



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 18—24 May 2025

CHRISTOS ANESTI ! CHRIST IS ARISEN!

SUNDAY 18 MAY

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

- **7.30am**
Orthros and Divine Liturgy

2025 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 19 MAY

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

WEDNESDAY 21 MAY

Saints Constantine and Helen

- **7.30am**
Orthros and Divine Liturgy
- **5.00pm**
Paraklesis to the Theotokos

THURSDAY 22 MAY

- **8.00—9.00pm**



**TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP
ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME**

Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment.

*** In downstairs classroom behind the Church building**

SUNDAY 25 MAY

GOSPEL READING: John 9: 1-38

EPISTLE READING: 2Corinthians 4: 6-15

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 Symeon Stylites (the Younger) of the Wonderful Mountain - 24 May

He was born in Antioch in 522. His father, John, died in an earthquake, leaving him to be raised by his mother Martha. From his earliest childhood he lived a very ascetic life and was under special protection and guidance of St John the Baptist, who often appeared to him.

He became a monk as a young man and, after a vision of the Lord, who appeared to him as a handsome youth and filled his heart to overflowing with love for Christ, he ascended onto a pillar, where he stayed for eighteen years, praying and singing psalms. He then went to the mountain called 'Wonderful', where he lived alone in a barren place for ten years; he then ascended another pillar, where he remained in extreme hardship for forty-five years.

During this time he became known as a wonder-worker and visionary: the Prologue says 'The measure of his love for God was such that rare grace was given him, by the help of which he was able to heal every sort of illness, tame wild beasts and perceive the most distant regions of the earth and the hearts of men. He was taken out of the body and saw the heavens, conversed with angels, harried the demons, prophesied, spent thirty days at a time without sleep and even longer without food, receiving nourishment at the hands of angels.' He reposed at the age of 85; seventy-nine years of his life had been spent in asceticism.

Troparion

Dweller of the desert and angel in the body, / you were shown to be a wonder-worker, our God-bearing Father Simeon. / You received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer: / healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to you by faith. / Glory to Him who gave you strength! / Glory to Him who granted you a crown! / Glory to Him who through you grants healing to all!

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

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

In today's Gospel, we see clearly how Our Lord combines within His Person two natures, the human and the divine. On the one hand, we see that as a human-being, like all of us, He is wearied, thirsty and hungry. The Gospel tells us, for example, that when midday, the sixth hour, had come, His disciples left him to obtain food in the city and that Christ, thirsty, asked the Samaritan Woman for drink.

On the other hand, we see that He is also divine. Living as God in eternity, He knows the present, past and future of all. Thus as God He knows that the Samaritan Woman has already been married five times and that at present she is living in sin with yet another man. Also He tells her that He can give her 'living water' from an Eternal Well, and He tells the disciples that His 'food is to do the will of Him that sent Me'.

As a man, Christ was a Jew, and His disciples are therefore astonished to find Him conversing not only with a woman, but with a Samaritan Woman. A Jew would never even have talked to a Samaritan, let alone a Samaritan Woman, for as the Apostle John says in his Gospel, 'the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans'.

As God, however, Christ does not hesitate to talk to one who is able to accept Him as the Messiah, for the vocation of Christ is universal. 'Salvation comes forth from the Jews', but salvation is only for those who accept Christ and few were the Jews who did accept Him.

True, from the Jewish viewpoint, the Samaritans, Jews who had intermarried with pagans, were heretics; they had rejected the importance of Jerusalem and much of the Old Testament, including the Prophets; they had confused pagan idolatry with the Old Testament.

On the other hand, the Jews had rejected Christ. The Jews had turned the truths and revelations of the Old Testament into legalism and territorial racism, an arrogant, nationalistic and racist ideology; they had denied that Christ, as a man a Jew, could, as God, come for the salvation of all peoples. It is that ideology which still to this day insists on the ownership of Jerusalem and has brought even the contemporary world to the brink of war on several occasions. For the Jews had kept the letter of the Law but had rejected the spirit of the Law. And without the Spirit they were unable to recognise Christ.

The Samaritans had rejected the letter of the Law, but some of them, at least, did not stubbornly insist on their errors but were open to its spirit, for they were open to Christ, the Word of God, the Inspirer of the Law. Whereas the Jews had rejected Christ, the Samaritans kept Him with them for two days and many believed in Him. As Our Lord said on His return from Samaria to Judea, 'a prophet has no honour in his own country'.

Why does the Church commemorate the Samaritan Woman today?

Because this is the first Sunday after Mid-Pentecost, the feast that stands half-way between Easter and Pentecost. At Easter the great truths of the Church are revealed - that Christ is both God and man, that He is crucified and risen from the dead. However, these truths, may remain rather abstract until at Pentecost we understand their inner meaning, their implications for our daily life. By the Coming of the Holy Spirit, these truths become living, and we worship Christ in spirit and in truth. Thus the Church reads to us the words that, 'the hour is coming when the true worshippers shall worship the Father **in spirit and in truth**'.

And this is why this world still continues today, why the world has not yet ended. Until the Gospel of Christ has been preached in spirit and in truth, that is, in Orthodox manner, in all lands, throughout the world, the world cannot end. For as long as there are new Samaritans, new peoples, new tribes to hear the Truth, as long as there are people who can still potentially become Orthodox, the world must continue, for there is harvest still to be reaped.

Let us this day pray that we too like the Samaritan Woman may bring others to the Church, testifying like Her to the Divinity of Christ, becoming reapers of that which we have not sown.

Holy Mother Photini, pray to God for us!
Amen.



"All of us sin constantly. We slip and fall. In reality, we fall into a trap set by the demons. The Holy Fathers and the Saints always tell us, 'It is important to get up immediately after a fall and to keep on walking toward God'. Even if we fall a hundred times a day, it does not matter; we must get up and go on walking toward God without looking back.

What has happened has happened – it is in the past. Just keep on going, all the while asking for help from God."

+ Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica, *Our Thoughts Determine our Lives*