



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 28 August— 3 September 2022

<b>SUNDAY 28 AUGUST</b>	<b>11th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 18: 23-35</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>2022 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES</b> (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) <b>Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal.</b> 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.	
<b>MONDAY 29 AUGUST</b> <i>Beheading of the Forerunner</i> <i>St John the Baptist</i>  (STRICT FAST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li><li>• <b>10.00am</b> Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall</li></ul>
<b>THURSDAY 1 SEPTEMBER</b> <i>Beginning of the Indiction</i> <i>Holy 40 Virgin Martyrs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: Matthew 19: 16-24</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: 1Corinthians 15: 1-11</b>

### 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.

### Holy 40 Virgin-Martyrs and their Teacher the Hieromartyr Ammon the Deacon at Heraclea September 1

Holy 40 virgin-martyrs and their teacher the Hieromartyr Ammon the Deacon at Heraclea in Thrace: Adamantine, Athena, Akrive, Antigone, Arivea, Aspasia, Aphrodite, Dione, Dodone, Elpinike, Erasmia, Erato, Ermeneia, Evterpe, Thaleia, Theano, Theano, Theonymphe, Theophane, Kalliroe, Kalliste, Kleio, Kleonike, Kleopatra, Koralia, Lambro, Margarita, Marianthe, Melpomene, Moscho, Ourania, Pandora, Penelope, Polymnia, Polynike, Sapfo, Terpsichore, Troada, Haido, and Harikleia.

### The Beheading of St John the Baptist Commemorated on August 29<sup>th</sup>

St John was the forerunner of Christ, preparing the world for the Saviour. He is sometimes referred to as the Child of the Desert and the one who fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God* (40: 4).

St John was born to Panagia's cousin, Elizabeth, and Zachariah six months before Christ. The relationship between St John and Christ began from the womb, when Panagia visited Elizabeth and the unborn John leapt in his mother's womb on seeing Panagia!

As an adult, St John lived an ascetic life dressed in camel skin and surviving on locusts and wild honey. When he encountered someone, he spoke of the need to repent and began baptising in God's name in anticipation of the Christ who would baptise with the Holy Spirit. Christ himself, before embarking on his three-year ministry, approached His holy cousin to be baptised and declared John greatest amongst all (Mat 11:11).

Filled with divine courage, St John was unafraid to speak the truth, rebuking King Herod for his sinfulness in taking his brother's wife as his own. This made Herodias, Herod's new wife, furious. But Herod was aware of the high regard that many had for John, and did not act on his wife's vengeful fury.

However, at the time of the King's birthday, Herodias' daughter from her first marriage, Salome, danced pleasingly for the guests. Herod wished to lavish her with any reward she requested even up to half of his kingdom. Salome sought her mother's advice as to what gift to request. Herodias replied that she should request the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

The King was resistant, but knew he had made a promise that would be embarrassing to back out of. A soldier was then ordered to fulfill Herod's command, and Salome presented her mother with the trophy.

St John is one of the greatest Saints, and is commemorated on four occasions throughout the ecclesiastical year: 7 January, 24 June (his birth), 23 September (his conception) and 25 May (the finding of his head).

## 11th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

### The Gospel Parable of the Forgiving Master and the Unforgiving Servant, Matthew 18:23-35

<sup>23</sup> Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup> And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup> But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. <sup>26</sup> The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' <sup>27</sup> Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup> "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'" <sup>29</sup> So his fellow servant fell down <sup>[a]</sup>at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you <sup>[b]</sup>all.' <sup>30</sup> And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. <sup>32</sup> Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. <sup>33</sup> Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' <sup>34</sup> And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

<sup>35</sup> "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother <sup>[c]</sup>his trespasses."

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The parable challenges purely rationalistic logic by saying love is of extreme importance, far more important to Jesus than justice.

Note, the Master does not call the servant wicked for accruing a 10,000 talent debt (the amount of money is phenomenal, 10,000 years' worth of wages), but calls him evil when he refuses to forgive his fellow servant. Think about that – what was really the great problem, the important problem, the insurmountable problem of the parable? The debt is far beyond anyone's ability to repay, the servant had indebted himself beyond all reason, and just that foolishness deserved punishment, but the Master forgives. Why? Because he is of that up-side-down Kingdom of heaven, where love reigns supreme to such an extent that it is almost absurd.

The fellow servant uses exactly the same words the servant used in begging for mercy from the master, but the servant does not recognize himself or his own words! What about u? We hope for God's mercy daily, yet do we show mercy to others in our daily transactions? How many times do we ask for God's mercy in the Liturgy? *Lord, have mercy!* How many times do we have opportunity to show mercy to others each week?

Christ demands more from us, His disciples. Even forgiving isn't enough – we must *forgive from our hearts*. We are to drop all claims to those indebted to us. This isn't saying, "Forget about it." Rather, it is acknowledging the debt, the loss and the pain but then still forgiving with that trespass.

We know how people can get under our skin and just irritate us. Christ though says forget about them just getting under your skin – instead allow them to get into your heart, where despite their foibles and failures you forgive them. You turn your heart into the Kingdom of God.

If we cannot behave in a manner befitting the Kingdom of God right now in this life by practicing love and forgiveness, we will find no entrance into that Kingdom. We will not find the Kingdom either welcoming nor a place we want to be. We will find instead only that bitterness of exact justice that we demand in this world being given to us for all eternity. That is unlike the Kingdom in which complete and undeserved and unearned love and forgiveness is how God runs His Kingdom.

Jesus said, "*Blessed are the peacemakers.*" He didn't say blessed are the peace lovers. We have to take the action that brings about peace, not evade or avoid the problems of community.

- Fr Ted Bobosh

"A little study and a lot of prayer. We must participate in prayer and worship with our whole heart".  
St. Paisios