



PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 1—7 JULY 2018

SUNDAY 1 JULY <i>Saints Cosmas and Damian, Unmercenaries</i>	5th Sunday of Matthew, Matthew 8: 28-34—9:1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30– 11.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
<p>***** SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES *****</p> <p>(A free voluntary program organised by the Church)</p> <p><i>Immediately after Holy Communion until Church dismissal, in the building behind the Church, Religious Instruction lessons take place for our children. We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to teenage years and are given in a relaxed, friendly environment. The understanding of our faith through the religious instruction lessons bring our children closer to God and the joy of peace of His Love.</i></p>	
MONDAY 2 JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
TUESDAY 3 JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 4 JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study
SATURDAY 7 JULY <i>St Kyriaki, Great-Martyr</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00– 9.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 3.45pm Service of Vespers
SUNDAY 8 JULY	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 9: 1-8 EPISTLE READING: Romans 12: 6-14



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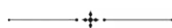
Fr Athanasios and
Fr Ephraim
are available at the Church
every Monday to Friday
between 4.00 and 6.00pm
for Holy Confession and
any spiritual need.

May I be no one's
enemy, and may I be
the friend of that
which is eternal and
abides."
Eusebius (260-340 AD)

VOICE OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

You must love every man with your whole soul, but put your hope in the one God, and serve Him alone. For as long as He is protecting us and our friends (the angels) are helping us, our enemies (the demons) cannot inflict evil upon us. But when He forsakes us, then also our friends turn away from us, and our enemies receive power over us.

- St. Maximus Confessor, *Chapters on Love*



Our world is guided by two principles and sources: God and the devil. All that is better in the world of men has its source in God, and all that is bad has the devil as its principle and source. In the final account, all good comes from God, and all evil from the devil.

- St. Justin Popovich, *Explanation of I John 3:11*

Jesus Do Not Disturb Me!

When you stay in a hotel or motel, there is a little sign that you can hang on the outside of your door that says, "Do Not Disturb!" How many of us have taken one of these signs and used them at home? Do Not Disturb! This is basically what the two demoniacs say to Jesus in today's Gospel reading from the Fifth Sunday of Matthew (8:28 – 9:1). As they came out from the cemetery, ²⁹*Suddenly they shouted, "What have You to do with us, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"* (v.29). When they say "before the time", they are referring to the time of the Parousia, the Second Coming of Christ when He will destroy Satan and all his demons and establish His heavenly kingdom forever (see the Creed). It reminds me when I was a teenager and my parents would wake me up to go to school or to church on Sunday. No matter when it was, it was always "before the time"; it was always too early. I wish I had a "Do Not Disturb!" sign. In the Gospel, the demoniacs were not the only ones saying do not disturb us. After the swine herders saw Jesus expel the demons, they went into the town. ³⁴*Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their neighborhood.*

Jesus disturbed their way of life and He is seeking to also disturb our way of life today. How does Jesus disturb us? First of all, Jesus disturbs us through our conscience. When we feel guilty that is Jesus tapping us on the shoulder or touching our heart to tell us what we are doing (or what we are saying, thinking or feeling) is not right—a correction in course is needed. Often people think of guilt as a bad thing, even punishment. But guilt is often a good thing. It is Jesus inviting us to repentance, confession and forgiveness.

Second, our conscience does not develop on its own. It is formed and shaped by outside input. Jesus literally taps us on the shoulder through other people, especially people who care about us and our salvation. As well, Jesus touches our heart through the words of these same people. But we sometimes do not like to be corrected and so we think that we are being disturbed or bothered by others. In the Epistle from Galatians (5:22-6:1), assigned for the Feast of St. Athanasios of Mt. Athos, St. Paul says, ¹*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.* (Gal.6:1).

The regular Epistle reading for the Fifth Sunday of Matthew is from Romans 10:1-10 and it applies to Jesus disturbing our conscience. St. Paul says, ¹*Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.* ²*I can testify that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened.* ³*For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God's righteousness.* How often do we want to establish our own standard of right and wrong apart from God? This is exactly what is happening with the redefinition of marriage and human sexuality. It is dressed up in language about equal rights but its foundation is the rejection of God's law handed down to us through the sacred Scriptures and the life of the Christian Church. Also in today's Epistle St. Paul says, ²⁴*And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires* (Gal.5:24). Instead, people use words like love and acceptance but what is really going on is the elevation of passionate lust than to the status of virtue. The world is truly upside down.

The third way that Jesus disturbs us is through His divine calling. He is constantly calling us, inviting us to prayer, to worship and to following Him. We often experience this calling in the restlessness of our heart. In today's Orthros Gospel reading, the Fifth Eothinon, from Luke 24:13-35, Jesus appears to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus. At first they didn't recognize Him. But afterwards they recalled, ³²*And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"* (v.32). At the end of the passage they relate to the other disciples, ³⁵*And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread* (v.35). It's like Jesus knocking on the door of heart. ²⁰*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me* (Revelation 3:20). When Jesus knocks, He is trying to wake us up from the heavy sleep of indolence. We have to ask ourselves, have I placed a little sign on the door of my heart that says, "Do Not Disturb!"? Jesus is the Divine Alarm Clock. When His alarm sounds, do we hit the snooze button? Do we just bury our head in our pillow?

The fourth way that Jesus disturbs us is by putting the poor and the needy in our life. Just like He put poor Lazarus on the rich man's doorstep (Luke 16:19-31), Jesus will surely put someone on our doorstep to disturb us about our wealth and our willingness to share it to help others. Now Jesus can disturb us through our conscience, through our parents, our friends, our priest, through His divine calling, through the poor and the needy, and many other means. But that is all Jesus can do is disturb us. The rest is up to us. The alarm clock can go off many times but it will not get us out of bed. We have to get ourselves out of bed.

As we conclude today, we should ask ourselves, why does Jesus disturb us? Is it because He wants to be a pest or to control us? Fr. Anthony Coniaris, in his sermon "Jesus: Disturber & Healer" (Meet Jesus in the Sunday Gospels, vol.1, p.141) says He disturbs us for only one reason: to heal us. He is the Divine Disturber in order that He may become the Divine Healer. Just as a physician will break a crooked bone in order to set it straight, God may break a wrong spirit in us in order to give us a chance to possess a right spirit. King David knew this when he wrote the Psalms: ¹⁷*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-- These, O God, You will not despise.* (Psalm 51:17) When a physician must clean and stitch a wound that typically does not feel good but it's the best way to help the wound heal. In a similar manner Jesus must cleanse our heart and soul of the passions in order that He may stitch it with virtue to heal us. The demoniacs and the townspeople in today's gospel did not want to go through the pain of change in order to be healed. They did not want to be disturbed.

I would like to close with the words of the 20th century playwright and poet T. S. Eliot. He once wrote this about the Church. *"Why should men love the Church? Why should they love Her laws? She tells them of life and death and of all they would forget [otherwise]. She is tender where they would be hard, and hard where they would like to be soft. She tells them of evil and sin and other unpleasant facts."* My brothers and sisters in Christ, outside the Church we can lead unexamined lives but inside the Church we know when we have sinned. Even though that is often disturbing, it is necessary for our healing and our salvation. Amen!