



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA  
PARISH OF ST. VASILIOS, BRUNSWICK, VICTORIA

SUNDAY  
20 MARCH 2016  
Volume 5—Issue 5  
20/03/2016—26/03/2016

# PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

## PROGRAM FOR 20 —26 MARCH 2016



<b>SUNDAY</b> <b>20 MARCH</b>	Sunday of Orthodoxy —St. John 1: 43-51 • <b>7.30– 11.00am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy <b>SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR AGES 5 TO 17 YEARS TAKES PLACE STRAIGHT AFTER HOLY COMMUNION. CLASSES TAKE PLACE IN THE DOWNSTAIRS ROOMS BEHIND THE CHURCH. BRING YOUR CHILDREN ALONG TO LEARN ABOUT THEIR ORTHODOX FAITH AND GOD'S LOVE FOR EACH ONE OF US.</b>
<b>MONDAY</b> <b>21 MARCH</b>	• <b>9.00am</b> Service of Holy Unction • <b>10.00am</b> Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall • <b>6.00pm</b> Service of Great Compline
<b>TUESDAY</b> <b>22 MARCH</b>	• <b>6.00pm</b> Service of Great Compline • <b>7.00pm</b> Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group will meet in our Church Hall. The meeting will begin with the Compline Service in English. • <b>7.30pm</b> Young Adults and Married Couples Bible Study Group —in downstairs building behind the Church.
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> <b>23 MARCH</b>	• <b>8.00– 9.30am</b> Service of Presanctified Liturgy • <b>6.00pm</b> Service of Great Compline
<b>THURSDAY</b> <b>24 MARCH</b>	• <b>5.00pm</b> Service of Vespers
<b>FRIDAY</b> <b>25 MARCH</b>  <i>Annunciation of the Theotokos</i>	• <b>7.00– 9.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy • <b>7.00pm</b> Service of Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos—2nd Salutations
<b>SATURDAY</b> <b>26 MARCH</b>	• <b>3.45pm</b> Service of Vespers

### Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church  
9387 7693

Fr Athanasios  
9383 4151

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.

## WORDS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

“A fish that is alive swims against the flow of water. One that is dead floats down with the water.  
A true Christian goes against the current of sinful age. A false one is swept away by its swiftness.”

# Become a Living Icon: Homily for the Sunday of Orthodoxy

Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40

St. John 1: 44-52

At the end of Liturgy today, we will parade around the church carrying our icons in celebration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, which commemorates the restoration of icons to the church after the period of iconoclasm many centuries ago. We do so because Icons are not mere works of decorative art to us; they are windows to heaven which remind us that the Son of God really has become one of us, with a visible human body, and that we are called to become like the saints whose images are portrayed in them. For we are all icons of God, created in His image and likeness. Jesus Christ is the new Adam Who has restored and healed every dimension of our fallen humanity, and brought us into the very life of the Holy Trinity. It may help us to think of Lent as a time to make ourselves better icons of the Lord.

When we recall the great saints of the Old Testament mentioned in today's reading from the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are humbled by their faithfulness, obedience, and humility. But even they "did not receive the promise, God provided something better for us that they should not be made perfect apart from us." As hard as it is to believe, we have been blessed beyond them, for God's promises in Jesus Christ were not fulfilled in their lifetimes; they hoped for what they did not receive, but their lives were still icons of faithful anticipation of the Messiah.

We live many generations after the New Testament saints Peter, Andrew, and Nathanael encountered Jesus Christ. And the Lord's promise to Nathanael, "you shall see the heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man," is the fulfillment of all the hopes and dreams of the Old Testament. In Jesus Christ, humanity and God are united; no longer shut out of paradise, we are raised to the life of the Heavenly Kingdom by our Lord. Our destiny is not for the dust and decay of the tomb, but for life everlasting because of His glorious third-day resurrection.

In Lent, we take small, humble, imperfect steps to open ourselves to this new life in Christ, to become better living icons—living images—of what it means for human beings to share in God's salvation. The point of Lent is not to punish ourselves or simply to make us feel guilty, miserable, or deprived. Instead, the purpose of our spiritual exercises is to help us share more fully in the promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We want His holiness, love, mercy, and blessing to reshape every dimension of our lives, to be evident in how we go through the day, in how we treat others, in what we say, think, and feel.

And the more we grow in His image and likeness, the more we will become our true selves. Icons portray particular human beings whose lives have shown brightly with the holiness of God. The unbelievable truth is that, in Christ Jesus, we may do the same. No matter our age, health, occupation, family circumstances, personality quirks, or anything else, we too may become living, breathing manifestations of our Lord's salvation when we open ourselves to His healing mercy through prayer, fasting, forgiveness, generosity to the needy, and all the various forms of spiritual nourishment given through the life of the Church.

There could be no greater optimism about us than what we proclaim on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. We not only carry icons, we are icons. We not only venerate icons, we are called to become living proof of what happens to a human being who enters into the eternal blessedness of God, even as we walk around Abilene. Let this sink in: What the Old Testament saints hoped for, we possess. This Lent, let's take Jesus Christ as His word, and prepare—with humility, persistence, and mindfulness— to "see the heaven open and angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." For that is the good news of our salvation. BY FR. PHILIP LEMASTERS

---

The candles lit before icons of saints reflect their ardent love for God for Whose sake they gave up everything that man prizes in life, including their very lives, as did the holy apostles, martyrs and others. These candles also mean that these saints are lamps burning for us and providing light for us by their own saintly living, their virtues and their ardent intercession for us before God through their constant prayers by day and night. The burning candles also stand for our ardent zeal and the sincere sacrifice we make out of reverence and gratitude to them for their solicitude on our behalf before God."