



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 3—9 September 2023

SUNDAY 3 SEPTEMBER	13th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 21: 33-42 <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 4 SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
WEDNESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 8 SEPTEMBER <i>Nativity of the Theotokos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SUNDAY 10 SEPTEMBER	GOSPEL READING: John 3: 13-17 EPISTLE READING: Galatians 6: 11-18

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.

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

The Nativity of the Most-Holy Theotokos September 8

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on September 8 each year. The Feast commemorates the birth of the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The birth and early life of the Virgin Mary is not recorded in the Gospels or other books of the New Testament, however this information can be found in a work dating from the second century known as the Book of James or Protevangelion.

According to the story found in this book, Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, were childless for many years. They remained faithful to God, but their prayers for a child were unanswered. One day, when Joachim came to the temple to make an offering, he was turned away by the High Priest who chastised him for his lack of children. To hide his shame, Joachim retreated to the hill country to live among the shepherds and their flocks.

As Joachim was praying, his wife Anna was praying at the same time at their house in Jerusalem. An angel appeared to both of them and announced that Anna would have a child whose name would be known throughout the world. Anna promised to offer her child as a gift to the Lord. Joachim returned home, and in due time Anna bore a daughter, Mary.

Troparion of the Feast

Your Nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe! The Sun of Righteousness,
Christ our God, has shone from you,
O Theotokos! By annulling the curse, He bestowed a blessing.
By destroying death, He has granted us eternal life.

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13th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 21: 33-42

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Today's Gospel is the parable of the vineyard. An owner built a vineyard, hedged it around, built a winepress and a tower and then let it out to tenants. When he sent servants to take the rent, they were beaten and stoned. He sent others, but they did the same. And when the owner sent own his son, they killed him.

In this parable, the vineyard is Israel. The owner is God. Israel is hedged around with natural borders. The winepress is the altar, the tower is the Temple. The tenants are the Jews. The servants are those sent by God, the prophets and holy ones who reminded the Jews that Israel was not theirs but God's. But what did the Jews do? They beat and stoned and killed first the servants and then the heir, the Son of God. Why? Because they wanted everything for themselves. And so they ceased to be God's people, they ceased to be Israel and were cast out of their land and scattered over all the face of the earth. Israel was given to others: the New Israel, the Church, was born.

However, this parable is also addressed today to us Orthodox of the New Israel. The vineyard is the planet where we Orthodox Christians live. It is hedged around by the presence of the Church. The wine-press is the altar. And the tower is the Church. And the servants are the saints. And we Orthodox should ask ourselves what we have done with God's saints who have been sent twice for our repentance?

When the remnant of the Roman Empire in Constantinople was under threat, God sent one of His servants there, St Mark of Ephesus, to warn the Orthodox to keep faith with the Church. Many did not, and so the Empire fell.

When the mighty Russian Empire was under threat at the beginning of the last century, God sent another servant and prophet, St John of Kronstadt, to warn the people to repent. Many did not, and so that Empire too fell.

Always those who have denied Christ and His Church have thought that the world belonged to them and that therefore they could do what they wanted with it. Always they have wanted to replace Christ with their own philosophies and ideologies and politics, their own religion. God has sent servants to us Orthodox of the New Israel twice; the next time He will send His Son and that will be the Second Coming, the Coming of the Heir.

This parable is also addressed to each of us today in a personal sense. The vineyard is our own soul. It is hedged around with prayer, our guardian-angel, our patron-saint. The wine-press is where we offer ourselves to Christ. The tower is our inner church where we pray to God. We are tenants of our God-created souls. The servants sent to us are all those occasions when God speaks to us. He speaks to us in prayer, He speaks to us through the word of His Scriptures, He speaks to us through every opportunity, every meeting, every event that comes into our lives. He speaks to us through the presence of His Church in the world.

And how do we react? Do we reject everything sent to us, everything allowed to us, as a chance to do better, to make good our weaknesses? Do we fail to heed God? Do we ignore the Church? If so, then we too beat and stone and kill the servants of God. We are warned: the Heir is coming.

At the end of the parable of the vineyard, Christ says: 'The stone that the builders rejected is become the head of the corner, and it is marvellous in our eyes'. The stone rejected is of course the Rock of Faith, Christ Himself, for He was rejected and crucified. And yet He became the head of the corner and it is marvellous in our eyes. Let us too be rocks of faith then, and though the world will reject us, we too shall become heads of the corner, and it will be marvellous in the eyes of God and men. Glory to Thee, O God, glory to Thee! Amen.

<http://orthodoxengland.org.uk/serm13ap.htm>

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September 6 - Commemoration of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossae (Chonae) (4thc)

The feast today in honour of the Archangel Michael commemorates the great miracle he wrought when he delivered from destruction a church and holy spring named for him. The pagans, moved by malice, sought to destroy the aforesaid church and holy spring by turning the course of two rivers against them. But the Archangel appeared and, by means of the Cross and a great earthquake that shook the entire area, diverted the waters into an underground course. Henceforth, the name of that place changed from Colossae to Chonae, which means "funnels" in Greek.