



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”

59 CARR ST, WEST PERTH WA 6005 PARISH PRIEST: FATHER EMMANUEL STAMATIOU

MOB: 0419 961 313 EMAIL: fremmstam@hotmail.com

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THE BLIND MAN

EPISTLE: The Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles [16:16-34] Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation. And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour. But when her masters saw that their hope was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city, and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrate tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors

were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' So they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

EXPLANATION: The demon who possessed the slave girl attempted to tempt Paul and Silas through the sin of pride by calling them, "**servants of the Most High, who preach to us the way of salvation**". But Paul saw through the malice of the evil spirit and commanded him to come out. **(16:16-18)** The girl's masters had no concern for the girl's health nor did they perceive that a miracle had occurred. All they were interested in was exploiting her gift of clairvoyance for money.

GOSPEL: **The Reading is from the Gospel of St John [9:1-38]** Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the work of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. Therefore the neighbours and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "is not this he who sat and begged?" Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like

him." He said, "I am he." Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.'" So I went and washed, and I received sight." Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know." They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from." The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvellous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does His will, He hears

him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.” They answered and said to him, “You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?” And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.” Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshipped Him.

EXPLANATION: Christ says that the man’s blindness was not necessarily a result of his sins in the past, but in order that God’s mighty works be revealed. **(9:1-3)** Jesus speaks of the urgency of doing God’s works and to bring light into the darkened world, through healing, forgiveness and newness of life for the duration of His time on earth is limited **(9:4-5)**; for all men are born spiritually blind and all need illumination in order to see the glory of God and salvation. Baptism is called “**Holy Illumination**”. Christ is said to “**anoint**” the man’s eyes, which corresponds to the anointing that were part of early baptismal rites. He says, “**it is necessary to work the works of the Father**”, which means that He is telling His disciples to continue such illuminating works through Baptism. **(9:7)** But the Pharisees attempted to discredit Jesus claiming that he cannot be from God because He works on the Sabbath which is contrary to Mosaic Law. **(9:16)** But how can a sinner do such things? The blind man replies that in his mind Jesus is indeed God. **(9:17)** Everyone knows that God does not hear sinners. The Pharisees denounce the blind man as being under the curse of God because he must have been a sinner to have been blind from birth and cast him out of the synagogue. Jesus, having opened the blind man’s eyes now finds him and opens the eyes of his heart, offering spiritual illumination. The man “**seeing**” the divinity of Christ worshipped Him. **(9:35-38)** Jesus’ coming brought “**judgment**” by increasing the accountability of those who saw and heard Him, but did not believe. The Pharisees had no excuse not to recognize Him as the Messiah. Their failure to do so is not the result of a genuine inability to see the truth, but of a stubborn refusal to do so because of their spiritual blindness, pride and hardening of heart.