



# PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

## PROGRAM FOR 2—8 JUNE 2019

### CHRISTOS ANESTI! CHRIST IS ARISEN!

<b>SUNDAY 2 JUNE</b>	<b>Sunday of the Blind Man, John 9:1-38</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>⇒ SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES</b> (A free voluntary program organised by the Church)  Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at the time of Holy Communion until Church dismissal. We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to teenage years. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, friendly environment. Please bring your children along to learn of their rich Orthodox faith and come close to God and His Love.	
<b>MONDAY 3 JUNE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction</li><li>• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.</li></ul>
<b>TUESDAY 4 JUNE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord Youth Group will meet in our Church Hall.</li></ul>
<b>WEDNESDAY 5 JUNE</b>  <i>Dismissal Feast of Pascha</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li><li>• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study</li></ul>
<b>THURSDAY 6 JUNE</b>  <i>The Ascension of the Lord</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li><li>• 7.30—8.30pm <b>⇒ TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP (Ages 13-19)</b> In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church <i>*ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME</i></li></ul>
<b>SATURDAY 8 JUNE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3.45pm Service of Vespers</li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY 9 JUNE</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: John 17: 1-13</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: Acts 20: 16-18, 28:36</b>



### Telephone Contact Numbers

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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.

"Just as a strongly  
flowing fountain is  
not blocked up by a  
handful of earth, so  
the compassion of  
the Creator is not  
overcome by the  
wickedness of his  
creatures."

St. Isaac The Syrian

### THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

The Lord Jesus passed forty days on earth after His Resurrection from the dead, appearing continually in various places to His disciples, with whom He also spoke, ate, and drank, thereby further demonstrating His Resurrection. On this Thursday, the fortieth day after Pascha, He appeared again in Jerusalem. After He had first spoken to the disciples about many things, He gave them His last commandment, that is, that they go forth and proclaim His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. But He also commanded them that for the present, they were not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait there together until they receive power from on high, when the Holy Spirit would come upon them.

Saying these things, He led them to the Mount of Olives, and raising His hands, He blessed them; and saying again the words of the Father's blessing, He was parted from them and taken up. Immediately a cloud of light, a proof of His majesty, received Him. Sitting thereon as though on a royal chariot, He was taken up into Heaven, and after a short time was concealed from the sight of the disciples, who remained where they were with their eyes fixed on Him. At this point, two Angels in the form of men in white raiment appeared to them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:11). These words, in a complete and concise manner, declare what is taught in the Symbol of Faith concerning the Son and Word of God. Therefore, having so fulfilled all His dispensation for us, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended in glory into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of God the Father. As for His sacred disciples, they returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, rejoicing because Christ had promised to send them the Holy Spirit.

## JOHN 9:1-38 THE MESSAGE OF THE BLIND MAN

The manner in which Christ healed the blind man was very strange, and caused much questioning among those who witnessed the event. I do not intend to concentrate on the miracle as such, but rather on one detail which is of symbolic significance for anyone who has learnt to look beyond the merely apparent. For the one who has learnt to think, to contemplate, to penetrate the signifiers and reach the signified.

What does the reading mean when it states: “He made mud and spread it on my eyes”? This symbolic gesture of Christ is intended to show us that salvation is in our midst, and that healing is by our side. The earth which we tread upon and exploit is **sacred ground**.

And when man takes it into his hands with a pleasing and grateful spirit, this earth not only produces all kind of fruit (how many colours, aromas and tastes!), but has the capacity of moving us to the point of realizing that God is in and on the soil. Since God created the world and gave it to humankind to enjoy.

He placed man and woman in paradise (see Gen. 2:8), which means in the midst of happiness. And this humble ground which we do not value, respect or honour sometimes, and which has so many natural powers, surprises us with its nakedness and the sheer variety of its products. When we are faithful to the earth, it is our body, and our body is the earth. Sooner or later, they are identified with each other once again; my body and yours will return to the body of the earth from where they came, and they will glorify God in silence – not in rebellion, as when we are alive.

So, in this world, within us and around us, is salvation. Do not expect supernatural actions of God on a daily basis: for the heavens to open up and for angels to come down. Do not wait for a message to come on the clouds. Do not wait for the invisible God to speak to you in a thunderbolt.

God gave all creation for **the purpose of thanksgiving and transfiguration**. He placed the human person at the centre of the world, between earth and heaven, between visible and invisible. He established the human person not as an abuser of the gift, but as priest and celebrant and beholder of the divine. To take creation in his hands and offer it as we offer the bread and wine to become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The blind man was a tragic figure because, as we chanted in the relevant hymn of the Church: “I could not see the sun shining, nor even could I see the image of Him who made me.” The reality is that the blind man is less tragic and unfortunate than us who think we can see. We who have our health, our sight, with everything around us observable like an open book, in fact **remain blind**.

Our eyes function, but we do not use them in a manner that is **worthy of God**. We have ears, but do we listen to His word? We have hands, but have we performed His will? We have legs, but have we brought His Gospel to those who have yet to know it? We have the sense of smell, but do we perceive that from all created things a fragrance rises, to the glory of God?

And in spite of this, only man pollutes the earth and creates ecological problems. Which other creature of God, which animal – even the wildest – has created an ecological problem in the world? Neither the lion, nor the ravens have managed to bring to extinction any species created by God in the Six Days of Creation. Man is close to extinguishing so many species of both flora and fauna. Man is in danger of extinguishing the human race itself.

You may ask: How can you call us all blind? It is not I who say this. Everyday experience tells us that **we are all blind**. I will only remind you of the definition of the creative and sensitive person, i.e. of the poet, given by Yannis Ritsos, one of the greatest poets of modern Greece. Ritsos said: “The poet is one who has overcome blindness”. Why did he say this? Because the poets manage to see in the same mundane things which we all see around us, and handle and use on a daily basis, an eternal dimension: **the voice of God**, as well as His and our fellow human being’s ‘nobility’. They see the spirit taking tangible form, ‘solidified’ in specific objects.

They see beyond the visible, and hear beyond the audible. Let us pray that God will enable us to **see within ourselves the spiritual blindness**, the inner blindness which affects the whole person, and that our eyes will be open to see further and deeper into the **daily reality of life**.