



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

SUNDAY  
26 FEBRUARY 2017  
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# PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

## PROGRAM FOR 25 FEBRUARY—4 MARCH 2017

<b>SUNDAY</b> <b>26 FEBRUARY</b>	<b>Cheesefare Sunday—Matthew 6: 14-21</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7.30– 11.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>• SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES (A free voluntary program organised by the Church)</b> Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at the time of Holy Communion until Church dismissal. We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to teenage years. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, friendly environment. Please bring your children along to learn of their rich Orthodox faith and come close to God and His Love.	
<b>MONDAY</b> <b>27 FEBRUARY</b>  <b>CLEAN MONDAY</b> <b>FAST FOR GREAT LENT</b> <b>BEGINS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction</li><li>• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.</li><li>• 6.00pm Service of Great Compline with 1st section of Great Canon</li></ul>
<b>TUESDAY</b> <b>28 FEBRUARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6.00pm Service of Great Compline with 2nd section of Great Canon</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> <b>1 MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8.00– 9.30am Service of Presanctified Liturgy</li><li>• 6.00pm Service of Great Compline with 3rd section of Great Canon</li></ul>
<b>THURSDAY</b> <b>2 MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6.00pm Service of Great Compline with 4th section of Great Canon</li></ul>
<b>FRIDAY</b> <b>3 MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7.00pm Service of Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos— First Salutations to the Theotokos</li></ul>
<b>SATURDAY</b> <b>4 MARCH</b> <i>St Theodore Commemoration</i> <i>Of His Miracle with Kollyva</i>  <i>Third Saturday of Souls</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7.00 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li><li>• 3.45pm Service of Vespers</li></ul>



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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.

## GREAT LENT—FINDING GOD IN FASTING

*We fast joyfully: self-discipline is not self-punishment, it is liberation and renewal - the fast is a celebration of our freedom.*

"... if our Father Adam had fasted,  
we should not have suffered banishment from Eden.  
The fruit that brought death upon me was  
pleasing to the eye and good to eat ...."

*From Vespers, Friday of the First Week of Lent*

*Fasting returns us to an awareness of our needs, and helps us discern the difference between what we truly need and the vast, unlimited range of what we want.*

*Fasting is not a discipline we take up for its own sake: we fast in order to discipline ourselves so that we can find ourselves in God. The fast is a period of intense waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom.*

## Sunday of Forgiveness (Cheesefare Sunday)

Matthew 6: 14-21

The Sunday of Forgiveness is the last Sunday prior to the commencement of Great Lent. During the pre-Lenten period, the services of the Church include hymns from the Triodion, a liturgical book that contains the services from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the tenth before Pascha (Easter), through Great and Holy Saturday. On the Sunday of Forgiveness focus is placed on the exile of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, an event that shows us how far we have fallen in sin and separated ourselves from God. At the onset of Great Lent and a period of intense fasting, this Sunday reminds us of our need for God's forgiveness and guides our hearts, minds, and spiritual efforts on returning to Him in repentance.

The Sunday of Forgiveness, the last of the preparatory Sundays before Great Lent, has two themes: it commemorates Adam's expulsion from Paradise, and it accentuates our need for forgiveness. There are obvious reasons why these two things should be brought to our attention as we stand on the threshold of Great Lent. One of the primary images in the Triodion is that of the return to Paradise. Lent is a time when we weep with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But Lent is also a time when we are preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ's death and rising, which has reopened Paradise to us once more (Luke 23:43). So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise.

The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Matthew 6:14-21) and in the special ceremony of mutual forgiveness at the end of the Vespers on Sunday evening. Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. We do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family. Our asceticism and fasting should not separate us from others, but should link us to them with ever-stronger bonds.

The Sunday of Forgiveness also directs us to see that Great Lent is a journey of liberation from our enslavement to sin. The Gospel lesson sets the conditions for this liberation. The first one is fasting—the refusal to accept the desires and urges of our fallen nature as normal, the effort to free ourselves from the dictatorship of the flesh and matter over the spirit. To be effective, however, our fast must not be hypocritical, a “showing off.” We must “appear not unto men to fast but to our Father who is in secret” (vv. 16-18).

The second condition is forgiveness—“If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you” (vv. 14-15). The triumph of sin, the main sign of its rule over the world, is division, opposition, separation, hatred. Therefore, the first break through this fortress of sin is forgiveness—the return to unity, solidarity, love. To forgive is to put between me and my “enemy” the radiant forgiveness of God Himself. To forgive is to reject the hopeless “dead-ends” of human relations and to refer them to Christ. Forgiveness is truly a “breakthrough” of the Kingdom into this sinful and fallen world.

The Sunday of Forgiveness is commemorated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, which is preceded by the Matins service. A Great Vespers is conducted on Saturday evening. The hymns of the Triodion for this day are added to the usual prayers and hymns of the weekly commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ. The naming of the Sunday is taken from the commemoration of the Exile of Adam and Eve from Paradise and from the Gospel reading of the Divine Liturgy.

Scripture readings for the Sunday of the Last Judgment are: At the Orthros (Matins): The prescribed weekly Gospel reading. At the Divine Liturgy: Romans 13:11-14:4, Matthew 6:14-21.

The Sunday of Forgiveness is also known as Cheesefare Sunday. This is the last day that dairy products can be eaten before the Lenten fast. The full fast begins the following day on Clean Monday, the first day of Great Lent. On the evening of the Sunday of Forgiveness the Church conducts the first service of Great Lent, the Vespers of Forgiveness, a service that directs us further on the path of repentance and helps us to acknowledge our need for forgiveness from God and to seek forgiveness from our brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the first time that the Lenten prayer of St. Ephraim accompanied by prostrations is read. At the end of the service all the faithful approach the priest and one another asking for mutual forgiveness.

Orthodox Christians are encouraged to enter Great Lent in repentance and confession by attending these services, coming for the Sacrament of Confession, and dedicating themselves to worship, prayer, and fasting throughout the Lenten period. The first day of Lent, Clean Monday, signifies the beginning of a period of cleansing and purification of sins through repentance.

On the Saturday before this Sunday, the second of three Saturdays of the Souls are held. This is a special commemoration when the Church offers a Divine Liturgy and Memorial Service for the departed faithful. This is considered a universal commemoration of the dead. Through the memorial services, the Church is commending to God all who have departed and who are now awaiting the Last Judgment. This specific Saturday is a general commemoration of all the ascetic Saints of the Church, both men and women. As we set out on the Lenten fast we are reminded that we will make this journey as members of a family, supported by the intercessions of the Saints.