



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 18—24 September 2022

SUNDAY 18 SEPTEMBER	SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS, Mark 8: 34—9: 1 <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.	
MONDAY 19 SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
TUESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER <i>St Eustathios and His Companions, Great-Martyrs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos• 7.00pm Divine Liturgy in ENGLISH
THURSDAY 22 SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8.00—9.00pm ➡ TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP (In Church Hall upstairs behind Church) ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME
SUNDAY 25 SEPTEMBER	GOSPEL READING: Luke 5: 1-11 EPISTLE READING: 2 Corinthians 4: 6-15

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.

"Glory, O Lord, to the power of Thy Cross, which never fails! When the enemy oppresses me with a sinful thought or feeling, and I, lacking freedom in my heart, make the sign of the Cross several times with faith, suddenly my sin falls away from me, the compulsion vanishes, and I find myself free... For the faithful the Cross is a mighty power which delivers from all evils, from the malice of the invisible foe."
- St. John of Kronstadt

The Cross as the Way of Life

Our lives make sense. This may not always seem to be true, but it is. For each of us, there are inner principles that guide our decisions and prioritize our actions. Life is not entirely random.

Much of that inner sense of things is not conscious. The day becomes very busy, and we can't stop and analyse each action and think about its meaning and purpose. Sometimes, you just have to drive the kids to school, go to the store, the doctor, two other places, and do a dozen things at home and have dinner on the table. Our inner sense on many days is just survival.

We are not particularly burdened by our hardships, not when compared to the stretch of history. But we often neglect the true principles of our lives. "Necessity" is a very empty principle for getting through the day.

The central point of the Christian life is the Cross. It is more than a single event in history. It is *The* Event in history and continues as an eternal presence. The Cross of Christ is the revelation of God's true life in the world. The Cross is the proper shape of our existence. But what does that mean? Especially on a daily basis?

For one, it means that our true lives are not centered in ourselves. We are not created to be self-fulfilling. Our lives, especially in difficulty, find their right shape as we give ourselves to others. The Other and not the Self is the way of the Cross. This is extremely counter to our culture. Of course, the fullness of the Other is God. St. Paul says that our "true life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). We can only find ourselves outside of ourselves. There are very practical ways of applying this in our lives.

Prayer is directing our hearts outside of ourselves and towards God. Pray.

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Kindness places the other ahead of ourselves. Be kind.

Giving thanks acknowledges that our lives are not the products of our own efforts, but a gift from God. Give thanks always, for all things.

Forgiveness accepts the fact that our actions have consequences and the lives of those around us. The refusal to forgive is a radical separation of ourselves from others. Forgive. Forgive everyone for everything.

We do not exist to consume. We have our daily needs. Satisfying them is enough. If our true life is found outside of ourselves, then sharing what we have with others is the most natural thing to do with our possessions. Give stuff away. The more, the better.

Lying is the ultimate act of selfishness. It is an attempt to create a false reality that exists only in our own perverse attempt to remake the world and avoid the truth. Do not lie. Do not participate in the lie.

The Cross is the way of life. Learn to love the Cross. Make the sign of the Cross frequently. Indeed the Fathers say we should cross ourselves before beginning anything. And when we are done, we cross ourselves in thanksgiving. The Cross is the remembrance of God and the truth of our lives. Our lives are not our own. They belong to the Crucified God who invites His friends to join Him in the most pure act of love.

Love God. Love His Cross.

- Fr. Stephen Freeman



Saint Eustace and his Companions

Saint Nikodimos the Athonite

The great martyr for Christ Eustace (Eustathios) was a soldier of renown in Rome at the time of the Emperor Trajan in about the year 100, and was known as the most acclaimed of all for his virtue, courtesy, disposition, charity and sympathy towards the poor. He had previously been called Placidus and his wife was Tatiana.

When he was still enslaved to the delusion of the idols, because of his great devotion and nobility, he was deemed worthy of being called to the faith by God, as Saint Paul had been. This happened because once, when he was hunting a stag and had drawn quite close to it, he saw, between its antlers, the precious Cross, which was shining more brightly than the sun. And he saw Christ, Who was crucified for us, standing there and heard a voice which said: "Placidus, why are you persecuting me. It's me, Christ". He was then schooled in the ways of piety by Christ and he and all his family were baptized. Placidus was named Eustathios, his wife Theopisti; one son became Agapios and the other Theopistos.

After this he was taught by Christ, who appeared to him, the temptations he was to undergo as a trial, like Job. And that he would be handed over to a demon which would test him. And so at once he, his wife and children left all their possessions and their homeland. On the voyage, he was robbed of his wife by the captain, a barbarous and brutal man. Both his children were taken by wild animals as they were crossing a river. Despite this, through Divine Providence, the wife and children were kept safe and sound. Eustathios thereafter worked for a wage and lived the life of a labourer, though he'd once been rich and an officer. But he suffered this bravely, with an adamant spirit, for no short length of time.

But since it happened that barbarians attacked the Roman lands, a search was made for someone who could be of assistance in this barbaric war. Then the emperor remembered bold Eustathios with his former feats and victories. A search was organized throughout the world, though Eustathios was barely remembered by the emperor's men, who were astonished at the miserable picture he presented and the poor condition in which he found himself.

When he'd been presented to the emperor and honoured magnificently by him, he regained his former rank. He led the campaign against the barbarians and routed them utterly.

On the way back to Rome after the war, by the dispensation of our ingenious God, he found his wife and children again and recognized them. So God was glorified by all because of the miracle He'd arranged to happen for them.

But when he got back to Rome with his wife and children, however, in 117, he found that Hadrian was emperor. The emperor rewarded Eustathios with great gifts for his victory and urged him to make a sacrifice of thanks to the gods. Eustathios replied however, that he had achieved this victory with the power of Christ, not that of the idols. This enraged the tyrant.

In the first place, he stripped him of his rank as general. Then he fed him and his children to wild lions, but when he saw that they were unharmed by the animals, he ordered that they be put into a red-hot metal contrivance in the shape of a bull.

And so, on the one hand, their sacred souls were given into the hands of God, and, on the other, their holy bodies remained entirely untouched by the fire. Those who were not of the faith were moved to astonishment and to faith in Christ, whereas the Christians were moved to praise God. The faithful then took the relics and buried them with veneration.

Source: *Saint Nikodimos the Athonite, Συναξαριστής*, vol. I, pubd. by The Brotherhood of Hieromonk Spyridon, New Skete-Holy Mountain, pp. 153-6.