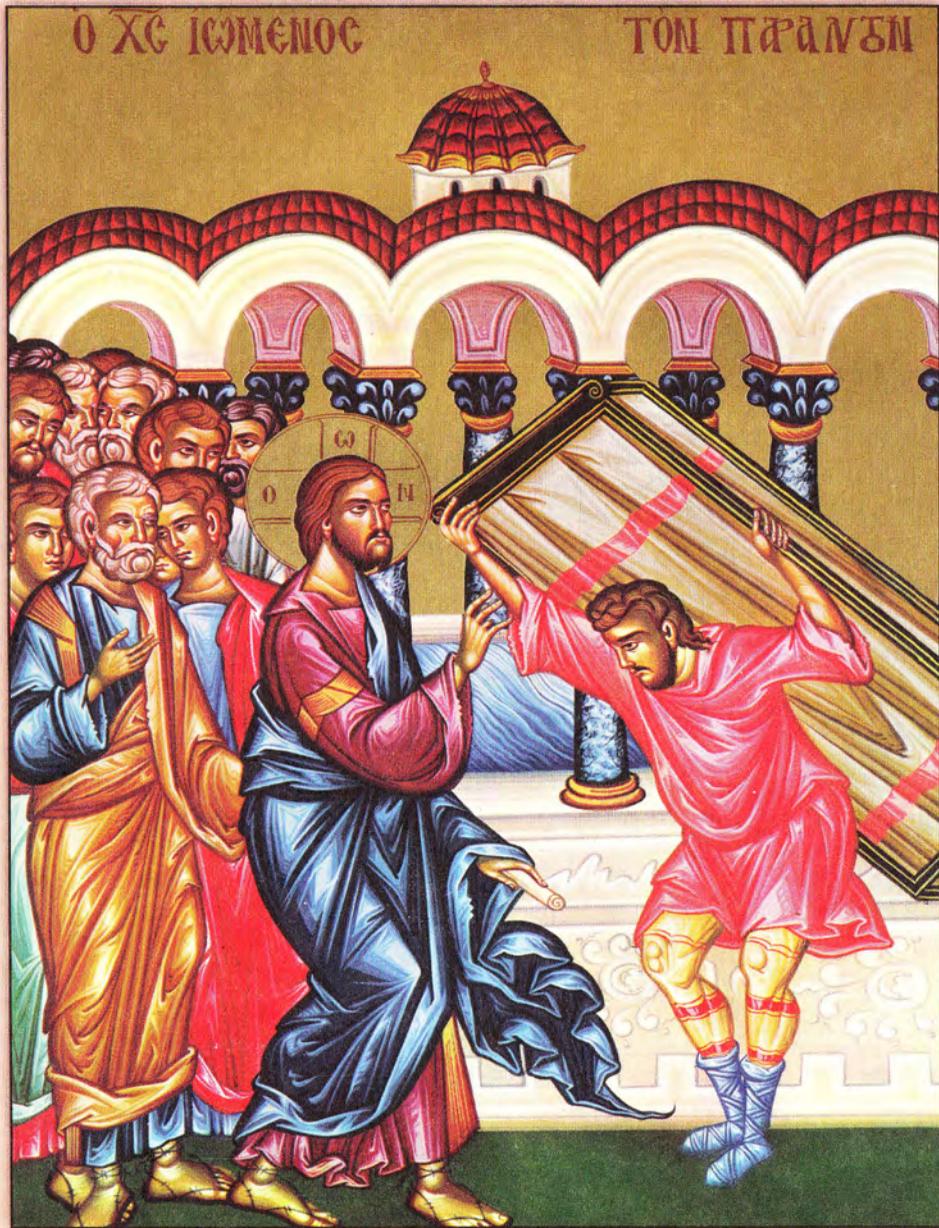


SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC



*Icon of Christ and the Paralytic Man*



**April 17, 2016**

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA – SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC**

**OUR VENERABLE FATHER SIMEON OF PERSIA**

**OUR VENERABLE FATHER ACACIUS, BISHOP OF MELITENE**

**ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕС!**

**ВОИСТИНУ ВОСКРЕС!**

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

**TRULY HE IS RISEN!**

**SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 18 – APRIL 24**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20 – *MID-PENTECOST; OUR VENERABLE FATHER THEODORE TRICHINAS*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

FRIDAY, APRIL 22 – *THE HOLY GLORIOUS GREAT MARTYR, VICTOR AND WONDERWORKER GEORGE*

10:30 AM – Divine Liturgy at St. Paul's Senior Homes & Services, 328 Maple Street, San Diego, CA 92103

SATURDAY, APRIL 23 – *THE HOLY VIRGIN MARTYR AGAPIA, IRENE AND CHIONIA*

6:30 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, APRIL 24 – *FIFTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA - SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN; THE HOLY MARTYR SABBAS THE GENERAL AND HIS COMPANIONS*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

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*If you are reading the bulletin during the Liturgy (including the homily),  
please **stop** and be attentive – будьмо уважли!*

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*This is the mark of Christianity – however much a man toils, and however many righteous deeds he performs, to feel that he has done nothing... and so say, "I am only just beginning to struggle for the Lord and to practice His ways." And even if he is righteous before God, he should say, "I am not righteous, not I; I do not struggle enough, and each day I only make a beginning in the Christian life." "*  
*– St. Macarius the Great*

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. **What on earth is He up to?** The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”

– C.S. Lewis (*Mere Christianity*)

# YOU ARE NOT YOUR SIN – PART 2...THE CHAINS THAT BIND

Fr. Stephen Freeman

Imagine that you have been shackled with chains on your ankles. The chains are heavy, make a lot of noise, and make it impossible for you to run. You cannot successfully climb over anything or dance. The chains are heavy enough that you quickly become exhausted and are limited in the things you can do and for how long you can do them. Imagine



that not only are you shackled, but so is everyone around you. Some only have light handcuffs, while others are almost immobile with the chains they bear. Some have these terrible devices on their heads that make it impossible for them to turn their heads. This, of course, makes for very great problems in the culture you live in. For one, bicycles are not very popular. Sports are extremely limited. Clothes are primarily zippered things. There are laws about the chains and devices. Recently, it has even become illegal to discuss the chains, so that no one is embarrassed. There are even discussions and academic papers about the chains. There are fads in which the chains are painted various colors, or even have bells attached to them. There are clubs.

*This is an analogy for sin.* We did not invent the chains. They get there in various ways. Some are even born with them. Others have more chains added by parents and neighbors, etc. Over the years, we do add some chains ourselves. Our behavior adapts to the chains – over that we have very little choice. **But, please note, we are not our chains.** The chains may affect us, but we do not become the chains. They may affect us so deeply that we completely organize our lives around the limitations they impose. But the limitations and the chains are still not us.

Many people like to discuss the origin of the chains. Who were the first to have them? Was it their fault? Is it our fault? In truth, it's largely a moot point. We have the chains and many of them are clearly not our fault. It's true that my chains slow me down and I trip over them a lot. Perhaps if I were more careful...

I wrote earlier that “you are not your sin.”

Neither are you your chains. Are you responsible? Sure, in some way. Are you free? There is still mobility, but nothing like complete freedom. Try riding a bike or swimming with leg irons. Responsibility means staying off the bike and out of the water. But that's not really the same thing as freedom, is it?

The New Testament not infrequently uses the term “bondage” to describe our sinful condition. The chains are a picture of what bondage looks like. Many people speak of sin as though it were something else, as though we were a group of people who willingly chose to act as though they had chains but are, in fact, actually free. So, all of the chain-driven behavior is really only a choice. It's your fault...entirely.

**Jesus sets us free from our bondage.** That is the clear teaching and meaning of His Pascha. He descends into the origin of our bondage, the bondage capital of the universe (Hades), and binds the “strongman.” And He sets at liberty those who were in bondage:

*He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.” (Now this, “He ascended” – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of*

*the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) (Eph. 4:8-10)*

And

*Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb 2:14-15)*

Also

*For the creation was subjected to frustration, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Rom 8:20-21)*

I am not trying to develop some complete scenario of judgment, heaven and hell. **However, sin as bondage and Christ as the destroyer of bonds is an essential New Testament image and at the very heart of the Church's understanding of His Pascha.** For those working within the metaphors and images of the legal/forensic world, Pascha is about a payment or an appeasement (propitiation) offered to the Father, freeing us from the righteous penalties of sin (which is understood as breaking the bonds of sin-debt).

Hidden within the legal/forensic image, however, is a false notion of human beings and their freedom of choice and action. The "bondage" in that imagery is a self-imposed burden that we deserve because we have broken the Law and owe a debt. We deserve it because we could have done differently. Our "chains" are entirely of our own making. It is argued, as well, that this concept of freedom and responsibility are absolutely essential to what it means to be a person.

What I think has taken place in the thoughts of many, is a transfer of the legal/forensic version of what it means to be human into the more Orthodox narrative of Pascha. It creates a very confused account that does not really make sense.

What does it mean to be a person? Most moderns assume that "personhood" is the correct way to describe the state of any individual. **Each individual is a person, created in the image of God.** Inherent to personhood, in this understanding, is freedom. **If there is no freedom, then there is no true personhood.** But, again, the modern consciousness has a false understanding of persons and presumes many things that are simply not true.

**Human beings are not the utterly free agents imagined by modernity.** The Tradition does not describe us as existing in a fullness of personhood. The language and understanding of what it means to be a person is rooted in the discussion and doctrine of the persons of the Holy Trinity, and the person of Christ as the God/Man. It is not rooted in what we experience and know to be the present case for human beings.

Indeed, the patristic consensus is that **human beings are created according to the "image" of God, but that we fail to fulfill the "likeness."** Expressed in a variety of ways, it is understood in the Orthodox Church, that human beings, created to be fully personal in the image and likeness of Christ, are not yet fully personal and in the image and likeness. Personhood is the end for which we are created, not the place from which we all begin. And personhood is not properly defined as merely a mode of existence that entails freedom. The image according to which we were created is the Crucified Christ (the Lamb was slain "from the foundation of the world"). The Crucified Christ is the image revealed to us of the Person of Christ as self-emptying love. True Personhood does not merely exist as freedom, it is freedom as self-emptying love. It is always freedom-for-the-Other.

**We live a shackled existence.** Some are far more bound than others. This is not to say that we have no freedom, or that we are not responsible for what we do with the freedom we have. But our “range of motion” is greatly restricted. We are hampered such that we frequently fall and take missteps. What is shackled in our existence?

St. John of Damascus notes: For either man is an irrational being, or, if he is rational, he is master of his acts and endowed with free-will. (*Exact Exposition*, XXVII).

The Fathers are quite clear, however, that our *nous* is darkened. We do not see clearly and our reason is impaired. We do not see God or perceive Him as we ought, nor do we see the good clearly as we ought. **Our reason is shackled.**

In the same manner, our will is shackled. We do not hold an insane person to be responsible if they commit suicide. The daily suicide of us all is frequently just as much a matter of something beyond our responsibility. Again, we are certainly responsible, but we are also insane. **There**

**are very good reasons that we ask for forgiveness for things we have done, “both voluntary and involuntary.”** That is simply the state of our present condition.

And it is this shackled existence of bondage that Christ destroys in His Pascha. It is His deliverance that forms the bulk of our hymnography within the Paschal Triduum. Of course, it is reasonable to ask why it is we still behave as we do if Christ has set us free from bondage.

The answer is simple: **that victory has not yet been made manifest in its fullness. We are not yet as we shall be.** We are not yet as fully free as we shall be, nor are we yet the persons that we shall be. And though the victory has begun within our lives, we “do not yet see all things under Jesus’ feet.” But for those who see Christ’s victory, the celebration has already begun, for they see the assurance of the promise that has been made to us:

*“We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”*

## TEN COMMANDMENTS OF HUMAN RELATIONS

1. **Speak to people.** There is nothing so nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
2. **Smile at people.** It takes 72 muscles to frown, only 14 to smile.
3. **Call people by name.** The sweetest music to anyone’s ears is the sound of his own name.
4. **Be friendly and helpful.** If you would have friends, be a friend.
5. **Be cordial.** Speak and act as if everything you do is genuine pleasure.
6. **Be genuinely interested in people.** You can like almost everybody if you try.
7. **Be generous with praise** – cautious with criticism.
8. **Be considerate with the feelings of others.** There are usually three sides to a controversy; yours, the other fellow’s, and the right side.
9. **Be alert to give service.** What counts most in life is what we do for others.
10. **Add to this a good sense of humor,** a big dose of patience, and a dash of humility, and you will be rewarded manifold.

## MIDFEAST OF PENTECOST

The time of Pentecost is 50 days. Indeed, the word Pentecost, means “fifty.” In the middle of the feast, that is on the 25th day, always a Wednesday, we celebrate the feast known as Mid-Pentecost. The feast unites and connects Pascha (the beginning) with Pentecost (the ending).

The symbol of water provides the theme for the feast of Mid-Pentecost. “Whoever is thirsty should come to Me and drink.” As the Scriptures says, “Whoever believes in Me, streams of life-giving water will pour out from his heart.” Christ said this about the Spirit which those who believe in Him were going to receive (John 7:37-38). This passage is also part of the Gospel reading for the Sunday of Pentecost.

Anticipating the gift of the Holy Spirit by Christ, the Troparion and Kontakion of Mid-Pentecost express the yearning of the believer with these words:

### Troparion

In the middle of the Feast, O Savior, fill my thirsting soul with the waters of godliness, as Thou didst cry to all: If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink! O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to Thee!

### Kontakion

Christ God, the Creator and Master of all, cried to all in the midst of the feast of the law: Come and draw the water of immortality! We fall before Thee and faithfully cry: Grant us Thy bounties, for Thou art the Fountain of our life.

.....

### A Reminder about Standing on all Sundays and everyday from Pascha to Pentecost

This is not an innovation, rather it is the explicit reiteration of a long tradition and teaching of the early church about the nature of the celebration of the Lord’s Day (i.e. Sunday.) This proscription of the church dates from the time of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 AD.) There was a divergence in practice in various places and the church identified the need to emphasize the resurrectional character of the Lord’s Day. The fact that an Ecumenical Council discussed and eventually issued a Canon (rule) on this subject shows the importance in the eyes of the church fathers. Canon 20 of the Council (which has never been negated) states: Since there are some communities that still bend their knees on the Lord’s Day (Sunday) and on the days of Pentecost, this Holy Council decrees that the common prayers (i.e., at Liturgy) are to be rendered to God standing.

To be very clear – This canon of the First Ecumenical Council applies to Every Sunday of the Year! **One should NOT kneel during Divine Services on ANY Sunday** (custom and the practice of the Latin Church notwithstanding).

### Пригадуємо що стоїмо підчас Служби Божої кожної Неділі року і кожного дня від Великодня до Неділі П’ятдесятниці

Це не є нова вигадка а виразне повторення стародавнього звичаю і повчання стародавньої Церкви про праведне додержування Господнього Дня (Неділя). Це повчання ще із Собору Нікеї (325р). Були різні звичаї в різних місцевостях і Церква рішила наголосити Христове Воскресення кожної Неділі. Ця справа була така важлива що Церковні Отці рішили надати закон. Канон 20 (яке ніколи небуло заперечене) каже: Тому що є деякі громади що ще клякають в Неділю і в дні П’ятдесятниці, цей Святий Собор проголошує що в спільній молитві (Служба Божа) молимося Богові стоячи.

Вияснюємо – Цей Канон Нікеї стосується кожної Неділі в році! **Не клякаємо під час неділішної Служби Божої** (не залежно від особистого звичаю ані Римо-Католицької традиції.)

## Enlarging Your Circle of Friendship

Often times when we come to church we find ourselves mingling with the same group of people; people with whom we may have a special affinity or perhaps people with whom we may have formed lasting friendships – and this is a great and wonderful thing! Yet, at the same time, we mustn't pass up the opportunity to interact with and **get to know people outside our circle of friends.** *There is nothing better than a unified parish, whose circle of friendship includes everyone.* Take a moment each Sunday to get to know someone different – you won't regret it!

### *Mission Days Prayer*

*O Lord, God, shine forth the light of Your Holy Gospel, so that the Christian faith might spread through us, the baptized, as children of the Light. Let us be witnesses to Your Living Presence in our lives and in our parish community, O Lord, hear us and have mercy. The Holy Spirit provides everything: He sends the prophets, leads priests to perfection, teaches wisdom to the uneducated, makes theologians of fishermen, and unites the entire Christian community, O Comforter, Consubstantial with the Father and Son, glory be to You!*

## Sunday offering for April 10

Amount	Number
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	2
\$36.00	1 (loose)
\$40.00	4
\$50.00	3
\$85.00	1
\$300.00	1
<hr/>	
\$801.00	

Parishioner Total: \$761.00  
Guest: \$40.00

Average / parish household (42): \$9.76  
Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

**Deficit: (\$1439.00)**

**Year-to-date deficit: (\$16,327.00)**

### PARISHIONERS THAT ARE HOME BOUND



If you or a loved one cannot make it to Church, Fr. James would be more than pleased visit at your home, in the hospital, at a nursing home, or any other place. It is no inconvenience at all.

Please be sure to schedule a visit.

#### **Pastor:**

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

#### **Pastoral Council:**

Vladimir Bachynsky: (619) 865-1279

Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357

Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008

#### **Social Committee Chair:**

Megan Hartman (619) 540-4291

#### **Finance Committee:**

Bohdan Kniahynyckyj: (619) 303-9698



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква  
Святого Йоана Хрестителя  
St. John the Baptizer  
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

4400 Palm Avenue  
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**Website:** [stjohnthebaptizer.org](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org)

**Pastor:** Fr. James Bankston  
[frjames@mac.com](mailto:frjames@mac.com)  
Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

***The Mercy Jesus Proclaimed***

What tongue can describe the heart of the divine mercy? What mind is not amazed by the riches of such great love? The psalmist was thinking of these riches of divine love when he said: My helper, I will sing a psalm to you. It is you, O God, who are my protector, my God, my mercy. Carefully weighing the labors surrounding our humanity, he called God his helper. He calls his "protector" the one who protects us in the midst of our present distress until we come to eternal rest. But bearing in mind that God sees our evil deeds and bears with them, that He puts up with our sins and still preserves us for His rewards because of repentance, he could not just speak of God

as being merciful but called him mercy itself, saying: My God, my mercy.

Let us then recall before our eyes the evil deeds we have done, let us consider with how much goodness God puts up with us, let us bear in mind the depth of His love. He is not only lenient toward our sins, but He even promises the heavenly kingdom to those who repent after sinning. Let each of us say from the very depths of our hearts, let us all say, My God, my mercy.

*St. Gregory the Great*

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