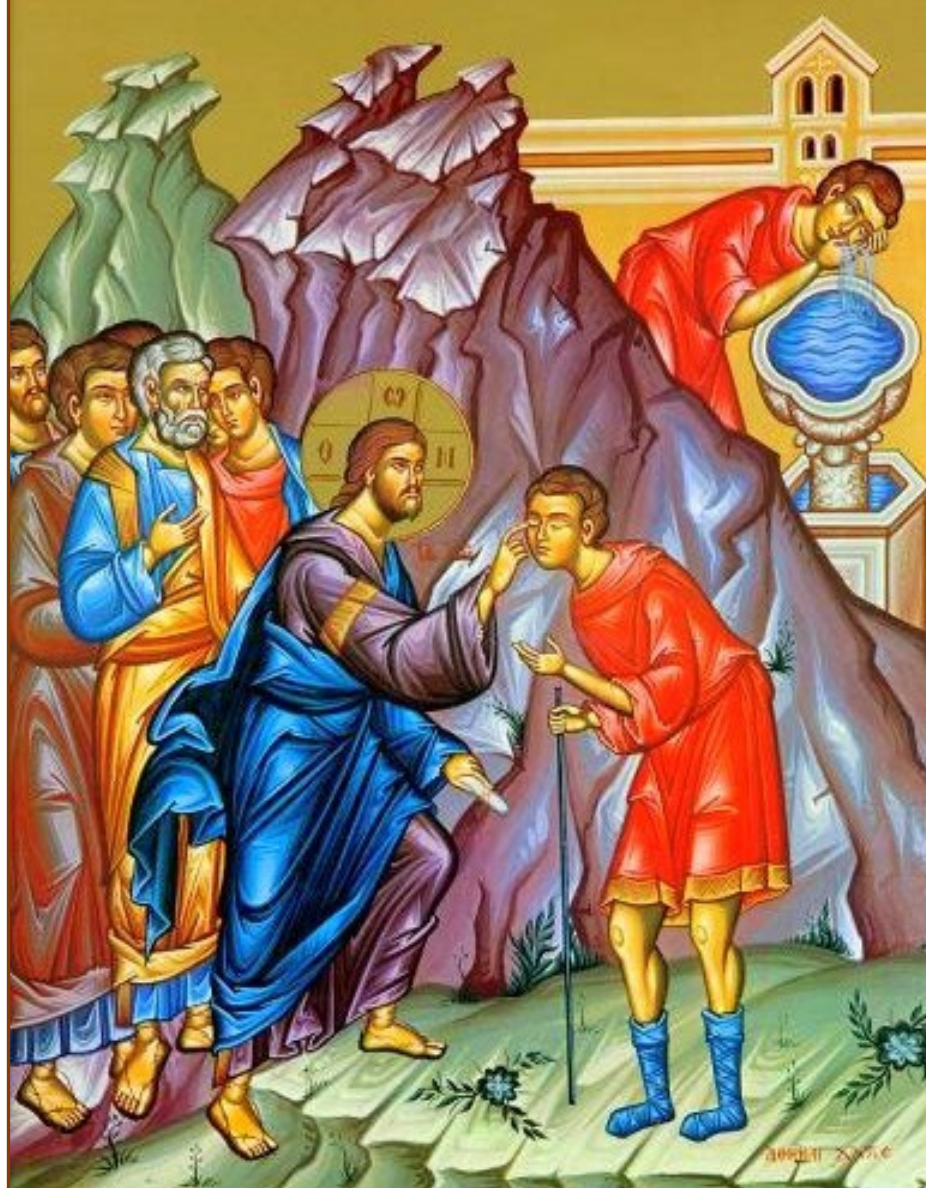


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GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

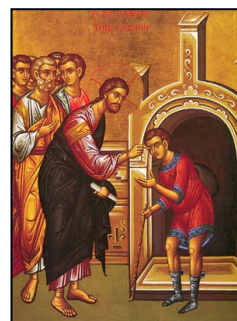
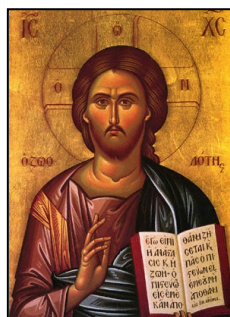
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: [www.patriarchate.org](http://www.patriarchate.org)

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: [www.atlmetropolis.org](http://www.atlmetropolis.org)

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: [www.saintchristopherhoc.org](http://www.saintchristopherhoc.org)

## **St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church**



313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210  
Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

**Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor***

### **Liturgical Guide for Sunday, May 21, 2023**

ON THIS DAY, THE *SIXTH* SUNDAY OF PASCHA, THE CHURCH REMEMBERS THE OCCASION OF JESUS PASSING THROUGH THE TEMPLE, WHEN HE SAW A MAN WHO HAD BEEN BLIND SINCE BIRTH. HE HAD COMPASSION ON HIM, AND SO, PUTTING CLAY OVER HIS EYES, HE SAID TO HIM: “GO TO THE POOL OF SILOAM AND WASH.” AND AS THE MAN WASHED, HE RECOVERED HIS SIGHT; AND HE PROCLAIMED THE GLORY OF GOD. BUT HIS RELATIVES ASKED HIM: “WHO OPENED YOUR EYES THAT NO LIVING CREATURE CAN HEAL?” AND HE ANSWERED: “A MAN CALLED THE MESSIAH, OF WHOM MOSES WROTE IN THE LAW; HE IS THE SAVIOR OF OUR SOULS.” WE ALSO COMMEMORATE *Constantine and Helen, Equal to the Apostles and Pachomios the Righteous New Martyr*. In your infinite mercy, O Giver of light, Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.

## **Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Parish!**

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. ***You and your family are welcome; we look forward to meeting you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!***

*Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.*

## **FROM THE PENTECOSTARION**

From the Service of Vespers for today's feast: "But his relatives asked him: 'Who opened your eyes that no living creature could heal?' And he answered: 'A man called Jesus. He told me to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He is truly Christ, the Messiah, of Whom Moses wrote in the Law: 'He is the Savior of our souls.'"

## **SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE**

### **1./2./10. Hymn for the Feast of Pascha – (see music distributed):**

*Sung three times after the opening of the Divine Liturgy, before the Small Entrance, and after the distribution of Holy Communion: Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.*

### **3. Small Entrance Exclamation of the Clergy:**

*On the occasion of the Paschal period, the Priest intones the following at the Small Entrance: "In your choirs, bless the Lord, you of Israel's wellspring. Save us, O Son of God, who did rise from the dead, we sing to You: Alleluia!"*

### **4. Resurrectional Hymn (Plagal of 1<sup>ST</sup>) – (Hymnal-pp.114-117):**

It is sung after the Small Entrance: To the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation, let us, the faithful, give praise and worship. For He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death and raise the dead by His glorious resurrection.

**5. Hymn of Saints Constantine & Helen – (not in Hymnal):**

*Sung at the end of Orthros and after the Small Entrance:* Your Apostle among the Rulers, St. Constantine, who once beheld in the sky the image of Your Cross, and who like Paul received his calling not from man, once entrusted the Ruling City into Your hand. We entreat You to restore it in peace forever, at the intercession of the Theotokos, O Lord Who loves humanity.

**6. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):**

*It is sung in both Greek and English after the Small Entrance:* Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

**7. Kontakion of Pascha – (Hymnal-pp.274-277):**

*It is sung after the Small Entrance:* Into the grave You descended, Immortal One, yet You destroyed the power of Hades, and as victor You arose, O Christ our God; You proclaimed to the Myrrh Bearing Women a greeting of joy, You brought peace to Your Holy Apostles, and to the fallen You granted resurrection.

**8. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) (Hymnal-pp.304-307):**

*Today, the following hymn is sung instead of "Axion Estin" or "Truly it is proper to call you blessed...":* The Angel cried out to the woman full of grace: Rejoice, O Pure Virgin; again I say, rejoice, for your Son is risen from the tomb on the third day. Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you. Exult and be glad, O Zion. Be radiant, pure Theotokos, in the resurrection of your Son.

**9. Communion Hymn – (Hymnal-pp.318-319):**

*On the occasion of today's feast, the following hymn is sung instead of "Aineite" or "Praise the Lord":* Receive the Body of Christ; drink from the font of immortality. Alleluia.

**SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S DIVINE LITURGY**

*The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts. – St. John Chrysostom*



### **Epistle Reading (Acts 26:1, 12-20)**

*Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and began to defend himself: “With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.’ I asked, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ The Lord answered, ‘I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen Me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’ “After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance.*

### **Gospel Reading (John 9:1-38)**

*As He walked along, He saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When He had said this, He spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes*

opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether He is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where He comes from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but He does listen to one who worships Him and obeys His will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove

*him out. Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when He found him, He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is He, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in Him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen Him, and the One speaking with you is He.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshipped Him. Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near Him heard this and said to Him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”*

**THIS WEEK’S MEMORY VERSE (SEE IF YOU CAN COMMIT IT TO MEMORY):**

*“Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things...” (Psalm 119:18)*

**PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:**

Too often we fail to see God. We miss out on seeing the sacred that He has placed right in front of us.

Helen Keller, whose only ability to “see” was through touch once, wrote:

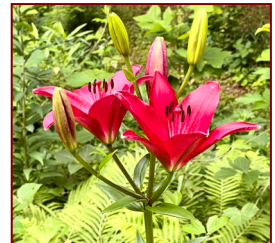
*I, who cannot see, find hundreds of things to interest me through mere touch.*

*I feel the delicate symmetry of a leaf.*

*I pass my hands lovingly about the smooth skin of a silver birch, or the rough shaggy bark of a pine....*

*I feel the delightful, velvety texture of a flower, and discover its remarkable convolutions; and something of the miracle... is revealed to me.*

*At times my heart cries out with longing to see these things. If I can get so much pleasure from mere touch, how much more beauty must be revealed by sight.*



*Yet, those who have eyes apparently see little. The panorama of color and action which fills the world is taken for granted....*

*It is a great pity that, in the world of light, the gift of sight is used only as a mere convenience rather than as a means of adding fullness to life."*

The gift of sight is being able to "see" what's around us, and more importantly, spiritually seeing our Risen Lord.

On a flight to New England a few years ago, as we began our final approach, I glanced out of the window. The late afternoon sun highlighted fall's vivid colors across the mountains and valleys. I put away my magazine and took in the breathtaking canvas that only our Creator-God could paint.

Unfortunately, the urgency of life, and the pressure of deadlines have caused us to miss many "God-moments".

Romans Chapter 1 contains a profound truth. *"For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world His eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things He has made."* (Rom. 1:19-20)

In short, in these two verses, St. Paul encourages us to approach life with a "spirit of expectation" — *to see Him through His invisible attributes* – His Eternal Power and His Divine Nature. They are clearly evident and visible in His creation.

***"The heavens declare the Glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork." (Psalm 19:1)***

Has the pace of life robbed you of enjoying His handiwork? Are your daily pressures stealing His eternal power from your soul? Has pain left you feeling that His divine nature could never fill your hurting heart?

If so, slow down. No – STOP! Whatever you are doing, right now, just stop.

Go outside and experience His creation with your family and friends. Enjoy His handiwork. Psalm 46:10 says, *"Be still and know that I am God"* — because He is. Allow the precious gift of sight to *add fullness to your life*. It just might turn your life around. Amen.



**"Follow" & "Like" our Facebook page.** Check for updates and photos.



On this *the 956<sup>th</sup>* Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women, and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia, area for the glory of God!

## **COMMUNITY SCHEDULE** *(CHECK WEB CALENDAR FOR MORE...)*

### **Sunday, May 21: (Sunday of the Blind Man):**

**9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy/Coffee Fellowship Reception**

**10:45 a.m. Religious Education Classes (last class this year)**

**11:30 a.m. Philoptochos General Meeting & Board Elections**

***Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!***



Last Sunday was filled with joy and fellowship. It is appropriate for us to offer a "special thank you" to two families who quietly funded our Mother's Day Luncheon last Sunday... Steve & Pam Theodorakis provided all the delicious food and Kirk and Dedee Panayis donated all the decorations and special gift bags. **We appreciate your gifts to us and thank you!**

## Reflection from Metropolitan Alexios – Sunday of the Blind Man

*(continued from back cover)*

Let us reflect on the fact, that after the miracle, the Blind Man's neighbors feel his words are of so little meaning they ignore him: "Others were saying, 'No [it is not the man], but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.'" (John 9:9). The Pharisees themselves are so arrogant that they ask the Blind Man twice to testify. Between their two questionings, they also speak with his parents, who are so afraid of being cast out of the Synagogue that they do not come to their son's defense. When the Blind Man continues to speak about Jesus as a great and powerful prophet of God, the Pharisees demonstrate their insensitivity towards his former disability by telling him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us? And they drove him out" (John 9:34).

My beloved ones, even today, as fallen human beings, we often neglect those with differences, whether we intentionally or unintentionally. Like the Pharisees, we fear that which we do not know, and often try to ignore unpleasant things. However, we know that Our Lord's ministry to bring salvation extends to the whole world, as He will commission His Disciples before the Ascension next week; but the spread of this faith was also because it spoke to those whom the rest of society cast aside, including those with disabilities. Our Lord sought to renew Creation in such a way that, through His life, death, and Resurrection, our own eyes would be able to see the true image and likeness of God in each one of our brothers and sisters—not with pity or fear, but with the *agape* our Lord first showed to us. As we prepare to accept the Great Commission, let us prayerfully think about how we can minister, not to the ends of the earth, but even within our own families, neighborhoods, and communities.

**Today is the Sunday of the Blind Man. His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios offers us the following message reflecting on today's Gospel lesson.**

My Beloved Ones, for this Sunday's miraculous healing of the Blind Man, I ask us to carefully consider what lessons it has for us, especially when we think of our fellow Orthodox Christians & neighbors with disabilities. Disabilities often make people uncomfortable, and since mankind has God-given reason, it is natural that our first instinct is to try to understand what it is we are seeing. This is what the Disciples do when they ask the Lord, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). In the ancient world, it was common to believe that sin could be passed down from parent to child, or even that a child could sin inside the womb. Even when we think about the healing of the Paralytic we observed two weeks ago, our Lord told the man, "Sin no more, lest nothing worse befall you" (John 5:14). However, we must remember that the Blind Man can hear the Disciples' question, and their words hurt, especially as an adult man who now begs for help to live.

Our Lord takes the opportunity to challenge their view of disability: "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (John 9:3). Of course, our Lord speaks of "...the works of God..." to announce the sign he is about to perform: He will create clay by mixing dust with His saliva, and He will anoint the Blind Man by telling him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. However, it is possible to see that "...the works of God..." also means how the Blind Man—and indeed, all those with physical and intellectual disabilities can show themselves to be icons of the living God through our own lives. *(Continued inside bulletin)*