



SYNAXARIA OF THE PENTECOSTARION

by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos

SUNDAY of THE PARALYTIC

On this day, the fourth Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the Paralytic and, as is meet, we celebrate the miracle wrought for him.

Verses

The word of Christ was strength for the Paralytic,
And thus this word alone was his healing.

Synaxarion

This event is placed here, because Christ worked this miracle at the time of the Hebrew Pentecost. For, having gone up to Jerusalem for the Feast, He went to the pool with five porches, which Solomon had built and which was called the Sheep's Pool, because it was there that they used to wash the entrails of the sheep that had been slaughtered in the Temple for sacrifice; the first person to enter it, when the water was troubled by an Angel once a year, was made healthy. Christ found in that place a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years and who lay there, despairing of finding anyone to place him in the water; from this we learn how beneficial endurance and patience are; and that since He was going to grant us Baptism, which cleanses every sin, God provided that miracles should be wrought in the Old Testament through water, so that, when Baptism was bestowed, it might be accepted. Jesus came to this paralytic, who was called Jarus, and questioned him; he related his despair over finding someone to help him. Christ, knowing that he had been wasting away with this illness for so long a time, said: "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." At once, he became healthy, and, taking his bed upon his shoulders, lest the event should seem illusory, he walked to his house. Since it was the Sabbath, he was forbidden by the Jews to walk. He explained that the One Who had healed him had told him

to walk on the Sabbath, though he did not know Who He was; for when a crowd had gathered in that place, the Gospel says, Jesus secretly departed.

After this, Jesus found him in the Temple and said to him: “Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” Some say—though incorrectly—that Jesus spoke these words, because this man would later smite Him when He stood before Caiaphas, the High Priest and would, as a result, be granted a worse trial than paralysis, that of being tormented in the eternal fire, not just for thirty-eight years, but for ever; rather, the Lord showed that the illness of paralysis befell him because of his sins. However, not all illness comes from sins, but in some cases it comes about from physical causes, from gluttony, indifference, and many other factors. The paralytic, knowing that it was Jesus Who had healed him, made this known to the Jews; they, goaded into defending themselves, sought to kill Christ, because He had supposedly broken the Sabbath. Christ said much to them about this, maintaining that it is right to do good on the Sabbath; and that it was He Who, being equal to the Father, had said that one should keep the Sabbath; and just as His Father had worked hitherto, so did He work.

It should be known that this paralytic is different from the paralytic in St. Matthew’s Gospel; for the healing of the latter took place in a house, with men assisting him, and he was told: “Thy sins are forgiven thee.” This man was healed at the Porches, and he had no man to help him, as the Holy Gospel says; but, like the other paralytic, he did take up his bed. It is celebrated now, because it occurred during the season of Pentecost, as did the wonders involving the Samaritan woman and the blind man. We celebrate St. Thomas and the Myrrh-Bearers in assurance of Christ’s Resurrection from the dead; but we celebrate the other wonders leading up to the Ascension, because they were done at different times in the season of the Hebrew Pentecost, and because St. John, whose Gospel is read during this period, is the only Evangelist to mention them.

By Thy boundless mercy, O Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

