

Saint Thomas' and St Thomas' of the Air Church  
 Trinity IXX  
 October 10, 2021  
 mcneely+

Arise. . .and go to your home.

In the remaining 6 weeks of the Trinity Season Survey of Christian Doctrine,  
 the Church begins to turn to the consideration of the end times

The Parousia,  
 The Second Advent  
 The Second Coming of Christ  
 The Judgment Day

Perhaps it is the Autumnal Season that turns us toward our end here on Earth

It is the season in which  
 The sun's daily arc is perceptively more southern.  
 The days becomes shorter.  
 The nights become colder.  
 The sunlight pales  
 The fog abates

When God dons nature with her autumnal garments:

In a blaze,  
 many of the trees display their colors  
 before their leaves fall.

The flowers wither and become dormant.

It is the time of harvest

As a boy, this was the time to collect the walnuts and almonds  
 from the tree branches.

The last pears, peaches and plumbs were gathered in.  
 The acorns and pine nuts ripened and fell from the trees.

The squirrels frantically buried their winter stash

The geese and ducks flew to their winter sanctuaries.

Perhaps it is in the midst of all this,  
 that it seems natural for the Church  
 to focus us on the lives we live and  
 The future that awaits us.  
 What it means to live a Christian life.

The Church enters the final phase of the ecclesiastical year;  
 What some think of as:  
 “The Church’s Harvest Time”.

As we prepare for the end,  
 The Second Advent, in the Church’s language  
 There is dread, even fear for some.  
 But the overall theme and spirit of the season  
 Is expectancy;  
 Christian “Hope”  
 Of what we know and believe to a certainty  
 is our end.

The ancient Collect for this Sunday starts us off  
 With the admission that without God  
 We are helpless  
 And pray that the Holy Spirit  
 Will direct and rule our hearts.

With the Holy Spirit of our lives  
 Pointing the way.

St Paul gives a lucid and practical text  
 Outlining a Christian life  
 Showing the way to the Hope, the certainty  
 Of a joyous return of Our Lord  
 Paul writes of the life lived in the world that will bring condemnation  
 And the antidote of protection

For Christians.

Paul guides us, as he did the Ephesians all those years ago  
 To a moral and Christian life.  
 That will enable us to celebrate the Second Advent  
 The Second Coming  
 And to know to a certainty  
 of eternal life.

St Matthew recounts the incident of the man with the palsy  
 And the manner in which Jesus healed the man.

There are about 27 accounts in the Gospels  
 of specific people Jesus healed  
 and many many more  
 referred to in only general terms.

They each have something to say about our Lord and about  
 ourselves.

Let's set the healing in today's Gospel in  
 The culture of the times.

It was a commonly held belief in those ancient times  
 that people who were sick  
 had committed sins  
 and that their sickness was the punishment for their sins.

If you consider it for a moment,  
 there is a powerful metaphor at work in this Gospel. In the  
 ancient view,

this man is literally paralyzed by his sins.

On occasion, haven't any of us been similarly afflicted?

I won't speak for you,  
 But certainly in my life,  
 my sin has frozen me out of entire areas of my life,  
 Has shut me out  
 As if I were paralyzed and could not move  
 Could not go there  
 Could not fully participate in the life God gave me

Fast forward:

To modern medical science  
 Which is discovering subtle connections  
 between mind and body in which  
 our minds,  
 the stress of our lives  
 or even our own behavior,  
 can impact our physical health.

In this life

we can only wonder  
 whether the ancient belief that  
 sinful behavior could cause physical consequences, may have  
 some validity.

OK with all that in mind, let's go back to St Matthew:

A group of people

have gathered up this poor paralyzed man,  
put him on a stretcher  
and carried him where Jesus was.

When He saw their faith,  
Jesus told the man with the palsy  
to be of good cheer that his sins were forgiven.  
Good news, but probably not what the man  
who could not move a muscle  
was hoping to have happen.

But now things really get interesting:  
As we have seen Him do before,  
Jesus reads the thoughts of the crowd.  
The Jews knew that only God forgave their sins  
and for this man Jesus,  
the Nazarene  
to boldly say He forgave sins  
was to say in essence  
that He was God.

We all know that the doubters got it right,  
Jesus is the second person of the Trinity  
and that may be one of the lessons Jesus was teaching.  
But to a Jew in those days,  
even inferring  
He was God  
meant that Jesus had committed  
the crime of blasphemy right there in front of them  
and He could be put to death for it.

A year or so later

we know that the Pharisees  
would spend weeks  
trying to set up Jesus for blasphemy  
and in fact that was the accusation at His Jewish trials.

But Jesus

knowing their thoughts about blasphemy  
confronted them saying:  
“Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?  
For whether it is easier to say thy sins be forgiven thee  
or to Say Arise and walk?”

Now, when sins are forgiven,

there is no brilliant flash of light, no trumpet call  
or other manifestation  
so the Jews had nothing by which to know that Jesus was  
telling them the truth.

So Jesus drives His point home

and in order to dramatically demonstrate  
who He is  
and to conclusively prove His claim  
both to the people gathered there  
and to us gathered here today  
that He is God incarnate,

He relieves the man of his paralysis. A sure and visible sign that no  
one could miss. He says to the man,

“Arise and take up thy bed and go unto thine house.”

The man’s body is cured  
 and in dramatic fashion,  
 but it seems almost an afterthought to Jesus.  
 Where we see a man horribly afflicted,  
 who could not move a muscle,  
 and where we see a disease  
 that could result in the man’s death:

Jesus sees a soul  
 that would know eternal death.  
 Where we see a body that was in torment,  
 Jesus sees a soul in torment.  
 Jesus first did the important work.  
 He forgave the man’s sins.  
 He healed his soul.

Just as disease prevents the normal progression  
 and development of our bodies,  
 our sins prevent the normal progression  
 and development of our soul.  
 Sins are a kind of paralysis of our souls and prevent us from  
 growing closer to God.

So Jesus dealt with the important part,  
 the sins of the paralyzed man.  
 He healed the man’s soul of the disease that afflicted it:  
 his sins.

He freed the man.

Restored his soul that he might have eternal life.

No one present could but wonder

That if this man Jesus

Could instantly cure a man of the palsy

A man afflicted by his sins;

Jesus must have also forgiven the man's sin.

Was He God?

It was another instance of how Christ

In His ordinary acts

Was performing divine deeds

Through visible media

That manifested invisible mysteries.

I can't help but wonder about the life lead by the man Jesus healed.

Jesus gave him a new life

free of the paralysis

and free of all sin.

What did he do with his new life?

What do we do with such a new life?

St Paul considers the question in today's Epistle

when he writes of

putting off the old man, the old person that we were

and taking on the new.



Paul is great at pointing out the futility of the old life  
 And the joy and hope of the new.

And he writes as if we shed the old life as a snake sheds its skin  
 And we take on the new life in Christ.

Paul makes crystal clear those things we must give up from our old  
 lives with lists of sins.

And he writes of how we are to live our new lives  
 Of prevarication he says;  
 speak the truth

Of anger, he says  
 get angry  
 but do not let the anger cause you  
 to sin against another.

Get over it, don't let the sun set on your wrath.

He says do not leave a place in  
 your heart,  
 mind  
 or soul for the devil to occupy.

The thief must work not steal.

Work so he has something to give to those in need.

There is no room for foul language

Words can be a sharp weapon

Our words should impart

the grace of God to all who hear them.

He reminds us that the Holy Spirit is a part of our being since  
 baptism

And advises; do not fight against Him

Paul summarizes;  
 All bitterness  
 Fury, anger, shouting, reviling and malice  
 Must be removed from us with the old man  
 And we must be kind one to another  
 Compassionate and Forgiving  
 As God has forgiven us.

And all of this  
 All that we have considered this day  
 Are the building blocks  
 That enable a Christian living a Christian life  
 To look forward to the end times;  
 The Judgment Day  
 With Joy at the glorious Second Coming of Jesus  
 And with Hope; that certainty in the Day of Christ.  
 Ours is not the dread of judgment and damnation  
 Ours is the joy by the Hope of our own resurrection to eternal life.

It is the theological virtue of Hope that the liturgy is striving  
 To make us practice during these autumn weeks.  
 And the Christian who lives with the Church  
 Has rich fields to exploit  
 During the Church's Harvest Time.

Ours sins are forgiven  
 We receive a new life  
 With each absolution  
 We are given a new start

A new life, a life of Hope.

“Arise and go unto thine house”

Or Perhaps:

Arise . . . and go unto the house of the Lord.