



PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 3—9 JULY 2016



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Fr. Athanasios
and
Fr. Ephraim

are available
at the Church

every Monday to Friday
between
4.00 and 6.00pm

for Holy Confession and
any spiritual need.

SUNDAY 3 JULY	2nd Sunday of Matthew—Matthew 4: 18-23 • 7.30– 11.15am Orthros and Divine Liturgy SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR AGES 5 TO 17 YEARS TAKES PLACE STRAIGHT AFTER HOLY COMMUNION. CLASSES TAKE PLACE IN THE DOWNSTAIRS ROOMS BEHIND THE CHURCH. BRING YOUR CHILDREN ALONG TO LEARN ABOUT THEIR ORTHODOX FAITH AND GOD'S LOVE FOR EACH ONE OF US.
MONDAY 4 JULY	• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction • 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
TUESDAY 5 JULY	• 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group will meet in Coburg Church Hall. The meeting will begin with the Compline Service in English.
WEDNESDAY 6 JULY	• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study
THURSDAY 7 JULY <i>St Kyriaki, Great-Martyr</i>	• 7.00– 9.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SATURDAY 9 JULY	• 3.45pm Service of Vespers

WORDS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

Do not say that faith in Christ alone can save you, for this is not possible if you do not attain love for Him, which is demonstrated by deeds. As for mere faith: "The demons also believe and tremble" (James, 2:19). The action of love consists in heartfelt good deeds toward one's neighbour, magnanimity, patience, and sober use of things.

- St. Maximus the Confessor, *Chapters on Love*, 1.39-40

If you find that there is no love in you, but you want to have it, then do deeds of love, even though you do them without love in the beginning. The Lord will see you desire and striving and will put love in your heart.

- St. Ambrose of Optina

2nd Sunday After Pentecost— Matthew 4: 18-23

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ today in today's Gospel we hear our Lord say "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." Our Lord said this to call the apostles. This is not just the apostles' call but it is our own. What this statement says is that if we follow the Lord Jesus Christ we will bring men to Him.

Following the Lord Jesus Christ means that we live our lives in the same manner that He lived His. That means that we are to be obedient to our Heavenly Father and take up the way of the cross. As our Lord said to His disciples; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24).

It also means that we must be one as the Son is with His Father. Our Lord prayed for this at His Passion saying "Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given me, that they may be one, as we are. (John 17:11) I in them, and You in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them, as You have loved me." (John 17:23)

In order for us to be one with God as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one we must first be obedient to the will of God. Obedience to the will of God means that we must place God in charge of our lives. In other words we must surrender our will to God's will. That is exactly what the apostles did when they forsook everything and followed Jesus. As our Lord said "He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." (Matthew 10:37)

This means that we must love God above all things. This is the great commandment "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mark 12:30)

To love God above all things is a difficult path to follow but, it is also a path of joy. This is because the path of the cross leads to the resurrection. Many people look at this path as without seeing the joy of the resurrection at its end. Saint Paul reminds us of this in his First Epistle to the Corinthians when he says "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18)

What the cross leads to is restoration of lives to that which we were created to be by God. When this happens we become changed. We are at peace with creation. This peace is often referred to as serenity.

Accepting the path of the cross is something we do voluntarily. While our Lord calls us to the path of salvation through the cross He leaves us to choose between the path of salvation and the path of destruction.

If we choose the path of destruction and our hearts are completely turned to evil, then God leaves us and Satan becomes our master. This was the case with Judas when he turned against our Lord Jesus Christ for thirty pieces of silver. Our Lord did not impinge on Judas' freewill but rather said to him "That thou doest, do quickly." (John 13:27)

Our Lord allows us to choose between good and evil freely. His call to us to make this choice is "Follow me!" or "That thou doest, do quickly."

In making this choice we all too often become concerned about our own welfare. We become scared to surrender everything over to God. Our Lord assures us that these concerns are unfounded when He says "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?" (Matthew 6:26)

If we have made the choice to follow Christ, then as the Gospel says we will become fishers of men. This means that as fishermen cast their nets into the dark depths of the sea for a catch of fish so, will we with Christ and the Gospel catch men from the dark depths of this world.

As fishers of men we will fulfill the Lord's command "Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

All too often we abdicate this responsibility to someone else. If we do this then we must ask ourselves are we truly following Christ. The Gospel says "Follow Me AND I will make you fishers of men." One of the key ways that we are fishers of men is through the way we live our lives; as the fisherman uses a lure to attract the fish to his hook.

However we also have the responsibility to share our faith as fishers of men. This sharing can be as simple as Philip saying to Nathaniel "Come and see." (John 1:46)

Come and see what I have found

Come and see what I have

Come and see what gives me joy

In sharing the faith the apostle Paul instructs Timothy in the following manner; "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:12)"

So my dear brothers and sisters in Christ my prayer for you is that you may fight the good fight of faith following the way of the cross of Christ so that you may draw men into Christ's net through your profession of Him before men in the manner in which you live your lives.

Amen