



# PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

## PROGRAM FOR 17 - 23 MARCH 2019

<b>SUNDAY</b> <b>17 MARCH</b>	<b>1st Sunday of Lent, Sunday of Orthodoxy, John 1: 43-51</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30– 11.00am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>• SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES (A free voluntary program organised by the Church)</b> 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.	
<b>MONDAY</b> <b>18 MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>9.00am</b> Service of Holy Unction</li><li>• <b>10.00am</b> Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.</li><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Service of Great Compline</li></ul>
<b>TUESDAY</b> <b>19 MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Service of Great Compline</li><li>• <b>7.00pm</b> Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group will meet in Coburg Church Hall.</li><li>• <b>7.00pm</b> Young Adults and Married Couples Bible Study Group at St. Vasilios, in the Church Coffee Room.</li></ul>
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> <b>20 MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>8.00– 9.30am</b> Service of Presanctified Liturgy</li><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Service of Great Compline</li></ul>
<b>THURSDAY</b> <b>21 MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Service of Great Compline</li><li>• <b>7.30–8.30pm</b> <b>TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP (Years 13-19)</b> – In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church <b>ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME.</b></li></ul>
<b>FRIDAY</b> <b>22 MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.00pm</b> Service of Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos— Second Salutations to the Theotokos</li></ul>
<b>SATURDAY</b> <b>23 MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>3.45pm</b> Service of Vespers</li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY</b> <b>24 MARCH</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: Mark 2: 1-12</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 1: 10-14, 2: 1-3</b>



### Telephone Contact Numbers

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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.

Think nothing and  
do nothing without  
a purpose directed  
to God.

For to journey  
without direction is  
wasted effort.”



+ St. Mark the  
Ascetic

### WORDS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS ....

“Possibly a contentious unbeliever will maintain that we worshiping images in our churches are convicted of praying to lifeless idols. Far be it from us to do this. Faith makes Christians, and God, who cannot deceive, works miracles. We do not rest contented with mere colouring.

With the material picture before our eyes we see the invisible God through the visible representation, and glorify Him as if present, not as a God without reality, but as a God who is the essence of being. Nor are the saints whom we glorify fictitious. They are in being, and are living with God; and their spirits being holy, the help, by the power of God, those who deserve and need their assistance.”

St. John of Damascus, *Treatise on Images*

**Venerate Icons by Becoming One: On the Sunday of Orthodoxy**

One of the great dangers of our age is the tendency to set our sights too low, to expect too little of ourselves and others. It is so appealing to think that being true to ourselves means indulging every desire and finding fulfillment by getting whatever want at the moment. It is so easy to envision our neighbors and even God in our own image, as though the meaning and purpose of all reality boils down to whatever makes us comfortable here and now. The blessed season of Lent, however, calls us to an entirely different way of life that reveals the holy beauty for which God created us in His image and likeness.

Today we celebrate the restoration of icons to the Orthodox Church at the end of the iconoclastic controversy, during which emperors ordered the destruction of images of our Lord, the Theotokos, and the Saints in the name of opposing idolatry. Of course, icons are not false gods to be worshiped, but visual symbols of the salvation that the incarnate Son of God has brought to the world. They reflect the true humanity of Jesus Christ, as well as how people like you and me may participate in His holiness in every dimension of our lives. They remind us not only that we are surrounded by “a great cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 12:1) who have gone before us, but that our Savior calls and enables us to join them in shining radiantly with the divine glory, even as we live and breathe as flesh and blood.

When we make a procession after Liturgy today with our icons, we will proclaim that our identity is not determined by whatever is popular, easy, or appealing. As those created in God’s image and likeness, we will never be fulfilled by the false gods of this world, such as indulgence in money, power, and pleasure in its various forms. We are called to something much higher, for Christ told Nathanael that he would “see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” (John 1:51) He comes to make us all participants in the divine glory by grace.

At the end of the day, the only way to answer that calling is by becoming better icons of Christ, better visible and tangible witnesses of His salvation. That is why we must fast from whatever keeps us from radiating the holy light of God. It is why we must refuse to feed our tendencies to dwell on the failings of others. It is why we must starve our inclination to speak words of self-righteous judgment and condemnation. It is why we must abstain from indulging in actions that harm, weaken, or take advantage of anyone. It is why we must refuse to nourish our passions by allowing into our eyes, ears, and stomachs anything that enslaves us to self-centered desire.

Even as we turn away from what diminishes us in the divine likeness, we must also feast on what helps us embrace more fully our true identity in Christ. That means putting our souls on a steady diet of prayer; of reading the Bible, the lives of the Saints, and other spiritually edifying works; and of mindfulness in all things such that we remain alert to the spiritual significance of what we think, say, and do. The more that we fill ourselves with holy things, the less appetite we will have for unholy things.

The journey of Lent is not about punishment or legalism, but instead about helping us grow personally into our exalted identity as those called to share in the eternal life of our Lord. It is about turning away from the idolatry of self-centeredness in order to become a more beautiful icon of the divine glory. It is about refusing to set our sights low concerning what it means to be a human being in God’s image and likeness. It is about crucifying our self-centered desires so that we may enter into the holy mystery of Lord’s cross and resurrection. For it is through His Passion that we will “see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

Fr. Philip LeMasters



*According to St. Basil, God is the “only truly Existing.”*

*Our own existence is a gift from God who is our Creator. None of us has “self-existing” life.  
We exist because God sustains us in existence – in Him we live and move and have our being  
(Acts 17:28).*

*Sin is the rejection of this gift of God – a movement away from true existence.*