

THE ORDER FOR THE TYPIKA SERVICE WHEN WE ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND CHURCH

SUNDAY MARCH 15, 2020

Second Sunday of Lent. St. Gregory Palamas. Martyr Agapius and those with him.

THE SERVICE TAKES PLACE IN FRONT OF OUR ICON CORNERS

EVERYONE: O, God cleanse me a sinner and have mercy on me! (3x)

READER: **Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.**

READER: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3 times)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

EVERYONE: Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

READER: **Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.**

READER: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

EVERYONE: Amen. Followed by the Singing of the First Antiphon.

Bless the Lord, O my soul! Blessed are Thou, O Lord! Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases. The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long suffering and of great goodness. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Blessed art Thou, O Lord!

THE LITTLE LITANY

READER: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.

EVERYONE: Amen. Followed by the singing of the Second Antiphon.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have being. Put not your trust in princes, in sons of men in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs he returns to his earth, on that very day his plans perish. The Lord will reign forever; Your God, O Zion, to all generation.*

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God, Who for our salvation didst will to be incarnate of the holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, Who without change didst become man and wast crucified, Who art one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit: O Christ our God, trampling down death by death, save us!

THE LITTLE LITANY

READER: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.

EVERYONE: Amen. Followed by the singing of the Third Antiphon.

In Thy Kingdom remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for

they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

Followed by the singing of the appointed Troparia for the day

Troparion for Resurrection - Tone 6

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, // glory to Thee.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Troparion for St. Gregory Palamas - Tone 8

O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation, O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians, O wonderworking Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, // always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

THE EPISTLE LESSON

READER: The Prokeimenon is in the 5TH Tone:

Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us / and preserve us from this generation forever.

CHOIR: *Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us / and preserve us from this generation forever.*

READER: In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel.

CHOIR: *Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us / and preserve us from this generation forever.*

READER: Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us / and preserve us

CHOIR: *From this generation forever.*

READER: THE READING IS FROM THE LESSON OF THE HOLY APOSTLE PAUL TO THE HEBREWS.

READER:

BRETHERN:

Thou, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But Thou art the same, And Thy years will not fail." But to which of the angels has He ever said: " Sit at My right hand, Till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

BRETHERN:

For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty

in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

READER: And to your spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! He who dwelleth in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God.

CHOIR: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

READER: He will say to the Lord: "My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust."

CHOIR: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

READER: The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak of judgment.

CHOIR: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia

THE GOSPEL LESSON

READER: And that we may be accounted worthy of hearing the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord God.

EVERYONE: Lord have mercy (3x)

READER: Let us listen to the Holy Gospel. The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Mark.

EVERYONE: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

READER:

Let us Attend!

And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone? But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'?"

But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins- He said to the paralytic, I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house. Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

At that time, Jesus said to those with Him: I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

EVERYONE: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.

Remember us, O Master, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.

Remember us, O Holy One, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.

THE LITANY OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION

READER: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.

EVERYONE: Amen.

READER: The Heavenly Choir sings Thy praises and cries out: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

READER: Draw nigh unto Him, and be enlightened; and your faces shall not be put to shame.

READER: The Heavenly Choir sings Thy praises and cries out: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

READER: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

READER: The Choir of Holy Angels and Archangels, with all the Powers of Heaven, sings Thy praises and cries out: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

THE SYMBOL OF FAITH

PEOPLE: I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY; MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND OF ALL THINGS VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE.

AND IN ONE LORD, JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN; BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER BEFORE ALL AGES. LIGHT OF LIGHT, TRUE GOD OF TRUE GOD; BEGOTTEN NOT MADE; OF ONE ESSENCE WITH THE FATHER, BY WHOM ALL THINGS WERE MADE; WHO FOR US MEN AND FOR OUR SALVATION CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND WAS INCARNATE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE VIRGIN MARY AND BECAME MAN. AND HE WAS CRUCIFIED FOR US UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, AND SUFFERED, AND WAS BURIED; AND ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES; AND HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND SITS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER; AND HE SHALL COME AGAIN WITH GLORY TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD; WHOSE KINGDOM SHALL HAVE NO END.

AND IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE LORD, THE GIVER OF LIFE, WHO PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER; WHO WITH THE FATHER, AND THE SON TOGETHER IS WORSHIPPED AND GLORIFIED; WHO SPOKE BY THE PROPHETS.

IN ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH; I ACKNOWLEDGE ONE BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS. I LOOK FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME. AMEN.

THE LITANY OF SUPPLICATION

READER: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

READER: Through the Prayers of Our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, Have Mercy on us.

EVERYONE: OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BY THY NAME. THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD; AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US; AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

READER: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us and save us.

EVERYONE: Amen. (Followed by the singing of the appointed Kontakia)

Kontakion for Lenten Triodion — Tone 4

Now is the time for action! Judgment is at the doors! So let us rise and fast, offering alms with tears of compunction and crying: “Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea; but forgive us, O Master of all,// so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns!”

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion for St. Gregory Palamas — Tone 4

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, joyful trumpet of theology, together we sing thy praises, O God-inspired Gregory. Since thou now standest before the Original Mind, guide our minds to Him, O Father// so that we may sing to thee: “Rejoice, preacher of grace!”

READER: Lord have mercy (12x)

O All-Holy Trinity, Consubstantial Power, Undivided Kingdom, Origin of all Good: be graciously inclined unto me, a sinner. Make steadfast my heart and give it understanding, and take away from me every defilement. Enlighten my mind, that I may ever glorify, praise and worship Thee, and say: One is Holy, One is the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord, henceforth and forevermore. (3x)

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever,
and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

PSALM 34

READER: **I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall be continually in my mouth. In the Lord shall my soul be praised; let the meek hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my troubles. Draw nigh unto Him, and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be put to shame. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The Angel of the Lord will encamp around those who fear Him, and will deliver them.**

O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that hopes in Him. O fear the Lord, all you His saints; for there is no want for them that fear Him. The rich have become poor and have hungered; but they that seek the Lord shall lack no good thing. Come, O children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man that desires life, who loves to see days that are good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears unto their supplication. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cried, and the Lord hear them, and He delivered them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are broken in heart, and will save them that are humble in spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, and out of them all shall the Lord deliver them. The Lord keeps all of their bones; not one of them shall be broken. The death of sinners is cruel, and they that hate the righteous shall do wrong. The Lord will redeem the soul of His servants, and none of them shall do wrong that hope in Him.

CHOIR: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.
Lord Bless!

READER: Through the Prayers of our Holy Fathers, through the Prayers of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, by the Power of the Precious and Life-Creating Cross, through the protection of the Bodiless Powers of Heaven, through the prayers of Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John, through the prayers of the holy glorious and all-laudable Apostles, through the Prayers of all the North American Saints, through the prayers of _____ the patron of this Holy Temple, through the prayers of St. Gregory Palamas. Martyr Agapius and those with him whom we commemorate today, of the holy and righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, and of all the saints, O Lord Jesus Christ Our God, have mercy on us and save us.

CHOIR: Amen.

(The faithful now come up and venerate the Precious Cross and Icons in our Icon Corner.)

READER: Through the Prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

CHOIR: Amen. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy.

THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK and NEW JERSEY EDUCATION CORNER

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

This Sunday was originally dedicated to St Polycarp of Smyrna (February 23). After his glorification in 1368, a second commemoration of St Gregory Palamas (November 14) was appointed for the Second Sunday of Great Lent as a second "Triumph of Orthodoxy."

Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, was born in the year 1296 in Constantinople. St Gregory's father became a prominent dignitary at the court of Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328), but he soon died, and Andronicus himself took part in the raising and education of the

fatherless boy. Endowed with fine abilities and great diligence, Gregory mastered all the subjects which then comprised the full course of medieval higher education. The emperor hoped that the youth would devote himself to government work. But Gregory, barely twenty years old, withdrew to Mount Athos in the year 1316 (other sources say 1318) and became a novice in the Vatopedi monastery under the guidance of the monastic Elder St Nicodemus of Vatopedi (July 11). There he was tonsured and began on the path of asceticism. A year later, the holy Evangelist John the Theologian appeared to him in a vision and promised him his spiritual protection. Gregory's mother and sisters also became monastics.

After the demise of the Elder Nicodemus, St Gregory spent eight years of spiritual struggle under the guidance of the Elder Nicephorus, and after the latter's death, Gregory transferred to the Lavra of St Athanasius (July 5). Here he served in the trapeza, and then became a church singer. But after three years, he resettled in the small skete of Glossia, striving for a greater degree of spiritual perfection. The head of this monastery began to teach the young man the method of unceasing prayer and mental activity, which had been cultivated by monastics, beginning with the great desert ascetics of the fourth century: Evagrius Pontikos and St Macarius of Egypt (January 19). Later on, in the eleventh century St Simeon the New Theologian (March 12) provided detailed instruction in mental activity for those praying in an outward manner, and the ascetics of Athos put it into practice. The experienced use of mental prayer (or prayer of the heart), requiring solitude and quiet, is called "Hesychasm" (from the Greek "hesychia" meaning calm, silence), and those practicing it were called "hesychasts."

During his stay at Glossia the future hierarch Gregory became fully imbued with the spirit of hesychasm and adopted it as an essential part of his life. In the year 1326, because of the threat of Turkish invasions, he and the brethren retreated to Thessalonica, where he was then ordained to the holy priesthood.

St Gregory combined his priestly duties with the life of a hermit. Five days of the week he spent in silence and prayer, and only on Saturday and Sunday did he come out to his people. He celebrated divine services and preached sermons. For those present in church, his teaching often evoked both tenderness and tears.

by the future patriarch, Isidore. After he returned from a visit to Constantinople, he found a place suitable for solitary life near Thessalonica the region of Bereia. Soon he gathered here a small community of solitary monks and guided it for five years. In the 1330s events took place in the life of the Eastern Church which put St Gregory among the most significant universal apologists of Orthodoxy, and brought him great renown as a teacher of hesychasm.

About the year 1330 the learned monk Barlaam had arrived in Constantinople from Calabria, in Italy. He was the author of treatises on logic and astronomy, a skilled and sharp-witted orator, and he received a university chair in the capital city and began to expound on the works of St Dionysius the Areopagite (October 3), whose "apophatic" ("negative", in contrast to "kataphatic" or "positive") theology was acclaimed in equal measure in both the Eastern and the Western Churches. Soon Barlaam journeyed to Mt. Athos, where he became acquainted with the spiritual life of the hesychasts'. Saying that it was impossible to know the essence of God, he declared mental prayer a heretical error. Journeying from Mount Athos to Thessalonica, and from there to Constantinople, and later again to Thessalonica, Barlaam entered into disputes with the monks and attempted to demonstrate the created, material nature of the light of Tabor (i.e. at the Transfiguration). He ridiculed the teachings of the monks about the methods of prayer and about the uncreated light seen by the hesychasts.

St Gregory, at the request of the Athonite monks, replied with verbal admonitions at first. But seeing the futility of such efforts, he put his theological arguments in writing. Thus appeared the "Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts" (1338). Towards the year 1340 the Athonite ascetics, with the

assistance of the saint, compiled a general response to the attacks of Barlaam, the so-called "Hagiorite Tome." At the Constantinople

Council of 1341 in the church of Hagia Sophia St Gregory Palamas debated with Barlaam, focusing upon the nature of the light of Mount Tabor. On May 27, 1341 the Council accepted the position of St Gregory Palamas, that God, unapproachable in His Essence, reveals Himself through His energies, which are directed towards the world and are able to be perceived, like the light of Tabor, but which are neither material nor created. The teachings of Barlaam were condemned as heresy, and he himself was anathemized and fled to Calabria.

But the dispute between the Palamites and the Barlaamites was far from over. To these latter belonged Barlaam's disciple, the Bulgarian monk Akyndinos, and also Patriarch John XIV Kalekos (1341-1347); the emperor Andronicus III Paleologos (1328-1341) was also inclined toward their opinion. Akyndinos, whose name means "one who inflicts no harm," actually caused great harm by his heretical teaching. Akyndinos wrote a series of tracts in which he declared St Gregory and the Athonite monks guilty of causing church disorders. The saint, in turn, wrote a detailed refutation of Akyndinos' errors. The patriarch supported Akyndinos and called St Gregory the cause of all disorders and disturbances in the Church (1344) and had him locked up in prison for four years. In 1347, when John the XIV was replaced on the patriarchal throne by Isidore (1347-1349), St Gregory Palamas was set free and was made Archbishop of Thessalonica.

In 1351 the Council of Blachernae solemnly upheld the Orthodoxy of his teachings. But the people of Thessalonica did not immediately accept St Gregory, and he was compelled to live in various places. On one of his travels to Constantinople the Byzantine ship fell into the hands of the Turks. Even in captivity, St Gregory preached to Christian prisoners and even to his Moslem captors. The Hagarenes were astonished by the wisdom of his words. Some of the Moslems were unable to endure this, so they beat him and would have killed him if they had not expected to obtain a large ransom for him. A year later, St Gregory was ransomed and returned to Thessalonica.

St Gregory performed many miracles in the three years before his death, healing those afflicted with illness. On the eve of his repose, St John Chrysostom appeared to him in a vision. With the words "To the heights! To the heights!" St Gregory Palamas fell asleep in the Lord on November 14, 1359. In 1368 he was canonized at a Constantinople Council under Patriarch Philotheus (1354-1355, 1364-1376), who compiled the Life and Services to the saint.

Second Sunday of Lent - The Paralytic Borne by Four

Mark 2:1-12

*From The Explanation of the Gospel of St. Mark
by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria*

1-5. And again He entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was heard that He was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and He preached the word unto them. And they come unto Him, bringing a paralytic who was borne by four. And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the paralytic, Child, thy sins be forgiven thee.

What does this *mean--after some days*? [Theophylact is here interpreting for his contemporary Greek reader of 1100 AD the somewhat difficult New Testament Greek phrase *di' mern*. Tr.] It means, "when several days had gone by." When Jesus had entered the house, the people heard that He was inside and all came running, hoping that it would be easy to meet Him there. The faith of those men was so great that they even made an opening in the roof through which they lowered the paralytic. Thereupon the Lord healed him, seeing the faith of those who carried him, or of the paralytic himself. For the paralytic would not have agreed to be carried if he himself had not believed that he would be healed. Many times the Lord healed the unbelieving sick on account of the faith of those who brought them. Similarly, He often healed the one brought to Him because of that mans faith, despite the unbelief of those who brought him. First He forgives the sins of the sick man and then He cures the disease, since the most severe illnesses occur for the most part as a result of sins. So it is that the Lord said of the paralytic in Johns Gospel that it was as a result of sins that the man had been paralyzed. [John 5:5-15] But the paralytic in Johns Gospel is not the same one mentioned here. For the man in Johns account had no one to help him, while this man had four. And that man was by the Sheeps Pool; this man was in the house. And this one was in Capernaum, while the other was in Jerusalem, to name but a few differences. But know that the paralytic mentioned by Matthew [9:2-8] and the one mentioned here by Mark are one and the same.

6-12. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? And Jesus, immediately knowing in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Is it easier to say to the paralytic, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins--He saith to the paralytic--I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

When the Lord said that He could forgive sins, the Pharisees falsely accused Him of blasphemy, since God alone can forgive sins. But the Lord gives yet more evidence that He is God, by knowing what was in their hearts. God alone knows what is in the heart of each, for, as the prophet says, "Thou alone knowest the hearts of the sons of men." [II Chron. 6:30, III Kings 8:39] Although the Lord had revealed their innermost thoughts, the Pharisees remained senseless, not conceding that He Who knew their hearts could heal their sins as well. By healing the body, the Lord makes credible and certain the healing of the soul as well, confirming the invisible by means of the visible, and the more difficult by what was easier, though it did not appear so to the Pharisees. For the Pharisees thought it was more difficult to heal the body, because it was something visible. And they thought that it was easy to say that the soul had been healed because this healing was invisible. Perhaps they were thinking thoughts like these: "Look at this deceiver. He declined to heal the body which is visible, and instead claims to heal the soul which is invisible, saying, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' Certainly, were He able, He would heal the body rather than pretend to do something that cannot be seen." Therefore the Saviour shows them that He is able to do both, saying, "Which is easier? To heal the body or the soul? Certainly it is easier to heal the body, but you think just the opposite. So I will heal the body, which in fact is easy, although it seems difficult to you. By so doing I will confirm the healing of the soul as well, which is difficult although it seems easy because it is invisible and cannot be verified." Then He says to the paralytic, Arise, and take up thy bed, to confirm even more that the miracle was not a phantasy, and also to show that He had not only healed him but had filled him with strength. The Lord does the same with our spiritual sicknesses. He not only delivers us from our sins, but fills us with strength to do His commandments. Therefore I too who am a paralytic can be healed. For Christ at this very moment is in Capernaum, which, interpreted, is the house of comfort and consolation, which is the Church. For the house of the Comforter is the Church. I too am a paralytic, for the powers of my soul are inert and will not move to do good. But if I am carried by the four Evangelists and brought to the Lord, then I will hear Him call me, Child, (for by doing His commandments I become a son of God) and my sins will be forgiven me. But how can I be brought to Jesus? If they make an opening in the roof. And what is the roof? It is my mind, which over-arches all that is within me. It is a roof made of many earthen and clay tiles, signifying earthly affairs. But if all these things are pulled away, and the strength of the mind within us is opened up and freed of the weight of earthly things, then I will be lowered, that is, I will be humbled. For I ought not to rise up in pridefulness that I have been unburdened of earthly things; but instead, after I have been unburdened of earthly things, I ought to be lowered, that is, humbled. Then I will be healed and I will take up my bed, which is my body, and employ it to do the commandments. For I should not only be raised up from sin and understand that I sin; I should also take up my bed, that is, get my body up and set it to do good. Then we shall also be able to see with spiritual eyes, so that all our thoughts within us can say, We never saw it on this fashion, which means, "We never understood until now that we were paralytics and have now been healed." Only he who has been cleansed of sins sees things as they truly are.

