



# PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

## PROGRAM FOR 9—15 JUNE 2019

<b>SUNDAY 9 JUNE</b>	<b>The Holy Fathers of the First Council, John 17: 1-13</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 10 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 11 JUNE</b> <b>Revelation of Axion Esti St Luke the Surgeon</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li><li>• 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord Youth Group will meet in Coburg Church Hall.</li></ul>
<b>WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study</li></ul>
<b>THURSDAY 13 JUNE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><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><li>• 7.30pm Young Adults and Married Couples Bible Study Group at St. Vasilios, in the Church Coffee Room.</li></ul>
<b>SATURDAY 15 JUNE</b> <b>Saturday of Souls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li><li>• 3.45pm Service of Vespers</li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY 16 JUNE</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: John 7:37-52, 8:12</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: Acts 2: 1-11</b>



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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.

Forget your good  
deeds as soon as  
possible ... Do not  
record your good  
deeds, for if you  
record them, they will  
soon fade. But if you  
forget them, they will  
be written in eternity.

St. Nicholas of Serbia

### Saint Luke, Bishop of Simferopol and Crimea, the Blessed Surgeon

A new miracle of St. Luke, Archbishop of Crimea, has occurred in the ancient Greek region of the Argolid, in the city of Argos,

A young man named Christos Argiropoulos, son of the Argos State Philharmonic Society's conductor, says that he took to St. Peter's Church a piece of cloth, saturated with oil from St. Luke's Relics.

On March 30 he met with his friend, the owner of a shop in Argos, and gave him a small piece of the cloth with the saint's blessing, as his friend had had serious problems with his spine. Movements that would be ordinary for a healthy person were extremely difficult for him: in order to get into a car he had to bear 20 minutes of pain.

Less than half an hour later, the friend called him, weeping with joy: as soon as the sick man came home, his mother anointed him with the oil from the relics. The young man at once felt that something was coming out from within; all the pain that had been tormenting him for so long time were disappearing!

After some time, Christos Argiropoulos met with his friend again. The latter began performing acrobatic tricks before him right on the pavement, crying and laughing at the same time.

May we have the blessing of St. Luke the Physician, and all the Saints,

## The Holy Fathers of the First Council, John 17: 1-13

Today we remember the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of 325 A.D. The Church brings into remembrance those faithful Fathers who defended the Apostolic Faith in the face of one of the greatest challenges to the truth of Christ. We remember so that we may be vigilant in our own day and in our own lives to safeguard the truth of Christ that we may truly know Christ.

It's important to remember that the Council was summoned to respond to the challenge of the priest Arius, who propagated the erroneous belief that "there was a time when (Christ) was not." Arius denied the eternal divinity and being of Christ, believing Him to be a creature of God's making. The Fathers retorted that Christ is "Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one essence with the Father," which we continue to believe as Orthodox to this day.

Doctrine matters: it safeguards our thinking, our knowledge of God, and therefore, our ability to know God as He's revealed Himself. Christ says in today's Gospel: "this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent... And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."

If Christ were not truly God, truly divine as the Father is divine, then He could not defeat sin and death on our behalf. He could not renew, re-create, human nature on our behalf, making a way of salvation for the fallen race of Adam. It's in knowing Jesus Christ as He's revealed Himself to be to His Church, that we're saved. Were He a creature like us, He could do nothing.

As St. John the Theologian testifies at the beginning of his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word (Logos) and the Word was with God and the Word was God." The same Word that created all life is the very Word that took on human nature to renew that life and defeat sin and death, creating a new race of man capable of "putting on Christ" and likewise becoming victors over sin and death by virtue of that sacramental relationship with Christ.

This is the wonderful truth we testify to in our celebrations of Pascha and Ascension. Christ God has completed His salvific mission to redeem the fallen race of Adam. He's gone up with a shout to where He was before so that we who have put on Christ in baptism and are living out our baptism, may likewise be transformed, resurrected, and ascend to heaven as well.

St. Athanasius the Great, defender of Orthodoxy against the Arians, puts it this way, "It was in the power of none other to turn the corruptible to incorruption, except the Saviour himself, that had at the beginning also made all things out of naught; and that none other could create anew the likeness of God's image for men, save the Image of the Father" (On the Incarnation).

The faithful Orthodox Fathers of that age rightly understood that Arius threatened the salvation of many and had to be condemned so the right faith (Orthodoxy in the Greek) could continue to be proclaimed. Only in this way would generations hence continue to come to know and be in communion with the One true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In our own day, we hear people making Jesus into whomever they want Him to be, whatever suites their lifestyle, their own 'personal' beliefs, what they've decided Jesus to be. Modern man has flipped the axiom: it's no longer we who need changing, conforming to the likeness of God, but rather, God whom we think to change and conform to our likeness or that of our culture and its humanism. Needless to say, this won't work—we'll have made of God a 'straw man' who isn't the God who's revealed Himself to us, and, who alone has the power to save us.

A watered-down Jesus, representing some non-judgmental, vague notion of 'humanity,' 'peace,' 'friendship,' whatever, is not the same Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, co-eternal with the Father, who loves all by calling them to repentance, healing, and salvation, to new life in Him by 'water and the spirit,' baptism and chrismation (John 3).

Many today say that they are 'Christians,' but they want Jesus without the Christ and Christianity without the Church, which turns out to be rather another 'man-made' religion. Christ on our terms is a god we've made and not the God who has revealed Himself to us through His Church and who alone can illumine and enlighten us, bringing us healing from our sin-sickness and grant us salvation, eternal life with Him who has no beginning.

What does it mean to 'have Jesus' if we water down the Gospel or conform it to our culture to become more 'inviting' at the expense of the fullness of the truth? If Jesus is 'dumbed-down' then whose likeness are we acquiring? If Jesus is my friend but not truly my Saviour, then I'm still stuck in my sin-sickness because I've not recognized that I'm a sinner who needs a Saviour.

Indeed, Christ commanded His disciples, the Apostles whom He sent, to baptize in the Name of the Holy Trinity AND to teach the people "ALL that I have commanded you," i.e., not just some of the truth, but the fullness of the Truth He is.

While we decry the dumbing down of Christ we see in much of the non-Orthodox Christianity around us, we as Orthodox also must judge ourselves: If we know the fullness of the truth of Christ and come to church every weekend but aren't striving to live the faith, struggling to incorporate it into our daily lives, fervently praying to God for continued growth and illumination, then a change in our priorities, in our hearts, is also required of us.

Salvation has always been for Orthodox Christians communion (koinonia), participation in the life of God the Holy Trinity. When we receive Christ God into ourselves through the Holy Eucharist, when we participate in the sacramental life of His Church, when we pray, when we worship Him, we are growing in that life that He alone is. We don't need just part of Jesus, or Jesus on our terms, or just some of the tools of salvation Christ entrusted the Church; we need all of Jesus Christ—the whole Life that He is, that is in Him alone and that's been revealed and lived faithfully in the Church for 2,000 years.

That Christ, who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," convicts us, helps us, saves us, heals us, and grows us into the fullness of godly manhood, womanhood that we're created to be as part of the new race of Adam.

We safeguard the Orthodox Faith by living out this faith in our daily lives, as we 'run' the race of faith, witnessing to the truth that Christ is and in whose likeness we are being conformed. In this way, we keep the Apostolic Faith alive, which has its fullness only in the Church of the Councils. And so, we ask the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council to pray for us and for our salvation this day that we may keep and live the true Orthodox faith in Christ, that believing, we may come to know the One true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent for this is eternal life!

Fr. Robert Miclean