



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 7—13 August 2022

SUNDAY 7 AUGUST	8th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 14: 14-22 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
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.	
PLEASE NOTE: Dormition Fast: 1—14 August)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm PARAKLESIS TO THE THEOTOKOS <u>will take place daily</u> (except on 5th August which will be replaced by Vespers for the Holy Transfiguration and 14th August for Dormition of the Theotokos.)
MONDAY 8 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
SUNDAY 14 AUGUST	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 14: 22-34 EPISTLE READING: 1Corinthians 3: 9 -17

If God the Father chose Her, God the Holy Spirit descended upon Her, and God the Son dwelt in Her, submitted to Her in the days of His youth, was concerned for Her when hanging on the Cross—then should not everyone who confesses the Holy Trinity venerate Her?

St John Maximovitch

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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.

The Service of the Paraclesis to the Theotokos

The word “paraclesis” has two different meanings: the first is “consolation,” from which the Holy Spirit is called the “Paraclete,” or “Consoler”; the second is “supplication” or “petition”.

The Service of the Paraclesis to the Theotokos consists of hymns of supplication to obtain consolation and courage. It should be recited in times of temptation, discouragement or sickness. It is used more particularly during the two weeks before the Dormition, or Assumption, of the Theotokos, from August 1 to August 14. The theme of these Paraclesis Services centres around the petition. “Most Holy Mother of God, save us.

If you have a problem or if something is burdening your soul, if you feel spiritually uneasy and if you are not at peace with yourself and with those around you, then, you should come to the Church during the first fifteen days of August and ask for the intercessions of the Mother of God. Even if you are fortunate enough to be one of those very few who are at peace with themselves and with God, then those blessed ones should come to these services and thank God and His Blessed Mother for the blessings that they have bestowed upon you and your family.

Since these Paraclesis Services to the Theotokos are primarily petition for the welfare of the living, let the whole Church pray for you during the first fifteen days of August and especially on the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15th. Don’t let your laziness and your apathy cause you to miss this great blessing and inspiration that the Church can bestow upon you. Let the peace and holiness that only the Mother of God can give you enter into your life. “Let us lay aside all earthly cares,” and let us truly, during these fifteen days, participate in the fasting and prayer life of the Church so that we can “taste and see that the Lord is good” and so that we may fully experience the spiritual blessings that the Church.

8th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 14: 14-22

The Feeding of the Five Thousand

And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick. And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. And they say unto Him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to Me. And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children. And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away (Matthew 14:14-22).

We read the Gospel from year to year, and from generation to generation, in new contexts, in the face of new situations, whether they are historical or personal. And every time one passage or another may strike us in a new way.

Today we read the passage about the feeding of the multitude by Christ. More often than not the Fathers and the spiritual writers express their sense of wonder at the mercy of God and the power of God who could feed so many with so little; who could indeed work miracles within a world so much estranged from Him, as long as just a glimmer of faith, a crack in the armour of our faithlessness allowed Him to act.

Reading this passage of the Gospel today I was struck anew with the words of Christ. The disciples call upon Him to send away the multitude because the day is spent, the distance to the neighbouring villages is great, tiredness will overcome them, and darkness if they stay longer, for they have not eaten all day listening to the life-giving word of Christ. And Christ says to the disciples: No, they need not depart, give them you to eat. How can they feed a multitude of that kind? A thousand men, women and children, when all they have is five loaves of bread and two fishes. And here is Christ's challenge to them, and to us. Yes, in a way, God alone can perform this miracle; but not if we contribute with openness of heart, with an open hand and all we have. He did not say to His disciples: Keep as much as you need for yourselves and give the rest, your leftovers, to others; He said: Take all you have, and give it all.

Is this not something that the Lord says to us now in a very special way, in these days when we are so secure, so rich, so opulent, and when we hear day after day of the hunger, the misery, the death, indeed, from starvation of thousands and thousands of people? And what the Lord says to us is simply: Give what you have and let Me act afterwards; do not ask Me to work a miracle where you could do the thing yourselves.

The Apostles could do little; they could share only five loaves and two fishes, but we can share so much. If our hearts were open, and if from hearts of stone God had made hearts of flesh within us, if we had learned anything of generosity and of mutual responsibility, if we had learned a little about loving our neighbour actively, there would be no hunger in the world.

Today's Gospel says to us, 'Look around you'; look at every person who is hungry, every person who is homeless, every person who is in need, and remember that each of these people is your responsibility, that all their hunger, their homelessness, their misery is ultimately the result of your opulence, your comfort, your refusal to share, to give; not to give beyond your means — just to give.

If only we remembered what a certain saint says in his writings, that whenever he eats a morsel which is not a necessity, whenever he acquires or possesses anything beyond his strict needs, he has stolen it from the hungry, the homeless, from the one who has no clothes — he is a thief.

Does not this apply much more pointedly to us than to this ascetic? We must reflect on this, because we are behaving like bad, unworthy stewards; there is such a thing as stewardship of wealth, intellectual, moral, emotional and material. You remember probably the story of the unjust, the unfaithful steward who had cheated his master, stolen from him, and when he was to be dismissed by the master who had discovered his dishonesty, he called the people who owed money to his master and reduced their debt. This is something we could learn. He turned to people and gave whatever help he could; we do not. Let us reflect on the words of Christ, 'They need not depart from My presence in order to eat; you can give them what they need'. If we looked around us, not far beyond the seas, but just round us, at the needs of people who are hungry, who are homeless, who are deprived of rights, or simply our neighbours who are at times so lonely and need a word of comfort, friendship and solidarity, we would begin to fulfil this commandment of Christ.

But let us not deceive ourselves; it is not by words of consolation, by kind gestures that we will fulfil it. Christ said: Give all you have. And to us, perhaps, taking into account the little faith we have and the narrowness and hardness of our hearts, He will say: Give what is superfluous in your life; but give some thought to what is superfluous, to what you spend on yourself unnecessarily, without even deriving true joy and pleasure, or any advantage from it. Give it, and then leave it to God to do the rest.

This is the judgement of God on me; it is also the call of God addressed to each of you.

+ Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh