



## Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 26 September— 2 October 2021

SUNDAY 26 SEPTEMBER

TRANSLATION OF ST JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN, John 19: 25-27, 21: 24-25  
• 8.00am—Orthros and Divine Liturgy

FRIDAY 1 OCTOBER

*Feast of Panagia Gorgoepikoos*

• 8.00am—Orthros and Divine Liturgy

### 2021 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 10.30am 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.

SUNDAY 3 OCTOBER

GOSPEL READING: Luke 6: 31-36

EPISTLE READING: 2 Corinthians 4: 6-18

### Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church  
9387 7693

Fr Athanasios  
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Fr Ephraim  
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Website:  
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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.



*Panagia Gorgoepikoos* (Gr., Γοργοεπήκοο, "She who is quick to hear")

### Saint John the Theologian

The Holy and Divine Theologian, John the Evangelist was the son of Zebedee and Salome (one of the daughters of Saint Joseph the Betrothed), and the brother of James the Great. John and his brother were called at the same time to be followers of Christ and became two of the three (the other, Apostle Peter) closest disciples of Christ. They witnessed the healing of many people, the Light of the Transfiguration at Tabor, as well as many other miracles. Saint John, being the youngest of all the disciples, was also the most beloved disciple of Christ, following Him from the beginning of his ministry all the way to his Crucifixion and Burial. In the icon depicted, the Evangelist is shown leaning on the Lord's chest at the Last Supper, a sign of love between the two.

After the Resurrection of the Lord, the Evangelist took the Theotokos to his home as his own mother. After her Dormition, he went to Ephesus to preach the Word of God. Having been denounced by pagans, he was given a poisoned drink, which failed to kill him. He was then exiled to the island of Patmos where he converted many to Christ, but most famously, where he wrote the Book of Revelations, the last book of the Holy Bible. Having returned to Ephesus, he wrote the gospel under his name and also another 3 letters, all a part of the New Testament. Saint John lived to well over 100 and outlived every single eyewitness of Christ. By this time, his message was simple: love one another. He was buried and when some of his disciples came later to farewell him, they found his grave empty, thus his body having been translated to Heaven.

### The following are some additional details from another account of St. John's life:

"While he was on Patmos, John received a letter from the Bishop of Athens, Dionysius the Areopagite (October 3) who was then ninety-nine years old. He praised John as the daystar of the Gospel and prophesied that he would soon be freed. Indeed when Trajan succeeded Nerva (AD 98), he recalled Saint John to Ephesus, to the great sorrow of the people of Patmos whom he had converted. John did not want to leave them unconsolated. Strengthened by a sign from heaven, he fasted with them for three days; then, accompanied by Prochorus, he went up into a mountain where he directed all the powers of his soul towards the Lord.

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Suddenly the sky was rent by fearful flashes of lightening and claps of thunder. Prochorus was overwhelmed and fell to the ground while John remained impassible in contemplation. He heard a voice like thunder proclaiming from the height of heaven: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Prochorus transcribed this message of salvation, revealed to John as was once the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, but this time not for the Jews alone, but for all even to the ends of the earth.

It was also on Patmos that John wrote the New Testament book known as the Apocalypse or Revelation. John saw Christ, having the appearance of a young man Whose "face was like the sun shining in full strength." Reassuring John, who "fell at his feet as though dead," the Lord said: "Fear not; I am the First and the Last; I am He that Lives and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore and have the keys of Death and of Hell. Write the things that you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (Revelation 1:17ff). Then in successive revelations John was shown what will happen at the end of time: the gathering strength of iniquity, the coming of the Antichrist, his warfare against the faithful and his final struggle against Christ who, in the end, will cast him forever into Hell with the Devil and his angels. It was also given him to see in his vision the violent upheavals that will take place in the world, the fiery end of all things, and the final triumph of the Son of man, the general Resurrection and the Last Judgment."

(taken from: <http://www.goarch.org/special/johntheapostle>)



### History of the Gorgoepikoos Icon

The best-known miraculus icon of the Holy Mountain Mount Athos, after Panagia Portaitissa, is an ancient wall-painting of the Blessed Virgin on the outside of the eastern wall of the refectory, to the right of the entrance, in the Docheiariou Monastery.

In 1664, the trapezares Neilos, who used to pass regularly in front of the icon holding in his hand a lighted torch which he needed for his duties in the refectory, heard a voice telling him: "Do not come past here with a torch, leaving smoke on my icon". Neilos did not pay much attention to the voice, but it was soon heard again, imposing a punishment on the monk and leaving him blind. The brothers began to show great reverence in passing before the icon and hung a perpetual lamp before it and ordered the new trapezares to burn incense before it every day.

The blind Neilos spent all his time in a stall in front of the icon, imploring the Theotokos to forgive him and heal him, and his prayer was granted when, for the third time, a voice was heard from the icon which told Neilos that his supplication had been heard, and that it was to her protection, after God, and her overshadowing guardianship that the monks should thereafter have recourse for all their needs. She would hear them speedily, for her name is "**Gorgoepikoos**" (she who hears speedily).

This miracle and the promise of the Theotokos became quickly know to the whole of Athos and her icon became an object of pilgrimage for all the Holly Mountain. The corridor was closed up and the icon was housed in the chapel which was built to its right. Innumerable miracles have been performed by it, and a special priest-monk, the prosmonarios attends to the needs of pilgrims.

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### Hieromartyr Cyprian and Virgin-Martyr Justina - 2 October

"Saint Justina, who was from Damascus, lived in virginity for the sake of Christ. Saint Cyprian, who was from Antioch, began as an initiate of magic and worshipper of the demons. A certain foolish young man who had been smitten with Justina's beauty hired Cyprian to draw her to love him; when Cyprian had used every demonic device he knew, and had failed, being repulsed by the power of Christ Whom Justina invoked, he understood the weakness of the demons and came to know the truth.

Delivered from demonic delusion, he came to Christ and burned all his books of magic, was baptized, and later ascended the episcopal throne in his country. Later, he and Justina were arrested by the Count of Damascus, and having endured many torments at his hands, they were sent finally to Diocletian in Nicomedia, where they were beheaded in the year 304." (*Great Horologion*)