



## Parish Information Bulletin

**SUNDAY 26 JULY**  
*St Paraskevi, Osio-Martyr*

**7th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 9: 27-35**

- **8.00am**  
Orthros and Divine Liturgy

**MONDAY 27 JULY**  
*St Panteleimon,  
Great Martyr and Healer*

- **8.00am**  
Orthros and Divine Liturgy

**SUNDAY 2 AUGUST**

**Epistle Reading: 1Corinthians 1: 10-17**  
**Gospel Reading: Matthew 14: 14-22**

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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.

A child cries  
when his mother  
washes him,  
and those  
of little faith  
murmur at God  
when they are  
in trouble,  
which cleanses  
the soul  
like water  
cleanses  
the face.



St. Symeon  
of Daibabe

### St Paraskevi the Great Martyr of Rome

"Holy Virgin Martyr Paraskeva of Rome was the only daughter of Christian parents, Agathon and Politia, and from her early years she dedicated herself to God. She spent much of her time in prayer and the study of the Holy Scriptures. After the death of her parents St Paraskeva distributed all of her inheritance to the poor, and consecrated her virginity to Christ. Emulating the holy Apostles, she began to preach to the pagans about Christ, converting many to Christianity.

She was arrested during the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161) because she refused to worship the idols. She was brought to trial and fearlessly confessed herself a Christian. Neither enticements of honours and material possessions, nor threats of torture and death shook the firmness of the saint nor turned her from Christ. She was given over to beastly tortures. They put a red-hot helmet on her head and threw her in a cauldron filled with boiling oil and pitch. By the power of God the holy martyr remained unharmed. When the emperor peered into the cauldron, St Paraskeva threw a drop of the hot liquid in his face, and he was burned. The emperor began to ask her for help, and the holy martyr healed him. After this the emperor set her free.

Travelling from one place to another to preach the Gospel, St Paraskeva arrived in a city where the governor was named Asclepius. Here again they tried the saint and sentenced her to death. They took her to an immense serpent living in a cave, so that it would devour her. But St Paraskeva made the Sign of the Cross over the snake and it died. Asclepius and the citizens witnessed this miracle and believed in Christ. She was set free, and continued her preaching. In a city where the governor was a certain Tarasius, St Paraskeva endured fierce tortures and was beheaded in the year 140.

Many miracles took place at the saint's tomb: the blind received sight, the lame walked, and barren women gave birth to children. It is not only in the past that the saint performed her miracles, but even today she helps those who call on her in faith."

### Homily for the feast of the Great-martyr Panteleimon

In ancient times, when referring to martyrs, they were called "witnesses," in accordance with what the Lord Jesus Christ told the apostles about their future service: "You shall be My witnesses everywhere." In truth, what testimony can be greater than when a person is ready to seal it with his blood and life, as did the holy martyrs. Those around them could not but wonder at the strength exhibited by the martyrs who, with all possible benefits spread before them, turned away from them and chose torture and agonizing death instead. They were aided by a special sort of force, and their hearts were touched by genuine truth.

For example, look at the great-martyr Panteleimon – a wealthy, prominent, and handsome young man, before whom an entire life was spread out, and the way was open to the best possible circumstances from a human point of view. And yet what did he choose? An agonizing death. We know that prior to his baptism he was not called Panteleimon, which was the name he received at baptism, but was called Pantoleon. This Greek name consisted of two words that meant "strong in all things." The name characterized his strong and forceful nature. However, when he was illuminated by the light of baptism through the offices of the holy martyric presbyter Hermolaus and

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became a Christian, he was given another name – that of Panteleimon, which means all-merciful or merciful to all. And we know how this holy youth spread healing and all kind of spiritual help around him. But when he was called upon to bear witness to his faith in Christ, he went out to suffer terrible tortures, rejoicing that in this manner he would affirm his loyalty to the One Whom he had come to love with his entire pure heart.

The situation is different in our times. No one threatens us with bloody torture or agonizing death. Yet, on the other hand, our times are such that in order to be a Christian always and in all things, and to act like a Christian in all ways, one also needs a fair amount of spiritual force, for the further we progress, the deeper and deeper and faster and faster does the world roll down the slope into an abyss of materialism and insanity... And the Christian who lives in the nightmare of our times and still wishes to truly be a Christian must naturally have strength of spirit similar to the strength possessed by the ancient martyrs. Saint Panteleimon is precisely one of such **witnesses**, who stood face-to-face before the pagans and testified to the light of Christ's truth, to its unfading radiance, to its all-conquering power, for these martyrs truly confirmed the apostolic words: "Such is the victory which conquered the world – our faith!" Amen.

#### **Apolytikion of Great Martyr Panteleimon.**

Panteleimon, saintly champion and healer, intercede with our Merciful God to grant our souls remission of sins.

#### **Kontakion**

You emulated the Merciful One, and received from Him the grace of healing, Passion-bearer and healer Panteleimon; by your prayers, heal our spiritual diseases and continually drive away the temptations of the enemy from those who cry out in faith "Save us, O Lord".

### **7th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 9: 27-35**

*"According to your faith be it done to you."*

In today's Gospel reading about the two blind men (Mat.9, 27-35) the path towards faith is depicted: we are shown how from a state of blindness one can be transformed to a state of seeing, how one can receive what one asks. Sin makes man blind, for the devil does not wish man to see God—his Creator. Spiritual blindness might be acknowledged only by admitting one's sinfulness. Furthermore, it is essential to follow Christ – that is to fulfill His commandments, God's will, and patiently carry one's cross. Also, one must "Shout" – in other words, pray strongly with zeal. When our prayer is not answered right away, Christ is testing our faith.

When Christ entered a house, the blind followed Him. Misfortune has brought the blind together, and they became friends – they functioned as one. We must be in one place with Christ. Where Christ is, there is God's temple. The blind approach Christ in the house. The objective of following Christ – is to catch up with Him and be joined with Him. Jesus asks them: "Do you believe, that I can do this and have mercy on you?" The blind answer: "Yes, Lord!" They acknowledge Jesus as Lord and God, because only God can give them that which they do not have: in this case – eyesight! Being physically blind, they had already matured spiritually; with eyes of faith they saw in Jesus Almighty God, their Creator. Christ touched their eyes and said: "You shall receive according to your faith". When their eyes opened, Christ strictly told them: "Tell no one; do not extol that God helped you!" We ought not to pride ourselves that we were in the temple and communed of the Holy Gifts. It is, probably, on account of this forbidding of Christ that Christian preachers seldom talk about this wonderful healing in their sermons.

We do not know the names of these two blind men, who were blind from their birth and whom Christ healed. But, we do know from the book of 'Acts of the Apostles' and from our history about two other blind men, who also were healed by our Lord. Christ miraculously healed the temporary blindness of the persecutor of the first Christians, 'Saul' (later Apostle Paul), and the blindness of Prince Vladimir of Kiev. They were granted sight only as a result of a miracle through their encounter with Christ and their acceptance of Baptism. Christ opened the eyes of their souls and also removed their physical blindness. In the year 998 Prince Vladimir was baptized and given the name of 'Vasili' (Basil). According to legend, Prince Vladimir had been blind for a while before being baptized, and as he was emerging from the baptismal font, he regained sight and proclaimed: "Now I know the true God!" Through these healing from blindness of Saul, the persecutor, and Prince Vladimir of Kiev, God shows all those, who are blind, that they should also accept this medicine with joy.

The best example of effectiveness and power of any medicine, is the healing of the sick. God shows us the power of faith. Of all the miracles, which happen because of faith in Christ, the most beneficial to the soul is the transfiguration of a sinner into a righteous person. As a confirmation of such a miracle of man's transfiguration we have Saint Vladimir, who says to each one of us: "I was like night changed into day". He asks us: "Who were you before being baptized? Whom did you become after being baptized? How do you view the spiritual world? Do you see Christ with you?"

Let us think on what answers we can give to these questions. Amen.