



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

SUNDAY
8 OCTOBER 2017
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PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 8—14 OCTOBER 2017

SUNDAY 8 OCTOBER St Pelagia of Antioch, St. Pelagia, Virgin-Martyr	3rd Sunday of Luke, Luke 7: 11-16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7.30– 11.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
<p align="center"> • 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. </p>	
MONDAY 9 OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9.00am Service of Holy Unction • 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 7.30pm Young Adults and Married Couples Bible Study Group at St. Vasilios, in the Church Coffee Room.
WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study
SATURDAY 14 OCTOBER	3.45pm Service of Vespers
SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER	GOSPEL READING: Luke 8: 5-15 EPISTLE READING: Titus 3: 8-15



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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.

THE CHILDREN'S WORD Presvytera Alexandra Houck, myocn.

God doesn't want sadness!

We've all heard sad stories. But in today's Gospel reading, we hear one of the saddest of all. We hear about a woman whose son had died. She was already a widow—her husband had died. Now her son had died, too. Of course, she was very upset!

When Jesus saw her, He felt sorry for her, too. "Do not weep," He said. "Don't cry."

Right then, He touched her son, and he rose up! The boy was alive again!

Lots of times, especially when you were little, your parents might have seen you sad or crying. "Don't cry," they said. Of course, your parents don't want you to be sad.

Just like your loving parents, God does not want us to be sad either.

But God has given us something to be very happy and joyful about.

He gave His own Son, Jesus Christ. He opened up heaven for us, so that one day, we can be in a perfect place forever! "Don't cry," God tells us too!

Good Grief

“Do not weep!” This is what Jesus said to the widow of Nain, whose son had died as she was processing with his body to the place of burial. Can you imagine her predicament? We learn from today’s Gospel reading (Third Sunday of Luke 7:11-16) that she previously lost her husband (v.12) and that this was her only child or at least her only son (v.12). Can you imagine her pain? And Jesus says to her “Do not weep” (v.13). It reminds me of adults who say to crying children, “Knock it off, stop crying.” Now we know this was not Jesus’ intent, for the gospel also tells us that “He had compassion upon her” (v.13), and we know He had something in mind when He said, “Do not weep.” We’ll get to that later.

Unfortunately, some people do say to those who are grieving things like “Do not weep” as in “Stop crying, knock it off.” Or perhaps, even if they don’t say it, they are thinking, “Why won’t this person stop crying?” We may want to put limits on other people’s grief because it makes us uncomfortable or we do not know how to handle it. And even though we don’t say it, our body language still communicates the same message, “Do not weep, stop crying.” It begs the question, how do we handle grief and loss?

First of all, we need recognize that the death of a loved one is not the only type of loss that involves grieving. Fr. Anthony Coniaris, in his sermon on this passage (Widow of Nain – How to Handle Grief in Gems from Sunday Gospels vol.2, p.28), relates the following,

“It is not only death that brings pain through loss. There are many other losses in life that bring similar pain. The loss of a job; the failure to receive an expected promotion; having to move from a place you love and leave behind dear friends; separation and/or divorce from a spouse; retirement from work that has been a vital part of your life for many years; having child grow up and go away to college or serve in the armed forces and eventually get married; an debilitating injury or illness; a financial loss through plunging stock market or swindle. All these experiences cause grief. They are like amputations; they destroy part of us; they bring death to a part of our lives.” A world famous mental health therapist wrote a book about these types of losses. She lives in the Twin Cities and her name is Pauline Boss and her book is titled “Ambiguous Loss.” It is an important book for everyone to read.

In response to the experience of loss, Fr. Coniaris adds,

“Some people say that the greatest cure for grief is time. Yet, by itself time will not heal grief completely. Time can also make grief worse. Time can turn grief into bitter resentment that can poison the body and the mind. In order for grief properly and heal the pain of loss, we must cooperate with time in ways that are constructive...Medical experts tell us that the mismanagement of grief causes all sorts of illness from ulcers, to diabetes to mental and emotional health problems.” Grief is hard work. It doesn’t just happen. It requires effort, sometimes it requires tremendous effort.

What are some constructive ways to grieve? How can we move through the process of grief? First of all, express it! Emotions must be expressed and shared with others. Repressed emotion is one of the leading causes of psychosomatic illnesses. Whatever is related to our grief—sadness, anger, fear, etc.—must be expressed. Hopefully, we have good, close friends and family who will listen but not everyone does, so seeking out a priest, a counselor, and a grief support group are also very helpful. Even if we feel all alone in our grief, we are never truly alone. God is always present ready to hear us and listen. Thus, prayer is also a necessary part of expressing our grief. The Psalms of the Old Testament are full of words and phrases that express sorrow, pain, sadness, anger and fear.

Be angry but do not sin (Psalm, Proverbs)

The second way to constructively grieve is to cry. As Fr. Coniaris says, “Let the tears flow!” Jesus said, *Blessed are they who mourn for they shall be comforted* (Matt.5:4). When His friend Lazarus died, “Jesus wept” (John 11:35). In the Epistle reading of the Orthodox Funeral Service, we hear St. Paul say, *“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope”* (1Thessalonians 4:13). St. Paul is not saying, “Do not grieve!” Rather, he is telling Christians to grieve, but to grieve with hope, hope in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is why Jesus tells the widow of Nain, “Do not weep,” because He is about to demonstrate His divine power over physical death by raising her son from the dead (Lk.11:15). The Orthodox Funeral Service, with its many different hymns and tones, is meant to evoke the wide range and depth of human emotion in order to facilitate the grieving process. We do Trisagion and Memorial Services several times in the subsequent days, weeks, months and years in order to continue the grieving process. There is no time-table for grief. Everyone is different and every situation is unique.

Thirdly, when we suffer a grievous loss, especially someone we truly love, it is common to become aware of many things left undone, things not said, and unkind or insensitive acts that we committed towards them. In response to this awareness, we often feel embarrassed, guilty, or ashamed. Sometimes these feelings can become very debilitating and we don’t know how to make things right because the person is now and forever absent from our life. Thankfully, we can seek forgiveness from God in the Sacrament/Mystery of Repentance. Talking with the priest can help sort out what is healthy guilt from what is unhealthy shame. The priest can help facilitate our confession in order to reconcile with God and our departed loved one. In the communion and Church of Christ there is no separation between the living and the dead. We can still talk to our loved one who left this world. The difference is instead of using cell phones, email and texting, we use a different type of wireless communication—prayer. Talk to God, talk to your love ones in prayer. Tell them everything you left unsaid in this life.

Thirdly and finally, self-pity is a common response to loss. “Woe is me! No one has ever felt as much pain as I’m feeling right now.” If not checked this self-pity can become all-consuming and very self-centered. In order to prevent this we must, at some point, begin to turn that focus from ourselves towards other people. We must use the pain of loss as a way to help others. Think of Patty Wetterling and John Walsh who used the unimaginable loss of their children to abduction and murder, as a way to help others through similar losses, to apprehend criminals, and to help prevent future child abductions. Our own loss gives us a unique perspective into the loss of others and also gives us the ability to help them in a unique way. We know how they feel. We know what they are experiencing.

In conclusion, Fr. Coniaris asks us to consider the widow of Nain in today’s gospel and how all her hopes, dreams and aspirations for her son were being buried with him in his coffin. With each and every loss in our own life, there is a little funeral that must take place. The question is, which funeral procession are we ultimately participating in? Is it the procession lead by a corpse that symbolizes despair, grief, sorrow, helplessness, and hopelessness of mankind? Or is it the procession lead by Christ, the Eternal One, the Savior, sent to stop mankind’s tragic trek to the grave; to offer us salvation, hope, peace and life eternal. Think about it. Amen!

Saint George Greek Orthodox Church Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago