



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 25—31 August— 2024

SUNDAY 25 AUGUST	9TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 14: 22-34 <ul style="list-style-type: none">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 26 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9.00am Service of Holy Unction10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
TUESDAY 27 AUGUST <i>ST Phanourios, Great-Martyr</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
WEDNESDAY 28 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
THURSDAY 29 AUGUST <i>Beheading of the Forerunner St John the Baptist</i> (STRICT FAST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy8.00—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 building, behind the Church
SUNDAY 1 SEPTEMBER	GOSPEL READING: I Timothy 2: 1-7 EPISTLE READING: Luke 4: 16-22

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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 PHANOURIOS, GREAT MARTYR, 27 AUGUST

Festal Apolytikion of the Saint:

*A heavenly song of praise is brightly sung on the earth;
the hosts of the Angels keep an earthly festival now in splendor and radiant joy;
from on high, they praise with hymns the sufferings and struggles;
and below, the Church doth laud the heavenly glory thou foundest by thy contests and pains,
O glorious Phanurius.*

THE BEHEADING OF THE HOLY GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER AND BAPTIST JOHN

Reading:

"The divine Baptist, the Prophet born of a Prophet, the seal of all the Prophets and beginning of the Apostles, the mediator between the Old and New Covenants, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, the God-sent Messenger of the incarnate Messiah, the forerunner of Christ's coming into the world (Esaias 40: 3; Mal. 3: 1); who by many miracles was both conceived and born; who was filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb; who came forth like another Elias the Zealot, whose life in the wilderness and divine zeal for God's Law he imitated: this divine Prophet, after he had preached the baptism of repentance according to God's command; had taught men of low rank and high how they must order their lives; had admonished those whom he baptized and had filled them with the fear of God, teaching them that no one is able to escape the wrath to come if he do not works worthy of repentance; had, through such preaching, prepared their hearts to receive the evangelical teachings of the Saviour; and finally, after he had pointed out to the people the very Saviour, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world" (Luke 3:2-18; John 1: 29-36), after all this, John sealed with his own blood the truth of his words and was made a sacred victim for the divine Law at the hands of a transgressor.

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This was Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch of Galilee, the son of Herod the Great. This man had a lawful wife, the daughter of Arethas (or Aretas), the King of Arabia (that is, Arabia Petraea, which had the famous Nabatean stone city of Petra as its capital. This is the Aretas mentioned by Saint Paul in II Cor. 11:32). Without any cause, and against every commandment of the Law, he put her away and took to himself Herodias, the wife of his deceased brother Philip, to whom Herodias had borne a daughter, Salome. He would not desist from this unlawful union even when John, the preacher of repentance, the bold and austere accuser of the lawless, censured him and told him, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mark 6: 18).

Thus Herod, besides his other unholy acts, added yet this, that he apprehended John and shut him in prison; and perhaps he would have killed him straightway, had he not feared the people, who had extreme reverence for John. Certainly, in the beginning, he himself had great reverence for this just and holy man. But finally, being pierced with the sting of a mad lust for the woman Herodias, he laid his defiled hands on the teacher of purity on the very day he was celebrating his birthday. When Salome, Herodias' daughter, had danced in order to please him and those who were supping with him, he promised her -- with an oath more foolish than any foolishness -- that he would give her anything she asked, even unto the half of his kingdom. And she, consulting with her mother, straightway asked for the head of John the Baptist in a charger. Hence this transgressor of the Law, preferring his lawless oath above the precepts of the Law, fulfilled this godless promise and filled his loathsome banquet with the blood of the Prophet. So it was that that all-venerable head, revered by the Angels, was given as a prize for an abominable dance, and became the plaything of the dissolute daughter of a debauched mother. As for the body of the divine Baptist, it was taken up by his disciples and placed in a tomb (Mark 6: 21 - 29). Concerning the finding of his holy head, see February 24 and May 25.

(text taken from: <http://goarch.org/chapel/saints>)

9TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 14: 22-34

The Holiness of Peter

The Gospel lesson of Matthew 14:22-34 offers us a unique look at the Apostles as a community, and one Apostle's, St. Peter's, relationship both to Christ and the other disciples.

Then Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

Christ sent the Apostles together on a boat. His disciples share a common life, common experience, common dangers. They experience life as a community – together they survive the storms of life, and together they also experience Christ the incarnate God.

On encountering Christ, in the midst of the battering storm, the disciples are made afraid both by the storm and by meeting the Lord in the midst of the storm. St. Peter, emboldened by seeing the Lord on the waters, asks permission to leave the fellowship of the disciples in the boat and to come to Jesus alone. His experience of Jesus alone cannot prevent him from sinking in the waters. In the boat with the other disciples, the fellowship kept him afloat.

It is an important lesson for believers. It is a false dichotomy to think one has to choose between the Church and Christ. Christ is with the disciples in the boat even when walking on the waters. The fellowship of the disciples, the Church, serves a purpose for the faithful. We encounter Christ as a fellowship and we support and help one another within the Church. The boat and the fellowship both serve a purpose for disciples as they face the surging storms of life, and neither prevents us from encountering Christ.

Of course there are times when the fellowship of believers fails. The Apostles deserted Christ at the cross. Members of the Church sometimes turn the community away from Christ to try to make the Church be something other than the Body of Christ. The Apostles were so afraid of the public after the crucifixion of Christ that they went into hiding rather than seeking the risen Lord. But if the Church keeps Christ as Lord, and the members including the leadership recognize the lordship of Christ rather than making themselves lords over others, the Church serves its purpose to help us find Christ in the midst of the storms of temptation.

Sergius Bulgakov reflects on St Peter, the only Apostle granted to walk with Jesus on water (even if momentarily), and also who also openly denied Christ. Peter rightly confesses Jesus as God, but then is called 'Satan' by Jesus for denying God's plan of salvation for the world. What does this tell us about holiness itself? What does it tell us about the man, Peter?

"The forgiveness of sins does not mean they are forgotten. It even pre-supposes the contrary: their special remembrance in the full awareness of God's mercy. There is no reason to think that the apostle Peter could forget, in this age or the future one, his renunciation of the Lord. According to tradition, he remembered this renunciation all his life, and its memory is preserved forever in the holy Gospel. But this does not nullify the great saintliness of the first apostle, to whom the Lord said on the same day, 'Thou art Peter,' and then, 'Get thee behind me, Satan' (Matt. 16:18,23). Peter is by no means an exception among all the saints, whose saintliness supposedly signifies freedom from all sin. On the contrary, this is what the prayer of the Church says about all human saintliness: 'there is no man who is alive and does not sin. Thou alone art without sin,' for 'every man [is] a liar, as it is written, That thou might be justified in thy sayings, and might overcome when thou art judged' (Rom. 3:4). Every human being has had need of forgiveness and redemption by the Blood of the Lamb. In other words, the saintliness glorified by the Church signifies not sinlessness but righteousness as the sum total of pluses and minuses, experienced as a synthesis of bliss and suffering. This confirms that, for human beings, there is neither absolute heaven nor absolute hell." (The Bride of the Lamb, p 480)

Peter isn't granted permission to walk on water because he is sinless or perfect. We don't abide in the fellowship of the saints because we are perfect and sinless. We all are part of the fellowship of the Church because we recognize we are sinners in need of God's forgiveness and mercy which we are given through our union with Christ and in His Church. - Fr.Ted Bobosh