



PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 10 - 16 MARCH 2019

SUNDAY 10 MARCH	Cheesefare (Forgiveness) Sunday—Matthew 6: 14-21 <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 11 MARCH CLEAN MONDAY FAST FOR GREAT LENT BEGINS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline with 1st section of Great Canon
TUESDAY 12 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline with 2nd section of Great Canon• 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group will meet in our Church Hall.• 7.00pm Young Adults and Married Couples Bible Study Group at St. Vasilios, in the Church Coffee Room.
WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8.00– 9.30am Service of Presanctified Liturgy• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline with 3rd section of Great Canon
THURSDAY 14 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline with 4th section of Great Canon• 7.30–8.30pm TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP— In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church—ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME.
FRIDAY 15 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00pm Service of Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos— First Salutations to the Theotokos
SATURDAY 16 MARCH <i>St Theodore Commemoration Of His Miracle with Kollyva</i> <i>Third Saturday of Souls</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 3.45pm Service of Vespers
SUNDAY 17 MARCH	GOSPEL READING: John 1: 43-51 EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 11:24-26,32-40



Telephone Contact Numbers

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Website:
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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.

Food is not evil, but
gluttony is.
Childbearing is not
evil, but fornication is.
Money is not evil,
but avarice is.
Glory is not evil, but
vainglory is.
Indeed, there is no
evil in existing things,
but only in their
misuse.

St. Maximus the
Confessor

Vespers of Forgiveness (in Greek)

This evening (10 March)

6:30pm - 8:00pm St Eustathios Church, 221 Dorcas St, South Melbourne

A very solemn and beautiful way to enter the period of Great Lent.

His Grace Bishop Ezekiel of Dervis will be presiding together with His Grace Bishop Iakovos of Miletoupolis and they will be joined by all the Clergy of Melbourne. At the completion of Vespers, we enter Great Lent by seeking the forgiveness and blessing of our Clergy as well as from one another.

**Where Your Treasure Is, There Will Your Heart Be Also": Homily for Forgiveness Sunday
in the Orthodox Church**

If all of your money is in a certain bank or investment, you will be very concerned about that bank or investment. Your treasure is there, and your heart will follow. If you invest your time, energy, and effort in any relationship or any activity, you will value it highly. You give your life to it, and your heart follows.

We are all given a blessed opportunity during Lent to invest our lives in God and our neighbours. For the treasure of our lives is our love, our attention, our time, and our actions. Too often, that treasure is wasted, is squandered, on matters of no importance at all. We use our minds to hold grudges and our lips to condemn others. We use food and drink simply for pleasure in ways that weaken us spiritually and physically. We fixate on money as though it is the measure of our worth and, no matter how much or how little we have, we are never satisfied. Our hearts follow our treasure. So we come to love putting others down and building ourselves up. We come to love pleasing ourselves in whatever way possible. And, of course, we come to love material possessions more than God and neighbour.

As St. Paul wrote to the Romans, it is time to wake up from our slumber. For without acknowledging what we are doing, we have all been stumbling in the dark, spending ourselves on that which cannot satisfy us, wasting life itself on the bad dreams of our passions. Yes, it's time to wake up, for Lent is like an alarm clock reminding us to stop throwing our lives away and to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."

We need to pay attention to St. Paul's warning. For too long, we have used our time, energy, and attention to fulfill whatever self-centered desires we have. Instead of focusing on forgiving those who have wronged us, we have remembered the offenses of others and fantasized about how to get even. Instead of using food or other pleasures with self-restraint so that they have their proper place in our lives, we have indulged ourselves and become their slaves. Instead of using our financial resources to help the needy and support the ministries of the Church, we have selfishly loved our money and possessions. In other words, we have learned to love what we treasure: ourselves and the things that help us get what we want.

Jesus Christ calls us to a different kind of life, of course. He calls us to invest ourselves in Him, to offer our time, energy, possessions, relationships, and bodily appetites for the healing, fulfillment, and transformation of the Kingdom. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If we want to be pure of heart, if we want to love God with every ounce of our being and our neighbours as ourselves, we must learn to treasure the new life that Christ has brought to the world. We do that by taking deliberate, intentional steps to redirect our hearts to Him, by investing the treasure of our lives in the ways of the Kingdom.

If there is anything that takes focused effort, it is forgiveness. How easy and seductive it is to brood over the wrongs other have done us, to judge them again and again in our minds, and to make ourselves feel better by comparing ourselves with those on whom we like to look down. But when we do so, we simply make provision for the flesh and fulfill its lusts. We sink deeper and deeper into a spiral of self-righteous delusion. We end up wasting the treasure of our lives and damaging our hearts.

Fr. Philip LeMasters



Fasting

Fasting from foods is intended as spiritual preparation for an experience of deeper communion with God. Each person is a unity of body and soul. A right spiritual diet and a discipline of fasting go together and strengthen each other. Just as prayer benefits not only the soul but also the body so also fasting from foods benefits not only the body but also the soul. Fasting and prayer make us more sensitive to God's personal presence. At important times of their lives the Prophets fasted and prayed. So did Jesus, the Apostles, Saints and Church Fathers.

Fasting must be undertaken willingly and not by compulsion. God doesn't need our fasting. We don't fast as a kind of personal punishment for our sins. We cannot pay God back for our sins but we can only confess them to Him to receive forgiveness. Fasting with a willing spirit and not just with an attitude of fulfilling a religious obligation means that we keep the purposes of fasting always before us which is to develop self-control and to remember God and His Kingdom. That way we fast not only in what we eat but also in how much we eat. Fasting is simplicity of eating. We leave the table not with loaded stomachs. Being a little hungry during the day becomes a constant reminder of God, of our dependence on Him, and of the fact that the Lord alone can give us "food that lasts for eternal life" (Jn 6:27). In fasting and prayer, He reveals Himself to us as our true food and drink.¹

¹ *A Year of the Lord*—Theodore Stylianopoulos

**Take the opportunity for you and your family to learn more about your Orthodox faith -
St. Vasilios has groups for all ages:**

•**Sunday School (Ages 5 yrs upwards – 4 classes)**

Every Sunday in building behind Church during Divine Liturgy, beginning at time of Holy Communion to 11.15 am.

•**Teenage Youth Group (13 years upwards)**

Every Thursday evening from 7.30—8.30pm. Bible Study and Discussions in building behind Church - upstairs in hall.

•**Parishes of St Vasilios & The Presentation of Our Lord, Coburg Youth Group**

Bible Study and Discussion –alternating between Parishes, every Tuesday from 7.00pm.

•**Young Adults and Married Couples Group**

Bible Study and discussion. Every second Wednesday 7.30—8.30pm in the Church Coffee Room.

•**Adults** Every Wednesday evening Paraklisis to Panagia, followed by Bible Study —5.00—6.00pm in Church.

All welcome—make enquiries.



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