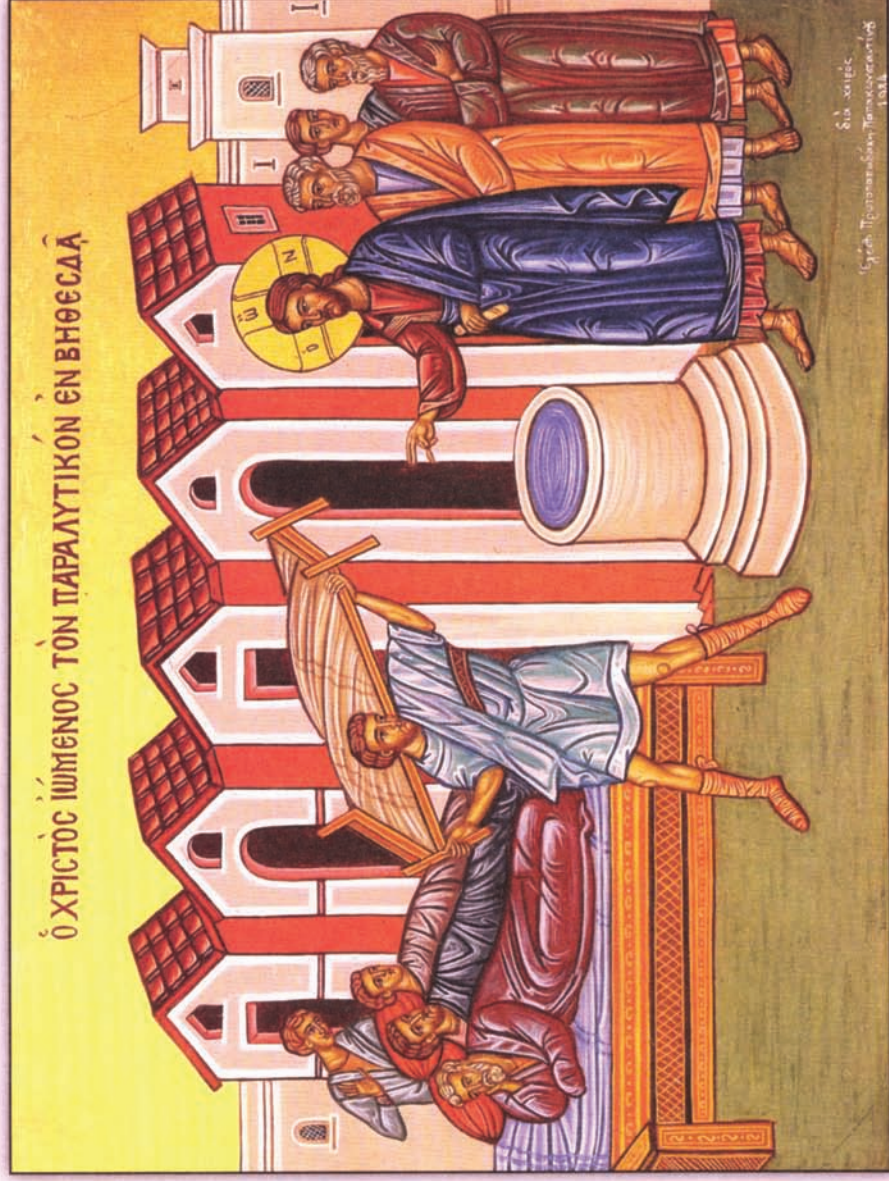


SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SIXTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of the Healing a Paralytic

July 8, 2012
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR PROCOPIUS

TONE 5

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 9 – JULY 15

SUNDAY, JULY 15 – *SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS; THE HOLY GRAND-PRICE VLADIMIR THE GREAT, EQUAL TO THE APOSTLES; THE HOLY MARTYRS CYRICUS AND JULITTA, HIS MOTHER*

9:30 AM – Typica Service

God's Extended Hand

If you cannot assist in this work of the Gospel by coming to help feed the hungry, there are other ways of fulfilling God's commission. You could prepare food that can be served. There is always a need for clothing (especially for the men) soap, shampoo, etc... Financial contributions are also gratefully accepted.

*Fellowship of Orthodox Christian United to Serve

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FR. JAMES WILL BE AWAY

Fr. James will be out of town from July 9th until July 22. In case of an emergency please contact either Fr. Robert Pipta of Holy Angels Byzantine Catholic Church at (858) 277-2511, Fr. Sabba Shofany of St. Jacob Melkite Catholic Mission at (619) 410-7868, or Fr. Myron Mykyta at (323) 663-6307.

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Please Note:

When you go on vacation, please don't forget that the church still relies on your contributions. Our bills do not go on vacation. The summer months are most difficult due to the decrease in attendance. Your absence on any Sunday does not negate your obligation to support your home parish.

Sunday offering for July 1

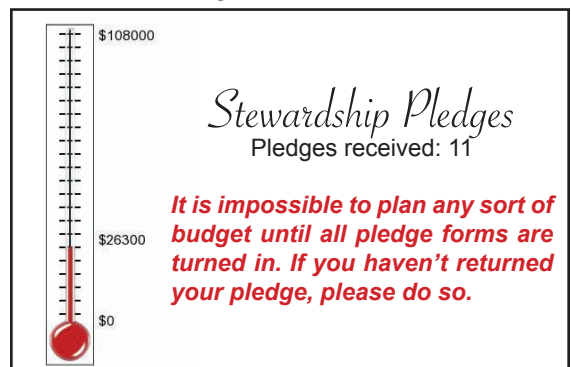
Amount	Number
\$2.00	1 (loose)
\$10.00	2
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	2
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	1
\$45.00	1
\$50.00	2
\$75.00	1
\$367.00	12 Parishioners

Parishioner Total: \$367.00

Average / parish household (39): \$9.41

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: **(\$1758.00)**



Last Sunday's Bulletin

If you haven't yet picked up last Sunday's bulletin, it is available in the church hall, or on our website, stjohnthebaptizer.org.

FROM HEAVEN

What is it that we want to communicate to our brethren? Something human? No. Something divine.

And how are we to do this unless we are already, as far as possible, reservoirs of divine force? The ABC of all supernatural work is that every apostle must be an instrument united to God.

The talents and intelligence that bring success, the psychological insight that ensures delicacy and tact, the vivacity that attracts, the fine assurance that knows no timidity, the power of initiative, and the rest—all these may carry conviction. But if they are not supported by an immense reserve of divine force, the apostolate will soon stop short. You may labour much; but you will achieve nothing. There will be plenty of outward fuss; but no serious work will be accomplished. It will be a human scaffolding, to collapse with the first breath of wind.

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The first—and obligatory—means of union with God, essential union with God, is the state of grace.

What would happen if you passed milk through a coal-sack? How much whiteness would remain after the experiment? The more pronounced the personal imperfections of an apostle are—selfishness, egoism, the spirit of criticism, pride, impurity—the more the graces of God will be adulterated, spoiled and attenuated as he attempts to transmit them to others.

From this point of view the apostolate of the laity calls for greater sanctity than that of the priest. Admittedly, by reason of the unparalleled dignity which he has received the priest is bound to strive after the highest possible degree of holiness. But his sanctity does not affect the effectiveness when he administers the sacraments. In other words the validity of the sacrament is—by a great mercy of God—independent of the sanctity of the minister. If the minister is holy, so much the better—he will add something to the effect of the sacrament; but the validity and efficacy of the sacrament as such is not conditioned by the holiness of him that administers it.

The layman, on the other hand, being unable to administer grace through the sacraments, can make use only of his own virtue and power. And if, when he is doing his apostolic work, he is lacking in the essential degree of virtue, if he is not in the state of grace, what can he give to the world save empty words, meaningless gestures? How can he create life when he himself is a corpse? A lay apostle who is not himself alive with the life of God, or at any rate striving to live that life, is a useless cog in the machinery.

“The time is past,” writes Mauriac.¹ “when men could profess principles at variance with their conduct. How many there were who used to try to reconcile the love of Catholicism with the anarchy of the soul! Our salvation lies in the fact that young people have now come to understand what is required of them in the secret recesses of their hearts, if their public life is to bear fruit.”

And this is true not only of the present day; it is true of a fruitful apostolate for all time.

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But the state of grace is not enough. The state of grace means that the apostle is not a bad instrument. But there are many ways of being a good instrument. An instrument may serve sufficiently, and it may serve perfectly—and there are many intermediate degrees. The best workman, the best channel of the divine, is he who is nearest to God, most conformable to His will, closest to His heart.

In a moving essay, entitled “Working with God,” P. L. de Grandmaison wrote:

“It is a recognized fact that pure souls radiate purity around them, inspire good thoughts and exclude bad ones. They act like a “sacrament”—minus, of course, the grace which comes by the *very priestly action*, and observing all due proportion and respect. ‘God is there,’ you feel like saying when you approach a Stanislaus Kostka, a John Berchmans, an Aloysius of Gonzaga, a Rose of Lima, a Catherine of Siena. It is especially children and sinners (if these last are touched by God’s grace) that feel this influence, because they are specially in tune—or out of tune, and regret being out of tune—with pure souls. Hence the attraction which many men and sinners feel towards devotion to Our Lady.”²

And so we are confronted with the question: What degree of union with God must the apostle possess? And since union with God is the fruit of recollection, the effect of the spirit and life of prayer, how far must the apostle lead a life of prayer?

Our model here must be again and always Our Lord, whether it be a question of recollection and prayer before action, or of recollection and prayer during action itself.

How did Our Lord act before beginning the preaching of His Gospel? He prayed and lived a life of recollection for thirty years. What a lesson for us, who are always wanting to get there before we start, who, having only the tiniest stock-in-trade, are anxious to give out what little we have as soon as we

1 *Echo de Paris*, March 4, 1934.

2 *Ecrits spirituels, I, Conférences*; Beauchesne, p.20.

can, and thus become bankrupt!

Now Our Lord is about to start work. He is thirty years of age; the time has come. Now we shall hear Him. No, not yet. He goes off into the desert for forty days. He wishes His words to rest upon the support of silence, and in the desert, far from all noise and contact with men, He recollects Himself. Does He need it? Not at all; but He wants to set us an example.

And how many of us are going to profit by it? We are ready to move, act, make a great fuss. But how many of us are capable of kneeling quietly at a kneeler, with lips tightly closed, leaving the world alone for a while? How many of us can force ourselves to be in solitude with the Master for any length of time? How many of us estimate retreats and times of recollection at their true value?

Few, I fear! And that is why an apostolate is so often ineffective. Apostolic energy is not lacking; but the apostolic energy lacks preparatory recollection. Before action there has not been enough prayer. Before starting to speak to men about God there has not been enough speaking to God about God, or rather, there has not been enough listening to God, who wants to communicate Himself to the soul and to fill it.

Moses wants to move his people. He speaks to them and they will not listen. Then Moses leaves the plains, departs from the multitude. He leaves his people; not that he intends to abandon them, but because he wants to be of greater service to them. He ascends the heights of Mount Sinai, takes off his shoes and, on the lonely heights, seeks contact with God. He recollects himself, listens, prays. When he comes down from the mountain he is no longer the same Moses. In his hands he has the true words which he has to say; not the words which he himself had invented, but the words which the Lord had dictated to him. He has around his head a light which will manifest his power, a reflection of his conversation alone with God. He has seen the invisible One, as the Bible puts it, and when the Hebrews receive him they recognize beyond all doubt that God has spoken to their leader. Moses has won the day. He casts down the golden calf; and the people offer no resistance, they listen to him. Again across the desert they follow him towards the Promised Land, in spite of hunger, thirst, serpents, in spite of all.

It was the same with the Apostle Paul. See him now, converted, burning with zeal, his mind made up to preach the Jesus whose disciples he has persecuted until now. Doubtless he will set forth without delay, going from city to city, preaching, baptizing and

making converts. But no. He crosses the Jordan and takes the sandy path that leads to the heart of the Arabian desert, and there he dwells. For how long, do you think? For a few days, a few weeks? The world is waiting for him to begin his missionary journeys. Yet Paul remains in the desert for three years.

The twelve Apostles on the eve of the Ascension received command from Our Lord to preach the gospel to the world. Surely, no sooner has their Master disappeared from sight, they will set out for the four corners of the earth. Yet, see how they shut themselves up in the upper-room and remain there for nine days in prayer and recollection. "They were all persevering in prayer with Mary the Mother of Jesus." It is only after this period, when the Holy Ghost has descended upon them, that they go forth "to set the world on fire."

What a curious conception we have of the apostolate and of the method of winning souls! How different from the methods of Jesus, of Moses, of Paul the Apostle! And yet we are surprised to find that our apostolate bears no fruit, that we fail to impress our contemporaries. Whose fault is it?

The most essential preliminary condition for all fruitful missionary work is silent prayer. The world does not need so much men who are active, it needs men who are ready to sacrifice their impetuosity, in order to make their activity fruitful by prayer.

"When man has nothing better to do, he thinks," says a humorist. What a pity! It is bad enough for the "man"; but the apostle of whom this can be said truly is no apostle at all. Thought, recollection, prayer, should be our first preoccupation.

If we only realized how much Our Lord wants us to be near Him so that in the quietness of prayer He may communicate to us the secret of the conversion of the world! It is a remarkable thing that while the Apostles dared only call themselves servants, Jesus calls them by the name of "friends." Peter calls himself *servant and apostle of Jesus Christ*.³ James: *The Lord Jesus' servant*.⁴ Jesus Himself calls them: *Children*. He is always anxious to have them near Him. "He made that twelve should be with him."⁵ And we often read in the Gospels: "The twelve were with him." They are at Cana, in the house of Simon the Pharisee; they are present at the miracles, at the preaching of Christ. They will never leave Him for long. When Our Lord rests at the well of Jacob they quickly return from the town. *the disciples left*

3 2 Pet. i, I.

4 i, I.

5 Mark iii, 14.

... the disciples returned.⁶ St. Luke represents Our Lord as praying alone; but then he adds: *When he was alone praying, and the disciples were with him.*⁷ They are present at the scene of the sellers in the Temple, the blessing of the children, at the Agony (though unhappily at a distance), at the Ascension. Often when He has spoken to the multitude Our Lord turns and addresses a few words to them alone. Thus after the promise of the Eucharist, when many of His hearers have left Him, refusing to believe, He says to His disciples: "Will you also go away?" The longest discourse Our Lord ever delivered was that to His Apostles (only eleven now, alas!) after the Last Supper.

The Master desired always to have His Apostles by His side; and the Apostles desired always to be with their Master. Of these two desires the first assuredly remains undiminished. But what of our desire to be as continually as possible close to the Master?

We have as much time as we want for the distractions and occupations of the world. It would seem that for a heart-to-heart talk with God we cannot find a minute.

Rene Schwob says somewhere that "the present age has lost the secret of solitude." How true that is! "Our whole trouble," wrote La Bruyere, "comes of never being able to be alone. Hence gaming, dissipation, wine, women, uncharity, envy, forgetfulness of oneself and of God." We may add as another result, the ineffectiveness of our apostolate.

Renan said ironically of Clemenceau :

"He is evidently not a man of prayer." What is the use of action, speaking, writing, external fuss, if what we sow is simply empty seed?

Silence, I mean that prayerful silence which Faber calls "an eighth sacrament," is the source of all fertility, the father of all words and all actions that are not vain. Supernatural expansion is the child of intense concentration, the child of prayer. Words and activity are expenditure of energy; silence and prayer are its source. The brightness of the stars is only seen at night Happy those who believe that they are not wasting their time when they escape from the glaring publicity of the day, and dare to stand face to face with solitude. It is then that heaven appears. And how are we to speak of heaven if we have never "seen" it ?

A Hindu philosopher, Dhon Gopal Mukerji tells us in *Le Visage de mon frere* (*The face of my brother*) that after staying for twelve years in America in order

to take diplomas and learn politics he was amazed to find all at once how spiritually poor he was: " When I stood on the platform of the Town Hall in New York and looked upon the faces of my audience and then looked into my own heart, I discovered with consternation that I was a man without a message. And I heard within me this clear call: 'Go back to India, and renew your spirit at the feet of Holiness.'"⁸

Of what use is it to talk and to expend energy if, having no message, I only talk to say nothing?

I have read that officers who were prisoners in Siberia during the Great War invented various devices to while away the long weary hours. One had made a drawing of a piano, another of the keys of a typewriter, a third of a Morse transmitter. And during the times of extreme boredom the pianist, with the air of one inspired, would amuse himself by passing his fingers over the mute keys, keeping time with movements of his head, correcting himself when he had struck an imaginary false note; on his blind typewriter the typist would write invisible demands upon non-existent paper; the imaginary telegraphist sent fantastic messages, the "shorts" and the "longs" having no existence save in his dreams

What these prisoners did out of boredom and for a psychological reason which is justifiable, I often do, perhaps, for want of thought or a pure enough intention. I act, I hurry and scurry with head, arms, legs and tongue, but in the end what results do I obtain? Am I working really for God? Is it not sometimes simply the outcome of a naturally energetic temperament, and is not my motive sometimes purely human? What a pity that I should have finally to acknowledge that I have merely been "beating the air!" Perhaps I have been only touching dead keys; nothing has been written in the book of life; my appeals have not gone home. My work has been void, fruitless.⁹

8 One day the conversation turned upon 'Nilson, the President of the United States: "Is he a saint," he asked, "this man of the fourteen points? Has he fasted and prayed to God long enough to give each of his points an immortal life."—"No, sir; he has not fasted or prayed for fourteen years." His face cleared: "Then how can a man hope to engraft an idea upon human life without having first sacrificed many years to it?"

9 A good example of talking when you have nothing to say is to be found in this anecdote told by Wladimir d'Ormesson: When the Danish court went to the theatre, it was required that the princes and princesses should appear during the intervals to hold a very animated conversation. In order to satisfy the public, they had hit upon the idea of counting up to a hundred. "One, two, three, four, five, six," said the Prince. "Seven, eight, nine, ten,

6 John iv, 8,27.

7 Luke ix, 18.

A nun of the community of Saint-Joseph at Cluny tells how, when travelling with Gandhi on the *Rajputana*, she and all the other travellers were struck by the recollection and the taste for prayer which the great Indian agitator manifested. Often he would go to the stern of the ship and there, his eyes closed or raised to heaven, he would remain absorbed in deep contemplation. "Prayer," he explained to one who questioned him, "has been my moral and physical salvation when in the greatest difficulties. I throw myself into the arms of God. Then my soul has been filled with unutterable peace even in the midst of the greatest contradictions. Today, whether I am free or in captivity, at my ease or in poverty, obeyed or rejected, exalted or mocked, I am the happiest of beings; I believe in God and trust myself to Him. The stronger my faith becomes the more I feel the need to pray to Him. . . . Intense prayer alone has been able to satisfy my longing for God, and I believe that a soul can never have too much of prayer."

What a lesson for us, Catholic apostles!

And now take the case of these young Israelites, who also understand the necessity of founding their work of apostolate on prayer. In 1927, "Jewish Jerusalem" had organized a "Week," a sort of retreat taking the form of a camp, with conferences, prayers, silent retirement. And they would have carried their plan into execution if, strange to relate, the Rabbis had not objected on the plea that the Israelite religion is a community religion and does not lend itself to these individualistic manifestations of worship.¹⁰

We Catholics need not fear such prohibitions. Georges Duhamel calls for the foundation of a *National Park of Silence*. It is not necessary. There is an abundance of places where one can find peace and recollection. Are there not many houses of retreat? Let us profit by them. If we cannot in a particular case go to one of these places to find peace for our souls, then let us manage somehow to find a silent corner, even in the midst of turmoil. "There is always plenty of solitude for those that are worthy of it," wrote Psichari.

Take the example of these students of the Ecole d'Arts et Metiers de l'Etat, who every morning get up before the official hour of rising and meet

eleven," replied the Princess Royal. "Twelve, thirteen, fourteen," interrupted the Princess Ingeborg, violently. "Fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen ..." retorted Princess Thura. "How bright and gay our princes and princesses are this evening!" thought the delighted public. (*Enfances diplomatiques*, p. 27.)

¹⁰ Bonsirven; *Sur les ruines du temple*, p. 366, Grasset (Translation published by B. O. & W.).

for prayer in common. One of them writes: "The great difficulty is to cultivate the interior life. In the evening you have only the last few minutes before going to sleep. In the morning, you have to hurry to get down a few moments before the bell rings, and go out into the courtyard, to be able to think for a few moments and offer the day to God." He adds: "An intense interior life is absolutely necessary for any truly apostolic activity."

Other students write in a similar strain: "Several find it very hard and acknowledge it humbly. This only proves that the work of redemption cannot be carried out without great supernatural means. The more I think of it the more I am convinced that we ought all to have a more than ordinary interior life."

And another, who is already in business, writes: "I try to put more silence and prayer into my life. On Sundays and on the days when I am travelling I give a little more time to meditation and reading. But during the week my whole day is taken up with my work. I can only be sure of a little peace in the evening, before the Blessed Sacrament in church. This is the most useful quarter of an hour in the day. It is that which gives me strength."

And here is a fine example from two statesmen, King Albert I of Belgium and Dollfuss, Chancellor of Austria.

When King Albert set out at the drivingwheel of his car, accompanied by his valet, Theophile van Dyck, he stopped his car a few paces from the Place du Congres.

"Wait a moment," he said simply.

Dressed in his Alpine costume he remained for ten minutes in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. He was making his meditation. An hour later the King was dead, and that night his dead body was brought along by that same road on a gun-carriage. Many facts have been quoted in praise of the great monarch; but we know of few so much to his credit as his habit of meditation.

And when Dollfuss was asked by the president of the Austrian Republic if he would accept the post of Chancellor, the courageous leader replied: "I will give you my answer tomorrow." He made his way alone to a little church in a popular quarter of the city, where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, and knelt down. In this decisive hour it was God's advice that this fervent Christian meant to ask. Only God's.

He remained deep in prayer until the next morning. Then, his mind made up, his duty clear, he went to the residence of the President. He accepted.

That we should pray before acting is a rule which

holds not only for important and vital decisions. It is a rule for every day. For the apostle there should never be a single day which does not include some time set apart for recollection before God. This habit of constraining oneself to devote a particular time every day to prayer will engender the habit of spontaneous prayer. We shall pray almost at every moment, and especially when we are called upon to take some important action, especially an action that concerns our neighbour.

We often read in the Gospel that Our Lord before beginning some very important action recollects himself, raises His eyes to heaven. Again and again He goes apart into a mountain to pray.¹¹ Before the choosing of the twelve He goes up to a mountain and passes the night in communion with God.

What a lesson for us! Instead of rushing immediately upon the work that awaits us, let us wait a while, recollect ourselves, purify our intention, raise our minds to God.

Especially when it is a question of forming and training His Apostles Our Lord betakes Himself to prayer; as if to prove to us that you cannot succeed in changing the hearts of men without first imploring the help of God. And again, in order to ensure that His Apostles will gain a hearing from the world, Our Lord prays likewise: “Not only for them do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me.”¹²

The Acts of the Apostles gives us a remarkable picture of St Stephen.¹³ He was full of grace and fortitude, we are told, and full of faith and the Holy Spirit. And because he was a man of God he had power over souls: “He did great wonders and signs among the people. . . . And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke.”¹⁴

In A. de Chateaubriant’s book, *La Reponse du Seigneur*, there is a student who vaunts the superiority of action. The hero, M. de Mauvert, replies:

“Anything that leads a man away from contemplation leads him away from the true path to power. The saints, Bruno, Bernard, Benedict, found in constant contemplation the secret of their phenomenal spiritual advancement.”

“After all,” continues M. de Mauvert, “what is the origin of all action, and what renders it possible, if not the idea of action itself? What is action but the projection of an ideal? And have there been any

great men of action who have not also been great contemplatives?”

“But that is to create a void in myself. And if I create a void in myself, what is left?

“In the void that you make, await Him who is.”

When a soul possesses God, that is, when a soul is in the state of grace, when it is also “possessed” by God, that is, when it strives as often as possible to come into contact with God (the state of habitual recollection)—then it can approach others. It may not be evident, even to the soul itself, that it is imparting divine powers to others; Our Lord may sometimes permit that nothing is imparted to others. But in fact, through that soul God will have found a way into certain other souls, and to others He will have revealed Himself more clearly.

He who possesses God, and possesses Him in a heart that is free from encumbrances, he who possesses God in that void of which the author just quoted speaks, the void that excludes useless nothings to make place for the only true and substantial Reality, such a one cannot fail to have great influence upon his fellows.

The more you feel the desire to give much, the more frequently should you have recourse to the source of all. Referring to Our Lord, Pascal writes: “The artisan who talks about riches, the solicitor who talks about war, soon betrays his ignorance and gives himself away. But the rich man talks well about riches ... that is to say, God talks well about God.” If the language of Our Lord is a proof of the divinity of His Person, the language of an apostle shows whether or not he is a man of God. If he is simply a man, and nothing more, then he will do better to hold his tongue.

To be continued...

– From *Radiating Christ* by Fr. Raoul Plus

11 See Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi, 46; Luke vi, 12; ix, 28.

12 John xvii, 20.

13 vi, 8.

14 vi, 8, 10.





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

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Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
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Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

Rise and Walk

It is easier said than done. Whether the sins of the paralytic were forgiven, only He who forgave them knew for sure. "Arise and walk." Both he who arose and those who saw him arise were able to vouch for this. Hence there is a bodily sign in order to demonstrate a spiritual sign, though its impact is to curb the imperfections of body and soul. And we are given an understanding of sin and many bodily weaknesses to come. Perhaps, too, sins are forgiven first, so that with the causes of infirmity removed health may be restored.

St. Jerome

Furthermore, so it could be understood that He was in a body and that He could forgive sins and restore health to bodies, Jesus said,

"That you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins," then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your pallet." He could have simply said "Arise," but since the reason for doing every work had to be explained, He added, "Take up your pallet and go home." First He granted remission of sins; next He showed His ability to restore health. Then, with the taking up of the pallet, He made it clear that bodies would be free from infirmity and suffering; lastly, with the paralytic's return to his home, He showed that believers are being given back the way to paradise from which Adam, the parent of all, who became profligate from the stain of sin, had proceeded.

St. Hilary of Poitiers