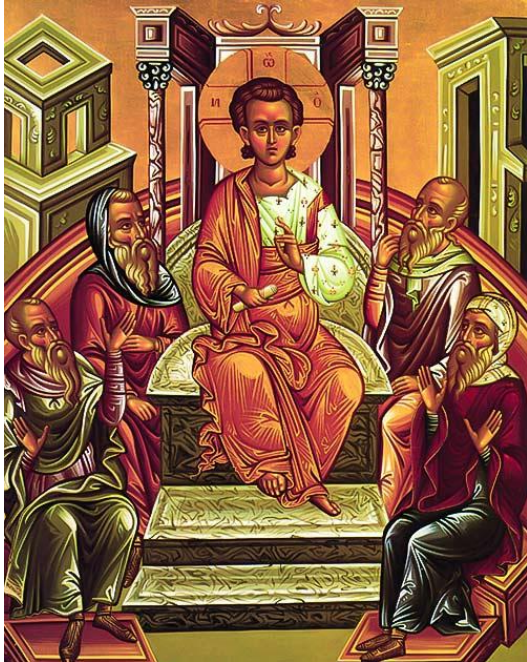




GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS ^{OF} ATLANTA

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ



My Beloved Ones,

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη!
Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

In this Sunday's Gospel we hear of the healing of the Paralytic, and a miraculous pool in Jerusalem called Bethesda, where an angel was known to trouble the waters. Knowing that this man has been paralyzed for thirty-eight years, 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 authorities are so shocked by Christ's breaking the Sabbath, that they seek to kill him.

Next Wednesday, after He heals the Paralytic, we read of Christ going to Jerusalem to teach in the Temple for the Feast of Tabernacles. The people discuss whether Jesus is good, or a deceiver, and many are stunned at His wisdom: "*How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?*" (John 7:15) Jesus defends His teaching, because as He says, "*My teaching is not mine but his who sent me... I performed one work, and all of you are astonished... If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath... are you angry with me because I healed a man's whole body on the sabbath? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.*" (John 7:16, 7:21, 7:23-24) This day is known in our Church as Mid-Pentecost, falling halfway between Pascha and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In the Icon of the Feast, we see the twelve-year-old Christ as Teacher in the Temple, demonstrating the wisdom that is still to come upon His Disciples; while this commemoration also looks back to Great and Holy Pascha, as those authorities begin the journey that will lead us back to the Crucifixion, and so, to our salvation.

Concerning Mid-Pentecost, St. Theophan the Recluse writes eloquently, "*Whatever you thirst for - so long as it is not contrary to the spirit of the Lord - you will find relief in Him. If you thirst for knowledge, run to the Lord, for He is the one and only light, enlightening every man. If you thirst for cleansing from sin and quenching of the flames of your conscience, run to the Lord, for He tore asunder the handwriting of our sins upon the Cross. If you thirst for peace in your heart, run to the Lord, for He is the treasury of all good... If you need strength, He is almighty. If you need glory, His glory surpasses the world. If you desire freedom, He gives true freedom. He will resolve all of our doubts, loose the bonds of our passions, dispel all our troubles and difficulties, will enable us to overcome all obstacles, temptations and intrigues of the enemy, and will make smooth the path of our spiritual life. Let us all run to the Lord!*"

+ALEXIOS
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