



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 17—23 September 2023

SUNDAY 17 SEPTEMBER	SUNDAY AFTER EXALTATION OF PRECIOUS CROSS, Mark 8: 34-38, 9: 1 • 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
<b>2023 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES - 2023</b> (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 18 SEPTEMBER	• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER <i>St Eustathios and His Companions, Great-Martyrs</i>	• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy • 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER	GOSPEL READING: Luke 5: 1-11 EPISTLE READING: 1Timothy 3: 10-15

### 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.

**We make known to all that a Greek Language School operates in our Parish.**

**Primary school classes: every Saturday, from 9.00am to 12.30pm**

**High School classes: every Monday, from 5.00 to 8.30pm.**

**For inquiries and enrolments : 0401 051773**

### FOR CONSIDERATION

The mysterious power of the Cross, however inexplicable, is true and indisputable.

St John Chrysostom speaks of the custom that obtained in his time, of placing the sign of the Cross 'on the imperial diadem and the soldiers' accoutrements, and of making it on parts of the body: the head, the breast and the heart, both at the table of sacrifice and on lying down in bed.' 'If', he says, 'we are striving to drive out demons, we use the Cross, and it is also of aid in healing sickness.'

St Benedict made the sign of the Cross over a glass containing poison, and the glass shattered as if struck by a stone. St Julian made the sign of the Cross over a cup of poison brought to him, and drank the poison, suffering no bodily harm from it. The holy martyr Vasilissa of Nicomedia protected herself with the sign of the Cross and stood in the midst of the flames, remaining completely untouched. The holy martyrs Audon and Senis crossed themselves when ravaging wild animals were let loose on them, and the beasts became docile and meek as lambs.

The sign of the Cross has been the most powerful weapon against great temptations from demons, from the early ascetics down to the present day. The most ferocious of the devil's devisings are dispersed into nothing, like smoke, when a man signs himself with the Cross. Thus it was the good will of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself that the erstwhile sign of wickedness and shame, the cross, should, after His Crucifixion on the wood of the cross, be the vehicle of all-conquering power and might.

- St Nikolai Velimirovic, *The Prologue from Ochrid*

## SUNDAY AFTER EXALTATION OF PRECIOUS CROSS, Mark 8: 34-38, 9: 1

Dear brothers and sisters,

We heard today the Gospel narrative the Lord's teaching on the salvation of the soul and how our salvation is deeply rooted in the Cross. Jesus said today in the Gospel, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Taking up one's cross does not imply wearing a cross around your neck, neither does it suggest to lift up on your shoulders and giant and heavy cross. The experience of the cross is when we sacrifice our own will and subject it to the will of the other, repeating in ourselves what the Lord did in Gethsemane in relation to the will of his Father.

When we see the Lord crucified on the cross, we are witnessing the culmination of his *kenosis*, which literally means one's self-emptying; losing oneself. Jesus says today, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it". When we hold onto something, we lose it, but when we let go, strangely, we find it. This kenotic way is the only way that befits the Christian. Without it, we would deny the true value of the Cross, but we also deny the true value of the salvation of our souls. "or what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" In this passage, the Lord underlines the huge importance of the soul. There is nothing in this world — nor in the next, as a matter of fact — more precious and valuable than our soul.

If a person was to travel the universe, and visit all the planets and expanses of this, or even perhaps live a life full of victories and trophies, but in the end lose their soul, what would be gained? Absolutely nothing. For there is nothing a person can give in exchange for their soul. The Lord is referring here to the importance of the soul, and he also raises the question, "What is the soul?" Many have tried in the past to define the soul, but have failed. Just as many have failed to define the human body. However, there are some descriptions of the soul that resonate more than others. St Gregory of Nyssa describes the soul as being 'in the image and likeness of God', St Irenaeus calls it 'the breath of life', and St Athanasius goes on to say that, 'The soul is in essence noetic, ethereal, bodiless, without change, and eternal'. All these statements confirm just how precious and important the soul is. So precious, indeed, that the Lord "sent his only begotten Son", the Word and Logos of the Father, "that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Let us therefore reaffirm our faith in the Lord and, in the spirit of thanksgiving and love, give glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Archimandrite Chrysostomos Michaelides*

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"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*

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### THE POWER OF THE CROSS

The power of the cross in the unseen warfare with the demons is illustrated in countless lives of saints, One of the most striking examples is found in the life of the holy martyrs, Sts. Cyprian and Justina (Oct. 2). An expert sorcerer before his conversion, St. Cyprian was engaged by a pagan youth to use his magic in order to seduce the Christian maid Justina. But even with the help of the prince of demons, the sorcerer was powerless before the maiden who "fled to the defence of the Cross of the Lord and placed its honourable Men on her forehead," causing the demons to depart in shame. This brought Cyprian to his senses, and he railed at the evil one whom he had served for so long: "O destroyer and deceiver of all .... Now I have discovered your infirmity. For if you fear even the shadow of the cross and tremble at the name of Christ, then what will you do when Christ Himself comes to you?"

Furious at Cyprian's rebuke, the devil began to beat and strangle him. Already scarcely alive, Cyprian "remembered the sign of the cross, by the power of which Justina had opposed all the demons' power, and he cried out: 'O God of Justina, help me! Then, raising his hand, he made the sign of the Cross, and the devil immediately leaped away from him like an arrow shot from a bow."