



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 16—22 July 2023

Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church
9387 7693

Fr Athanasios
9383 4151

Fr Ephraim
0490 378 215

Website:
stvasiliosbrunswick.com

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 16 JULY | FATHERS OF THE 4TH COUNCIL, Matthew 5: 14-19 <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 17 JULY <i>St Marina, Great-Martyr</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall |
| WEDNESDAY 19 JULY | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos |
| THURSDAY 20 JULY <i>Glorious Prophet Elijah the Tishbite</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy |
| SUNDAY 23 JULY | GOSPEL READING: Matthew 9: 27-35 EPISTLE READING: Romans 15: 1-7 |

The Holy Prophet Elijah (Elias), the Tishbite Open To God's Voice

On July 20th, in the calendar of the Church, we celebrate the Feast of The Holy Prophet Elijah (Elias), the Tishbite, the Great Prophet. For us of the Orthodox Faith and particularly those of us who are from the Arab countries, Holy Prophet St. Elias has particular renown. You will notice, especially with those coming from the old country in the last ten, fifteen or twenty years, the two most popular names amongst Orthodox Christians are George and Elias. All of the young men that are named Elie, for example, are named after this particular Prophet and Saint.

When we read in the first book of Kings of the life of this great Prophet we find that not too much is written. He is involved in perhaps seven or eight pages of the Old Testament but the events of those pages are profound. I think that at least one of the lessons to be learned from the Life of St. Elias is that need for us to be open at all times to God's message and His inspiration. Our Elias was a man of Tishbe, a small village in Gilead. There was nothing so exceptional about him except that he was open to God's will and when God called upon Him to express His intentions to the King and the people of Israel, because Elias was open to Him, He heard that message and was able to transmit it clearly and freely.

Now there are many prophets that come forth. Some are true and some are false prophets. We are called upon to recognize them for what they are by virtue of our faith and the spiritual intuition that is within us. Those who speak with the voice of God differ from those who speak with the voices of someone else.

Ahab, the King of Israel, did not recognize the prophetic voice of God in St. Elias simply because he himself was not open to the scriptures. Ahab, who was a Hebrew, a son of Israel who had been raised in the Mosaic traditions had turned away from the face of God as had his predecessors. Therefore when the voice of God came to him through Elijah the prophet, he was stone deaf to that voice. There was no way that he nor his pagan wife, Jezebel, could possibly be inspired or guided by that divine, prophetic voice.

Many of us think that we are living a godly life but because we are turned off to scriptures, because we are not open to the prophetic voices of the Church, because we have turned our thoughts away from the sacred traditions which have been preserved and handed down for us for five thousand years, we can no longer hear the sounds of inspiration and guidance. As a result, many of us follow after the voices of false prophets.

For this reason there is a rise of cultism in our society that has never been preceded. There is a need for people to know God. There is an innate need for them to know a power higher than themselves, to find the source of all reality, the source of all truth. But when they are not tuned in to the Truths of Scripture, when they are not a part of that main flow of Divine Revelation that has been a part of mankind's history for five thousand years or more, then, when the voice of God does come to them, the chances of their hearing it are very scarce.

Let us turn another way, the way of Holy Prophet Elias. Let us be attuned to the Voice of the Lord as it comes to us through the mouths of His preachers and His prophets. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Some have been given the gift of prophecy and some the gift of preaching, but many more have been given the gift of hearing. Unfortunately, as I said before, we can hear the Voice of God only if we are open to the Word of God. We cannot be open to that Word of God unless we attune ourselves thereto with regularity, with faithfulness and with humility.

Then, unlike Ahab, when we hear the voice of a true prophet, we will recognize it as the Voice of God being spoken through the mouth of His creature who is open to Him, as we are.

- Fr. James C. Meena

FATHERS OF THE 4TH COUNCIL, Matthew 5: 14-19

You are the Light of the World

Years ago a young missionary doctor was embarking on a ship for China. Despite the pleas of his friends, he insisted on making the voyage. "Look," they said, "you are absolutely helpless against the suffering of that giant nation. You will disappear in that vast mass of humanity. What can you do about their epidemics? What can you accomplish against war, famine, flood?"

As he stepped up the gangplank, the young doctor gave his answer: "When it is dark about me, I do not curse the darkness, I just light my candle."

One tiny candle can pierce and destroy the darkness that surrounds it.

A story is told of a man at sea who was very seasick. If there is a time when a man feels that he cannot do any work, it is then. But he heard that a man had fallen overboard. He couldn't do much, but he laid hold of a light and held it up to the porthole. The light happened to fall on the drowning man's hand, and a man caught him and pulled him into the lifeboat. It seemed a small thing to do to hold up the light, yet it saved the man's life.

Jesus said in today's Gospel lesson: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

It seems that Jesus is talking our language here. We all like to shine. We are only too willing to have people see our good works and praise us. But here is the hitch. Jesus does not say that people will praise us but our "Father who is in heaven." Our sole business is to glorify Him and so let our light shine that others will glorify Him too.

"Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them." These are the words of the same Lord who tells us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Notice that Jesus is not begging or pleading with his disciples. There is nothing here about trying to become the light of the world. He merely announces a fact: "You are the light of the world." This is what God chooses to make of us. This is how God uses our obedience to Him — to illumine the darkness of the world.

No Invisible Christians

Obviously Jesus does not mean for us to try to impress people with our piety and good works. But He is warning us that we cannot be invisible Christians. When a man becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ, he is committed to a way of life that sometimes will stick out like a sore thumb. In his attitude toward other people, in his sense of values, in the use of his money, and in a thousand other ways the Christian will be visibly different. Not because we want it that way. Not because we try to get attention. But only because God is calling us to be obedient in ways that cannot be hid. As you cannot hide a city that has been set on a hill, so there is no way that you can hide the kind of obedience that is required of a disciple of Jesus. It will shine.

High-Fidelity Christians

The need today is for high-fidelity Christians. A high-fidelity record player is one that plays back recordings through speakers which give very high fidelity to original sounds. Fidelity, or faithfulness, is a virtue greatly prized in people as well as in record players. It means faithfulness to the original, a careful and exact reproduction of the highest standard. Because we are Christians, life for us becomes a very special high fidelity project. The original is our Lord Jesus Christ. From Him we hear what He wants us to be. And through obedience, through the grace and strength He gives us in prayer and the sacraments, we reproduce the original in our lives as faithfully as possible.

In a society that is so widely and deeply unchristian, our Lord expects us to live, in the words of St. Paul, as "blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15).

We are not to conform to the sinful world around us. We are called to be different, conformed to God in Christ. We are called to reflect not the mores of our culture, but the mind of Christ. We are not only businessmen, waiters, bus boys, secretaries, teachers, but children of God and heirs of His kingdom. We are in this world, yet not of this world, said Jesus. We belong to God. The Gulf Stream is in the ocean, yet it is not a part of it. It maintains its own warm temperatures even in the icy waters of the North Atlantic. It creates a climate of its own wherever it goes. St. Paul said to the Ephesians: "Once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8). We are called to create a "Christ" climate wherever we go.

Source: *"Gems from the Sunday and Feasts Gospel" - Anthony M. Coniaris*