



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

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Please join us for prayer and fellowship.

Upcoming Services:
Saturday, May 13, 20
Great Vespers: 5pm

Sunday of the Samaritan Woman **May 14**

Sunday, May 14, 21
Divine Liturgy: 10am

**Coffee and fellowship will
follow the service**

*The above services are at
St. Olympia Church
34 North Main Street
Norwood, NY, 13668*

*Mailing Address
St. Olympia Orthodox
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Canton, NY13617*



Sunday of the Blind Man **May 21**

*I come to You, O Christ,
blind from birth in my spiritual eyes
and I call to You in repentance:
You are the most radiant light of those in darkness!*

Kontakion, Sunday of the Blind Man

Sunday of the Blind Man

May 21

At the end of Chapter 8 in Gospel of Saint John, the Savior was disputing with the Pharisees in the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. He told them, "Your father Abraham was glad that he should see my day; and he saw it and rejoiced" (John 8:56). The Jews said that Jesus was not even fifty years old, so how could He claim to have seen Abraham? The Lord replied, "Before Abraham was, I am." I am, of course, is the name that God revealed to Moses in the Burning Bush. When the Jews picked up stones to throw at Him, He hid Himself and went out of the Temple.

We read in Saint John's Gospel (9:1-38): "As He passed by, he saw a man who was blind from birth." It might appear that Jesus was on His way to something or someone else, but in his Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John, the ever-memorable Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas, quotes from Homily LVI of Saint John Chrysostom: "that on going out of the Temple, He proceeded intentionally to the work, is clear from this: it was He who saw the blind man, and not the blind man who came to Him..."

Christ's disciples asked Him who had sinned, the blind man or his parents that he had been born blind. Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God might be manifested in him" (John 9:3). It was thought that a person who had some affliction must have sinned (or his parents did) to deserve such punishment. In the Book of Exodus (20:5), God said that he would visit "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." This, however, applied to the sin of idolatry, if the children emulated their parents' behavior.

The blind man was not born blind just so the miracle could be performed, but seeing the man in such a condition, the Lord decided to use him in a way that would manifest God's glory. He Who is the Light of the world healed the blind man and enlightened him. Giving sight to the blind was one of the signs which would identify the Messiah (Matthew 11:4-6).

The Lord made clay when He spat on the ground, and placed it in the man's empty eye sockets and sent him to the pool of Siloam to wash. Most versions of the Gospels translate the word *επεθηκεν* as "anointed," but it can also mean "to spread on," or "to smear." Siloam means "sent," and in Saint John's Gospel Christ says about forty times that He Himself had been sent by the Father."

This manner of healing reminds us of the way God created man by fashioning him from the dust of the earth. In the Old Testament God created man from the dust of the earth, now Christ, the same God, fashions eyes from the clay and places them in the blind man's empty sockets. Here are some quotes from the Pentecostarion:

At the Oikos of Matins: *"He receives physical eyes as well as those of the soul."* In the Verses of the Synaxarion: *"O Bestower of light. Who are Light coming forth from Light; You gave eyes to the man who was blind from birth, O Word."* In the second exapostilarion: *"Along the way, the Savior found a man who lacked both sight and eye s."* At Monday Vespers (stikheron of the Feast) we sing, *"With his whole soul, and mind, and his tongue, the man who in times not long passed had been blind, confessed Him Who had fashioned eyes for him out of spittle and clay..."* Saint Theophylaktos says in his Commentary "Jesus our Lord fashioned all the members of the blind man's body except for the eyes, which He omitted. By healing them now, he completes the divine act of creating and demonstrates that He is the Creator."

Jesus tests the faith of the blind man by sending him to the Pool of Siloam (which means "sent"). He respects the man's freedom, but asks for his voluntary and free participation in the miracle. The blind man, with faith, obeys God's command. He goes and washes in the pool, and he returns seeing.

The former blind man's life was not made easier, however. He becomes the object of the Scribes' and Pharisees' evil and hatred, those who believed in God and in the observance of His Law. They themselves were blind, yet they were suspicious of the formerly blind man, imagining that he only pretended to be blind and now was able to see. "They willingly were made blind by the dark letter of the Law, in which Christ, the resplendent Sun shines."¹

They questioned the man who was blind, but when they see the miracle before their eyes, instead of believing, they shut the eyes of their souls. Then the man's parents were questioned. They were afraid to confirm the miracle that happened to their son who was born blind, because they did not want to be expelled from the synagogue. They tried to avoid trouble by concealing the truth. Therefore, they said, "He is of age, ask him!"

We who receive benefits from God every day are ashamed or afraid to confess God because of our lack of trust. We put our own interests above God, knowing that He will understand us! He will understand us, but He will also see our faith and what priorities we have in our lives. Christ will see what "gods" we have put in His place, but He will not cease to remind us that He is the light of the world.

The blind man was healed, not only in the eyes of his body but eventually in his soul as well. He recognizes Jesus as God, and does not hesitate to confess it before the religious rulers with courage that many of us would envy. Faith alone is not enough; we also need to confess our faith in order to become genuine children of God. When we confess Christ before men, He will confess us before His Father, as the Lord has promised us: "Everyone who shall confess me before men, I also shall confess him before my Father who is in Heaven; and whoever denies me before men I also will deny him before my Father who is in Heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

Entrance of Saint Nina, Enlightener of Georgia **May 19**

The holy Apostles Andrew the First-called and Simon the Canaanite first preached the Christian Faith in Georgia in the 1st century, but at the beginning of the 4th century most of the country was still pagan.

After the Theotokos revealed God's will for her future, the Equal-to-the-Apostles Nino set off for Georgia to enlighten the Iberian people. She arrived in Armenia with the holy martyrs and virgins Rhipsimia, Gaiana and their fifty companions. The holy virgins were martyred in Armenia and, according to God's will; Saint Nino journeyed on alone to Lake Paravani, entering Georgia from the Javakheti Mountains. She arrived in the spring, but the weather was unseasonably cold.

The Apostolic Church of Georgia has honored the Entrance of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Nino as a major feast day. The Church also commemorates her on January 14, the day of her repose.



Saint Nina, Enlightener of Georgia
May 19



Saint Lydia of Philippi
May 20

Saint Lydia of Philippi **May 20**

While Saint Paul was at Troas, he beheld a certain Macedonian in a dream (Acts 16:9), who entreated him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." He heeded this voice as if it were the voice of God, and he decided to journey to Macedonia without delay, accompanied by Saints Timothy, Silas, and Luke.

They disembarked at Neapolis and made their way to Philippi. On the outskirts of Philippi, on the banks of a river, there was a Jewish place of prayer. It was the Sabbath and, to the women who had gathered there, the Apostle of the Gentiles preached the Word of God in Europe for the first time.

The God-fearing women listened to the words of this unknown Jew carefully and with reverence. The one who was most enthusiastic was Saint Lydia, a proselyte and a seller of purple from Thyatira. As she listened, the Lord opened her heart to heed the words that were being spoken by Saint Paul. When she heard him talk about the Messiah, she accepted the truth of what he said and she believed in Christ.

Saint Lydia and her entire household were baptized in the waters of the river. Thus, she became the first woman of Macedonia to be enrolled as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. Her heart was filled with gratitude toward those who had opened the eyes of her soul, and so she asked them to accept the hospitality of her house. "If you have judged me to be a believer in the Lord, come to my house and remain there." And she insisted that they should come (Acts 16:15).

The Orthodox Church honors Saint Lydia as an Equal of the Apostles, and at the holy place of her baptism on the banks of the Zygaktos River, a baptistery has been built, which is similar to the early Christian basilicas of Philippi.

Saint Lydia is commemorated on March 23 (Slavic usage) and on May 20 (Greek usage). She was glorified by the Church of Constantinople on May 23, 1972.

***The Samaritan Woman came to the well in faith;
She saw You, the Water of Wisdom, and drank abundantly
She inherited the Kingdom on High and is ever glorified!***
Kontakion, Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

UPCOMING DIOCESAN & PARISH EVENTS

Diocesan Council Meeting

Thursday, May 18, 2023, at 11:00 AM
Diocesan Chancery

Presbyters' Council Meeting

Thursday, June 1, at 11:00 AM
Diocesan Chancery, Bronxville NY

St Olympia Orthodox Church – Next Parish Council Meeting

7:30 PM Monday, June 19, 2023

WEEKDAY VESPERS AT THE HERMITAGE OF ST OLYMPIA

Weekdays at 5 PM

For information please contact Mother Sophronia at mothersophronia@gmail.com
or via Facebook: Nun Sophronia Hofstead.

Most men believe in the resurrection of Christ, but very few have a clear vision of it. ...That most sacred formula which is daily on our lips does not say, "Having believed in Christ's resurrection," but,

"Having beheld Christ's resurrection, let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus, who alone is without sin."

How then does the Holy Spirit urge us to say, "Having beheld Christ's resurrection", which we have not seen as though we had seen it, when Christ has risen once for all a thousand years ago, and even then without anybody's seeing it? Surely Holy Scripture does not wish us to lie? Far from it! Rather, it urges us to speak the truth, that the resurrection of Christ takes place in each of us who believes, and that not once, but every hour, so to speak, when Christ the Master arises in us, resplendent in array and flashing with the lightnings of incorruption and Deity.

For the light-bringing coming of the Spirit shows forth to us, as in early morning, the Master's resurrection, or, rather, it grants us to see the Risen One Himself. Therefore we say, "The Lord is God, and He has given us light" (Ps. 118:27) and we allude to His second Coming and add these words, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord" (Ps. 118:26).

Those to whom Christ has given light as He has risen, to them He has appeared spiritually, He has been shown to their spiritual eyes. When this happens to us through the Spirit, He raises us up from the dead and gives us life. He grants us to see Him, who is immortal and indestructible. More than that, He grants clearly to know Him who raises us up (Ephesians 2:6) and glorifies us (Romans 8:17) with Himself, as all the divine Scripture testifies.

These, then, are the divine mysteries of Christians. This is the hidden power of our faith, which unbelievers, or those who believe with difficulty, or rather believe in part, do not see nor are able at all to see.

+ St. Symeon the New Theologian