



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 15 — 21 June 2025

SUNDAY 15 JUNE	<b>1ST SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, (ALL SAINTS)</b> <b>Matthew 10: 32-33, 37-38, 19: 27-30</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>2025 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES</b> (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) <b>Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal.</b> 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 16 JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>9.00am</b> Service of Holy Unction</li><li>• <b>10.00am</b> Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall</li></ul>
WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Paraklesis to the Theotokos</li></ul>
THURSDAY 19 JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>8.00—9.00pm</b>  <b>TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP</b> <b>ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME</b> Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment. <b>* In downstairs classroom behind the Church building</b></li></ul>
SUNDAY 22 JUNE	<b>GOSPEL READING: Matthew 4: 18-23</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: Romans 2: 10-16</b>

### 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.

### The Holy Trinity

When you are praying alone, and your spirit is dejected and you are wearied and oppressed, remember then, as always, that God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that is the Trinity looks upon you with bright eyes, brighter than the sun; and so do all the angels, including your own guardian, and all the saints of God.

Truly they do, for they are all one in God, and where God is there they are also. Where the sun is, there also are its rays.

Try to understand what this means. Bear in mind with whom you are conversing, Men often forget with whom they are conversing during prayer, and who are the witnesses of their prayer!

St John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ*



### The Holy Spirit Comes ....

The Holy Spirit comes when we are receptive. He does not compel. He approaches so meekly that we may not even notice.

If we would know the Holy Spirit we need to examine ourselves in the light of the Gospel teaching, to detect any other presence which may prevent the Holy Spirit from entering into our souls.

We must not wait for God to force Himself on us without our consent. God respects and does not constrain man.

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It is amazing how God humbles Himself before us. He loves us with a tender love, not haughtily, not with condescension. And when we open our hearts to Him we are overwhelmed by the conviction that He is indeed our Father. The soul then worships in love."

St Sophrony ,*His Life is Mine*,



## All Saints Sunday

*"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven."*  
(Matthew 10:32)

Today we gather on this 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost to honour all of those who have lived righteous lives in following the teachings and commandments of our Lord. On this Sunday of All Saints we commemorate those who having received the grace of the Holy Spirit lived their lives in complete obedience to the command of our Lord to "confess Me before men."

We have just come through the celebration of the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Holy Pentecost and now we now see the practical result of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who have been called to faithfulness: namely the saints of our Holy Orthodox Church. These two commemorations follow logically from each other: in the one we saw the power come which makes possible the lives that we now commemorate in the second. And in noticing the close connection we are able to understand the meaning of both celebrations and gain a very important insight into what these two festal celebrations mean for our own lives.

Today we have before us the examples of all the holy men and women who having received the Holy Spirit , proceeded to live their lives in light of having the Spirit working actively in their lives. For the saints that we honour today were not born as saints but rather were made saints through allowing the grace and power of the Holy Spirit to guide and transform their lives so that their lives became models of piety and holiness. And this is a very important point for us to understand, for the saints were not super human beings- like some mythical super heroes- but rather they were and are like you and I in that they share in our human nature with all of its struggles, temptations and failings. But they understood that receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit called them to live a life of holiness and faithfulness in which the quality of their live gave clear testimony that the Holy Spirit was at work in their lives.

In the early centuries of our Orthodox Church this day was given over first as a commemoration of all the Holy Martyrs and then by the end of the First Millennium, this day has become what it is today that is a commemoration of all the righteous ones who have lived out in their lives the meaning of having received the Holy Spirit through Holy Baptism and Chrismation.

So what does all this mean for us today as we hear the same call of the Gospel as those whom we commemorate as the Righteous and Holy Saints of our Orthodox Church? In answering that question , we are called to ask ourselves another question: do we also fit the description which our Lord gives in the Gospel of those who "confess Me before men", which after all is the first character trait of a saint? In answering those question we are led to understand that by confessing Christ before men is meant not just in giving verbal assent to Christ but in giving witness to our confession through our manner of life. For how can we say we confess Christ if our way of living is at odds with that very confession of believing in Christ as our Lord and Master. For the first hallmark of one who truly confesses Christ before all men- and a key characteristic of a saint- is the testimony given by one's life. And this manner of life- what we might call holiness- is made possible because we also have received the gift of the Holy Spirit and allowed this grace to work actively in our lives so that we are lives are transformed as we live faithfully each day. Now granted this pathway of holiness, this way of living our lives and allowing the Grace of the Holy Spirit to work freely and fully in our lives is not easy. It means being willing to take up our cross and follow our Lord wherever He may call us to go; but we do so gladly if we truly are willing to confess our Lord because we understand that we have the power of the Spirit to give us the strength to give testimony to our Lord before all men even when the giving of that testimony leads us through difficult times and struggles in this earthly life. The Holy Saints we commemorate today followed the call of Lord to confess His Holy Name through a life of holiness even though they knew that this would lead them through sufferings and struggles: they understood that the end result of living out the commands of our Lord was a far greater blessing than the temporary pain, sufferings and struggle that might need to be endured in this life.

So the question for us this morning is this: are we willing to confess our Lord before our society and live a life of holiness that gives testimony to that confess? Or do we see to hide our confession of Christ in order that we may "fit in" and be seen as "normal" by our society? For we also have heard the same call to live lives of holy faithfulness as our holy and righteous fathers and mothers in the faith did: they responded positively to this call and lived lives of holiness because they understood that this is what it meant to confess Christ. Will we follow them in this dedication to confessing our Lord before all men despite the cost? If indeed we do then we also will receive- as the Holy Saints did- the promise of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: "... him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven." Amen.

Father Paisius McGrath  
<https://www.uocofusa.org>