



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

SUNDAY
7 AUGUST 2016
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PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 7—13 AUGUST 2016



SUNDAY 7 AUGUST <i>Sts Nicanor, Dometios</i>	Seventh Sunday of Matthew —Matthew 9: 27-35 • 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 8 AUGUST	• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction • 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall. • 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
TUESDAY 9 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 Hall. The meeting will begin with the Compline Service in English. • 7.30pm Young Adults and Married Couples Bible Study Group —in downstairs building behind the Church.
WEDNESDAY 10 AUGUST	• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study
THURSDAY 11 AUGUST	• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
FRIDAY 12 AUGUST	• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
SATURDAY 13 AUGUST	• 3.45pm Service of Vespers

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Fr. Athanasios
and
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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.

WORDS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

St. Paisios on Praying at Home

Silence greatly helps in spiritual life. It is good for one to practice silence for about an hour a day: to test himself, to acknowledge his passions and to fight in order to cut them off and purify his heart. It is very good if there is a quiet room in the house which gives him the feeling of a monastic cell. There, “in secret,” he is able to do his spiritual maintenance, to study, and to pray. A little spiritual study done before prayer helps greatly. The soul warms up and the mind is transported to the spiritual realm. That’s why, when a person has many distractions during the day, he should rejoice if he has ten minutes for prayer, or even two minutes to read something, so as to drive away distractions.

—St. Paisios the Athonite (1924-1994), from *Family Life*

7th Sunday of St. Matthew. (Matthew 9:27-35)

In the book of the Prophet Isaiah it is written that, when the Messiah comes He will cure our illnesses. "Behold, our God renders judgment, and He will render it; He will come and save us. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear" (Is. 35:4-5).

In today's divine Gospel this prophesy has been fulfilled before us. Two blind men, as Jesus Christ was passing by, "followed Him, crying out and saying, 'Son of David, have mercy on us'" (Matth.9:27). These men were deprived of the greatest gift from God, their sight, and for many years lived in darkness. They struggled to survive by begging in the streets of their home town and were unable to see even their beloved ones. Although blind, they were not deaf. They heard about Jesus of Nazareth. They listened to the stories, which their fellow countrymen were saying, about the miracles that this young Rabbi was performing and within their hearts a great hope was building up. They listened to the loud voice, arising from the depths of their hearts, crying and saying to them: 'He is the only One, Who can help you. He is the One, Who all nations are waiting for. He is the Son of David. He is the Messiah of Whom the Prophets have spoken about. He is the Saviour of the world, Whom God the Father has sent for the salvation of mankind. He is the true Physician of both soul and body. He is the only One Who can give you the light, because He is the Light of the world'.

With these thoughts they followed Christ and with faith cried out to Him: "Son of David, have mercy on us"! 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on us! Lord Jesus Christ, You Who came into the world to save Your creation from the darkness of sin, ignorance and death, show Your lovingkindness to us sinners, and have mercy on us. You, Who are the only Philanthropic God and created us in Your "image and likeness", show us Your Love and philanthropia. You created man and gave him reason to admire the works of Your Hands. Grant to us the light of our eyes, in order for us to see the beauty of the universe'. The results of their faith was that "their eyes were opened" (Matthew 9:30).

In today's society, how many people walk around blind not because they are incapable of seeing, but because they refuse to see with their own eyes the problems of society today? How many have the gift from God to see His creation, remain blind and refuse to approach and believe in Him, Who created all things? How many refuse to open their eyes before the truths of God's Revelation and accept Jesus Christ, as the only Son of God and their Saviour? How many times do we find people who, although believe in Christ, refuse to hear the real teachings and interpretations of the Church and remain blind and deaf in the darkness of heresy? How many have lost their spiritual sight, because they remain under the shadow and slavery of sin? How many people, who are blessed from God to have earthly riches, remain blind and deaf before the needs of their fellow man and refuse to give with their hearts? How many times have governments around the world become blind and they destroy the fruits of the Earth, in order to keep the stock market high and they do not see the true needs of the poor people of other countries? How many billions of dollars are spent for man to go to the stars, and yet people on Earth are starving to death?

The two blind men of today's Gospel reading, my beloved friends, when Christ our God asked them to keep silent, "they spread the news about Him in all that country" (Matthew 9:31). As Orthodox Christians, living in this beloved country of S. Africa, or in any part of the world, we also have to approach Christ. Man can only find the restoration of his spiritual sight, when he approaches Christ, the source of true Light. He is the only One, who can heal our infirmities and our blindness caused by sin. He is the only One, Who can free us from the slavery of sin and death. The Prophet Isaiah spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit saying, "He bears our sins, and is pained for us; yet we accounted Him to be in trouble, and in suffering, and in affliction. But He was wounded on account of our sins, and was bruised because of our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His bruises we were healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5). "Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:17). He is the One about Whom St. John, the Baptist, testified saying: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). He is the Paschal Lamb, who offers Himself for our deliverance from darkness and death (1 Peter 1:19).

In Jesus Christ man finds his true health. Man is healed by Jesus through the actions of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Sacraments of the Church the Holy Spirit acts and sanctifies the faithful who believe in Jesus Christ, as their Lord and Saviour. Man is restored to his original condition of health only within the Church, which Christ established. Outside the Church there can be no true restoration of man's health, because outside the Church man is unable to overcome and to be free from sin. When man believes in the Lord Jesus and practices His Teachings, then he finds his way in life. He sees the needs of his neighbour not only with his eyes, but also with the understanding of his spirit. As Orthodox Christians we must never forget, that we should love our neighbours as we love ourselves. This is the Commandment of our Lord. Under this light we should walk. Under this light we should see. Under this light we should cry out to the people, that One is He Who is Holy, One is the Lord; Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

My beloved friends, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will come again in all His glory and power to judge the living and the dead. And according to our deeds, He will reveal before the whole universe the secret works of each and every one. Let us open the eyes of our understanding now that we have the time. Let us approach Him, Who can heal all our infirmities and will restore our spiritual health. Let us testify to the world, that only in Jesus Christ man can find the true aims for life. Let us approach the source of true Love. Let us approach our fellow men and see to their needs. In this way the Apostle taught us; in this way the Fathers of our Orthodox Church showed us; in this way we, today, follow. My beloved friends, as the two blind men asked with faith for Christ to grant them their sight, let us also at this moment ask Him with faith to grant us our spiritual sight in order to lead a way of life according to His divine Teachings and Commandments, for the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Metropolitan of Antinoes, Panteleimon—Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa