



Parish Information Bulletin

9—15 October 2022

Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church
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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.

SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER

3rd SUNDAY OF LUKE, 7th ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Luke 7: 11-16

- 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 10 OCTOBER

- 9.00am
Service of Holy Unction
- 10.00am
Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall

WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER

- 5.00pm
Paraklesis to the Theotokos

THURSDAY 13 OCTOBER

- 8.00—9.00pm
➡ **TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP**
(In Church Hall upstairs behind Church)
ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME

SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER

GOSPEL READING: Luke 8: 5-15
EPISTLE READING: Titus 3: 8-15

“To have faith in Christ means more than simply despising the delights of this life. It means we should bear all our daily trials that may bring us sorrow, distress, or unhappiness, and bear them patiently for as long as God wishes and until He comes to visit us. For it is said, ‘I waited on the Lord and He came to me.’”

— St. Symeon the New Theologian

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS OF THE SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

On this day in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate the holy and blessed Fathers who came together for the second time in Nicaea, during the reign of the pious and Christ-loving Sovereigns Constantine and Irene, against those who impiously, ignorantly and foolishly asserted that the Church of God worshiped idols, and rejected the august and holy icons.

The Council met in 787 to refute the Iconoclast heresy, whose camp believed that all depictions of Christ, His Mother and the saints should be destroyed. The iconophiles believed that icons served to preserve the doctrinal teachings of the Church; and they considered icons to be man's dynamic way of expressing the divine through art and beauty. The council decreed that the veneration of icons was not idolatry (Exodus 20:4-5), because the honour shown to them is not directed to the wood or paint, but passes to the prototype, or the person depicted. It also upheld the possibility of depicting Christ, Who became man and took flesh at His Incarnation. The Father, on the other hand, cannot be represented in His eternal nature, because “no man has seen God at any time” (John 1:18).

By the intercessions of the Holy Fathers, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

3rd SUNDAY OF LUKE, 7th ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Luke 7: 11-16

Jesus Raises the Son of the Widow of Nain

"And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep" (vs.12-13).

These few words, "Do not weep", encompass the whole purpose of Christ's coming to the world. Today's moving gospel reading from Luke 7:11-17 reminds us that Jesus came to wipe away our tears, to soften our pain, and to lighten the burden of life. One can only imagine how painful must have been the grief of the widow on her way to the cemetery to bury her only child - a son. St. Luke tells us that a "large crowd from the city was with her", but no matter how many people around her, she was now alone and aware only of her pain and grief. In the beautiful city of Nain in the region of Galilee, all she could see was two graves - that of her husband and now that of her only son. Now we might hastily think that this is simply the tragic story of one woman. But isn't it really everyone's story? Life can be beautiful for a while, but inevitably the day comes when it is no longer so. There is suffering; there is trouble; there is war; there is death. The result of all this is grief - an utterly painful experience that all of us must at some point in life come to terms with.

But how does one handle grief effectively? In the twentieth century we live in an age of miracle drugs. There are few pains which science today cannot lessen or eliminate completely with medication. Yet there is no pill or sedative that can ease the anguish, loneliness and suffering of a grieving and broken heart. Medical authorities tell us that the mismanagement of grief causes all sorts of illnesses from ulcers to psychosis. It may even lead to suicide. Now some people feel that the greatest cure for grief is time. Yet time alone will not heal grief completely. Time can do terrible things to grief. It can turn it into bitter resentment which can poison the body and the mind. If we are to cure grief we must co-operate with time in ways which are constructive.

One of the most serious mistakes we can make is to refuse to express our grief or to keep it bottled up. It is such unexpressed grief that causes all sorts of physical and mental ailments. Modern psychiatry has emphasized that when the eyes refuse to cry, other organs in the body will begin to cry with all kinds of illnesses resulting. Thus a very constructive way of expressing grief is to let the tears flow.

Unfortunately in our culture we often equate tears with weakness. We even say, "If that person had enough faith as a Christian they would not cry." Yet tears have nothing to do with weakness or lack of faith. When Lazarus died, St. John clearly tells us that "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). And the next verse says very simply but profoundly; "And the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him.'" The fact that Jesus wept teaches us that sorrow is natural. Jesus wept even though he is the Source of life. Tears are an expression of love. Even the sure knowledge of eternal life will not take all the grief out of the human heart when we lose a loved one. St. Paul says, "Do not grieve as others who have no hope." He is not saying that we should not grieve, but that we should grieve with Christian hope.

To facilitate the healthy expression of grief, our Church conducts memorial services on specific Saturdays throughout the year and on anniversaries of our loved ones' passing. The Church has always realized that in many ways a grieving person is like a steam engine. Unless the steam can escape in a controlled way, pressure will build up and the boiler will explode.

Now in today's gospel reading we saw the widow walking behind her son's coffin on the way to the cemetery. Her hopes, her aspirations, her dreams were being buried in that coffin. The procession of death was making its way through the city gates.

But there was another procession that day: Jesus and His disciples and a great crowd with Him. The two processions met at the city gate. "When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then He came and touched the open coffin...And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." And he who was dead sat up and began to speak. (vs.13-15)

There were two processions that day! At the head of one was a corpse - symbolizing despair, grief, sorrow, the helplessness and hopelessness of mankind. But at the head of the other was Christ, the Eternal, the Saviour, sent to stop mankind's tragic journey to the grave and to offer hope, peace, salvation and eternal life. St. Luke then continues by telling us that after the dead man sat up and began to speak, Jesus "gave him to his mother" (v.15). We notice here that the gospel says "gave him" and not "restored him". Jesus, in raising the young man, had acquired a special right of possession over him, and it is a gracious gift that He now made to the mother.

Today's gospel passage shows us Jesus's compassion triumphing over death, and it is one of the three gospel accounts where He was seen to raise a dead person. The other two accounts involved the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and the raising of Lazarus. In each of the three cases it seems that it is the compassion that Jesus felt for the sorrowing relatives which was the foremost cause of the miracle. (We note that Jesus did not even ask the widow to express her faith - as He had done before performing other miracles - but merely acted in response to her grief.)

Now if this element of compassion is the first to be emphasised, it cannot be ignored that the miracles of resurrection have another cause also: they demonstrate that Jesus has all power over life and death. Some details of today's gospel throw light on this power: there is the authority with which Jesus (by a sign) stopped the procession; then the solemn and imperative form of the words, "I say to you, arise"; and the fact that the Evangelist Luke, who in the first verses of the same chapter speaks simply of "Jesus", now uses the word "Lord", for this was an encounter in which the Lord of life confronted death and human grief.

We also notice that the three cases of resurrection reported in the gospels cover all the successive physical aspects of death. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus when she was still lying on her bed, He raised the son of the widow of Nain while he was being carried out in a coffin, and He raised Lazarus who was already buried and decomposing. Jesus's power over death is absolute. This applies just as much to different degrees of spiritual death as it does to different degrees of physical death, and the gospel accounts of resurrection indicate symbolically how Jesus restores life to sinners. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," said Jesus. "Whoever believes in me, though they die, yet shall they live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26). Amen.