



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

SUNDAY
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PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 27 MARCH—2 APRIL 2016

SUNDAY 27 MARCH	2nd Sunday of Lent—St Gregory Palamas —Mark 2: 1-12 • 7.30– 11.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy 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.
MONDAY 28 MARCH	• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction • 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall • 6.00pm Service of Great Compline
TUESDAY 29 MARCH	• 6.00pm Service of Great Compline • 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group will meet in Coburg Church Hall. The meeting will begin with the Compline Service in English.
WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH	• 8.00– 9.30am Service of Presanctified Liturgy • 6.00pm Service of Great Compline
THURSDAY 31 MARCH	• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline
FRIDAY 1 APRIL	• 7.00pm Service of Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos—3rd Salutations
SATURDAY 2 APRIL	• 3.45pm Service of Vespers



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.

PLEASE NOTE:

GOOD FRIDAY CHOIR PRACTISE FOR ΕΓΚΩΜΙΑ (LAMENTATIONS) WILL BE TAKING PLACE EVERY SUNDAY STRAIGHT AFTER THE DIVINE LITURGY - UPSTAIRS INSIDE THE CHURCH. EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO JOIN OUR CHOIR.

WORDS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

Let not one think, my fellow Christian, that only priests and monks need to pray without ceasing and not laymen No, no; every Christian without exception ought to dwell always in prayer.

+ St. Gregory of Palamas

**St. Gregory Palamas and the Healing of our Paralysis:
Homily for the Second Sunday of Great Lent in the Orthodox Church**

Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Mark 2:1-12

Think for a moment how you would feel if you went to the doctor with a serious health problem and were simply told medical facts about your condition and that you were an interesting case. You would probably not be happy at all because you go to a physician to be healed, not simply to learn truths that in and of themselves do not restore you to health.

On this second Sunday of Great Lent, we remember a great saint who knew that our salvation is not in mere ideas about God, but in true participation in His life by grace. St. Gregory Palamas lived in the 14th century in the Byzantine Empire. A monastic, a bishop, and a scholar, he defended the experience of hesychast monks who in the stillness of deep prayer beheld the divine light of the uncreated energies of God. In ways that go beyond rational understanding, they saw the divine glory as they participated in the life of God by grace.

Against those rationalists who said that such a thing was impossible, St. Gregory insisted that we know the Lord by being united with Him in prayer and holiness. Jesus Christ has joined humanity and divinity and dwells in our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit. We truly become partakers of the divine nature when we know by experience the presence of God in our lives.

That is precisely what happened to the paralyzed man in today's gospel lesson. The Lord did not simply convey ideas to Him, but instead shared His divine energies by restoring him to health, both spiritually and physically. At the root of all human corruption is our sin, which weakens and sickens us all, and the Savior showed His divinity by forgiving the man's sins. Christ then enabled the man to rise up and walk as evidence that He has the authority to forgive sins as the Son of God.

This healing also shows what it means to be infused with the gracious divine energies, for the paralyzed man experienced freedom from bondage and a miraculous transformation of every dimension of his life. He did not simply hear words or receive a diagnosis, for the Lord healed him inwardly and outwardly.

This miracle speaks to us all, of course, because we are sinners paralyzed by our own actions and those of others. We have made ourselves so sick and weak that we do not have the strength to eradicate the presence of evil in our lives. Just think for a moment of how easily we fall into words, thoughts, and deeds that we know are not holy. Our habitual sins have become second nature to us; left to our own resources we are no more able to make them go away than a paralyzed man is to get up and walk.

The good news is that Jesus Christ comes to every single one of us with forgiveness and healing. Too often, we are willing only to ask for forgiveness, but not to rise, take up our beds, and walk. In other words, we fail to see that being infused with the gracious divine energies is not a matter of simply being excused from paying a penalty or declared not guilty; instead, it is truly a calling to become who we are created to be in God's image and likeness. It is to be healed from all the ravages of sin and to shine with the light of holiness as we participate by grace in the life of the Holy Trinity.

No, we do not have to become monks and nuns in order to do that. But we do need to do everything that we can to open ourselves to the healing energies of God. When we pray, fast, give to the needy, and practice forgiveness and reconciliation, or any other act of truth faithfulness or repentance, we do so in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, alive and active in us. Even the smallest bits of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" that we experience are the fruits of the Spirit's presence. (Gal. 5:22) We should cherish them as such and do what we can to help them grow and become characteristic of our lives and personalities.

The truth is that if we want to know Christ's healing and strength, we have to obey His commandments, for He calls us all to get up and move forward in a holy life. In order to do that, we have to welcome and cooperate with our Lord's mercy. Think again of going to the doctor yourself. We're glad to hear that there's a cure for our ailments, but that knowledge will do us no good unless we participate in the treatment. We have to take our medicine and do our therapy if we want to benefit personally.

How sad it would have been for the formerly paralyzed man to have disobeyed the Lord's command and simply stayed in bed. How sad that we so often do precisely that in our refusal to cooperate with Christ's healing and mercy by obeying Him. As we continue our Lenten journey, let's remember that in every aspect of the Christian life we experience the gracious divine energies of the Lord. The Son of God has joined Himself to every dimension of our human existence and the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts. We do not have mere signs and symbols of salvation, but God Himself. The only limits to His presence, power, and healing in our lives are those that we keep in place. This Lent, let's leave our sick beds behind and do all that we can to participate more fully in the healing mercy that the Savior brings to each and every one of us. That's the best way to prepare to behold the glory of His resurrection.

Fr. Philip LeMasters