

Saint Mary's Newsletter: September

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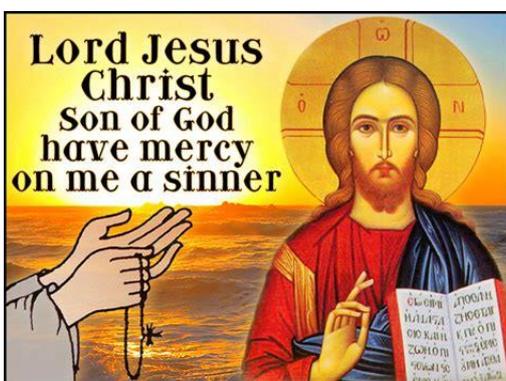
SERVICES ETC FOR SEPTEMBER

Due to uncertainty of covid levels, lockdowns etc, and that the Refreshment Roster has not been able to be filled out, there are no services, nor morning tea / readings / prayer roster listed as per usual for this month. When we are able to meet, I'm sure we will all get stuck in to ensure things are sorted out 😊



THE JESUS PRAYER:

This ancient prayer of Eastern Orthodoxy is a wonderful, short, yet powerful prayer that is said on the breath of millions of Jesus followers. It is particularly helpful in times of temptation as well as uncertainty:



Genesis 8:22 states: *“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”* We praise God for the seasons on Earth! The stirrings of spring always remind me of the Resurrection.



Parts of the book of Ephesians reminds us that what is at play in the world and world events are likely caused by the unseen realm. When the Lord opens our eyes and we awaken to what is happening, Ephesians 5:8-14 is striking:

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴This is why it is said:

*“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”*

The phrase *principalities and powers* occurs six times in the Bible, always in the King James Version and its derivatives (NKJV, MKJV). Other versions translate it variously as “rulers and authorities,” “forces and authorities,” and “rulers and powers.” In most places where the phrase appears, the contexts make it clear that it refers to the vast array of evil and malicious spirits who make war against the people of God. The principalities and powers of Satan are usually in view here, beings that wield power in the unseen realms to oppose everything and everyone that is of God.

The first mention of principalities and powers is in [Romans 8:37–39](#): “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 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.” These verses are about the victory Christ has won over all the forces ranged against us. We are “more than conquerors” because no force—not life, not death, not angels, not demons, indeed nothing—can separate us from the love of God. The “powers” referred to here are those with miraculous powers, whether false teachers and prophets or the very demonic entities that empower them. What is clear is that, whoever they are, they cannot separate us from the love of God. Victory is assured. It would be unfortunate to dwell on identifying the powers and miss the main thrust of the verse, which is assurance about what God has done to save us.

Another mention of principalities and powers is in [Colossians 1:16](#), “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.” Here is the clear statement that God is the Creator and Ruler over all authorities, whether they submit to Him or rebel against Him. Whatever power the evil forces possess, they are not out of the ultimate control of our sovereign God, who uses even the wicked for bringing about His perfect plan and purpose ([Daniel 4:35](#); [Isaiah 46:10–11](#)).

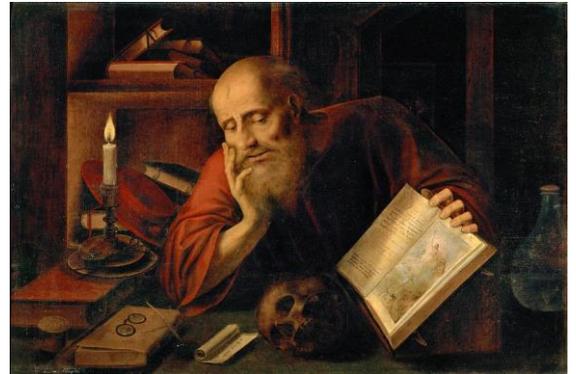
In the next chapter of Colossians, we read about Jesus’ ultimate power over all other powers: “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” ([Colossians 2:15](#)). In keeping with all things, the powers are created by Christ and therefore under His control. They are not to be feared, for they have been disarmed by the cross. The Saviour, by His death, took dominion from them, and took back what they had captured. Satan and his legions had invaded the earth and drawn mankind into captivity, subjecting them to their evil reign. But Christ, by His death, subdued the invaders and recaptured those who had been vanquished. [Colossians 2:14](#) speaks of Jesus being nailed to the cross along with the written charges against us. The record of our wrongdoing, with which Satan accuses us before God, is nailed with Christ to the cross. It is thereby destroyed, and the powers can no longer accuse us; we are innocent in the eyes of God. Hence, they are disarmed.

[Ephesians 3:10–11](#) presents different principalities and powers—those of the heavenly realms: “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here we see the angelic hosts being shown the wisdom and purpose of God in the plan of salvation through Christ. Angels, both holy and unholy, witness the glory of God and the pre-eminence of Christ above all creatures in the church, those who are saved and preserved by His power ([Ephesians 1:20–21](#)).

[Ephesians 6:12](#) declares the warfare in which we are engaged as we battle throughout our lives “against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” So, having been saved, we must continue to struggle to do good things in light of the sure victory promised in [Romans 8](#). It is as though we are facing an army of dark powers who have been disarmed from real power and against whom we have been promised victory. It is our job to demonstrate and depend upon the wisdom and power of God in defeating them in our lives. We can do this by trusting in God’s victory.

This Month in Christian History:

30th Sep 420: Death of Jerome, Bible scholar, and one of the most learned of the Latin Fathers. Originally from Rome, Jerome moved to Bethlehem, entered a monastery, and devoted himself to translating the bible into Latin (bequeathing to the Western Church the Vulgate Bible). He also prepared numerous works of ecclesiastical history and biblical interpretation.



Parish Giving

Please consider giving to the parish via Automatic Payment. St Mary’s has to pay for our vicar and all other costs of running a Parish, as well as giving a proportion to the Diocese. Please help us to be sustainable by giving via Automatic Payment. It is an easy way to give and is useful for the parish in running its budget. The Parish Bank Account is:

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