





PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 4–10 AUGUST 2019

SUNDAY 4 AUGUST	SEVENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 9: 27-35 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
<div> SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES (A free voluntary program organised by the Church)</div> <p>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.</p>	
MONDAY 5 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8.45am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.• 5.00pm Service of Vespers
TUESDAY 6 AUGUST Holy Transfiguration of our Lord	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
WEDNESDAY 7 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6.30pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos presided by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia
THURSDAY 8 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos• 7.30—8.30pm <div> TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP (Ages 13-19) In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church <i>* ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME *</i></div>• 7.30pm Young Adults and Married Couples Bible Study Group at St. Vasilios, in the Church Coffee Room.
FRIDAY 9 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
SUNDAY 11 AUGUST	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 14: 14-22 EPISTLE READING: 1Corinthians 1: 10-17



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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.

**He never
gives you
more than
you can
bear.
Every burden
prepares you for
eternity.**

Monks of Mt Athos

Quotes from the Holy Fathers

“Do not let pass any opportunity to pray for anyone, either at his request or at the request of his relatives, friends, of those who esteem him, or of his acquaintances.

The Lord looks favourably upon the prayer of our love, and upon our boldness before him. Besides this, prayer for others is very beneficial to the one himself who prays for others; it purifies the heart, strengthens faith and hope in God, and enkindles our love for God and our neighbour.

When praying, say thus: ‘Lord, it is possible for Thee to do this or that to this servant of Thine; do this for him, for Thy name is the Merciful Love of Men and the Almighty.’”

+St. John of Kronstadt

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST - August 6

Opening the Eyes of our Souls to the Brilliant Light of Christ

Have you ever noticed how we often use our ability to see as an image for our ability to understand? We say “as you can see” when we mean “as you can understand.” And we say that people are blind to the truth in order to express that they do not know the truth. There is a deep connection between seeing and knowing.

Our Lord's Transfiguration, is a great feast that focuses on human beings actually seeing and knowing God. At our Lord's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, He revealed His divine glory to Peter, James, and John. His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as light itself. Moses and Elijah appeared with Him, until a cloud overshadowed them and the voice of the Father proclaimed, “This is my Beloved Son with Whom I am well pleased: Hear Him.” The disciples had understandably fallen to the ground before this overwhelming revelation, but the Savior told them to “Rise, and have no fear.” Then they saw only the Lord Himself. (Matt. 17:1-9)

We may think that the change that occurred at the Transfiguration was in Christ's appearance, but it was actually in the spiritual eyes of the disciples. The Lord enabled them to behold His unchanging, eternal divine glory to the extent that they were able in order to prepare them for His Passion, so that they would know that His suffering was voluntary. For He is truly the Lamb of God Who offered Himself freely on the cross out of love for the salvation of the world. That is how He conquered sin and death, bringing corrupt humanity into eternal life through His glorious resurrection on the third day.

The Transfiguration is not simply an event that occurred two thousand years ago, but the greatest manifestation of what it means to unite ourselves with Christ. For to know Him is not simply to affirm certain ideas or words about Him, however true they may be. To know Christ is to experience and encounter Him as the eternal Son of God from the depths of our souls. It is to see and know Him for Who He really is as we share in His life by grace. We enter mystically into the Transfiguration when we are transformed personally by His divine energies and shine with His holy light.

In today's gospel lesson, Christ restored the sight of two blind beggars who had called out to Him as the Jewish Messiah, saying “Have mercy on us, Son of David.” When these men came to Him, He asked: “Do you believe that I am able to do this? They said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord.’ Then He touched their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith be it done to you.’ And their eyes were opened.”

This passage has much in common with the Transfiguration, for in both we read of Christ opening the eyes of the blind. Both concern Jews who lacked full understanding of Who the Lord is as the Son of God, as they thought of the Messiah as an especially blessed human being, not as divine. Moses and Elijah represented the Old Testament law and the prophets, but Christ's superiority to them was revealed when the voice of the Father identified Him as His Beloved Son. At the end of the vision, only Christ remains. He is not simply the Son of David as a righteous ruler, but “Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made...”

Both our gospel text and the Transfiguration also concern people who need healing beyond their own power. In this regard, the disciples represent us all who have turned away from the deep personal union with God for which He created us in His image and likeness. Our sins have darkened, distorted, and clouded the eyes of our souls. Left to our own devices, we would never behold the glory of God. Spiritually, we all come to Christ like the blind men, calling out for His mercy to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Those men did not have a full understanding of Who Christ was, but the Savior did not require that in order to restore their sight. He asked only if they believed that He was able to help them. When they answered “yes,” He said “According to your faith be it done to you.”

The Lord treated Peter, James, and John in a similarly generous way. These disciples did not have a full comprehension of Who Christ was until after His resurrection. Nonetheless, He mercifully revealed His divine glory to them. They had at least enough faith at the time for this vision to be of spiritual benefit. It was through this experience that they were prepared to receive the good news of the resurrection and to proclaim the gospel to the world. In this sense, we can see that St. Paul bases his call for humble compassion on the example of Christ: “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself, but, as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.’” He enlightened the disciples at His Transfiguration for the healing of their souls, which enabled them in turn to enlighten and serve others.

We all suffer from badly distorted vision in our relationship with God, other people, and even ourselves. Our spiritual vision is weak because we have become content with darkness and weakness in our souls. Instead of doing all that we can to grow in the divine likeness in response to our Lord's mercy, we have preferred to stumble around in the night of our passions. Too often, we are the blind leading the blind who together fall into a pit.

The good news, however, is that Christ has become one of us in His infinite mercy so that we may become partakers of the divine nature, so that we participate personally in the eternal and holy life for which He created us. If we will call out to Him in humble faith and repentance, He will restore our spiritual vision as surely as He healed the eyes of the blind. All that they had to do was to ask and to believe as best they could.

We can be sure that those men were not expressing a casual emotion by calling out to Him, but instead opening the wretchedness of their lives for healing with every ounce of their being. We must do the same thing daily by cultivating a settled habit of prayer in which we open our hearts and minds to the Lord for healing and strength that are beyond our own ability. Prayer is not simply thinking about God, but being fully present to Him. It is true spiritual knowledge of God, not simply having religious ideas or feelings. As hard as it is to believe, true prayer is opening the eyes of our souls to the same divine glory beheld by the disciples at the Transfiguration. It is how we may become illumined with the gracious divine energies like an iron left in the fire.

Even as we cannot expect a room to be full of light unless we uncover the windows, we cannot expect the eyes of our souls to be illumined unless we offer our lives to God in prayer. We all like to convince ourselves that we have better things to do, but can anyone really not spend at least a few minutes each day in focused prayer? We can all offer the Jesus Prayer quietly and meditatively many times during our daily routines: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Whenever you are tempted not to pray, remember that prayer is how you open the darkness of your soul to the brilliant light of Christ. It is how, like those blind men, you present yourself in faith for His healing. Though we do not yet have the eyes to see it, prayer is how we may behold the radiance of the only-begotten Son of the Father as truly as did the disciples on Mount Tabor. Prayer is the most basic practice of the Christian life, and absolutely necessary if we want to stop wandering around in the dark. It is how we ourselves may be transfigured by the mercy of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

Fr. Philip LeMasters