



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 13—19 OCTOBER 2024

SUNDAY 13 OCTOBER	4TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, 7th ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Luke 8: 5-15 PATRIARCHAL DIVINE LITURGY Margaret Court Arena, Olympic Blvd, Melbourne
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 14 OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9.00am Service of Holy Unction10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
WEDNESDAY 16 OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER	★ TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP (In Church Hall upstairs behind Church) ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME <i>In Church Coffee Room on side of the Church</i>
FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER <i>St Luke the Evangelist</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SUNDAY 20 OCTOBER	GOSPEL READING: Luke 8: 26-39 EPISTLE READING: 2 Corinthians 6: 16-18; 7:1

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.

St Luke the Evangelist—18 October

Saint Luke may have been the most intelligent of the early church leaders. He is claimed as the patron saint of lawyers, doctors, historians and artists.

Saint Luke was a physician by trade. He was an orator. He is one of the Four Evangelists, having authored both the Gospel that bears his name as well as the Book of Acts. Since the Book of Acts is a history of the early church, Saint Luke is hailed as the first church historian. And Saint Luke was also an artist. He painted the first icon, that of the Virgin Mary. Saint Luke preached the Holy Gospel in Italy, France, Libya, Egypt, Dalmatia, Achaia, and Viotia in Greece (where his tomb is located).

Apolytikion

O Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke, intercede to our merciful God,
that He may grant our souls forgiveness of sins.



Holy Prophet Joel – 19 October

The Prophet Joel (800 B.C.) predicted the desolation of Jerusalem. He also prophesied that the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon all people, through the Saviour of the world (Joel 2:28-32).

“Yet even now,” says the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil. (Joel 2:12-13)

While for many Orthodox, repentance implies going to confession and enumerating one's sins, the Prophet Joel gives us a much broader sense of what repentance implies. For Joel, repentance means returning to God when one has strayed away from the Lord. It is a re-orienting of one's life and priorities, restoring God as Lord of one's life. This goes beyond just admitting to certain sins or showing remorse for one's errors. It is more akin to changing one's perspective, a paradigm shift in one's thinking and orientation.

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PARABLE OF THE SOWER, Luke 8:5-15

The sower in today's parable is God. The seeds which are sown are the Word of God. God sent His disciples throughout the world to preach the "Good News," the Gospel. This mission continues today with the successors of the apostles who continue to sow the seeds of God everywhere in the world. In addition, the lay people are also called to be missionaries and help in our sacred task to preach the Gospel, and many of them sow these seeds as well. This is a sacred mission that will always need to be fulfilled. People forget God and need to be reminded of His presence, and others, for various reasons do not know the Word of God, or have a distorted understanding of the Christian faith.

It is up to those who hear the Word to decide for themselves how they will react after the seeds have been sown in their hearts. God and none of His disciples force anyone to follow Christ, to have faith and to live a Christian life. For many reasons some people choose not to accept Christ. Some will not even listen. For many reasons there are others who choose Christ but lose their way and fall off the path to salvation.

When we wander and lose our faith, God never stops loving us, even when we fail. Sometimes we might be tempted to think that there is too much between us and God that He cannot overlook, and we don't know how to get back. Returning is very simple. Just get on your knees and say "God, I'm back." When you return, hold fast to the love that first drew you to him, and God will manifest Himself to you. There is a lot of noise and distraction in the world which can separate us from God. We must learn to filter out the noise and be able to recognize His voice above any other sound. When we listen to God, we must be ready to follow through and do the things that He asks of us. It is easy for us to become discouraged in life, but we must adjust our perspective to view everything against the backdrop of a victorious Saviour. Then we will be able to face anything with confidence and peace.

Life is full of broken promises and disappointments, so it is easy for us to become sceptical and anxious. The beautiful truth is that God never breaks His promises. If we live our lives patiently by always placing our trust in Christ, then we will have peace in our souls as we walk on the path to salvation. If we are focused only on the cares here on earth, we will quickly find ourselves overwhelmed by fear and uncertainty. If we fix our eyes on Christ and the promise of Heaven, then we cannot help but be filled with peace, joy and hope. It is important not to forget that our time here is temporary and that the joy of Heaven is eternal. By being mindful of our own fleeting existence on earth, we can spend our energies not on the pressures of earth, but rather on the purpose of Heaven, which will last forever. There are different ways of dealing with worry. When we bring our worry to God and lay our anxious hearts bare before Him, He will encourage us, lift us up, and sustain us. He will not allow us to be shaken or weakened by worry because He holds us through every situation.

As Christ says in today's Gospel, it is easy to be choked by the pleasures and riches of life, like a plant which is choked by weeds. Our heart and devotion must be fully committed to God. The Lord says that you cannot serve both God and riches ~ "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).

Just like the gardener who sows his seeds, we must take care of the seeds sown by God in the soil of our hearts. The gardener must have patience with his seedlings. He must water his garden, fertilize it, and protect it from insects and animals who threaten to destroy his seedlings and plants. We also must have patience and nurture and tend to our faith and not expect to bear fruit immediately.

The garden of our hearts must be watered with the tears of our repentance, it must be fed by the spiritual nourishment of prayer, fasting and receiving the Holy Mysteries. The Devil and his hosts are always threatening to devour the seedlings planted by God in our hearts. Like the gardener who builds a fence around his garden, we must build a wall and a guard around our hearts, a wall of purity, a wall of virtue, and a wall of humble obedience to God.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk says that God does not merely cast his seeds and leave them to grow or die on their own. Above all, for the seedlings in our hearts to grow into mighty trees and bear an abundance of fruit, the most important component is the presence of God in our lives. If we are the plants that grow, then God is the gardener who cares for His seeds and tends to His garden. If we always trust in God and cling to Him, then He will always care for and take care of us. The final verse in today's Scripture is "And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience." Amen.

By Archpriest Peter Olsen St. Basil's Church, Watervliet, NY