

**Week of
May 14th
2017**

**You can reach Fr. Luke at
frlukacs@gmail.com
or at
(613) 925-3004**

***Please leave a clear
message and include your
phone number***

Next Divine Liturgies

**Sunday, May 21st
Divine Liturgy at 2:00 pm
At Trinity Episcopal Church
Fall Island, Potsdam, NY,
with our Orthodox brethren
from St. Vasilios Greek Orthodox
Church in Watertown**

**Thursday, May 25th
The Ascension of our Lord**

**Divine Liturgy at 10 am
St. Olympia Chapel
123 Main Street
Potsdam, NY**

All welcome!

Sayings from the Desert Fathers

*More sayings of St. Anthony
the Great:*

A hunter in the desert saw Abba Anthony enjoying himself with the brethren and he was shocked. Wanting to show him that it was necessary sometimes to meet the needs of the brethren, the old man said to him, "Put an arrow in your bow and shoot it." So he did. The old man then said, "Shoot another," and he did so. Then the old man said, "Shoot yet again," and the hunter replied, "If I bend my bow so much I will break it." Then the old man said to him, "It is the same with the work of God. If we stretch the brethren beyond measure they will soon break. Sometimes it is necessary to come down to meet their needs." When he heard these words, the hunter was pierced by compunction and, greatly edified by the old man, he went away. As for the brethren, they went home strengthened.

A brother said to Abba Anthony, "Pray for me." The old man said to him, "I will have no mercy upon you, nor will God have any, if you yourself do not make an effort and if you do not pray to God."

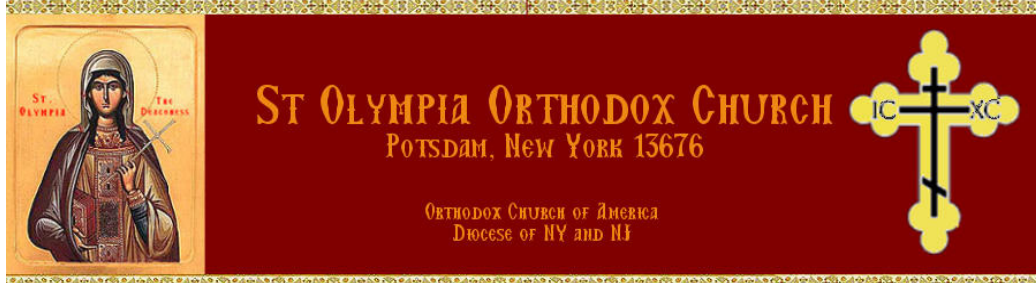
It happened one day that one of the brethren in the monastery of Abba Elias was tempted. Cast out of the monastery, he went over the mountain to Abba Anthony. The brother lived near him for a while and then Anthony sent him back to the monastery from which he had been expelled. When the brothers saw him they cast him out yet again, and he went back to Abba Anthony saying, "My Father, they will not receive me." Then the old man sent them a message saying, "A boat was shipwrecked at sea and lost its cargo; with great difficulty it reached the shore; but you want to throw into the sea that which has found a safe harbor on the shore." When the brothers understood that it was Abba Anthony who had sent them this monk, they received him at once.

It was revealed to Abba Anthony in his desert cell that there was one who was his equal in the city. He was a doctor by profession and whatever he had beyond his needs he gave to the poor, and every day he sang the Sanctus with the angels.

Planning Ahead

Archbishop Michael's next visit to Potsdam will be:

**Saturday-Sunday,
September 9-10, 2017**



Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church, a young and, God willing, growing community of worshippers.

Join us for prayer and fellowship. Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday and are primarily in English.

Visit us on Facebook or www.saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org

Christ is risen!

The sixth Sunday of Pascha is the Sunday of the Blind Man (John 9: 1-38). This reading, along with the hymnography, reminds us of many things such as we are all in need of the illumination of Christ and that it is a choice to remain spiritually blind. In addition, the placement of this reading during the season of Pentecost can be seen to point to one thing in particular, that Christ is indeed the Messiah foretold by the Prophets. One of the most influential books of the early Church, ***On the Incarnation***, was written by St. Athanasius of Alexandria (298-373 AD) before he was 20 years old. In it he writes:

"The Scripture says, 'Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear; then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be plain.' [Isaiah 35:5-6] Now what can they say to this, or how can they dare to face this at all? For the prophecy not only indicates that God is to sojourn here, but it announces the signs and the time of His coming. For they connect the blind recovering their sight, and the lame walking, and the deaf hearing, and the tongue of the stammerers being made plain, with the Divine Coming which is to take place. Let them say, then, when such signs have come to pass in Israel, or where in Jewish history anything of the sort has occurred. Naaman, a leper, was cleansed, but no deaf man heard nor lame walked. Elias [Elijah] raised a dead man; so did Eliseus; but none blind from birth regained his sight.... Since then nothing is said in the Scriptures, it is evident that these things had never taken place before. When, then, have they taken place, save when the Word of God Himself came in the body? Or when did He come, if not when lame men walked, and stammerers were made to speak plain, and deaf men heard, and men blind from birth regained their sight? For this was the very thing the Jews said when they witnessed it, because they had not heard of these things having taken place at any other time: 'Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.'"

A beautiful feature of this passage is the increasing faith of the man born blind. At first, he simply follows Jesus' directions – to wash away the mud in the pool of Siloam. He has nothing to lose. However, when he was brought before the Pharisees, his answer is simply factual. Rather than becoming fearful, the healed man's answers strengthen the more he is questioned to the point that his responses are taken as insolence. It is as if the antagonism forces him to think more deeply about the miracle of his healing and prepare him for the second, more miraculous encounter with Christ recounted at the end of the pericope where the man can say, "Lord, I believe!"

Again on this Sunday, there is a clear connection between the Gospel passage and the Epistle reading which relates Paul's and Silas' missionary work in Phillipi, their imprisonment where at midnight "they were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them," their miraculous release by the earthquake, and the conversion of the jailer and his family. St. John Chrysostom writes:

"What could equal these souls? [Paul and Barnabas] had been scourged, had received many stripes; they had been misused, were in peril of their lives, were thrust into the inner prison, and set fast in the stocks: and for all this they did not suffer themselves to sleep, but kept vigil all night. Do you mark what a blessing tribulation is?.... That the earthquake should not seem to have come of itself, there was this concurrent circumstance bearing witness to it: the doors were opened, and all their bonds were loosed. And it appears this happened in the night time, for the Apostles did not work for display but for men's salvation... Here, they no sooner showed the doors standing open and it opened the doors of the jailer's heart. It loosed two sorts of chains. That prisoner kindled the true light: for the light in [the jailer's] heart was shining.... He says immediately, 'What must I do to be saved?' What then does Paul answer? 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved: you and your household.... The faith of the jailer was a voice in itself. What could be equal to this? [Paul] is put in bonds, and looses, being bound? He looses a twofold bond: him who bound him he looses by being unbound. These are indeed works of grace.'"

In both the Gospel and the Epistle narratives, spiritual eyes are opened. The Apostles (lit. those who are sent forth) are shown to continue the Lord's work through the Holy Spirit. The man born blind and the jailer are both illumined. And in both readings, it is adversity that strengthens faith.



Christ Healing the Blind Man

Sixteenth century wall fresco at Dionysiou Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece

***Parish Council meeting this Sunday at 11:30 am
at 123 Main St., Potsdam.***

We will finish in time to go to Liturgy at 2 pm at Trinity Episcopal Church.