



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

SUNDAY
5 MARCH 2017
Volume 6—Issue 8
05/03—011/03/2017

PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 5—11 MARCH 2017

SUNDAY 5 MARCH	First Sunday of Lent, Sunday of Orthodoxy —John 1: 43-51 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30– 11.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
• SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) 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.	
MONDAY 6 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.• 6.00pm Service of Great Compline
TUESDAY 7 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 8 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6.00pm Service of Great Compline
THURSDAY 9 MARCH <i>Forty Martyrs of Sebaste</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00– 9.30am Orthros and Service of Presanctified Liturgy• 6.00pm Service of Great Compline
FRIDAY 10 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00pm Service of Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos— Second Salutations to the Theotokos
SATURDAY 11 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3.45pm Service of Vespers



Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church
9387 7693

Fr Athanasios
9383 4151

Fr Ephraim
0490 378 215

Website:
stvasiliosbrunswick.com

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.

WORDS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

"It is remarkable that, however much we trouble about our health, however much care we take of ourselves, whatever wholesome and pleasant food and drink we take, however much we walk in the fresh air, still, notwithstanding all this, in the end we sicken and corrupt; whilst the saints, who despise the flesh, and mortify it by continual abstinence and fasting, by lying on the bare earth, by watchfulness, labours, unceasing prayer, make both their souls and bodies immortal.

Our well-fed bodies decay and after death emit an offensive odour, whilst theirs remain fragrant and flourishing both in life and after death. It is a remarkable thing: we, by building up our body, destroy it, whilst they, by destroying theirs, build it up - by caring only for the fragrance of their souls before God, they obtain fragrance of the body also."

St. John of Kronstadt - 'My Life in Christ'

The First Sunday of Lent: The Sunday of Orthodoxy— John 1: 43-51

The Seventh Ecumenical Council dealt predominantly with the controversy regarding icons and their place in Orthodox worship. It was convened in Nicaea in 787 by Empress Irene at the request of Tarasios, Patriarch of Constantinople. The Council was attended by 367 bishops.

Almost a century before this, the iconoclastic controversy had once more shaken the foundations of both Church and State in the Byzantine empire. Excessive religious respect and the ascribed miracles to icons by some members of society, approached the point of worship (due only to God) and idolatry. This instigated excesses at the other extreme by which icons were completely taken out of the liturgical life of the Church by the Iconoclasts. The Iconophiles, on the other-hand, believed that icons served to preserve the doctrinal teachings of the Church; they considered icons to be man's dynamic way of expressing the divine through art and beauty.

The Council decided on a doctrine by which icons should be venerated but not worshipped. In answering the Empress' invitation to the Council, Pope Hadrian replied with a letter in which he also held the position of extending veneration to icons but not worship, the last befitting only God.

The decree of the Council for restoring icons to churches added an important clause which still stands at the foundation of the rationale for using and venerating icons in the Orthodox Church to this very day: "We define that the holy icons, whether in colour, mosaic, or some other material, should be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on the sacred vessels and liturgical vestments, on the walls, furnishings, and in houses and along the roads, namely the icons of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, that of our Lady the Theotokos, those of the venerable angels and those of all saintly people. Whenever these representations are contemplated, they will cause those who look at them to commemorate and love their prototype. We define also that they should be kissed and that they are an object of veneration and honour (timitiki proskynisis), but not of real worship (latreia), which is reserved for Him Who is the subject of our faith and is proper for the divine nature. The veneration accorded to an icon is in effect transmitted to the prototype; he who venerates the icon, venerated in it the reality for which it stands".

An Endemousa (Regional) Synod was called in Constantinople in 843. Under Empress Theodora. The veneration of icons was solemnly proclaimed at the Hagia Sophia Cathedral. The Empress, her son Michael III, Patriarch Methodios, and monks and clergy came in procession and restored the icons in their rightful place. The day was called "Triumph of Orthodoxy." Since that time, this event is commemorated yearly with a special service on the first Sunday of Lent, the "Sunday of Orthodoxy".

Orthodox teaching about icons, as defined at the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787, is embodied in the texts sung on this Sunday.

From Vespers: *"Inspired by your Spirit, Lord, the prophets foretold your birth as a child incarnate of the Virgin. Nothing can contain or hold you; before the morning star you shone forth eternally from the spiritual womb of the Father. Yet you were to become like us and be seen by those on earth. At the prayers of those your prophets in your mercy reckon us fit to see your light, "for we praise your resurrection, holy and beyond speech. Infinite, Lord, as divine, in the last times you willed to become incarnate and so finite; for when you took on flesh you made all its properties your own. So we depict the form of your outward appearance and pay it relative respect, and so are moved to love you; and through it we receive the grace of healing, following the divine traditions of the apostles."*

"The grace of truth has shone out, the things once foreshadowed now are revealed in perfection. See, the Church is decked with the embodied image of Christ, as with beauty not of this world, fulfilling the tent of witness, holding fast the Orthodox faith. For if we cling to the icon of him whom we worship, we shall not go astray. May those who do not so believe be covered with shame. For the image of him who became human is our glory: we venerate it, but do not worship it as God. Kissing it, we who believe cry out: O God, save your people, and bless your heritage."

"We have moved forward from unbelief to true faith, and have been enlightened by the light of knowledge. Let us then clap our hands like the psalmist, and offer praise and thanksgiving to God. And let us honor and venerate the holy icons of Christ, of his most pure Mother, and of all the saints, depicted on walls, panels and sacred vessels, setting aside the unbelievers' ungodly teaching. For the veneration given to the icon passes over, as Basil says, to its prototype. At the intercession of your spotless Mother, O Christ, and of all the saints, we pray you to grant us your great mercy. We venerate your icon, good Lord, asking forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God. For you freely willed in the flesh to ascend the cross, to rescue from slavery to the enemy those whom you had formed. So we cry to you with thanksgiving: You have filled all things with joy, our Saviour, by coming to save the world."

The name of this Sunday reflects the great significance which icons possess for the Orthodox Church. They are not optional devotional extras, but an integral part of Orthodox faith and devotion. They are held to be a necessary consequence of Christian faith in the incarnation of the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, in Jesus Christ. They have a sacramental character, making present to the believer the person or event depicted on them. So the interior of Orthodox churches is often covered with icons painted on walls and domed roofs, and there is always an icon screen, or iconostasis, separating the sanctuary from the nave, often with several rows of icons. No Orthodox home is complete without an icon corner (iconostasion), where the family prays.

Icons are venerated by burning lamps and candles in front of them, by the use of incense and by kissing. But there is a clear doctrinal distinction between the veneration paid to icons and the worship due to God. The former is not only relative, it is in fact paid to the person represented by the icon. This distinction safeguards the veneration of icons from any charge of idolatry.

The theme of the victory of the icons, by its emphasis on the incarnation, points us to the basic Christian truth that the one whose death and resurrection we celebrate at Easter was none other than the Word of God who became human in Jesus Christ.