



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 3—9 July 2022

SUNDAY 3 JULY	3rd SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 6: 22-33 • 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
MONDAY 4 JULY	• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
2022 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.	
THURSDAY 7 JULY <i>St. Kyriaki, Great-Martyr</i>	• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy • 8.00—9.00pm ➡ TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment. - In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church
SUNDAY 10 JULY	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 8: 5-13 EPISTLE READING: Romans 6: 18-23

Telephone Contact Numbers

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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.

7 July: The Holy and Great Martyr Kyriaki

In the lime of the Emperors Diocletian and his son-in-law Maximian, both adversaries of Christ, there lived in Anatolia two elderly, devout souls, Dorotheus and Eusebia. They were devoted Christians, rich but childless. With unceasing prayer, they besought God for a child, and their prayers were answered in this holy Kyriaki.

She consecrated herself to God from her childhood, holding herself apart from the activities of carefree children. When she had grown up, beautiful in body and soul, she had many suitors but refused them all, saying that she had betrothed herself to Christ the Lord and desired nothing other than to die a virgin. One of these rejected suitors denounced Kyriaki and her parents to the Emperor Diocletian as Christians. The Emperor ordered that her parents be tortured, and after torture had them exiled to the town of Melitene, where they died under further torture. Diocletian sent Kyriaki to Maximian for trial. When she affirmed her faith in Christ the Lord before Maximian, he ordered that she be thrown to the ground and flogged with bull-whips. Then the Emperor handed her over to the generals, firstly to Hilarion and then, after his death, to Apollonius. They tortured her bestially in all possible ways, but in vain. While holy Kyriaki lay in prison wounded all over, Christ the Lord appeared to her, healed her and said to her: "Don't be afraid of the torture, Kyriaki; My grace is with thee." And indeed Christ's grace saved this martyr from fire and from wild beasts, which the godless torturers were certain would bring about her death. Seeing the miraculous saving of Kyriaki from such a death, many of the pagans came to belief in Christ.

All were beheaded, Dominica said to Apollonius: 'There is no way that you can turn me from my faith. Throw me into the fire - I have the example of the Three Children; throw me to the wild beasts — I have the example of Daniel: throw me into the sea — I have the example of Jonah the prophet: put me to the sword — I shall remember the honoured Forerunner. For me, to die is life in Christ.' Then Apollonius ordered that she be beheaded. Kyriaki knelt and raised her hands to heaven in prayer to God, that He would have mercy on and save all those who would celebrate her memory, and that he would give rest to her soul to God before the sword descended on her head. She suffered with honour in Nicomedia and went to eternal joy in the year 289.

3rd SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 6: 22-33

In today's Holy Gospel we hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in which He exhorts us toward a complete and perfect trust in God, our loving Father. He implores us to not worry about things... what we shall eat or what we shall wear – all of those material concerns that can so completely eclipse our life and preoccupy us with stress and anxiety over things. And what does our worrying about things solve? Absolutely nothing... worrying is entirely wrapped up in our thoughts; it has no positive bearing on the outcome of things.

It demonstrates our false perception of control and our lack of trust in God. Instead of worrying and tying ourselves in knots, we need to pray and we need to trust.

Indeed, the final words of today's Gospel reading are a distillation and perfect summary of the spiritual life – we must *'seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things will be added unto us'*.

If our eyes are focused toward God, toward the perspective of eternity and of the disposition and health of our soul; then we will not get so thrown off balance when things unexpected or troubling or tragic occur in our life. We read in today's Gospel: *'The Lord said: "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is pure, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness."*

What does this mean?... It is addressing this issue of the focus and the disposition of our soul. If we keep our eye on God, if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, then our whole experience of things is full of light. We see things in a positive way; we assume the best of others and wish goodness toward all. When troubles come upon us we are not so easily defeated, but we can take these sorrows in stride and trust that the Lord is watching over us and that our difficulties can be endured in a spirit of humility and hope. As we read in the Epistle today: *'We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.'*

If our eye is not pure, if our vision is limited only to the triumphs and tragedies of this brief earthly life; then the inevitable ups and downs of this life are going to take us on a rollercoaster ride of emotions and worry. In such a state, our vision and our life is not full of light, but of darkness; and we tend to see things negatively, we suspect others and we're tossed to and fro by our passions – reacting to everything that comes our way.

It is a miserable way of life – but we all do it to one degree or another. This way of life is based on our pride and in trusting ourselves rather than having a perfect trust in God.

Our unwillingness to trust in God stems from our pride and from not really understanding the love of God.

Listen to the words of the Epistle from this morning: *'God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.'*

Do we understand what the Apostle Paul is saying here?... We must never fall into the trap of thinking that our sinfulness is more powerful than the love and mercy of God. God's love and care for us is so great that, even when we were estranged from Him, He was willing to die for us. How much more then, when we are reconciled to Him through our baptism, through our repentance, through our partaking of His Body and Blood... how much more then may we be assured of His love for us?

God's love is constant. He is eternal and is not subject to change. He loves you with a perfect love that encompasses His willingness to die for you. You cannot win His love or persuade Him to love you more than He already does and always will. The only thing we can do is accept or obstruct that love, we can seek it or we can hide from it, we can receive it or we can reject it. But the constancy of the outpouring of the grace and love of God is eternal and unchanging. Several fathers have likened it to a radio signal... God's love is broadcasting clearly at all times, but we are not tuned in to the right channel to receive it. Our lives are filled with static and we do not perceive or receive fully the love of God. Perhaps we 'tune in' during the quiet hours of morning prayer or in the beauty of the Divine Services at church... but this does not reflect a change in the broadcast of God... it only reflects the changing and fickle nature of our ability to tune ourselves to the right frequency.

This is both a source of great hope and also a source of great challenge to our understanding and experience of God. Through a life of prayer, of fasting and spiritual discipline, of reading and praying the Scriptures... through a life of service and sacrificial love... through a life lived in the Church – participating in Her Sacraments... through all of these means we do not earn the love of God. We do not bring forth a love that has been withheld because of our sins and selfishness. No... it is through seeking first these things of the kingdom of God that we remove the obstacles and the static blocking us from the ever present love of God.

Let us make every effort to attune ourselves to the right frequency of God's grace and love. And may God grant us good and clear 'reception'... that we may seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, that the eye of our soul may therefore be pure and full of light.