



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 25 June—1 July 2023

SUNDAY 25 JUNE	3rd SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 6: 22-33 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
2023 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES - 2023 (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 26 JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
WEDNESDAY 28 JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
THURSDAY 29 JUNE <i>Saints Peter and Paul, the Holy Glorious Leaders of the Apostles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 8.00—9.00pm ➡ TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP 2023 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
FRIDAY 30 JUNE <i>Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles</i>	7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SUNDAY 2 JULY	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 8: 5-13 EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 9: 1-7

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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.

Synaxis of the Twelve Holy Apostles

The names of the Twelve Apostles are these: Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew, the First-called; James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, who was also the Evangelist and Theologian; Philip, and Bartholomew (see also June 11); Thomas, and Matthew the publican, who was also called Levi and was an Evangelist; James the son of Alphaeus, and Jude (also called Lebbaeus, and surnamed Thaddaeus), the brother of James, the Brother of God; Simon the Canaanite ("the Zealot"), and Matthias, who was elected to fill the place of Judas the traitor.

These men's lives were changed once having come to know Christ our Lord; they showed us this was a change not out of duty, but of love—by their most precious sacrifice. They left families, jobs, homes, earthly comforts—they gave all, even themselves. By tracing their travels on a map we see the drive within them; their love for Christ Preaches at Pentecost; to share His love and salvation with others. They comforted, helped, freed from fear, guilt and sin, healed from sickness, all, regardless of danger and obstacles. They opened mankind's eyes to Truth and Love and bestowed us the Gospel of joy and hope. We remember them especially and honour them through the ages.

Let us also remember here how these most holy and selfless men in the history of the world died and finished their earthly course:

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Peter was crucified upside-down.
Andrew was crucified.
James was beheaded.
John the Theologian died in a wondrous way.
Philip was crucified.
Bartholomew was crucified, then flayed and beheaded.
Thomas was pierced with five spears.
Matthew was burned by fire.
James the Son of Alphaeus was crucified.
Thaddeus was crucified.
Simon the Zealot was crucified.
Matthias was stoned, then beheaded with an axe when dead.
Paul was beheaded.

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

Faith and Hope: Catching a Glimpse of Eternal Life

Our life in Christ always means working out our salvation in relationship to the church, to our neighbours, to our family, to strangers, and even to enemies and to the world itself. The goal of this love is to help build up in us a concern for others. In Matthew 6:22-33, our Lord Jesus Christ tells us numerous times not to be anxious. He concludes his anti-anxiety lesson with these words:

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.

Do not be anxious about your life – Jesus taught us liberation from anxiety, concern and worry – that was His idea of freedom and independence. Freedom from concern not because God grants us our every wish, but rather He taught us that by being united to God in prayer, we learn how to be content in every situation. We learn to be thankful always and in all circumstances. Worry doesn't take away tomorrow's problems, it only takes the joy out of today. Faith in God on the other hand helps us to look to God and for God in every circumstance.

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

If we are united to God, we will not be shaken by the events happening in our lives. As St Paul says in Philippians 4:6-7,

Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

We are told not to be anxious, but rather to pray. Yet, we are also warned that problems will arise, but that in Christ, if we stand firmly with Christ, we will have reason to hope even in the face of problems because in Christ we are already united to God. In Christ we are united to God even through times of sorrow or suffering, as we heard St Paul say in today's Epistle:

*Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and **hope** does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. (Romans 5:1-10)*

In the midst of all that troubles us, bothers us, weighs us down, confuses us, or causes us to suffer, there is hope – that is what our faith in Jesus Christ is and produces. The world doesn't have the last/final say, there is yet a judgment of this world, and this world as we know it as well as our own lives will become visible to us from a new perspective in which this world and our lives will seem small and unimportant in the grand scale of things. Our hope is Jesus Christ, our belief is that Christ is the real context of our life. We may suffer in this life, yet in faith we are never separated from Christ even in times of distress or sorrow or sickness. We endeavour to keep ourselves in Christ so that we can always be united to God, to that bigger picture of which this world is only a tiny part. It is this bigger perspective – the eternity of the Kingdom – that gives us hope in our current moment

Many of the original twelve disciples of Christ made a living by catching fish – they sought out fish in the sea, trying to discover where the fish were so they could catch them. Jesus promised to make them into fishers of men rather than fishers of fish. In other words, He promised to redirect their life and work to seek out people and to work for God not just for themselves. Jesus wants us also to produce a harvest for Him – to seek out people and bring them into the church. The words of Jesus, "*follow me*", are spoken to you. Jesus invites you to follow Him and you do that by seeking out other people to join you in your Christian life.

We however often persist in following our own dreams and our own way forgetting the concerns of Christ and the Gospel. We build our dreams, but then sometimes a tornado comes along and teaches us how fragile and temporary life is. Some of the tornadoes are meteorological events, other tornadoes are simply people in our lives. Sometimes in these events we are forced to look at the fact that we have been devoting our lives to build things that are temporary rather than eternal or permanent.

Jesus says, "*Come, follow me*" and I will give you something permanent – eternal life. Not a house that can be broken into or blown away by a tornado, but a room in the heavenly mansion. Not a catch of fish, but an entire kingdom.

And Peter said, "Lo, we have left our homes and followed you." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no man who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive manifold more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life." (Luke 18:28-30) - Fr. Ted Bobosh