





PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 25 – 31 AUGUST 2019

SUNDAY 25 AUGUST	TENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 17: 14-23 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES (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.	
MONDAY 26 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8.45am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
TUESDAY 27 AUGUST St Phanourios, Great-Martyr	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group will meet in our Church Hall.
WEDNESDAY 28 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study
THURSDAY 29 AUGUST STRICT FAST <i>Beheading of St John Baptist, Forerunner</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 7.30—8.30pm  TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP (Ages 13-19) In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church * ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME *
SUNDAY 1 SEPTEMBER	GOSPEL READING: Luke 4: 16-22 EPISTLE READING: 1Timothy 2: 1-7

ST PHANOURIOS, GREAT-MARTYR



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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.

Let all involuntary
suffering teach you
to remember God,
and you will not lack
occasion for
repentance.



St. Mark the Ascetic

The holy, glorious and right-victorious Great-martyr the Newly Appeared of Rhodes, the Miracle-Worker, is commemorated by the Church on August 27. There is no literature available in the church prior to discovering his little church in Rhodes so not much is known about St. Phanourios's life other than the images of his martyrdom on his icon.

The only literary evidence that supports a historical date, relating to this saint, is documented in the book *Lives of the Saints*, which testifies that the icon in Rhodes was discovered, around 1500 AD. Some sources support the opinion that the icon was discovered in Cyprus and not in Rhodes. A 2008 research paper on folklore suggests that there are two manuscripts. The first is the mention of a miracle included in the *Cod. Vat. Gr. 1190* (dating from 1452 and written in Crete). The second manuscript originates from Heraklion, dating from 1600-1640. Both of these manuscripts describe a miracle that took place in Rhodes which caused the saint's fame to spread from Rhodes to Crete.

In the Church we have the tradition of patron saints. St. Phanourios has become famous for assisting the faithful in revealing lost or hidden spiritual matters of the heart, objects, directing or revealing actions that should be taken, restoring health and similar situations. He is then honoured by the faithful through a symbolic cake, called the "Phanouropita" which can be brought to the church, at any time, for a blessing.

BEHEADING OF ST JOHN BAPTIST, FORERUNNER

John the Baptist, was the son of Zachariah, a temple priest, and his wife Elizabeth, who was a cousin of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was born when his mother was advanced in age, after the foretelling of his birth and the choice of his name by an angel. He began his mission of preaching and baptizing in the river Jordan at about 27 AD. His way of life closely resembled those of some Old Testament prophets, such as Elias. His message was one of repentance and preparation for the coming of the Messiah and His Kingdom. Among his disciples were the Apostles St. Peter and St. Andrew. John baptized Jesus and recognised Him as the Messiah when he saw the Spirit come down on Him.

John also denounced the incestuous relationship of Herod Antipas with his niece and brother's wife, Herodias, and was imprisoned for doing so. His death was brought about by the hatred of Herodias and the weakness of Herod. When Salome, her daughter, had greatly pleased Herod with her dancing, he promised her anything she wanted. She demanded John's head on a dish. The executioner Machaeus beheaded John and presented his head to Salome, who passed it on to her mother.

John the Baptist was believed to be buried in Samaria where he was honoured in the 4th century, but the tomb was desecrated by Julian the Apostate. **The death of the Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist is remembered on 29th August, and the Church keeps a strict fast on this day.**



10TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 17:14-23

Moving Mountains

In today's gospel reading from the 10th Sunday of Matthew 17:14-23, which interestingly occurs right after the event of the Transfiguration, Jesus speaks of a mountain in much different terms. After Jesus casts out the demon of the epileptic boy (v.18), the disciples ask Jesus why they could not cast it out (v.19). Jesus replies, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (v.20). So here, Jesus implies that a mountain can be an obstacle of sorts. Anyone who has done some hiking will testify that mountains can be barriers from getting from one point to another.

Some of the patristic commentators on this passage picked-up this point. Origen says that "mountains are the hostile powers that have their being in a flood of great wickedness that have settled in some souls of various people." Hilarion intimates that the mountains are the "burden of sins and the heavy mass of their unbelief." So, while we often think of a mountain as an external barrier or obstacle, we should also understand that often it can be internal to us such as a personality trait, a habit of character or a passion ("a inclination towards sinful thoughts, words and behaviors"). St. Augustine furthers the point when he comments on this passage, "If one can pray so that one may cast out another demon, how much more should one pray that one's own demons be cast out."

If we have done some serious reflection on the spiritual life, our experience will tell us that it's virtually impossible to change other people and it's even very difficult to change ourselves. However, any change in the world around us must always begin with a change in ourselves first. The patristic quotation from St. John Cassian in today's bulletin builds on this point, "If you want to correct your brother when he is doing wrong...you must keep yourself calm; otherwise you yourself may catch the sickness you are seeking to cure and you may find that the words of the Gospel now apply to you...'Why do you look at the speck of dust in your brother's eye, and not notice the rafter in your own eye?' The speck reference is a quotation of Jesus' words from Matt.7:1-5. Here's the whole passage:

Judge not, that you not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why to you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look , a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

At the end of today's passage Jesus says that the demon of the epileptic boy can only come out by prayer and fasting. Jesus points out that the disciples and the father of the boy were lacking in faith and fasting when He says, "Because of your unbelief" (v.20) and earlier when He says, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?" (v.17). So, the essential tools of personal change are prayer and fasting.

Here's how they work. Prayer is "the sincere and fervent seeking of the one, true God in order to discover His will, in order to do His will." Prayer is not simply dialogue with God but it is the opening up of our heart and mind to the transforming power and presence of God. In other words, only God can change us and only if we let Him.

True fasting goes hand-in-hand with prayer. It is the denial of physical hunger in order to help bring under discipline our other appetites to prevent them from becoming out-of-control passions. God cannot change us if our life is being dominated by passions. An example is the addict who must quit cold-turkey from their "drug" of choice in order to stop the destructive cycle of abuse. However, this is just the first step. The second step is to begin to understand his personal appetites and internal dynamics that drive the addiction. The second step cannot begin until the first step is completed.

Once our own life is in order, then we can help others change. Yet, it is not through controlling words and actions that change occurs. It is, as Jesus says to His disciples, through prayer and fasting that change in others is effected. Origen, commenting on today's passage says, "We pray for the sufferer and by our own fasting, we may thrust out the unclean spirit from him." St. Seraphim of Sarov said, "Save yourself first and 1,000 others will be saved by it." Let us hear Jesus speak again but this time from the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 11:

Have faith in God. For assuredly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."

Moving internal mountains may be one of the hardest things we ever do but it only takes is a little faith and trust in God in order to let Him do it. Amen!

- Fr. Richard Demetrius Andrews, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America