



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 4—10 August 2024

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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.

SUNDAY 4 AUGUST	6TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 9: 1-8 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 5.30pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
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 5 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
TUESDAY 6 AUGUST <i>Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 5.30pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
WEDNESDAY 7 AUGUST <i>St Nikanor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 5.30pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos IN ENGLISH
THURSDAY 8 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.30pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos• 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 building, behind the Church
FRIDAY 9 AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.30pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
SUNDAY 11 AUGUST	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 9: 27-35 EPISTLE READING: Romans 15: 1-7

The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ

From the Orthodox Study Bible

“And He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light” (Matt. 17:2).

The Transfiguration is a theophany—a manifestation of God, especially of the divinity of Christ, through a display of His uncreated, divine energy. Therefore, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Transfiguration of the Lord as a major feast day.

Several elements of the Transfiguration show that Christ is Messiah and God:

Because God is light (1 John 1:5), the bright cloud, the shining of Jesus’ face like the sun, and the whiteness of His garment (Matt. 17:2, 5) all demonstrate that Jesus is God. (In some icons this light is shown as beyond white, a blue-white, ineffable colour, indicating its spiritual origin).

The Father bears witness from heaven concerning His Son. He does not say, “This has become My beloved Son,” but *“This is My beloved Son”* (Matt. 17:5), indicating that this divine glory is Christ’s by nature. From eternity past, infinitely before Jesus’ Baptism and Transfiguration, He is God’s Son, fully sharing in the essence of the Father: Jesus Christ is God of God.

The Transfiguration not only proclaims Christ’s divine sonship, but foreshadows His future glory when He as the Messiah will usher in the long-awaited Kingdom. The bright cloud recalls temple worship and the cloud that went before the Israelites in the wilderness, the visible sign of God being extraordinarily present. Peter sees this as a sign that the

Kingdom has come. Knowing that the Feast of Tabernacles is the feast of the coming Kingdom, he asks to build booths (Matt. 17:4), as was done at that feast, to serve as symbols of God's dwelling among the just in the Kingdom. Moses represents the Law and all those who have died. Elijah represents the Prophets and—since he did not experience death—all those who are alive in Christ. Their presence shows that the Law and the Prophets, the living and the dead, all bear witness to Jesus as the Messiah, the fulfilment of the whole Old Testament. The presence of Moses and Elijah also manifests the communion of the saints (Heb. 12:1). Both men are immediately recognizable, and talk with the Lord. The disciples are able to understand Jesus' words that "*Elijah has come already*" (Matt. 17:12) referring to John the Baptist. Their eyes have been opened to the fact that Malachi's prophecy (Matt. 4:5, 6) refers to one coming "*in the spirit and power of Elijah*" (Luke 1:17), rather than to Elijah himself. Finally, the Holy Trinity is manifest here, for Christ is transfigured (Matt. 17:2), the Father speaks from heaven testifying to Jesus' divine sonship (Matt. 17:5), and the Spirit is present in the form of a dazzling light surrounding Christ's Person, overshadowing the whole mountain (Matt. 17:5).

We Are Paralysed without Jesus

Published by Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis

And getting into a boat He crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith He said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He then said to the paralytic—"Rise, take up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Matthew 9:1-8 (Gospel from the Sixth Sunday of Matthew)

A fair number of people in the world are paralysed. Some are paralysed and unable to move certain parts of their bodies because of an accident. Some are paralysed due to a stroke or other neurological injury. Paralysis of any kind is devastating. Because paralysis inhibits freedom of movement. And lacking freedom of movement makes it a challenge to enjoy a full life, not that this is impossible, just that it is more difficult.

However, an even greater number of people are paralysed in other ways. Some are paralysed by poverty. Others are paralysed by fear. And still others are paralysed with hopelessness, sadness, doubt and many other things.

Doctors treat patients who have paralysis with therapies designed to help them increase their range of motion.

Other types of "paralysis" can be cured by people who are not necessarily doctors. For instance, for the one who is paralysed by poverty, this is healed through generosity. When we give to those who are in need, we help to treat this illness.

We know that "perfect love casts out all fear." (1 John 4:18) This means that for the one paralysed by fear, this is healed through God's love, given to us by God Himself and manifested with us by those who love us. The love of other people helps to cure fears.

When one is paralysed with hopelessness, sadness, doubt, etc. the cause often is a spiritual cause. Because for the devout and committed Christian, while he or she might be sad, there is never the despondency that accompanies the feeling of hopelessness. Because through the storms of life, when one surrenders to the will of God, he or she is shown some form of healing and reassurance that can only come from God. One can achieve all kinds of material "success" (or any of the many kinds of circumstances society considers successful) and still feels incomplete and unsure. When one surrenders his or her heart and asks God to use his or her heart as His instrument, this is when one is able to help others and in turn, will help himself. For God favours the one who works to take care and comfort those who are lonely despondent.

Without Christ, one is truly paralysed, because as the glass from the hourglass of our lives empties, so does any sense of hope, or heaven, or salvation. With Christ, on the other hand, there is no need to ever feel despondent or hopeless.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus healed a man who was a paralytic. This man was not only paralysed in his body but also paralysed in his spirit. So, Jesus first told the man "Take heart, my son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 9: 2) Because what good is a healthy body if that body holds an unhealthy and wounded Spirit. Jesus knew that the man was paralysed in his heart and so before He restored the man's body to health, He healed his wounded spirit.

The reaction of the scribes was not reverence for Christ's power not joy for the man who was finally healed. Instead they accused Christ of blasphemy. Jesus, knowing the evil intentions in their hearts then also heals the man, don't so by His word alone. Those who witness the miracle were overcome with fear, but still praised God. Unlike the people who sent Christ away from their town, after he cured a demoniac while sending the demon into swine, the people who witnessed today's Gospel were joyful that it had come at the hands of Jesus. Likewise, we also should rejoice in the healings that Christ provides for us and for others.

Let us honour the Cross of the Lord with solemn praise, and His holy entombment extol with sacred hymns, and His Rising from the dead supremely glorify; for He despoiled the realm of death and the devil's might, for He is God; then He resurrected the dead from the graves together, and made the light to dawn on those in hell. (First Resurrectional Kathisma, Plagal 1st Tone, Trans. by Fr. Seraphim Dedes)

In our lives, it is very important for us to seek not only physical healing for our wounds but spiritual healing for our souls. For without Christ, we are truly paralysed. <https://myocn.net/>