



SYNAXARIA OF THE PENTECOSTARION

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SUNDAY of THE BLIND MAN

On this day, the sixth Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the miracle wrought by our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ upon the man who was blind from his birth.

Verses

O Bestower of light, Who art Light coming forth from Light,
Thou givest eyes to the man blind from birth, O Word.

Synaxarion

This miracle was wrought by means of water, just like those of the Samaritan woman and the Paralytic. It happened as follows. While Christ was addressing the Jews and proving that He was equal to the Father, saying, for example, “Before Abraham was, I am” (St. John 8:58), they took up stones to cast at Him. He withdrew from that place and found the Blind man stumbling around. He had been born this way, having only sockets for eyes. After finding him in this condition, the Savior was asked by His Disciples (who had heard Him telling the Paralytic, “Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more” [St. John 5:14], and had heard that the sins of parents are visited upon their children [Exodus 20:5]): “Teacher, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” (St. John 9:2). Moreover, there prevailed a kind of Pythagorean-Platonic belief that souls preëxisted and descended into bodies after sinning in the non-material realm. Refuting all of this, Christ said: “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God,” that is, My works “should be made manifest in him” (St. John 9:3). For, this statement does not pertain to the Father, and the conjunction “that” relates to the consequence, not to the cause.

After saying this, Christ spat on the ground and made clay, wherewith He anointed the hollows of the man's eyes; He then bade him go to the spring of Siloam and wash, in order to show that it was He Who in the beginning took dust from the earth and fashioned man. Since the eye is the principal part of the body, He fashioned that which was previously non-existent. He did not use water, but spittle, so that it might be made known that all the Grace came from the mouth of Him Who spat, and because He was going to send him to Siloam. He exhorted the man to wash, lest anyone should ascribe the healing to the earth and the clay. He sent him to Siloam, in order that he might have many witnesses of his healing; for, he would have encountered many people on his way to the spring, who would notice that his eyes had been anointed with clay. Some say that, after washing, he did not remove the clay formed by the spittle, but that the clay itself, by the application of moisture, was transformed in such a way as to fashion eyes for him.

“Siloam” is, by interpretation, “sent”; for this pool was outside the city of Jerusalem. During the reign of Hezekiah, when the enemy had laid siege to the city and had occupied Siloam, the water that came from there was held back. Before those inside the city had dug wells and reservoirs for the storage of water, if anyone was sent out at the bidding of the Prophet Isaiah, the water came forth all at once and he could draw from it; but if anyone went on his own initiative or if any of the enemy went, the water was prevented from flowing out. This is how it happened ever since that time. Therefore, in order that Christ might show that He Himself was from God, for this reason He sent the Blind man to Siloam and the restoration of his sight was the immediate consequence. Some think that Siloam is interpreted as “sent” because the Blind man was sent by Christ.

The Blind man was given eyes after washing by some ineffable power, and not even he who experienced it beheld the mystery. His neighbors and acquaintances, when they saw that he had suddenly regained his sight, were filled with doubt. At all events, he confessed that he was formerly blind. When asked how he had gained his sight, he declared that Christ had cured his ailment. When the Pharisees heard of this extraordinary miracle, they again blasphemed against the Savior for not observing the Sabbath, for the miracle wrought for the Blind man was, it seems, performed on the Sabbath. Accordingly, there was a division among the Jews: some said that Jesus was from God, on account of the miracles that had taken place, but others said that He was not from God, because He did not keep the Sabbath.

Those who had a good opinion about Him asked the Blind man: “What sayest thou of him?” He proclaimed that Jesus was a Prophet (St. John 9:17). This, among them, was something more honorable. But the others did not

believe that Christ had bestowed healing upon a man who was blind. Indeed, they sent for his parents, perhaps because they did not believe his neighbors; hence, in wishing to keep the matter obscure, they made it more manifest. The testimony of his parents was entirely consonant with his, although, in order to avoid being expelled from the synagogue, they mentioned that their son was of age. The Jews said again to the Blind man, "Give God the glory" (St. John 9:24), on the ground that the cure came from Him, not from Christ, for "he is a sinner," they said, in that He breaks the Sabbath. But he who was formerly blind, wishing to show that Christ was God by virtue of His deeds, said: "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, it is through Him that I see" (St. John 9:25).

Again they said to him: "How opened he thine eyes?" (St. John 9:26). Being vexed, he did not speak in detail, but proved that, if He were not of God, He could not have worked such a miracle. At first, he was insulted by them for having confessed that he was a disciple of Jesus and because he said: "No one hath opened the eyes of a man born blind; others, indeed, have given sight to the blind, but no one hath given sight to a man blind from birth." Mocking him, they cast him far away from the synagogue. After this, Jesus found him and said to him: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" (St. John 9:35). When the man learnt Who it was that was speaking to him and Whom he was seeing (for, being blind, he had not known Him previously), he worshipped Him and became a disciple of His, proclaiming the benefaction done to him.

This passage might be interpreted in anagogical terms. The Blind man represents the people of the Gentiles, whom Christ found when passing by, that is, while on earth and not in Heaven. Alternatively, He came for the sake of the Hebrew people, but passed them by and went to the Gentiles. Spitting on the ground and making clay, He anointed the Blind man, that is, He taught the Gentiles first; for, like a drop of water He came down to earth and was incarnate of the Holy Virgin. He then handed them over to Divine Baptism, that is, Siloam. Subsequently, the Christian people who came from the Gentiles confessed Christ before all, were persecuted and martyred, and were later extolled and glorified by Christ.

By Thine infinite mercy, O Christ our God, the Giver of light, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

