



Join us for prayer and fellowship.

Services are primarily in English.

ISRISEN



Divine Liturgy
at 10:00 am

**Divine Liturgy
at 10:00 am**

at

St. Olympia Chapel

123 Main Street

123 Main Street

Potsdam, NY

All welcome!

Sunday of the Paralytic (John 5:1-5)

*Note: the following article has been written by an anonymous contributor.
It is included here by permission.*

So? So in today's Gospel, John 5:1-15, we find the Lord Jesus strolling to a body of water similar in effect to what de Leon sought: a pool in Jerusalem called Bethesda, where He found a scene that would repulse many of us. Lying and sitting around this pool were "a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water." A huge crowd of men, women, boys and girls, all lay there hoping for healing and restoration because, says verse 4, "an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had."

As Jesus takes in this scene of human need and desperation, He spots a man who had been ill, paralyzed and bed-ridden for the past 38 years. Very likely, the man made his living by begging, and may have had to pay people to bring him food and/or take care of any other needs. Life for this man was hard; but because alms-giving was so much a part of Jewish life, it may not have been completely bad. Indeed, one Bible scholar writes, “An Eastern beggar often loses a good living by being cured.” So there was a risk if he was cured. And because Jesus lived in that culture, He understood the situation clearly. That’s why, in verse 6, Jesus asks the man a question that seems to us almost silly: “Do you want to be made well?”

On the surface this is a ridiculous question. It would be like asking a starving person if they want something eat, or a person lost in the desert if they'd like some water, or a person shivering in the cold of a North Country winter if they'd like a warm coat. Yet, Jesus' question was profound and insightful. When Jesus asks the man if he wants to be made well, He's not just asking "Do you wish it?" but "Do you will it? Do you choose it? Do you want it enough to do something with it?" It's like asking if someone wants \$1 million: they can have it, but only on the condition they do something with it: build a house, start a business, endow a scholarship. That word "want" includes and involves participation in this action. And that was a hard question. The paralytic had lived for so long in this state, that he may well have surrendered to it, learned to accept and deal with it, and give up any real hope of being cured. Yes, he was waiting for the stirring of the waters. But was it anything more than just going through the motions---like saying prayers but not really believing a word of them.

And that leads you and me to the same question: “Do you want to be made well?” And let’s be careful how we answer. We say we want to be made well of our physical ills, our emotional troubles, the spiritual sickness that is sin in our lives. But look around! On the outside we all look and sound like there are no worries no concerns in our lives. We give the impression that life is just grand. But in an article entitled “Would Every Non-Hurter Please Stand Up?”, Marshall Hayden points out that because people come to church wearing their best clothes and their best smiles, and because everybody looks happy, we assume everything is okay. But he suggests we need to look beyond the facade and realize that the pews are full of hurting people. “Over here,” he writes, “is a family with an income of \$500 a week and an outgo of \$700. Over there is a family with two children who, according to their dad, are ‘failures.’ He’s constantly telling them, ‘You’re stupid. You never do anything right.’ The lady over there just found a tumor that tested positive. The Smith’s little girl has a hole in her heart. Sam and Louise just had a nasty fight. Each is thinking of divorce. Last Monday Jim learned he was being laid off. Sarah has tried her best to cover the bruises her drunken husband inflicted upon her. That teen over there feels like he’s on the rack, pulled in two directions. Parents and church pull one way, peers and hormones pull the other. Then there are those of us with lesser hurts, but they don’t seem so small to us: an unresponsive spouse, a boring job, a poor grade, a friend or parent who is unresponsive and on and on and on go the stories. The lonely, the dying, the discouraged, the exhausted, they’re all here.”

In the face of that, the Word of God has good news! In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus says, “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” That’s not to say that He will heal every problem immediately and give us an easy life. Jesus clearly warns in John 16:33 that “in the world you will have tribulation,” not a trouble-free existence. In some cases, He may resolve the problem immediately, even miraculously. In others, He grants the power to endure the difficulty and triumph over it. But in every case He can help us through all our problems, big and small, only if we trust Him.

But that always means leaving our behind our pool, whatever we're relying on to solve our problems and assuage our pain: drink, drugs, an affair, working all the hours God made and then some, whatever our escape may be. Jesus asks each of us, "Do you want to be made well," and we say "Yes!" We hear the promises of Jesus, and our hearts run to them and claim them; and we believe that we mean what we say. Yet for some of us it's been, not just 38 years, but a lifetime of rejecting Jesus' offer of healing. We want to be healed; yet do we really have the faith, the trust, that allows Jesus to move us outside of our boundaries, outside of what's familiar, outside of what feels safe and comfortable?

That's the question that confronted the paralytic that day; and it's the question which confronts us today and, to be honest, everyday: "Do you want to be made well?" You see, if that man got well, and if we get well, then our lives must change. That man would have to get a job, pay rent, buy his own food, become responsible for himself and, perhaps, for a family. And the same goes for us. When we make a commitment to Jesus Christ, along with that commitment come a whole new set of responsibilities. Think of our baptism. Through the waters of baptism we become "a new creation;" the old nature, the sinful nature, is dead and buried, and new person with a new nature rises from the water. But now the call for each person is to use the faith that God has placed in our heart, soul, and mind to actually live as a new person, by new values and new priorities, and to go into the world bearing witness to Jesus Christ and serving others, doing good things in the name of Jesus Christ. That's not always easy; but it is our duty, our responsibility, part and parcel of saying the "Yes" of faith to Jesus Christ.

In verse 8, Jesus tells the newly-healed paralytic to do three things: “Rise, take up your bed, and walk.” Now, if I’d been unable to use my legs for 38 years, I’d have some doubts about my ability even to stand, let alone to walk: “How can I walk? I’ve been unable even to stand for 38 years!” But Jesus in effect says, “You can, because I say so.” But the command to get up is not all. When Jesus says “take up your bed,” He’s removing the possibility of relapse. He says, “Rise, take up your bed!” because the man wasn’t coming back. He’s doesn’t need to leave his bed at that pool because he will not be back tomorrow! He’s healed, and it’s time to move on. So he got up, picked up his mat, and he walked.


But Jesus wasn't done yet. Verse 14 says that some time later, "Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.'" Physically, the man was cured; but now spiritually through repentance he needed to be healed. And that's where you and I are most times: looking for a cure for our problems and troubles, but really needing to be healed in our spirits. And each time, Jesus asks us that pesky question: "Do you want to be made well?" And whether or not we ask Him, believe in Him, participate with Him, is our real answer to His question. What's your answer---and mine---today?

Parish News

Congratulations to Joel Hein on his graduation from Champlain College with a B.A. degree in Integrated Studies. God grant you many years!


Congratulations to Zachary Price on his degree recital. Zach, a tenor, chose a program of all sacred music. This is Zach's last semester at Crane as he will student teach in the fall. He will be missed!

“Singing Praises: Music to Deepen Our Prayers,” an interview with Dr. Jessica Suchy-Pilalis, is included in the latest issue of *Praxis*, a journal published by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.



Liturgical Music Workshop

Inspiring Children to Sing



Instructor: Mary Ellen Junda, Professor of Music, University of Connecticut

Date: Saturday, June 2, 2018

Place: Holy Apostles Church, 17 Platt Ave, Saddle Brook, NJ 07663

Time: Workshop 10 am – 12 pm
(Lunch will be served between 12-1 pm)
(Q&A will be from 1 pm – 2 pm)

Suggested Donation: \$20.00

Registration: Nothing is more beautiful than the sound of children singing—at home, school and at church. We invite parents, church school teachers, clergy, choir leaders and others who may be interested in learning about how the child's singing voice develops from pre-school through the early teens. Songs and age-appropriate activities will be presented that will both inspire children to sing and help to develop their vocal and aural skills. The goal is for participants to feel comfortable making music with children and for our children to have confidence in their singing voices so that they will share their talents with others.

Mary Ellen Junda is a nationally recognized master teacher of children's voices, conductor, recording artist, and a specialist in the Kodály Concept of Music Education. With energy and style, Dr. Junda has presented sessions on children's vocal development and musical literacy for choir directors, music teachers, and classroom teachers across the United States. A professor of music at the University of Connecticut, Dr. Junda currently teaches a unique general education course focused on music and social justice, and conducts *UConnbelle*, the choir for piano and alto voices, and *Earthtones*, the world music choir. Dr. Junda is a member of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Willimantic, Connecticut.

PRE-REGISTRATION IS ESSENTIAL

TO HELP THE INSTRUCTOR PLAN THE PRESENTATION, ASSURE ADEQUATE HANDOUTS, AND MEAL PLANNING