



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

SUNDAY
23 JULY 2017
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PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 23—29 JULY 2017

SUNDAY 23 JULY	7th Sunday of Matthew - Matthew 9: 27-35 <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 24 JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
TUESDAY 25 JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 26 JULY Martyr St Paraskeve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30– 9.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study.
THURSDAY 27 JULY St Panteleimon, Great Martyr	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30– 9.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SATURDAY 29 JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3.45pm Service of Vespers
SUNDAY 30 JULY	GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 14: 14-22 EPISTLE READING: 1CORINTHIANS 1: 10-17



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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

A Christian must be courteous to all. His words and deeds should breathe with the grace of the Holy Spirit, which abides in his soul, so that in this way he might glorify the name of God.

He who regulates all of his speech also regulates all of his actions. He who keeps watch over the words he is about say also keeps watch over the deeds he intends to do, and he never goes out of the bounds good and benevolent conduct.

The graceful speech of a Christian is characterized by delicateness and politeness. This fact, born of love, produces peace and joy. On the other hand, boorishness gives birth to hatred, enmity, affliction, competitiveness, disorder and wars.

St. Nektarius of Aegina, *The Path to Happiness*, 7

Seventh Sunday of Matthew (Romans 15:1-7 and Matthew 9:27-35) – The Tongue: Asset or Curse?

“But the Pharisee kept on saying, ‘It is by the help of the prince of the demons that He drives them out’ (Matthew 9:27-35)”

St John Chrysostom says that nothing is worse than ingratitude. And indeed, dear brethren, nothing annoys man so much as the behaviour of an ungrateful person. When someone gives you even so small a thing as a glass of water when you are thirsty, the rules of etiquette prescribe that you thank him. Even a simple person, who knows nothing of etiquette, says thank you out of common courtesy. I shall never forget when I was a student in Constantinople and wished, after a day of shopping in the city, to get a ride back to my lodging on a bus. Much to my embarrassment, I found that I had not one cent left in my pocket with which to pay the driver. Just as he was about to slam the door in my face, a stranger, a Turk, paid my fare for me. I shall never forget the favour of this modern-day “good Samaritan”.

Today’s Gospel Lesson, however, does not deal with material goods which, regardless of their value, remain lifeless matter; rather, the Gospel Lesson relates the healing by Jesus of three grievously afflicted people – two blind men, and one deaf and dumb. Both miracles are noteworthy, else Matthew would not have recorded them for us. St John writes, “There are many other things that Jesus did, which, if they were all written down in detail, I do not suppose that the world itself could hold the books that would have to be written” (Jn 21:25). But what about those things Jesus said and did that were not recorded for us? These became Tradition, passed on orally from one generation of Christians to another. The Church has been and remains the guardian, the judge, and the touchstone upon which was decided the integrity and genuineness of that which has become known as Tradition.

Matthew does not describe for us the attitude, the behaviour of the blind, deaf, and dumb after their healing. We presume that they were grateful to the Master, unlike the nine lepers of Luke 17. Matthew does describe for us, however, the attitude and behaviour of the Pharisees. These leaders of the Jewish people, because they could neither deny nor doubt the reality of these miracles, instead launched a vicious accusation, not only against Christ, but against the Holy Spirit as well: “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons”.

Previously they had accused Him of violating the sacred character of the Sabbath. Once before they had accused Him of permitting His disciples to eat without washing their hands. Another time they accused Him of eating with tax-collectors and sinners. This accusation, however, was the worst of all. Why? Because there have always been (and still are) simple people who are all too ready to believe vicious slander about a person.

The ancient philosopher and moralist Theocritus was once asked which of the wild beasts he considered to be the worst. He wisely replied that, while in the hills there are lions and bears, yet in the cities there are the tax-collectors and sycophants – the latter much more dangerous than the former. It was for this reason that King David used to pray, “The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart” (Psalm 119:69).

Because the people considered the Pharisees to be great and distinguished men, and because the Pharisees were incapable of duplicating the miracle of Jesus (and who among mortal men could?), they had to accuse Him, and their accusation was horrible: “The ruler of the devils helps Him drive out the devils”. St John Chrysostom points out that, not only was the accusation brought about by envy, it was utterly foolish; for, the father of the Church continues, the healing ministry of Christ was not limited to casting out demons: “And He cleansed lepers, raised the dead, calmed the stormy seas, forgave sin, proclaimed the Kingdom of Heaven, and much more”.

Dearly beloved, very often the false accusers, drunk with the zeal of their envy, know not where to start nor where to stop. They have but to open their mouths, and out flow slander and calumny without logic and without limit. The evil becomes multiplied when the slander turns into an organised “smear campaign”, as we see in today’s Gospel Lesson, where all the Pharisees take their lying stand opposed to the Son of God.

An old legend relates that an Egyptian king once sent a dead animal to be used in sacrifice to the philosopher Pittokos, in order that the latter might determine which part of the dead animal was the most valuable, and which part the least value. The philosopher cut out the animal’s tongue and returned it to the king with a short note: “This is both the most valuable and the most worthless part of the animal”. Naturally, the philosopher was speaking metaphorically of the human tongue. St James writes, “The tongue...is a little organ but can boast of great achievements...The tongue is a fire, and takes its place among the parts of our bodies as a world of evil; it soils the whole body and sets on fire the circle of world of evil; it soils the whole body and sets on fire the circle of man’s nature; and itself is set on fire by hell...It is an evil incapable of being quieted, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who are made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth flow blessing and cursing” (James 3:5-10).

God gave us our tongues to use for good, not for false accusations. Out of the whole creation, man is the only creature that can slander, calumniate and lie. “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour” (Exodus 20:16). Let’s remember that we do not possess a monopoly on virtues; our neighbours have some, too. And let us remember these awesome words of our Lord: “I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37).

Fr George Dimopoulos

Source: Orthodox Sermons for all the Sundays of the Year – Volume 1