



PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 24 -30 MARCH 2019

SUNDAY 24 MARCH	2nd Sunday of Lent, Gregory Palamas, Mark 2: 1-12 <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 25 MARCH <i>The Annunciation of the Theotokos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00– 9.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline
TUESDAY 26 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline• 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord Youth Group will meet in our Church Hall.
WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8.00– 9.30am Service of Presanctified Liturgy• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline
THURSDAY 28 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Service of Great Compline• 7.30–8.30pm TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP (Ages 13-19) – In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME.
FRIDAY 29 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6.00pm Service of Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos— Third Salutations to the Theotokos
SATURDAY 30 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3.45pm Service of Vespers
SUNDAY 31 MARCH	GOSPEL READING: Mark 8: 34-38, 9:1 EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 4: 14-16, 5: 1-6

THE THEOTOKOS

What does 'Theotokos' mean?

Although this term refers to the Virgin Mary, it is in fact a statement of conviction about who we believe Christ to be. The Greek term 'Theotokos' literally means 'the one who gave birth to God'. We thereby confess our faith that Christ is not simply an enlightened teacher or prophet. Nor is He a human being who somehow 'achieved' divinity through His life and work. Rather, He is God in the flesh. He became a full human being, like us, without for a moment ceasing to be fully divine. The Holy Mother of God is therefore always seen in relation to Christ Whom she brought into the world, through the will of the Father, in the Holy Spirit. It was through her that the Incarnation took place. The eternal Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, became human and entered time, born as a human Child. Thus, He who is born beyond time from the Father without a mother, was born in time from a Mother without a father. It is an incomprehensible mystery. And it is a cause for the faithful to glorify God. In every Church Service, we hear this term of honour repeated time and again whenever the Mother of God is referred to. It is worth recalling that Elizabeth pre-empted the title Theotokos when she greeted Mary as "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43) soon after the Annunciation. The Holy Virgin then prophesied that "all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:48). This scriptural passage magnifying God's divine plan is joyfully chanted at every Orthros Service to this day. In short, to describe the Holy Mother of God as 'Theotokos' is not a 'diversion' from Christ, but a re-affirmation of our devotion to Him.



Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church
9387 7693

Fr Athanasios
9383 4151

Fr Ephraim
0490 378 215

Website:
stvasiliosbrunswick.com

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.

Happiness can only
be achieved by
looking inward and
learning to enjoy
whatever life has
and this requires
transforming greed
into gratitude.

St. John
Chrysostom

Second Sunday of Lent, Gregory Palamas, Mark 2: 1-12

Your Friends May Never Read the Scriptures, But They are Always Reading You

Our Gospel lesson for the Second Sunday of Lent might be summarized in this way: One day, four men carried their paralyzed friend to Jesus. They laboured hard to get their friend into the Lord's presence. As any of you who have ever carried another human being know – the man is literally dead weight. He is paralyzed and can't help the others who are carrying him. When Jesus saw the faith of the four men, he pronounced that the paralyzed man's sins had been forgiven.

Note in the Gospel lesson that neither the paralyzed man nor his friends protest when Jesus forgives the paralyzed man – none of them say, *"No, Lord, he's a good guy, he never did anything wrong that's why we're bringing him to you. He deserves to be healed because of all his good deeds."* Instead they all seem to accept that the man is a sinner and needs God's forgiveness.

The four men bear the burden of their friend's sinfulness. They are not bringing to Christ some upright and holy man who they think deserves God's intervention, rather they are bringing to Christ a man whose sin apparently led to his paralysis. His sin had a visible effect and all could see it. His paralysis perhaps the result of the man's own choices. I visited such a man once – he was in his mid-30s and paralyzed from the waist down. He told me he had been in that condition for 15 years – the end result of being a young fool who was drinking and driving. He regretted his condition and his past choices, and he blamed no one but himself for the fact that he was in a wheelchair and in a great deal of pain.

So we can even imagine that instead of bearing the burden of their friend's sinfulness, that the men in the Gospel lesson could have been more like Job's friends and telling him: "you made your own bed, now sleep in it" or "you caused your own problems, so solve them yourself." Or even worse, "you were such an idiot, now you got what you deserved." Or maybe even reminding the paralyzed man, "We are doing all the work and you don't even carry your own weight around here because you are the burden." But the four men aren't complaining, they are fulfilling the Gospel commandment that we bear one another's burdens. (Galatians 6:2) – *"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."*

We should have the same attitude when we do the work of God – not complaining about the burden we have to bear nor to criticize those who don't carry their own weight around the church. We have a task to accomplish – to bring others to Christ, not just holy, deserving and good people, but even those who have made a mess of their lives.

We bear other people's burdens not only in bringing them to church, but also when we decide to pray for them and when our hearts are moved by their problems and we feel the weight of their suffering. We are called by Christ to help carry the burdens of others.

We are to lead by example. It is Great Lent and some have rightfully set out to read Scripture during Lent, or to read more Scripture daily: God bless you for that. Persevere! We all know how our good intentions don't always get fulfilled. We start out with zeal, but then life intervenes and pretty soon we have forgotten what we promised to do.

Just remember that reading the bible is noble, but that is not the goal of the Christian life. The real goal is to live the scriptures in your daily life. St. Paul once said to his flock:

You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all men; and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Corinthians 3:1-3)

The goal is to live in such a way that others can read the scriptures written on our hearts. We are to be the living word, a living temple of God. If Christians keep the Gospel commandments, others will be able to see the Word of God active and alive in us...

You are to be the living word of God – with the Word written on your hearts and visible for all to see in your life and life style. Of course you first have to know the Scriptures before they can be written on your hearts, but then you have to live that Word. Your friends, family, neighbours, co-workers may never read the Bible, but they do read you – what you say, how you live, what you do. Be an example to others, let them see in you Jesus Christ – may they experience from you the power of living the Gospel. The only word from God they may ever experience is the one they see in you.

Great Lent is sometimes called a school for us Orthodox. It is a time for us to practice our faith, to be an example of what it is to be a Christian.

And what is the word that we should be an example of? St. Paul says:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

May God bless your Lenten efforts and give growth to the seeds which are planted in your hearts so that you might bring forth spiritual fruit.

Fr. Ted Bobosh