



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

SUNDAY
11 DECEMBER 2016
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PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 11—17 DECEMBER 2016



SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER	Eleventh Sunday of Luke —Luke 14: 16-24 • 7.30– 11.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR AGES 5 TO 17 YEARS TAKE 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 12 DECEMBER <i>St Spyridon, the Wonderworker</i>	• 7.00 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy • 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER	• 7.00pm 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. This will be the final Youth Group Meeting for 2016.
THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER <i>St Eleutherios and his mother Anthia</i>	• 7.00 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SATURDAY 17 DECEMBER <i>St Dionysios of Zakynthos</i>	• 7.00 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy • 3.45pm Service of Vespers

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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.

WORDS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

In order that you may move your will more easily to this one desire, in everything—to please (God and to work for His glory alone—remind yourself often, that He has granted you many favours in the past and has shown you His love.

He has created you out of nothing in His own likeness and image, and has made all other creatures your servants; He has delivered you from your slavery to the devil, sending down not one of the angels but His Only-begotten Son to redeem you, not at the price of corruptible gold and silver, but by His priceless blood and His most painful and degrading death.

Having done all this He protects you, every hour and every moment, from your enemies; He fights your battles by His divine grace; in His immaculate Mysteries He prepares the Body and Blood of His beloved Son for your food and protection. All this is a sign of God's great favour and love for you; a favour so great that it is inconceivable how the great Lord of hosts could grant such favours to our nothingness and worthlessness.

+ From Unseen Warfare , St. Theophan the Recluse and St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain

You're Invited... (Homily on Luke 14: 16-24)

The master of the feast made doubly sure that the guests received the invitations. He issued two invitations to each: the first was to tell each one that he was invited; the second, on the day of the dinner, to announce that all was ready: "Come; for all is now ready."

"Come!" The Gospel is not so much a command as an offer; not so much a demand as a gift - an invitation to share in the unbelievable joy of the kingdom.

"Come!" God is expecting you! He is ready for the poor, the maimed, the blind, the lame. He is ready for those who have spent their lives in the highways and byways of life. He invites all: "Come; for all is now ready."

As a shepherd seeks for the lost sheep, as a woman gets down on her knees to look for a lost coin, as a father waits for the lost son to come home again, so God is ever seeking, calling, inviting.

"Come; for all is now ready." Come you who seek meaning for life. Come you who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Come you who falter under the burden of sin and guilt. Come you who are anxious and fearful. Come you who mourn. Come you who seek peace and fulfilment. Come, "the table is richly laden. Fare ye royally on it. The calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry... Enjoy ye all the riches of his goodness.. Let no one mourn that he hath fallen again and chain; for forgiveness hath risen from the grave. Let no one fear death; for the death of our Saviour hath set us free."

There are many people who consider Christianity a type of tyrannical religion. To them it is nothing but a series of commandments, You should do this. You should not do that. But Christianity is not first and foremost a "should" religion. It is first and foremost a "come" religion. The great drawing power of Christ is not in His "Thou shalt not" but in His "Come to me." Come be filled with the Holy Spirit. Come be filled with the power of God's presence. If we come to Him, then we shall do certain things, not because we "should" do them, but because we delight in doing them as an expression of our love for Jesus.

Commenting on this word "Come" and, in particular, on the words of Jesus "Come to me all you who labour.." St. Chrysostom wrote these precious words, "His invitation is one of kindness. His goodness is beyond description. 'Come to me all, ' not only rulers but also their subjects, not only the rich, but also the poor, not only the free but also the slaves, not only men but women, not only the young but also the old, not only those of sound body but also the maimed and those with mutilated limbs, all of you, He says, come! For such are the Master's gifts; He knows no distinction of slave and free, nor of rich and poor, but all such inequality is cast aside. 'Come, ' He says, 'all who labour and are burdened!'

"And see whom He calls! Those who have spent their strength in breaking the law, those who are burdened with their sins, those who can no longer lift up their heads, those who are filled with shame, those who can no longer speak out. And why does He call them? Not to demand an accounting, nor to hold court. But why? To relieve them of their pain, to take away their heavy burdens."

When Jesus says, "Come," He does not stand on the top rung of a long, high ladder in heaven to signal us to start climbing. For He Himself has climbed down the ladder to stand at our very elbows. He has come to us.

"For us people and for our salvation (He) came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, and became man" (Nicene Creed). "She brought forth her first-born Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger." He came, born in a stable. He came and died on the cross. He came to prepare the banquet of salvation for us. And now - today - He sends His servants to extend us His invitation: "Come, for all is now ready."

Far from being accepted, this gracious invitation was rejected. "I have bought a field .. I have bought five yoke of oxen... I have married a wife... I cannot come. Have me excused .." This was the response. Is it not the same response today? Our great tragedy is that we end up accepting the wrong invitations in life. We miss the banquet, the abundant life of Christ, and settle for the lesser, and the fleeting. And Jesus still laments, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not" (Matt 23 37).

"Come, for all is now ready." "But," you object, "I am not worthy to come. My clothes are not suitable. I wouldn't know how to act in the Master's palace." None of this makes any difference. The invitation goes out to all. The good news is that you don't have to be perfect to come. Come as you are - with all of your sins and sorrows, weaknesses and failures, problems and anxieties. Come to the only One who can forgive you and heal you. Come to the only One who can make you worthy.

"Come, for all is now ready." Coming to Jesus is a way of life. It begins with baptism. It involves daily commitment, repentance, obedience, worship, prayer, Bible reading, and regular communion. It involves a daily walk with Jesus. It involves not only "Come!" but also "Go!" "Go out into the world and be my disciples. Be servants. Be lights. Be salt."

None of us will ever know the wonder of the brightly lighted banquet hall, the goodness of the food, and the joy of being a part of this amazing fellowship unless we lay aside the excuses and dare to accept the invitation.

Come to Him now and be assured that on the last day He will direct to you the greatest "Come" of all; "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

- Fr Anthony M. Coniaris