



My Beloved Ones,

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

In this Sunday's Gospel we hear of a miraculous pool in the city of Jerusalem, called Bethesda, where an angel was known to trouble the waters so that those who suffered from illness or had disabilities were known to lay in the pool. And it is this place, and a lonely paralytic, that stops our Lord.

Knowing that this man has been paralyzed for thirty-eight years, and that he has waited by the water for a long time, Jesus asks the man if he wishes to be healed. The paralyzed man responds, "*Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when*

the water is troubled, and while I am going, another steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, '*Rise, take up your pallet, and walk.'* And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked." (John 5:6-8)

The rest, we know: the authorities are so shocked by this man's breaking the Sabbath, they fail to notice the miracle the Lawgiver Himself has performed. Even the man on whom this blessing is bestowed fails to appreciate what Christ has done for him. Our Lord warns him, "*See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you*", but still the man points Him to the authorities. (John 5:14-15)

The Evangelist meant for this miracle to illustrate Christ honoring the Spirit of the Law—but today I wish to concentrate on something else. The man's statement, "*Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled...*" is simple enough to miss, but it illustrates an important point about loneliness. This man was not simply looking to be healed, he wished to be *seen*. This sentence seems especially moving with the current pandemic, when so many of us are isolated physically from our families and friends, and when we hear stories of those who are sick or suffering in their own ways.

This current situation has shown the importance of community. Before this self-isolation, how often would we see someone lacking in shelter or clothing? How often would we see someone in pain, confusion, or sadness, and do nothing? Surely, we told ourselves: "What right do I have, when it is not my business, but the life of someone else?" The Coronavirus has shown us that there are some who would use the

justification that the nature of humanity is to protect ourselves from danger, whether physical or emotional. “If it is someone I know,” we said to ourselves, “then of course I would help them.”

Christ approached the Paralytic to demonstrate how we are to treat others. His Creator knew him, but as a human being, they were strangers. And yet still, our Lord helped him. We do not have the capacity to perform miracles like Jesus, but we can do our best to demonstrate kindness and love. We are not simply called to give our possessions or our treasures to those less fortunate, but our time as well. In this era, let us remember the Paralytic’s statement, and reach out to those who are sheltering alone, so that they can say, “*I have someone...*”

+ALEXIOS

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