



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

SUNDAY
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PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 31 JULY—6 AUGUST 2016



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Fr. Athanasios
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are available
at the Church

every Monday to Friday
between
4.00 and 6.00pm

for Holy Confession and
any spiritual need.

SUNDAY 31 JULY	Sixth Sunday of Matthew —Matthew 9: 1—8 • 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 1 AUGUST (FAST BEGINS)	• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction • 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall. • 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
TUESDAY 2 AUGUST	• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos • 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group will meet in our Coburg Hall. The meeting will begin with the Compline Service in English.
WEDNESDAY 3 AUGUST	• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study
THURSDAY 4 AUGUST	• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
FRIDAY 5 AUGUST	• 5.00pm Service of Vespers
SATURDAY 6 AUGUST Transfiguration of Jesus Christ the Saviour	• 7.00– 9.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy • 3.45pm Service of Vespers

WORDS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

Temptations come on some people for the cleansing of previous sins, on other for the beautification of their current perfection, and on yet others, as preparation for things to come, except temptations, which are for the increase of a man's faith and virtue, as it was with Job.

- St. Maximos the Confessor, *Chapters on Love*, 2.45

Temptations come so that hidden passions may be revealed and so that it will be possible to fight them, and so that the soul may be rid of them. They are also a sign of God's mercy. So give yourself with trust into God's hands and ask his help, so that he will strengthen you in your struggle. God knows how much each one can bear and allows temptations according to the measure of our strength. Remember that after temptation comes spiritual joy, and that the Lord protects them that endure temptations and suffering for the sake of His love.

- St. Nektarios of Aegina, *The Path to Happiness*, 4

SERMON ON THE TRANSFIGURATION

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!

On 6th August, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we commemorate the event when our Lord's human nature was transfigured by the Holy Spirit, proceeding from Our Heavenly Father, Whose voice witnessed to His Son's divine nature.

This Feast shows us firstly that the human and the divine natures of Our Lord Jesus Christ are united in One Person, secondly that, therefore, there is no unity without the Holy Spirit, and thirdly that our Saviour and Lord, dominates over Life and Death, for prophet Moses, who died, and prophet Elijah, who did not die, both came to worship Him on the Mount Tabor...

Every minute detail of this Evangelical event is, indeed, full of a profound significance but today I would like to point out an aspect of this Feast which is often overlooked: the symbolical meaning of Mount Tabor, the 'mountain' where the Transfiguration occurred. This Mount Tabor is for us a figure of repentance. We note that, like for the disciples, in order for us to see the transfiguration or to hope to be transfigured ourselves, we will first have to climb up, to mount, from our present condition. Otherwise any transfiguration or change for the better in our lives is impossible...

Our transfiguration or salvation is like Mount Tabor: however hard we try, we will not be guaranteed salvation through a swift, if arduous, climb today. Salvation takes a lifetime, it is a long climb up a long slope, which is why the Lord gives most of us so long to live... Salvation is a long struggle which requires determination and perseverance, patient longsuffering...

Our spiritual progress is then not sudden and dramatic. And there are many obstacles through our path in our daily life: to pick up our prayer books in the morning and again in the evening is a struggle, and there are always hindrances along our path to even this: meals to prepare, trains to catch, phones to answer Church life is indeed made up of little sacrifices, obstacles to overcome: there are prayers to be said, fasts to be kept, a donation to be made, the washing-up to be done, flowers to be bought, the church to be cleaned, a choir rehearsal to go to, a vigil service to be attended, a confession to be prepared for...

We may well ask ourselves what are those little sacrifices that we have made since the Feast of Transfiguration a year ago? How far have we ascended up our own Mount Tabor? How have we changed over this time? What have we done to lead a better life since then? How have we improved? What have we given to God that we had not given Him before? It is this that we call progress: in what way am I a better Orthodox Christian than a year ago?

In our faith we are called to struggle daily, whatever the rocks or boulders in our way: whether they are pride or selfishness, lust or discouragement, envy or judging of others, – we have to struggle to ascend our personal Mount Tabor, we have to fight for our personal transfiguration. That is why it is so important to come to confession and communion!

If we do not do this, then the Church will move away from us. For we can both go up and down a slope. We can spiritually progress, but we can also spiritually regress. We can be transfigured by the love of God or we can be disfigured by the love of sin. And like progress, regress is not sudden and dramatic, regress, too, is a slope, as we say, a slippery slope.

Let us, therefore, take heed and give God what He really wants from us – our hearts and minds spiritually progressing. Amen.