



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 25 May—1 June 2025

CHRISTOS ANESTI ! CHRIST IS ARISEN!

SUNDAY 25 MAY

SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN, John 9: 1-38

- 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 26 MAY

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

TUESDAY 27 MAY

*St John the Russian
St Elladius, Hieromartyr*

- 7.30am
Orthros and Divine Liturgy

WEDNESDAY 28 MAY

Dismissal Feast of Pascha

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

THURSDAY 29 MAY

Ascension of our Lord

- 7.30am
Orthros and Divine Liturgy
- 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 1 JUNE

GOSPEL READING: John 17: 1-13

EPISTLE READING: Acts 20: 16-18, 28-36

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.

Saint John the Russian—27 May

Troparion

He that hath called thee from earth unto the heavenly abodes doth even after thy death keep thy body unharmed, O righteous one; for thou wast carried off as a prisoner into Asia wherein also, O John, thou didst win Christ as thy friend. Wherefore do thou beseech him that our souls be saved.

Hieromartyr Helladius, Bishop in the East (6th - 7th c)

Commemorated on May 28

Concerning Saint Helladius, little is known except that he was a bishop who refused to sacrifice to idols, and that during his martyrdom our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and healed him of his wounds, after which he was cast into fire and was preserved unharmed, suffered further torments, and finally was beaten to death with the blows of fists.

Miracles

When the matter relates to God's Mysteries, do not inwardly ask: how can this be? You do not know how God created the whole world from nothing, you cannot and may not know here either how God mysteriously works. God's mystery must remain a mystery for you, because you are not God, and cannot know all that is known to the eternally Wise, Almighty God. You are the work of His hands; His most insignificant creature. Remember that there was a time when there was nothing and that afterwards all that now exists was created out of nothing by the Word of God.

Father John of Kronstadt, *Spiritual Counsels*

HOMILY ON THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

St. John of Kronstadt

The Holy Church now rouses all the people of the earth to joy and says, "*All ye nations, clap your hands, Christ hath ascended whither He was Before*,"¹ i.e., to heaven.

And so, on the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord, all Christians should rejoice. What is there to be happy about? It would seem that it was necessary rather to be sad and grieve, because our sweetest Savior Jesus Christ departed from us with His visible presence and ascended to heaven, from whence he will come again—but he will come as a terrible Judge of all earthly people. No, on the day of remembrance of the Ascension of the Lord, there are more reasons for joy than for sadness. Let's just consider why the Lord ascended to heaven from us.

The Lord ascended from us to heaven not to grieve us with His departure, but to arrange things most usefully for us. His whole life, all His works were for our benefit, for our salvation; in the same way, His ascension was for our good. Loving us, He came down to us from heaven and, having lived with people, laid His soul on the cross for them. So out of love for us he also ascended to heaven, to benefit us. As He himself said to His disciples: *It is better for you that I go, for if I do not go, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you* (Jn. 16, 7). So, the Lord ascended to heaven in order to send One equal to Himself, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Who would comfort the holy apostles and all true Christians in their sorrows, troubles and persecutions. That's the first reason for joy. Come, come, Lord Jesus, and send us the Comforter!

Further, the Lord ascended from us to heaven so that He could look down on us from above, as a Father on a child, as a Shepherd on His sheep, as an Eagle on the chicks, as a Leader on his army, so that He could see everyone and consider the distress and needs of each of us and give help to everyone. Like some king, having gathered his numerous troops for war and wanting to see all his regiments, ascends to a high place—on a mountain or on some building—and looks down from a height and arranges them; and when he sees that they are prevailing, rejoices over them. And if he notices that they are being overcome, he quickly sends aid to them. So our Lord, the King of kings, having His Church militant on earth—that is, His faithful Christians—ascended to heaven, as if to a mountain, so that from a height He could see everyone's ascetic labors and weave crowns for those who are struggling and give a helping hand to those who are exhausted; in order to restore the fallen and make them stronger against their enemies, and to place an obstacle before those who persecute us. The Holy Protomartyr Stephen is struggling in an anguishing feat, he is being stoned by the Jews, and our Lord, having opened the sky, looks at him from the height of His glory, so that seeing this the sufferer exclaims: *I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God* (Acts. 7, 56).

The Lord ascended from us to heaven in order to shine like the sun on all of us from the height of heaven with His grace. As the sun hiding in the west produces the evening darkness throughout the celestial empire, and when it rises to the heights, the darkness flees from the entire celestial empire, and the sun's rays illuminate the universe with wondrous light, so our spiritual Sun, Christ, while He lived on earth, as if in the west, did not show His luminous divinity to people. Until then, over all the earth was the darkness of ignorance of God's essence; and after He shone forth from His tomb He ascended to heaven, then the lightning of His divinity illuminated the universe, His name became glorious from the east to the west, over all the earth, and the whole universe was enlightened by the knowledge of God.

The Lord ascended from us to heaven in order to arrange for us a path to heaven, and to be our Leader in the mountainous countries. There was no path to heaven for man until the very ascension of the Lord to heaven; *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven*, says the Lord (Jn. 3:13). *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things*. (Eph. 4:10). So, before this, no one could ascend to heaven, even if he were righteous and holy; and when our Lord, clothed in human nature, ascended to heaven, the way to heaven was arranged for the whole human race, and the souls of the holy forefathers and prophets, led out of hell, followed Christ by that way. Apostles, saints, martyrs, confessors, ascend to them; worthy righteous people who follow Christ's footsteps ascend to them even now. Now everyone knows the way to heaven. Just don't you be lazy to ascend, Christians!

So, the Lord ascended from us to heaven—in order to open the doors of heaven to us—for an unhindered entrance there. Our forefather Adam closed the doors of Paradise to the whole human race, and a Cherub with a flaming weapon stood at the doors. I say, Adam closed Paradise and the entrance to life, but he opened only the entrances to death and hell, but the Lord did the opposite—He closed the entrances to death and hell, and Paradise opened—first to the robber, to whom he said, *Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise* (Lk. 23:43), then to everyone. And finally, He opened heaven itself with His Ascension.

Such are the all-joyful reasons for the Ascension of the Lord from us to heaven. Further, the Lord ascended from us to heaven to intercede for us before God the Father. Thus says the Holy Apostle John the Theologian: *And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins* (1 Jn. 2:1–2). And so, we sinful people will not despair of our salvation, but we will be faithful, for we have a good Intercessor for us to God the Father—Christ our Saviour Himself, Who intercedes for us. Only let's not be lazy, and with Christ's intercession we will send our warm prayers to the Heavenly Father. Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ intercedes for us to God the Father and propitiates Him.

But for whom is he petitioning? For sinners. For which sinners? For those who repent; He propitiates His Father for them. But he does not propitiate for unrepentant sinners because they crucify for the second time the Son of God by their grave sins; also, by touching the blood of the Son of God without repentance they trample on it with their impenitence. And so sinner, have fear, O you who are unrepentant, lest the sudden punishment of God overtake you and you be consumed from the land of the living, and you be condemned together with the murderers who crucified the Son of God.

Finally, the Lord ascended from us to heaven in order to prepare for us a place in heaven where we will live forever and reign with Him, our Lord. So He Himself says: *I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also* (Jn. 14:2–3). What a joyful reason for the Ascension! The Lord ascended from us to heaven to prepare a place in heaven for all the righteous and pious people, as well as for us sinners, if we turn and repent from the bottom of our hearts. Where the place is for the Apostle Peter, who rejected the Lord and wept bitterly about it afterwards; where the harlot is, who wept at His feet, where the prodigal son is, where the publican is, where the robber is, there also will be a place for us; only we must weep bitterly over our sins. We will fall at His feet with repentance like Peter and like the harlot; as the publican we will be converted. Let us be crucified with Him, like the good thief. Let us repent, and we will be saved.

Let us all rejoice in the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour. Amen.