



## Parish Information Bulletin

### SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER

#### Sunday After Holy Cross, Mark 8: 34—9:1

- 8.00am  
Orthros and Divine Liturgy

### SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER

#### Translation of St John the Theologian

- 8.00am  
Orthros and Divine Liturgy

### SUNDAY 27 SEPTEMBER

#### Epistle Reading: 2 Corinthians 6: 1-10 Gospel Reading: Luke 5: 1-11

### Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church  
9387 7693

Fr Athanasios  
9383 4151

Fr Ephraim  
0490 378 215

Website:  
[stvasiliosbrunswick.com](http://stvasiliosbrunswick.com)

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.

### The Translation Of Apostle John The Theologian

This Apostle was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the brother of James the elder. First a fisherman by trade, he became an Apostle and the beloved Disciple of Christ. Only he of all the Disciples followed Him even to the Cross, and was entrusted with the care of our Saviour's Mother, as it were another son to her, and a brother of Christ the Teacher. After this, he preached throughout Asia Minor, especially in Ephesus. When the second persecution against the Christians began in the year 96 during the reign of Domitian, he was taken in bonds to Rome, and there was cast into a vat filled to the brim with boiling oil. Coming forth therefrom unharmed, he was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Returning again to Ephesus after the death of the tyrant, he wrote his Gospel (after the other Evangelists had already written theirs) and his three Catholic Epistles.

In all, he lived ninety-five years and fell asleep in the Lord during the reign of Trajan in the year 100. He was called Theologian because he loftily expounded in his Gospel the theology of the inexpressible and eternal birth of the Son and Word of God the Father. It is for this cause that an eagle—a symbol of the Holy Spirit, as Saint Irenaeus says—is depicted in his icon, for this was one of the four symbolic living creatures that the Prophet Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 1:10).

It should be noted, that according to Holy Tradition, the reason we have no physical remains and an empty tomb of the Apostle John is because when the disciples returned to his tomb, it was found empty. It is assumed that his body was raised by the Lord, just like the Theotokos. This is what we call "Metastasis" or "Translation", and it is what we celebrate on September 26th.

### The Latter Years of the Apostle John

#### (According to the Synaxarion)

The last years of his life, the holy Apostle John spent in strict asceticism. He ate only bread and water, did not cut his hair, and dressed in simple linen garments. Because of his old age, he did not have the strength to preach the word of God even in the environs of Ephesus. At that time he taught only the bishops of the Church and inspired them to teach the people the Gospel unceasingly, and especially to keep in mind and to preach the first and principal commandment of the Gospel: the commandment of love.

When the holy apostle became very weak, the blessed Jerome relates, his disciples carried him to the church, but he was no longer able to give long sermons. He then reduced his teaching to the unceasing repetition of "Little children, love one another." One day when his disciples asked him why he repeated this to them incessantly, John replied with the following words: "This is the Lord's commandment; and if ye keep it, it is enough."

According to St. Jerome, the Apostle John reposed in the third year of the reign of Trajan, that is 101 AD. This is sixty-eight years after the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord. This is confirmed by Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, and other Holy Fathers of the Church. It is believed he was about 6-8 years younger than the Lord, which made him 93 or 95 years of age upon his repose.

Do not be surprised  
that you fall  
every day;  
do not give up,  
but stand your  
ground  
courageously.  
And assuredly,  
the angel who  
guards you  
will honour  
your patience.



Saint John  
of the Ladder

***“He said unto them, ‘Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.’”***

The Sermon of Sermons... is the Sermon for the Cross, presented to us today by our Mother Church, on the Sunday after the elevation of the Honourable Cross. And we are all invited to offer to the Cross our hearts, instead of flowers and basils. The Church calls us to raise ourselves from the earth and our ordinary life, to gaze upon the brightness emanating from Christ and His Cross. The most central sign in the gospel is the sermon of the Cross of Christ: God on the Cross – incomprehensible and never understandable. Only men whose hearts pound with sincere feeling are capable of comprehending the meaning. Only those who love, only they can understand the Sacrifice of the Son of God. The rest will remain indifferent. But again there is no real measure by which we can compare the love between men and the love of God towards man.

St Paul tells us that the Cross of our Lord was foolishness for the Greeks and a scandal for the Jews. For the chosen people, whether they be Greek, Hebrew, or Roman, the Cross will remain as the power and wisdom of God.

The first (being the Greeks, IE philosophers) asked for the solution to the problems of this world and the next, but in the measure of their own wisdom. Whatever went beyond the limits of their own already limited wisdom or understanding, they refused to discuss. But they were hardly successful...“For after that in wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God” (1 Cor. 1:21).

The latter (being the Jews) sought the solution of their problems in the deification of money, in the ransoming of their conscience; Which is exactly what has happened today. “Money talks”. They try to materialise the most immaterial ideas. They neither recognise God or His will for their own salvation, and they are of no help to others. Only the Christian sermon can save the world, and then, not all, but only those who pay attention (1 Cor. 1:18).

The Cross is the greatest consolation for the faithful, as many accept Christ, the crucified Christ. When the Jews (the Pharisees and their ilk) finished their act of decide, satisfied with their work, and watching the God-Man suffer, they said to Him: “Save Thyself and come down from the Cross”, thinking that the sacrifice of the Lord was an ordinary condemnation. When Christ climbed upon the Cross He offered salvation to the world, and each man to gain his own salvation must also climb upon the Cross in his own way.

The coming of Christ into the world in theological language is understood as “kenosis” – self-emptying -; and the last step of this kenosis is the Cross. Whosoever will empty himself, whoever will crucify himself only in this way can earthly man be glorified and spirituality devoted.

In the life of the Christians, the Cross means sacrifice. But today, man is unwilling to sacrifice. Oftentimes man despises those that not only sacrifice for themselves but in behalf of others. Christ did not promise His disciples earthly thrones when He called them, simply because He Himself did not possess these things...“My kingdom is not of this world”. And neither did he promise pleasures and a good life...“The birds of the air have nests and the foxes have dens, but the Son of Man does not have a place to lay His head”.

He did not promise them positions and offices because He had not the same Himself...“I did not come to be served, but to serve and to give my soul for the redemption of many”. He did not speak to them about calm and peace...“because if they have persecuted me, they will persecute you”. What did Christ promise? Sacrifice, self-denial...the Cross: “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me”.

My beloved, our life will be a cross. Everyone will have a cross to bear, be it large or small, made from gold, silver or wood. Today all Christian denominations face a great problem – the lack of worthy priests. Thousands of men study theology but never become priests. Why? What is the reason? Could it stem from financial problems? No. The reason is that we all seek an easy life, without responsibilities, a life without a cross. And those who refuse to bear their cross suffer a change of attitude, becoming hostile towards those who do accept their cross. The bearers of the cross serve the Church and man patiently, and offer themselves as a sacrifice for the betterment of society, for the peace of the world.

Dear Brethren, do we want to better ourselves – the lives of others and that of society? Then let us improve it through the Cross. Not with accusations and slander, or by the knife or gun – but with the Cross. The Cross, not merely as an ornament, not as a sign on the banners of war, or topping the crowns of kings, but the Cross inscribed in our hearts. The Cross, the instructor and symbol of our life according to St John Chrysostom, Amen.

- Fr George Dimopoulos , Source: *Orthodox Sermons for all the Sundays of the Year – Volume I*