

2 OCTOBER 9



Saint Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church of San Diego



The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread

(1 CORINTHIANS 10:16-17).



T H E

I S S U E 1 6 2

Shepherd

Saint Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church of San Diego

From the desk of

F A T H E R A N D R E W

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy

These three words *Lord have mercy* repeated over and over again through the divine services and prayer life of the Orthodox Church are probably my favorite three words. I have heard them all my life and they are very, very powerful words. I was a very young boy when my yia yia died and I do not have many memories of her. However, the one memory that instantly comes to my mind when I think of my grandmother is the phrase *Lord have mercy* *Κυριε ελεησον*. It seemed to be constantly on her lips.

One example of many from Scripture comes to us from the Gospel of Matthew (9:27-35). As the blind men approach Jesus for healing the first thing they say is *Lord have mercy*. Somehow they had heard about this man named Jesus who was not like other men; He had the power and authority to heal and to perform miracles *not like the Pharisees*. These blind men knew that according to the prophecy of Isaiah, the messianic age is signified when *the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped* (Is. 35:5). They felt that day was upon them and they were going to take advantage of it. Somehow they sensed their chance to receive their sight was imminent and they were not going to miss their opportunity. The blind men knew the first words out of their mouths had to be words of sincerity, words that spoke loudly or their opportunity may pass them by, and, therefore, they offered those three very beautiful and powerful words *Lord have mercy* as their opening statement of faith. Jesus' response was to ask *Do you believe that I am able to do this?* After the two blind men answer *Yes Lord* Jesus reaches out His hand, touches their eyes and *with a word* He heals them from their blindness.

What then does it mean *to have mercy*? Mercy is the outward manifestation or expression of someone's inner compassion. Mercy assumes (physical) need on the part of him that receives it and, having the resources to meet the need on the part of him who shows it. So, mercy assumes need and is expressed by those able to show compassion upon others. God's ultimate expression of mercy was giving *His only Son so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life* (John 3:16). The blind men truly exhibited a *need*; they were blind and desired wholeheartedly to see the world around them. Because of His Divine nature, Jesus had the *resources* to honor their request and surely as God He had the *inner compassion* to do so. From the same Gospel lesson the point is made clear, *Jesus...had compassion upon them...*How did Jesus outwardly express His inner compassion? By *healing every disease and every infirmity*. For *He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses* Isaiah (53:4).

FATHER - Continued on page 2