



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 2 - 8 June 2024

CHRISTOS ANESTI ! CHRIST IS ARISEN!

SUNDAY 2 JUNE

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN, John 4: 5-42

- 7.30am
Orthros and Divine Liturgy

2024 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 3 JUNE

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

WEDNESDAY 5 JUNE

- 5.00pm
Paraklesis to the Theotokos

THURSDAY 6 JUNE

- 8.00—9.00pm
➡ **TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP 2024**
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

SUNDAY 9 JUNE

GOSPEL READING: John 9: 1-38
EPISTLE READING: Acts 16: 16-34

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.

On Leading Others to Christ

Nothing is more frigid than a Christian who does not care about the salvation of others. You cannot plead the excuse of poverty here; the widow who gave her two mites will stand to accuse you. Peter said, "Silver or gold I have none." Paul was so poor he often went hungry, lacking the necessary food. You cannot plead lowliness. They were of low estate and so were their parents. You cannot allege lack of education or preparation. They were unlearned men. You cannot plead infirmity. Timothy was often laid low by sickness and the Apostle had to counsel him to take a little wine for his stomach. Everyone can profit his neighbour if he will do what he can.

Do not say, It is impossible for me to lead others to the faith. If you are a Christian, it is impossible for it not to be so. The natural properties of things cannot be denied. This witnessing to others is part of the very nature of being a Christian. It would be easier for the sun to cease to shine and give forth heat than for a Christian not to send forth light; easier for the light to be darkness than for this to be so.

Source: *Daily Readings from the Writings of St. John Chrysostom*—A.M. Coniaris



FORGIVENESS

Never despair of God's mercy, no matter what sins you may have been bound through the tempting of the devil, but pray with your whole heart, with the hope of forgiveness; knock at the door of God's mercy, and it shall be opened to you. Do not despair, then, what sins you have committed, only repent and confess them with a contrite heart and humble spirit.

Father John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ*

Source: *Through the Year with the Church Fathers*, Presbytera Emily Harakas

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN, John 4: 5-42

WHAT GOD GIVES

"If you only knew what God gives" (John 4:10)

Life is filled with gifts. Every person is a gift. A family is a gift. A child is a gift. A friend is a gift. The sun is a gift. The sea is a gift. A tree is a gift. A flower is a gift. Health is a gift. Love is a gift. Laughter is a gift. The air we breathe is a gift. The water we drink is a gift. The earth upon which we walk is a gift. Talking with a neighbour is a gift. Reading a book is a gift. Looking at the stars is a gift.

All gifts! In the Liturgy the congregation offers bread and wine to God. When he lifts up the gifts in a gesture of giving, the priest, representing the congregation, cries out to God: "We offer to You these gifts from Your own gifts in all and for all!"

Everything is a gift! But do you know what God gives?

"For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son" (John 3:16).

"He gave us His Son — will He not also freely give us all things" (Romans 8:32)?

"It is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

In His dialogue with the Samaritan woman Christ began with the gift of water to lead her and the other Samaritans to a higher gift — "life-giving water" or "living water" (John. 4:10). In Greek the phrase *hydor zon* means literally "running water." Jesus used the image to convey the higher meaning of new life through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The living water is Christ Himself in His person, teaching, and saving work. The living water is the Holy Spirit, the fountain from which flow streams of blessings. The living water is also the gift of grace in a Christian's heart which becomes a spring of holiness, goodness, and love, welling up to eternal life. "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water'" (John 7:37-38, RSV).

Do you know the gift of God? A story is told about a jewel and a jewel box. A king once gave a precious jewel to someone. To safeguard the jewel its new owner and his family decided to put it in a jewel box. Because the jewel was so valuable a beautiful jewel box was Grafted. The next generation highly valued the jewel box as well as the jewel, so they made another jewel box in which they placed the first jewel box containing the jewel. As the generations passed the outer jewel boxes became larger and larger, wonders in themselves, decorated with delicate carvings, figures, and precious stones, and admired greatly for their beauty and value. Then one day someone asked: "By the way, what is inside the jewel box?" And nobody knew! The precious jewel had been forgotten.

Breaking Barriers

The sun was hot at noon. Tired from the long journey, Jesus sat by the well to rest. When He asked for a cup of water He knew what the response would be: "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan" (John. 4:9). The hostility between Jews and Samaritans was proverbial. Later, when the disciples arrived, they too were perplexed by what they saw Jesus doing. Although they did not dare question Him about it "they were greatly surprised to find Him talking with a woman" (John. 4:27).

Jesus broke down barriers between people and sexes. He talked to women as freely as He did to men, and He offered to all the gift of living water. Baptized into Christ we are all one in Him (see Galatians 3:27-28). Jesus' attitude toward the Samaritans was shocking to pious Jews. A pious Jew travelling from Judea to Galilee would take the long way around the district of Samaria rather than the short way through it. But Jesus saw love and goodness in Samaritans. Remember the Jew who was robbed and beaten by bandits, who was ignored by passing Jews but helped by a Samaritan at great risk and expense (Luke 10:33-35)? Of the ten lepers who were healed by Jesus, which one returned to give thanks (Luke 17:16, p. 207)? Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman and welcomed the hospitality of her fellow villagers. Although a Jew, He won their hearts through His love, and He won their souls for the kingdom.

One of the most interesting things about Jesus was what H.H. Home has called His "social freedom." By virtue of His spiritual depth and inner authority He was able to break through religious bias and racial prejudice and He also helped others to do so. He was equally comfortable with the fishermen disciples and with the scholar Nicodemus; He ate with Simon the Pharisee as well as with Zacchaeus the tax-collector; He spoke with the pure Nathaniel as well as with the adulterous Samaritan woman. Jesus was a good mixer, open to all, young and old, rich and poor. Healthy and sick, sinner and righteous, because He lived "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24, RSV). Without compromising His principles or lowering His spiritual standards Jesus was interested in all people, paid attention to them, listened to them, fulfilled their needs, and changed their lives!