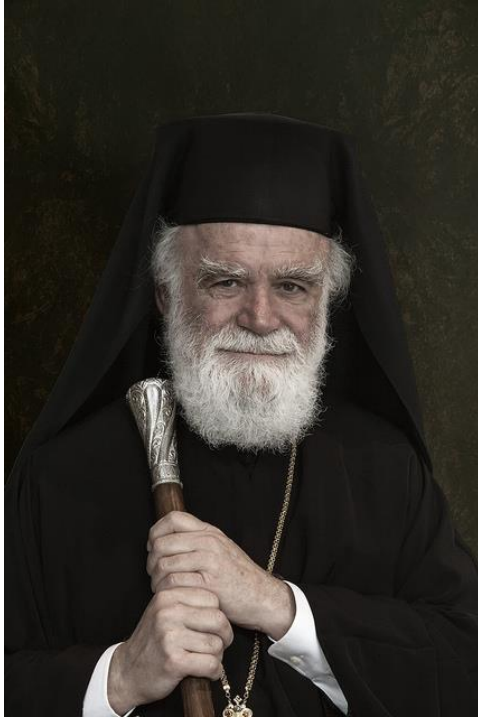




GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS ^{OF} ATLANTA

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ



My Beloved Ones,

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

This Sunday's Gospel concerns our Lord's miraculous healing of the blind man. Often when something bad happens to us, we attempt to find a reason. "What have I done wrong?" "Who is responsible?" When the Disciples encounter the blind man, they ask the Lord, "*Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*" According to our human understanding, this question seems important, but our Lord answers, "*It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him*" (John 9:2-3). The blind man has lived his life without blaming anyone, and our Lord is moved.

Taking His spittle and making clay from dust, Jesus anoints the man's eyes and tells him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, to demonstrate the miracle to the people. St. John Chrysostom draws the comparison that, just as

God created Adam and Eve from His Divine breath and the dust of earth, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity gives sight and new life to the blind man in the same way. After the miracle, the blind man's problems are far from ended. On one side, his neighbors do not believe that this is the same man. On the other side, the Pharisees and authorities wish to interrogate him, and to use his own words against Christ. However, the man still shows his characteristic patience, defending the ministry of Jesus. Though the man is cast out from the synagogue, Jesus approaches him, asking, "*Do you believe in the Son of man?*" He answered, "*And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?*" Jesus said to him, "*You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.*" He said, "*Lord, I believe*"; and he worshiped him. (John 9:35-38) Indeed, it is a wonderful thing that this man is at peace, having been given His vision, and having seen His Creator.

My beloved ones, next Thursday, we will celebrate the last occasion our Lord's followers saw Him as He Ascended into Heaven. Though we are not able to know Him in the same way as did the Blind Man & the Apostles, we celebrate the Ascension to look forward to our Lord's Second Coming, as the Angel said, "*...why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!*" (Acts 1:11) And so, for one last time,

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

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta