

“Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. . . . When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (Jn. 9:2-3, 6-8).

Let us imagine to ourselves the mental state of this blind from birth. He cried out, called. They pushed him, maybe even forced him to be silent, but he still cried out, begged. Speaking in our terms, he was praying. Finally, that Miracle-Worker Who was invisible to him approached. But He did not perform an immediate miracle. On the contrary. He did something which according to human understanding might appear humiliating, unpleasant. He spat and made clay from the saliva and earth, and smeared the eyes of the blind man. But this wasn't enough; He sent him with this clay on his eyes to go wash in the pool of Siloam (which means “sent”)- But the blind man didn't object, he went feeling his way, stumbling, exposed to the mockery of the passersby. Finally he reached the pool and washed. And here, fulfilling all this, enduring all this, he finally recovered his sight and returned seeing.

This is a model of prayer for you and me. After all, we too are spiritually blind and cannot see the Lord. But we know that He exists. Let us call to Him, cry out to Him, begging for help. And let us not despond if this help is not immediately given to us. Maybe we still have to go a long way, not an easy way, like the way for the blind man to the pool of Siloam. On this path we might meet unpleasant things, humiliations, like the clay for the blind man. Let us endure everything. Let us be obedient. Let us do what He orders us to do; let us go the way He showed us, like the blind man's way to the pool of Siloam. And here, when we have fulfilled all this, then the Lord will answer our prayer, and if it pleases Him, will fulfill it. And the same will happen to us that happened to the blind man. When, through the circumstances of our life, the Lord asks us, “Dost Thou believe on the Son of God?” (Jn. 9:35), we will answer: We believe Lord! and we will worship Him.

Only let us avoid all images during the time of prayer. We must not imagine anything to ourselves; but like the blind man, let us just know that the Lord is near and that He can do anything. And if things seem to turn out opposite to our prayers, let us not despond. But let us hope, hope against hope. And He will do what is beneficial for us. Let us keep the state of mind of the blind man — this is the best form of prayer.

<http://www.rocor.org.au/?p=1347>

## THE ASCENSION

Fr. Thomas Hopko

After His resurrection from the dead Jesus appeared to men for a period of forty days after which He “was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God” (Mk 16.19; see also Lk 24.50 and Acts 1.9–11).

The ascension of Jesus Christ is the final act of His earthly mission of salvation. The Son of God comes “down from heaven” to do the work which the Father gives Him to do; and having accomplished all things, He returns to the Father bearing for all eternity the wounded and glorified humanity which He has assumed (see e.g. Jn 17).

The doctrinal meaning of the ascension is the glorification of human nature, the reunion of man with God. It is indeed, the very penetration of man into the inexhaustible depths of divinity.

We have seen already that “the heavens” is the symbolical expression in the Bible for the uncreated, immaterial, divine “realm of God” as one saint of the Church has called it. To say that Jesus is “exalted at the right hand of God” as Saint Peter preached in the first Christian sermon (Acts 2.33) means exactly this: that man has been restored to communion with God, to a union which is, according to Orthodox doctrine, far greater and more perfect than that given to man in his original creation (see Eph 1–2).

Man was created with the potential to be a “partaker of the divine nature,” to refer to the Apostle Peter once more (2 Pet 1.4). It is this participation in divinity, called theosis (which literally means deification or divinization) in Orthodox theology, that the ascension of Christ has fulfilled for humanity. The symbolical expression of the “sitting at the right hand” of God means nothing other than this. It does not mean that somewhere in the created universe the physical Jesus is sitting in a material throne.

The Letter to the Hebrews speaks of Christ's ascension in terms of the Jerusalem Temple. Just as the high priests of Israel entered the “holy of holies” to offer sacrifice to God on behalf of themselves and the people, so Christ the one, eternal and perfect High Priest offers Himself on the cross to God as the one eternal, and perfect, Sacrifice, not for Himself but for all sinful men. As a man, Christ enters (once and for all) into the one eternal and perfect Holy of Holies: the very “Presence of God in the heavens.”

. . . we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God . . . (Heb 4.14)

For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens. . . . He has no need like those high priests to offer sacrifice daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did this once and for all when he offered up himself.

Now, the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle which is set up not by man but by the Lord (Heb 7.26; 8.2).

For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Heb 9.24).

. . . when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet (Heb 10.12–13; Ps 110.1).

Thus, the ascension of Christ is seen as man's first entry into that divine glorification for which He was originally created. The entry is made possible by the exaltation of the divine Son who emptied Himself in human flesh in perfect self-offering to God.

<https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/doctrine-scripture/the-symbol-of-faith/ascension>

# SS. Constantine and Elena Orthodox Church

May 13, 2018



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## PARISH LIFE

**SUNDAY, MAY 13, 2018: 6<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF PASCHA: THE BLIND MAN (TONE 5, MATINS GOSPEL 8) – FR. SILVIU BUNTA SERVING**

8:40 am Matins  
10:00 am Divine Liturgy

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 16**

6:30 pm Vigil for the Ascension

**THURSDAY, MAY 17: FEAST OF THE ASCENSION**

8:00 am Divine Liturgy (with Academy students)

**SATURDAY, MAY 19:**

4:20 pm Church School  
5:00 pm Mystery of Confession (by appointment, please)  
6:00 pm Great Vespers (followed by confessions)

**PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND OF OUR PARISH:**

Victor Cosgarea, Jay Hanko, Jan Isham, Zachary Waltz, Margaret Wey.

**PRAY FOR THE NEWLY ILLUMINED OF OUR PARISH:**

Rocío Carrasco, Chris Hohne, John Minniear, and Chuck & Kitty Ryerson.

**PRAY FOR OUR CATECHUMENS:**

Sophie Cannon and Miriam Fakhoury

**LOOKING AHEAD...**

*Next Sunday's readings (7th Sunday of Pascha: Fathers of the 1st Council):  
Acts 20:16-18, 28-36; John 17:1-13.*

**Sunday, May 20**

12:00 pm Patronal Festal Celebration  
(picnic behind the house, weather permitting)  
6:00 pm Vespers with Litia for Ss. Constantine & Elena

**Monday, May 21: Ss. Constantine & Elena**

8:00 am Divine Liturgy (with Academy students)

**Friday, May 25**

6:30 pm "Nox Palmati": closing program for Hagia Sophia  
Classical Academy

**Saturday, May 26**

10:00 am Soul Saturday Pan-Orthodox Liturgy, Oak Lawn Cemetery  
6:00 pm Great Vespers with Litia for Pentecost

**Sunday, May 27 – the Great Feast of Pentecost**

8:30 am Festal Matins  
10:00 am Divine Liturgy  
12:00 pm Kneeling Vespers



## TRAVELS THIS SPRING

Fr. David and P'sa. Janene will be away for three weekends in the next two months. They are in Seattle this weekend through next week for the wedding of their younger son, Jesse (Fr. David will return in time for the Vigil of the Ascension), and then on vacation from June 2 through June 11. Prayers for their safe travels, and especially for Jesse and Laura as they wed, are deeply appreciated.

## THANKS TO FR. SILVIU

Fr. Silviu Bunta has again graciously offered to serve this weekend while Fr. David is away. We are grateful for his friendship and his willingness to come and help us. Many years, Father!

## PATRONAL FEAST

This year, the Feast of our Patrons, Constantine & Elena (our "2nd Pascha") falls on Monday, May 21. Thus we will have our community pitch-in celebration the day before, on Sunday. We are hoping for beautiful weather to enable us to have a full-fledged picnic together in the yard behind the house. We ask that those who are especially skilled at grilling (particularly with mitite) make plans to help out. Everyone should plan to contribute to the festive community spirit, remembering to help with set up and cleanup afterward. A sign up sheet is posted on SignUp Genius.

## CELEBRATION EVENT FOR HSCA

Our parish school, Hagia Sophia Classical Academy, will finish its seventh year on May 24th. We will then hold our annual celebration, "Nox Palmati" ("Night of Palms") on Friday evening, May 25th, beginning at 6:30 pm with awards and presentations, followed by the premier of a school play on film, "Hamlet's Dilemma." All are invited to celebrate our school and students, and to see the fruits of this treasure with which God has entrusted us. Please mark your calendars and join us!

## SOUL SATURDAY PAN-ORTHODOX LITURGY

This year for the Soul Saturday before Pentecost, as it falls on Memorial Day weekend, we will join our other sister parishes at Oaklawn cemetery at 10 am for the Divine Liturgy and blessing of the graves. Service will be held at the Orthodox outdoor shrine in the south east corner of the cemetery. Please mark your calendar, plan to spend some time remembering those departed, and bring your names for commemoration.

## USHER PROGRAM UPDATE

In our desire to greet our members and welcome visitors, as well as take specific steps to assure and enhance safety, you may notice Ushers present for Saturday Vespers through confessions and on Sunday. There are various du-



ties they are performing such as being attentive to all visitors, including those who come to our Church with various needs outside of our normal worship/fellowship activities. (Future training is planned for assisting in medical or other emergencies). Soon the Ushers will have simple badges so you can recognize them and access them for any needs or concerns. More to come on this program as it develops. If anyone is interested in participating, please see Buck Hatcher or John Geist.

## OUTREACH WITH FOOD

As part of the church's outreach to our neighborhood and to help facilitate our security efforts, we again ask for generous contributions of food for food bags to hand out to the needy who show up at our doors. Please consider contributing the following non-perishable foods:

- protein sources such as canned meat, beans, soup, peanut butter (with crackers or bread), nuts, protein bar;
- fruits or vegetables such as fruit cups, applesauce cups, canned vegetables;
- desserts such as a pudding cup, fruit or cereal bar, packaged cookies;
- packaged drinks such as water bottles and juice boxes.
- Napkins and plastic ware.

All canned products should have tabs for easy opening. We will have a box in the basement to collect the foods on Sundays (which we will store in secure plastic bins in the basement closet). If you have questions, please contact Jamie Spence. Thank you for your generosity.

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA – SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN

**Archbishop Andrei (Rymarenko)**

Last Sunday, the Sunday of the Samaritan woman, the Holy Church told us how Christ raises a person from an earthly, carnal state of mind to the state in which a human being thirsts to worship God and pray to Him. You see, the Samaritan woman came to the well for physical water which satisfies only earthly thirst. But when Christ revealed her sins to her, and she ran to Him in repentance, then in her awakened spiritual thirst, the thirst for Living Water springing up into everlasting life, the thirst for communion with God, her first question was about prayer: where one should worship God, how to pray. Now today's Gospel gives us a model for prayer.

"As Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth" (Jn. 9:1). Being blind from birth he had never seen anyone. He could not imagine to himself the form of a man. He had never even seen Christ. He only knew that Christ was passing close by, that He was a miracle-worker and could give him sight. And he began to cry out, to call to Christ: "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mk. 10:47; Lk. 18:38). The people tried to quiet him; he was interfering with their listening to Christ's preaching, he was disturbing the peace. Christ was walking, surrounded by His disciples, and they asked:

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