



ONE MISSION, TWO CHURCHES



The Exaltation of the Holy Cross , Year C - 14th September 2025

Parish Priest

Fr Alex Chow

Parish Secretary

Sonya O'Farrell
Wednesdays,
Thursdays & Fridays
10am – 2pm

SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil: 5pm (SL)

Sunday: 8:30am (SL),
10:30am (ST),
5pm (ST, Vietnamese)

WEEKDAY MASSES

Tues. 6:30pm (SL)

Wed. 9.15am (ST*)

1st Wed Mass of Anointing
@10am

Thurs. 9.15am (ST)

Fri. 9.15am(SL*)/6.30pm (ST)

Sat. 9.15am (SL*)

*Rosary after Mass

RECONCILIATION

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:10pm

Sat 9:45 - 10:15am

Sat 4:30 - 4:50pm

ST: Fri 5:30 - 6:10pm

**EXPOSITION OF THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT &
EVENING PRAYER**

SL: Tues 5:30 - 6:30pm

ST: Fri 5:30 - 6:30pm

**HOSPITALITY AFTER MASS
AT ST. LUKE'S**

Second weekend of each
month - bring a plate to
share (optional)

YAM GROUP - 1st & 3rd Wed.
each month at 7pm
at St Luke's Presbytery

Numbers 21:4-9 , Ps 77:1-2, 34-38, Phil 2:6-11.

Gospel Reflection on Jn 03:13-17

Meditation: Do you know the healing transforming power of the cross of Jesus Christ? The Lord Jesus came to unite earth with heaven and to raise those on earth to the glory of heaven. Jesus explains to Nicodemus, one of the chief leaders of the Jewish nation, that he is the "Son of Man" sent by the Father in heaven to restore our broken relationship with God. The "Son of Man" is a key Old Testament title for the Messiah who comes from heaven to establish God's kingdom on the earth (see the prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14).



The Finding and Trial of the Three Crosses by Agnolo Gaddi (1369-1396), Fresco painting © Chancel Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

The proof of God's love for us

There is no greater proof of God's love for us then the sending of his Son to become one with us in our humanity and to lay down his life for us. "To ransom a slave God gave his Son" (an ancient prayer from the Easter vigil liturgy). God sent his Son to free us from the worst of tyrannies - slavery to sin and the curse of death. Jesus' sacrificial death was an act of total love through self-giving. Jesus gave himself completely out of love for his Father. And he willing laid down his life out of selfless love for our sake and for our salvation. His death on the cross was both a total offering to God and the perfect sacrifice of atonement for our sin and the sin of the world.

John tells us that God's love cannot be limited because it is boundless and encompasses all of creation (John 3:16). His love is not limited to a single nation or a few chosen friends. His love is limitless because it embraces the whole world and every individual created in "his image and likeness". God is a persistent loving Father who cannot rest until all of his wandering children have returned home to him. Saint Augustine says, God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love.

The love of God is rooted in truth, goodness, and mercy

God gives us the freedom to choose whom and what we will love and not love. We can love the darkness of sin and unbelief or we can love the light of God's truth, goodness, and mercy. If our love is guided by truth, goodness, and that which is truly beautiful, then we will choose for God and love him above all else. What we love shows what we prefer. Do you love God who is the supreme good above all else? And do you seek to put him first in all your thoughts, cares, choices, and actions?

God's love sets us free to love and serve others

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). Do you allow God's love to purify your heart and the way you treat others? Do you allow God's love to transform your mind and the way you think of others? Do you allow God's love to conquer every unruly passion and addiction that would enslave you to sin and harmful behavior? The Holy Spirit gives us his seven-fold gifts of wisdom and understanding, right judgment and courage, knowledge and reverence for God and his ways, and a holy fear in God's presence (see Isaiah 11) that we may live God's way of life and serve in the power and strength of his enduring love and mercy. Do you thirst for new life in the Spirit?

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Next Week's Daily Readings 15 Sept - 21 Sept

MONDAY, Sept 15 Heb 5:7-9
Ps 30:2-6, 15-16, 20 Jn 19:25-27
Our Lady of Sorrows

TUESDAY, Sept 16 1 Tim 3:1-13
Ps 100:1-3, 5, 6 Lk 7:11-17
Sts Cornelius, pope, martyr, and Cyprian, bishop, martyr

WEDNESDAY, Sept 17 1 Tim 3:14-16
Ps 110:1-6 Lk 7:31-35

THURSDAY, Sept 18 1 Tim 4:12-16
Ps 110:7-10 Lk 7:36-50

FRIDAY, Sept 19 1 Tim 6:2-12
Ps 48:6-10, 17-20 Lk 8:1-3

SATURDAY, Sept 20 1 Tim 6:13-16
Ps 99 Lk 8:4-15
Sts Andrew Kim Tae-gon, priest, martyr, Paul Chong Ha-sang & companions, martyrs

SUNDAY, Sept 21 Amos 8:4-7
Ps 112:1-2, 4-8 1 Tim 2:1-8
Lk 16:1-13

25th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

*(Taken from
ORDO 2025, Liturgy Brisbane, ACBC 2024)*

The Jubilee Prayer



Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

SOME USEFUL CATHOLIC RESOURCES:

PRAY AS YOU GO (<https://pray-as-you-go.org/daily-meditation>)
HALLOW (<https://hallow.com>):#1 prayer Catholic App
UNIVERSALIS website and App. (<https://universalis.com/index.htm>)

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

13 and 14 Sept.

Liliana Restrepo
May McKeown
Molly Hemsley
Mai Le, Tuyet Nguyen & Thuy Vu

20 and 21 Sept.

Catherine Koh
Edith Robertson
Trevis Yee
Youth Group

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

Lucy Ferris
Melina Barcellona
Eleanor Mendes
Hoang Nguyen

Godfrey Thong
Beryl Chelliah
Daphne Hickman
Youth Group

SLIDE OPERATORS

Saturday 5pm SL
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

Choir
Paul Tierney
Lee Min Yee
Toan Tran

Choir
Rosemary Donaldson
Manny Gonzalez
Theresa Nguyen

SL WELCOMERS 13/14 AUG

5pm Libby Theodore
8.30am Margaret Gearon
10.30am Volunteer

SL CHURCH CLEANING

4th Oct - Maree's team
Maree Moss, Allen Leung,
Serena Ng & Lynda Kilroe-Smith

SL CHURCH FLOWERS

13th Sept: Edna Lee
20th Sept: Jo Adams

ST CHURCH FLOWERS

Flowers: Parishioners

SL WELCOMERS 20/21 SEPT

5:00pm Edna Lee
8.30am Marie Pekish
10.30am Volunteer

ST CHURCH CLEANING

27th Sept @ 8am
Hoang Nguyen, Anico Yee
Dzung Vu & Trong Nguyen

ST COUNTERS

This week Team 4:
Mary Choy & Eileen Chang
Next week Team 5:
Anico Yee & Pabs Gonzales

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

All who are sick, especially Tony Lobo, Kevin Ryan, Agatha Wink, Ronda Smith, Chris Leach, Dora Leung, Hazel Grealy, Josephine Alexander, Grace Dimattina, Margaret Hogg, Bernadine O'Meara, Kit Bing Fan, Kathryn Holmes, Stewart Davis, Mark, Margaret Hayes, Charmaine Bancroft, Marilene Japour, Paciencia Cabral and all those parishioners unable to be among us this weekend.

All who have died, and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Artidoro & Gelinda Liberatore, Lira Medira, Romeo Malicse, Fintan Pendergast, Kath Tobias, Stella Mary Hammett, Francis Joseph Tyrrell, Eileen Mayo, Audrey Barry, Annie Calleja, Sir Michael Curtain, Ken West, Jeffery Lawrence, Maria Delores Salinas, Robert Mead, William Searle, Edward John McGrath, Kathleen Williams, Henry Gleeson, Michael William White & Eileen Leach. May they rest in peace.

POPE LEO'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR SEPTEMBER:

For our relationship with all of creation. Let us pray that, inspired by St. Francis, we might experience our interdependence with all creatures who are loved by God and worthy of love and respect.

PARISH PRIEST INSTALLATION - SAVE THE DATE: Fr Alex will be officially installed as Parish Priest of St Luke's and St Timothy's by Bishop Thinh Nguyen D.D. at the **5pm Mass on Saturday 18th October**. There will be a potluck (bring a plate to share) dinner and celebrations in the parish hall after the Mass. Please save the date.

UPCOMING WEEKDAY MASS CHANGES: There will be

NO 9.15am MASS on Friday 19th Sept, 26th Sept. & 3rd Oct at St Luke's,

NO 9.15am MASS on Saturday 20th Sept. at St Luke's.

NO 9.15am MASS on Thursday 25th Sept, 2nd Oct & 9th Oct at St Timothy's.

WELCOME TO THE FULLNESS OF THE FAITH! We joyfully celebrate and congratulate Sarah Santilli who will be received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church this weekend. Through prayer, discernment, study, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, Sarah has entered into the fullness of sacramental life, professing the Catholic faith and receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. We welcome her into our parish community with love and continued prayers. May the Lord Jesus continue to bless Sarah's faith journey and draw her ever closer to His Sacred Heart as she in turn is a missionary disciple who draws others into the Father heart of God. Welcome home!

iSTAND SET FREE CAMP: Get ready for an unforgettable weekend! Join us **22nd – 24th September at Belgrave Heights Convention Centre** for a camp designed for Year 8–12s. *Be inspired. Make new friends. Encounter God in a whole new way.* Register now using the QR code or contact Anthony Bolling on 0419 103 511



Resources

MELBOURNE CATHOLIC: We are called to be saints

MAJELLAN MEDIA: Looking out for each other

STEWARDSHIP CORNER:

The First collection is for the priest and retired priests.

The Second collection is for parish expenses.

ST: Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Total Collection: \$313.80

Last week's Church Stewardship Total Collection: \$256.10

Vietnamese Donation: \$94

SL: Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Total Collection: \$467.95

Last week's Church Stewardship Total Collection: \$551.65

Parish Groups & Contacts

Volunteers and Rosters

ST: Corrie Quimbo

SL: Margaret Gearon

Baptism Preparation

ST: Mary Italiano

Vietnamese Community

Hoang Nguyen

Andy Tran

Vietnamese Youth

Theresa Nguyen

Parish Collection Preparers

ST: Barry Silvester &

Michael Kawalewski

Stewardship Counters

SL: Dale Dixon

Steve Kilroe-Smith

Parishes Safeguarding Committee

Theresa Nguyen, Mary Italiano,

Darren McLean

Janette Clark

Parish history

SL: Margaret Gearon

Parish Accountant

Bernard Negline

SL: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ the

Parish Office – 9877 2292

Church Sacristan

ST: Margaret King & Hoang Nguyen

SL: Greg Grant

Church Housekeeping

ST: Margaret King

Church Cleaning & Flowers

SL: Megan McLean

Church Linen

SL: Beryl Chelliah

Parish Garden Maintenance

ST: Des Connors, Leo Watson,

Anico Yee & Vietnamese Community

SL: Darren McLean

Parish Choirs

ST: Miguel Ilagan & Theresa Nguyen

SL: Lina & Maria Mafi

St Vincent de Paul Conference

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

(Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)

Parish Contacts:

ST: John McCoy

SL: Tony Lobo &

Steve Kilroe-Smith

Entrance Antiphon: We should glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life and resurrection, through whom we are saved and delivered.

Response to the Psalm: Do not forget the works of the Lord!

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you, because by your cross you have redeemed the world. Alleluia!

Eucharistic Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself, says the Lord.



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL

Year 9 – 25 years plus leaders

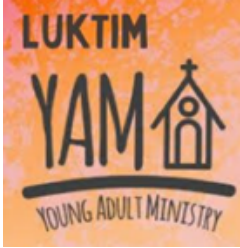
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The LukeTim YAM (18-35 Yrs) is an outreach program of St Luke the Evangelist, Blackburn South and St Timothy's, Forest Hill.



WHEN: Wed. 17th Sept @ 7pm
WHERE: St Luke's Presbytery, 46 Orchard Grove, Blackburn South
TOPIC: The Bible
What is it? Can we trust it?
How can it change your life?
An evening of nibbles, praise & worship, talk, sharing & games to deepen our relationship with Christ in a fun, safe and inclusive environment. Further enquiries to Jerisy or Sarah at luktimyam@gmail.com

menALIVE MAX 2025 MOUNTAINS

Date: **10-12 October 2025**
Venue: **Edmund Rice Centre, Amberley, Lower Plenty, VIC**

A national Catholic event for men. Join us as we gather to 'listen, learn and long for the fullness of life' in groups or in workshops. We desire to grow into the men we were made to be, better husbands, fathers, and men of God.



This weekend is designed to offer you a sanctuary of peace and spiritual growth. It will be a time of renewal and inspiration for men. To register go to: https://app.tickets.org.au/MA/MAX2025MEL_vaacM

EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS – 14 SEPTEMBER 2025



COLLECT

Look upon us, O God,
Creator and ruler of all things,
and, that we may feel the working of your mercy,
grant that we may serve you with all our heart.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

The feast of the Exaltation (or the Triumph) of the Holy Cross originated in the fourth century with Empress Helena's discovery of the true cross of Christ in Jerusalem. The date of the feast commemorates the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built by Constantine on the site. The church is the holiest Christian shrine in the world. The commemoration replaces a Sunday because it is regarded as a 'Feast of the Lord'.

Combining the cross and the exaltation, the feast sums up the whole Paschal Mystery which we celebrate whenever we gather for Eucharist. Pope Francis speaks of his amazement, his sense of astonishment in the liturgy, at the reality of the Paschal Mystery where we encounter the Risen Christ. *In the Eucharist and in all the sacraments we are guaranteed the possibility of encountering the Lord Jesus and of having the power of his Paschal Mystery reach us. The salvific power of the sacrifice of Jesus, his every word, his every gesture, glance, and feeling reaches us through the celebration of the sacraments.*

Pope Francis, *Desiderio Desideravi* (2022) 11.

A reading from the book of Numbers 21:4-9

On the way through the wilderness the people lost patience. They spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this wilderness? For there is neither bread nor water here; we are sick of this unsatisfying food.'

At this God sent fiery serpents among the people; their bite brought death to many in Israel. The people came and said to Moses, 'We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you. Intercede for us with the Lord to save us from these serpents.'

Moses interceded for the people, and the Lord answered him, 'Make a fiery serpent and put it on a standard. If anyone is bitten and looks at it, he shall live.' So Moses fashioned a bronze serpent which he put on a standard, and if anyone was bitten by a serpent, he looked at the bronze serpent and lived.

First Reading

The Exodus from slavery in Egypt is the defining event in the Old Testament. But after crossing the Red Sea, the people wandered in the desert for forty years. They complained frequently to Moses.

The people, and God it seems, lost patience with one another. But when they were struck down by fiery serpents, they went to Moses to express their sorrow. Moses interceded on their behalf. He made a bronze serpent and lifted it up, so that anyone who looked upon it was saved from death by snake bite.

This event is quoted in today's gospel. As for Israelites who looked upon the bronze serpent, so too, all who look upon Christ lifted up on the cross will be saved and receive eternal life.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 77:1-2, 34-38

R. Do not forget the works of the Lord!

Give heed, my people, to my teaching;
turn your ear to the words of my mouth.

I will open my mouth in a parable
and reveal hidden lessons of the past. **R.**

When he slew them then they would seek him,
return and seek him in earnest.

They would remember that God was their rock,
God the Most High their redeemer. **R.**

But the words they spoke were mere flattery;
they lied to him with their lips.

For their hearts were not truly with him;
they were not faithful to his covenant. **R.**

Yet he who is full of compassion
forgave their sin and spared them.

So often he held back his anger
when he might have stirred up his rage. **R.**

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 77/78 is a lengthy poem that recounts God's saving actions on behalf of Israel despite their recurring sinfulness and loss of faith.

Covering the centuries from the Exodus to the time of King David, it reflects on the cycle of God's action, human failure and divine forgiveness that we have seen in miniature in the first reading.

The first stanza is a kind of introduction. The second and third show the people's fickle return to God and failure. The fourth verse is the climax which acknowledges God's great compassion. The cantor/reader should try to build towards this concluding expression of forgiveness and salvation.

**A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Philippians 2:6-11**

The state of Jesus was divine,
yet he did not cling to his equality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave,
and became as men are;
and being as all men are, he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death, death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim
Jesus Christ as Lord,
to the glory of the Father.

**A reading from the holy Gospel
according to John 3:13-17**

Jesus said to Nicodemus:
'No one has gone up to heaven
except the one who came down from heaven,
the Son of Man who is in heaven;
and the Son of Man must be lifted up
as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,
so that everyone who believes may have eternal life
in him.
Yes, God loved the world so much
that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost
but may have eternal life.
For God sent his Son into the world
not to condemn the world,
but so that through him the world might be
saved.'

Second Reading

We last heard this reading on Palm Sunday. It is likely an early Christian hymn which expresses the whole of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection. It summarises beautifully and concisely the meaning of today's feast.

Prominent here is the 'lifting up' which we see in the other readings and which is actually embedded in the name of the feast itself. Note that this is God's work: God raised him on high to receive the adoration of 'every creature under heaven'.

The reader should proclaim this poetic text with a sense of awe and wonder at the saving Paschal Mystery. Hearing these words should bring the assembly to worship. 'Men' should be read as 'human beings' and then 'people'.

Gospel

The Gospel of John likes to play with the ambiguity of the phrase 'lifted up'. Jesus is physically lifted up on the cross to die, and then lifted up again in the resurrection. For John, it is a neat expression for the whole Paschal Mystery which is the central theme of today's feast.

As today's Preface says: *You placed the salvation of the human race on the wood of the cross, so that, where death arose, life might again spring forth...*

John follows this affirmation by explaining that all this is an expression of God's immense love of the world. In conclusion, we hear the stunning revelation that, in Christ, God wants the whole world to be saved: not just a chosen few, but all.

The Exaltation of the Cross is a wonderful return to the celebration of the Easter Triduum which we enjoyed five months ago. It unfolds the reality of the Eucharist which we celebrate each Sunday throughout the year.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Solemn Blessing (Ordinary Time VI)

May God bless us with every heavenly blessing,
make us always holy and pure in his sight,
pour out in abundance upon us the riches of his glory,
and teach us with the words of truth;
may he instruct us in the Gospel of salvation,
and ever endow us with fraternal charity.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down on us and remain with us for ever.

Amen.

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Ordinary Time VI, Roman Missal p. 717)



ST. LUKES SCHOOL
BLACKBURN SOUTH



St Luke the Evangelist Blackburn South

We are Taking Enrolments for All Year Levels

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BOOK A
TOUR





IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST PAUL

TO GREECE & TURKEY (WITH ROME OPTION)



20TH APRIL –
3RD MAY 2026

LED BY
FR ALEX CHOW

14
DAYS

PACKAGE PRICE: AU\$ 8,490*
per person (twin share)

OPTIONAL SINGLE
ROOM SUPPLEMENT:

AU\$ 1,150

FULLY
ESCORTED

*Conditions apply. Subject to change.
Price estimated based on group
size of 20 pilgrims. Actual pricing
will be known in late May 2025.

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'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres'. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love'

(Ephesians 4:2)

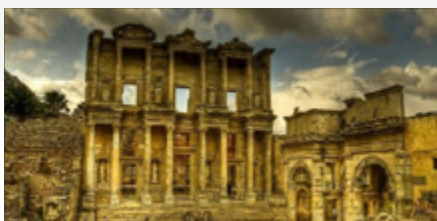
Such passionate, life giving, encouraging and hopeful words written by St Paul the Apostle. Come and join us for an extraordinary pilgrimage of Greece and Turkey and (optional Rome extension) as we follow the footsteps of St Paul and experience the contexts in which these passionate letters were written. It will be an opportunity of spiritual renewal, deepen our relationship with God as we reflect and experience the incredible journey of Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles.

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REGISTER FOR AN INFORMATION SESSION at 7pm ON THURSDAY, 5th JUNE

* Enjoy full travel briefing * Meet your fellow Pilgrims * Have your questions answered

CONTACT FR ALEX OR OLIVE TREE TRAVEL TO REGISTER & GET THE DETAILS



NEXT STEPS

1. Register your interest and obtain a booking form from Fr Alex or Olive Tree Travel or by [CLICKING HERE.](#)
2. To secure your place, a deposit of \$500 per person is payable by 16th June 2025 (unless sold out prior)
3. Final balances will be due by late February 2026.



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DAY 1 MONDAY 20TH APRIL

DEPART AUSTRALIA

Depart Melbourne this evening on your Emirates flight to Dubai. On arrival, transfer to your connecting flight to Athens.

DAY 2 TUESDAY 21ST APRIL

ARRIVE ATHENS

Arrive in Athens today. Athens is the thriving capital of Greece but more importantly, we have entered into the world of the New Testament where St Paul and his companions established the first Christian communities throughout his four missionary journeys. On arrival in **Athens** we will be met and transferred to our centrally located hotel for the remainder of the day at leisure. Athens overnight (D)

DAY 3 WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL

ATHENS - CORINTH – ATHENS

Journey out to **Ancient Corinth** where the Apostle Paul lived for almost two years, teaching the people the Word of God and converting many. We visit the ancient ruins and see the site where he preached the Gospel from the **Rostrum**. Also visit the Peirene fountain, and the 6th century BC **Temple of Apollo** before an outdoor Mass in this stunning pilgrimage setting. Finally we come to **Cenchreae**, the ancient port from where Paul said farewell to the believers and departed for Ephesus (Acts 18:18). Return to Athens in the late afternoon for dinner and overnight. (BD)

DAY 4 THURSDAY 23RD APRIL

ATHENS

When St Paul first came to Athens it was predominantly a city that worshipped pagan gods. St Paul was taken before the city council at the Areopagus Hill, a rough outcrop of limestone rock from which he preached the Gospel message to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:16-21). We begin our day with a tour of **Christian Athens** including the **Acropolis**, the **Areopagus** where St Paul delivered his famous sermon about the identity of "the Unknown God" (Acts 17:15-34) and the **Parthenon**. Continue for a visit the **Ancient Agora** and a bus tour to see the highlights of the city including the Kallimarmaro Stadium, dating back to 330 B.C. and restored for the first modern Olympic Games held here in 1896. Visit to the New Acropolis museum. Enjoy dinner and overnight in Athens. (BD)

DAY 5 FRIDAY 24TH APRIL

ATHENS – METEORA – KALAMBAKA

Depart this morning and travel north to the small town of **Kalambaka** built at the foot of the majestic grey rocks of **Meteora**. Marvel at this unique phenomenon of nature – 24 perpendicular rocks where 600 years ago Byzantine monks chose to worship God and build their Monastic community of Meteora. We visit two of the Byzantine Meteora monasteries. Among striking scenery and perched on top of huge rocks, the ageless monasteries of Meteora seem to be suspended in mid-air. The monasteries contain beautiful Byzantine art and offer an insight to the mystic world of the monks still residing there. Mass this evening, will be held in a private room at the hotel before dinner and overnight in Kalambaka (BD)

DAY 6 SATURDAY 25TH APRIL

KALAMBAKA – VERGINA – VERIA – THESSALONIKI

Depart this morning to **Vergina**, the first capital of the Macedonian Kingdom. Here we visit the "Vergina findings", treasures of Ancient Macedonia and the tomb of King Philip II of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. A few minutes away is Veria, located on the ruins of **Ancient Beroea**, is one of Apostle Paul's stops. Here we see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching. Continue our drive to Thessaloniki. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki. (BD)

DAY 7 SUNDAY 26TH APRIL

THESSALONIKI

Today is for Thessaloniki exploration. Welcome to Greece's second city, founded in 315 BC, and where St Paul preached during the winters of 49-50AD and wrote the two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians. See the ramparts of the city, the triumphal Arch of Galerius and the Roman Agora where St Paul once preached. We shall visit St Demetrios' Church with its valuable mosaics and frescoes and will drive up to the upper town, which offers a marvellous view of the city. We will also have the chance to celebrate Mass at the Catholic Church. Dinner & overnight in Thessaloniki. (BD)

DAY 8 MONDAY 27TH APRIL

PHILIPPI – KAVALA – THESSALONIKI

Arise and journey along the ancient route of the Apostle Paul to nearby Philippi, named after Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. It was here that St Paul won his first European convert, a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira (Acts 16:12-40). Visit the Baptistery of Lydia for a beautiful outdoor Mass on the River Zygaktis, and renew

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our Baptismal vows. Visit the market place (where St Paul and St Silas were brought before the rulers) and the cistern which tradition identifies as the place where St Paul was imprisoned. We will also see the famous Acropolis, Basilica and the theatre. It was here that he established the first Christian Church in Europe. Visit the Octagonal church, an early Christian monument thought to be built on the site where St. Paul had established a house of prayer. Finally, we drive to the port in Kavala (Neapolis in New Testament times), where Paul landed with Timothy, Silas, and Luke. Return to your hotel in Thessaloniki for dinner and overnight. (BD)

DAY 9 TUESDAY 28TH APRIL **THESSALONIKI – IZMIR (SMYRNA) - KUSADASI** This morning, we depart Thessaloniki Airport for our flight to Izmir (via Istanbul or Athens). Upon arrival we will be met by our Turkish guide and commence our touring programme by visiting the Ruins of Ancient Smyrna, one of the 7 Churches. After the Agora visit we will drive to the coastal city of Kusadasi. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. (D)

DAY 10 WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL **EPHESUS PILGRIMAGE**
 Today we visit the famous city of Ephesus. Ephesus, as we will see, is in a very good state of preservation and the overall existing view of this ancient city will make it evident that she was a wealthy, cultural, and commercial centre in the 1st century. Paul's preaching in the area resulted with the uproar of the Guild of Silversmiths and the evangelisation of the whole province of Asia. Highlights include the ancient temple to the Roman Emperor, the 'slope' houses, the Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian, the Fountain of Trajan, the brothel, and the large theatre in which the riot of Acts 19 took place. Not far from the theatre, we visit the Church of St Mary, where it is said that Mary spent the later years of her life. Celebrate Mass. Finally you will visit the restored remains of the 6th century Basilica of St John at Celcuk where a small church was originally built over the tomb of St John the Evangelist. Return to your hotel in Kusadasi for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 11 THURSDAY 30TH APRIL **KUSADASI - ISTANBUL** After breakfast at the hotel, we will depart for Izmir Airport to catch our flight at 10:00AM. On arrival, we will be met and transferred to old city to visit Basilica Cistern, the largest of several hundred ancient cisterns that lie beneath the city. We'll also get to see one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches. This afternoon visit the Byzantine Hippodrome, the Blue Mosque and nearby Hagia Sophia (meaning 'Holy Wisdom'). Built in 548 AD, Hagia Sophia was the greatest Church in Christendom until 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire. Onwards then to the Grand Bazaar, with over 4000 exotic tiny shops. Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 12 FRIDAY 01ST MAY **ISTANBUL**
 Commence the day with a special morning cruise along the Bosphorus River, where you will sail past the Ottoman Palaces, Byzantine fortresses, Beylerbeyi Palace and Suleiman's Mosque. An opportunity to celebrate Mass at a Catholic Church. Enjoy a brief visit to Topkapi Palace. After the visit, transfer to our hotel for dinner and overnight (BD)

DAY 13 SATURDAY 02ND MAY **ISTANBUL - AUSTRALIA**
 End your pilgrimage with a transfer to Istanbul Airport for your departure flight to Dubai. Transfer to your connecting flight back to Melbourne. (B)

DAY 14 SUNDAY 03RD MAY **ARRIVE AUSTRALIA**
 Arrive back to Melbourne this evening with wonderful memories from your pilgrimage!

**

Itinerary subject to change **

Interested in continuing the Footsteps of St Paul and visiting other amazing sites in Rome?

Instead of flying straight home from Istanbul, we will hold a limited number of seats out of Rome, allowing pilgrims to enjoy an independently arranged Rome Pilgrimage in the Eternal city and surroundings as organized with/by Fr Alex Chow.

Fr Alex has lived in Rome as a seminarian for 4 years. Fr. Alex has offered to assist pilgrims in finding

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modest but clean and comfortable accommodation. The Roman stay will consist of the following (depending on time availability):

1. Sites of St Paul: Basilica of St Paul Outside the Wall, Tre Fontana (where St Paul was imprisoned and executed), via Ostiense (where St Peter and St Paul met in Rome)
2. 3 major Pontifical Basilica: Basilica of St Peter, Basilica of Mary Major, Basilica of John Lateran
3. Churches of Saints of the Roman Canon: St Cosmos and Damian, St Clement, St Agnes in Agony, St Cecilia, St Bartholomew
4. Beautiful Rome: Colosseum, Rome Forum, Pantheon, Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, Piazza di Popolo, etc...
5. Churches of the Passion of Jesus Christ: Church of the Holy Steps, Basilica of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, Basilica di Santa Prassede (Column of the Flagellation)
6. Elegant Churches: San Luigi dei Francesi (Caravaggio - calling of Matthew), Basilica of Saint Mary of Minerva (the tomb of St Catherine of Siena), Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria (Bernini's dramatic carving "The Ecstasy of Teresa."), Chiesa del Gesu.

****Olive Tree Travel will arrange your flight from Istanbul – Rome****

PRICE INCLUSIONS:

- Emirates Flight from Melbourne to Athens via Dubai and then return Istanbul to Melbourne via Dubai
- One way flight from Thessaloniki to Izmir
- One way flight from Izmir to Istanbul
- 11 nights in total: 7 nights in Greece and 4 nights in Turkey in hotel accommodation in twin share rooms.
- Breakfast and Dinner daily. Breakfasts and Dinners at hotels unless otherwise specified.
- All tips, gratuities and portorage (where available)
- Whisperer headsets
- All guiding and entrance fees as per the itinerary.
- Air-conditioned coach

NOT INCLUDED:

- Drinks with meals
- Travel insurance
- Incidentals, laundry
- Lunches
- Turkey Visa – currently US\$66 and obtained privately before departure

HOTELS (OR SIMILAR):

• Hotel Luwian	Athens	3 nights
• Hotel Amalia	Kalambaka	1 night
• Hotel Imperial Plus	Thessaloniki	3 nights
• Korumar Hotel	Kusadasi	2 nights
• Port Bosphorous Hotel	Istanbul	2 nights

NEXT STEPS

1. Register your interest and obtain a booking form from Fr Alex or Olive Tree Travel or by [CLICKING HERE.](#)
2. To secure your place, a deposit of \$500 per person is payable by 16th June 2025 (unless sold out prior)
3. Final balances will be due by late February 2026.

WHO TO CONTACT:

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 South and St Timothy Forest Hill
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Be GOOD SHEPHERD THE

2025



Year
of
hope

By
Olivia
Dawson