



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

SUNDAY
5 NOVEMBER 2017
Volume 6—Issue 41
05/11—11/11/2017

PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 5—11 NOVEMBER 2017



SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER	5th Sunday of Luke, Luke 16: 19-31 <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 NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER	MELBOURNE CUP FAMILY DAY AT GORGOEPIKOOS MONASTERY, GEELONG 10.00—11.00am Divine Liturgy in Greek and English followed by fun games and activities for all ages. BYO Picnic Lunch or enjoy the delicious food and coffee which can be purchased on the day.
WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER <i>Synaxis of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00– 9.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study
THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER <i>St Nectarios the Wonder-worker of Aegina</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00– 9.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3.45pm Service of Vespers
SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER	GOSPEL READING: Luke 10: 25-37 EPISTLE READING: 2 Cor. 9: 6-11

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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.

ANGELS: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW CAN THEY HELP ME?

Did you know God has some special helpers? They're called angels! The word "angel" means messenger, because God sends them to give messages to us on earth!

Lots of people say they believe in angels—even people who don't believe in God. But we've all seen pictures of cute little angels flying around with little wings, playing the trumpet or harp. Let's find out what angels really are!

God has lots of different kinds of angels. They serve God. They follow Him and do things for Him. They don't have bodies like we do, and they are invisible. The different angels all have different jobs. Some try to help us to have more love for God. Some try to help us learn more about God. Some try to help us be better people—to remember God's rules and to do them.

Archangels tell good news. Remember Gabriel, who told Mary she was going to have a baby? He is an archangel. In the liturgy, if you listen closely, you will hear about some other angels, the cherubim and seraphim. They bring us wisdom and love. Each one of us also has a guardian angel who protects us. You can pray to your guardian angel! Ask him to watch over you at school, at home, when you're playing and even sleeping! Ask your parents to find the "Prayer to Your Guardian Angel" for you—in a prayer book or on the internet.

The Poor Man Has a Name: Homily on Lazarus and the Rich Man in the Orthodox Church

Luke 16: 19-31

During our mission trip to Guatemala in July, we met children from very poor and broken families that could not care for them. The kids who live at the Orthodox orphanage are surely among the most fortunate needy children in that part of the world, for they have food, clothing, shelter, education, and the love provided by the nuns and staff. Too often children in such circumstances are simply abandoned and left to face whatever cruel fate awaits them due to disease, starvation, or abuse. They are truly "the least of these." Their names are not known and their lives and deaths are not thought to be very important in the eyes of the world.

How completely shocking it is, then, that our gospel text gives us the name of the desperately poor and miserable Lazarus, but leaves out the name of the rich man. This detail shows us that God's kingdom is not like worldly kingdoms, not like human society as we know it. For the kind of wealth that makes people famous in this life counts for nothing in the next. And the kind of humility, the kind of complete trust in God that the poorest of the poor are in the best position to have, counts for little in today's world; yet, it is only by that kind of humble trust that anyone will enter the kingdom of God.

No, the point is not that all the rich will be damned and all the poor will be saved. Instead, it is that there are strong and deep temptations associated with focusing on wealth, possessions, and success in this world. For if we love ourselves, our riches, and our status more than God and neighbor, no matter how much or little we have, we will shut ourselves out of the kingdom. The name Lazarus means "One who has been helped," and those whose miserable life circumstances do not encourage them to trust in money, power, or success are in a good position to learn that their help is in the Lord, in His mercy and love.

The rich man never learned that lesson, however. He wore only outrageously expensive clothes and had a great feast every day. He must have known about the poor beggar Lazarus. He probably stepped over or around him every time he went in or out of his house. Here was a dying man, lying on the ground, whose only comfort was the stray dogs who would lick his open sores. All that Lazarus wanted were the crumbs that fell from the man's table, you might say his garbage. But the rich man was so greedy and thoughtless that he apparently denied him even that. Our Lord is quite clear about the consequences of such a life. This man showed no mercy; he demonstrated no love for his wretched neighbor. Consequently, he cut himself off from the mercy and love of God.

His eternal suffering shows the reality of what it means to refuse to respond to our calling to live as those created in God's image and likeness. This man would not be like Christ in any way. He showed what he thought of the Lord by treating his neighbor, surely one of "the least of these" who also bore the divine image and likeness, literally like trash. And when he called for mercy from Father Abraham, he made no confession and did no repentance. He cared only for himself and his brothers, and obviously had no concern for obeying Moses and prophets who had made clear the obligation of the Jews to care for the poor.

As we say in the prayers of the Church, we will all need mercy before the judgment seat of Christ. We err, however, if we think of the Lord's mercy as being available only in some arbitrary way at some point in eternity. For we encounter Him every day in our neighbors, especially the poor, wretched, and inconvenient: the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. We participate in His mercy by showing mercy to them. The rich man in the parable shaped himself decisively in unholy ways by his behavior; in contrast, we may shape ourselves decisively in holy ways by our behavior. We never earn God's mercy, but we will ultimately make offerings of our lives to God or to something else. We will either worship and serve Him or ourselves. Perhaps the Lord's eternal judgment will be more a confirmation of who we have become than a shocking decree from out of the blue.

God knows our hearts and we can hide nothing from Him, either today or at any point in the future. Our faith as Orthodox Christians goes to the heart, to the depths of who we are, but also reminds us that we are always in relationship with other people who are also the children of God. We encounter Him in them. Who we are in relation to Jesus Christ is shown each day of our lives in how we treat others, especially those who need our help, attention, and friendship, as well as our enemies. A Christianity that ignores "the least of these" is not worthy of the name. Every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. We bring judgment upon ourselves whenever we treat our neighbors, no matter who they are or how they have offended us, in ways that do not manifest the divine love and compassion.

Contrary to popular opinion, the Christian life is not about feeling, emotion, or sentiment. No, it is a commitment, a sacrifice, an offering of ourselves to God. As St. Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." Surely, those who live that way will bear witness to the mercy of Christ by showing that same mercy to other people.

The Nativity or Advent fast starts on November 15 as we prepare to welcome Christ at His Nativity on December 25. During those forty days, we should plan on giving the money that we save by eating a humble diet to those who do not have the basic necessities of life, as we have done as a parish for Syrian refugees and needy people in our own community. Think also of the crumbs from our tables, the small bits of time and energy, that we are all able to give: to the sick and lonely who need visitors or at least a note or a phone call; to children who need tutors and mentors; to pregnant women in difficult situations who need our support to help them welcome their babies; and to the countless other people in our own neighborhoods who need God's blessing in their lives in tangible, practical ways.

The hard truth is that, if we are not sharing our lives and blessings with others in some way, we will become just like the rich man who was too caught up with his own pleasure to worry about poor Lazarus. We know where that path leads. The good news is that Christ has shown us a better way which is open to us in every generation, in every walk of life, no matter how rich or poor we are. For the money and power of the world will fade away; they do not last. Only one thing lasts, and that is the selfless love of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ Who has conquered sin and death. And we all have gifts and abilities that may become channels of His blessing and mercy to a world of people like Lazarus, whether their wounds are physical or spiritual or emotional.

We do not have to save the world; Christ has already done that. We just have to be faithful: to trust, believe, and follow our Savior in how we treat others. He turned no one away empty-handed and neither should we. If we claim His mercy and love for ourselves, we must do likewise for all who bear His image and likeness. We must be Christians not merely in name, but also in how we live, even when it is inconvenient. Then we will become living icons of the salvation that Jesus Christ has brought to a world of sin and death, and the Lazaruses of the world will know that they too are the children of God. And together with them, we will all share in the mercy of a Lord Who raises the dead, heals the sick, feeds the hungry, and makes even the most miserable people guests at His heavenly banquet.

Fr. Philip LeMasters