



PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 3 - 9 MARCH 2019

SUNDAY 3 MARCH	Judgement (Meatfare) Sunday, Matthew 25: 31-46 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30– 11.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
<p>***** SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES *****</p> <p>(A free voluntary program organised by the Church)</p> <p>Immediately after Holy Communion until Church dismissal, in the building behind the Church, Religious Instruction lessons take place for our children. We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to late teenage years, which are given in a relaxed, friendly environment. The understanding of our faith through the religious instruction lessons brings our children closer to God and the joy and peace of His Love.</p>	
MONDAY 4 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
TUESDAY 5 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group, will meet in Coburg Church Hall.
WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study
THURSDAY 7 MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30—8.30pm TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP— In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church
SATURDAY 2 MARCH 2nd Saturday of Souls	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00– 9.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 3.45pm Service of Vespers
SUNDAY 10 MARCH	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 6: 14-21 EPISTLE READING: Romans 13: 11-14, 14: 1-4



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.

If you cannot close
the mouth of one
who reviles his
brother, at least
avoid conversation
with him.

St. Isaac the Syrian

WORDS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Fasting, prayer, alms, and every other good Christian deed is good in itself, but the purpose of the Christian life consists not only in the fulfilment of one or another of them. The true purpose of our Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. But fasting, prayer, alms and every good deed done for the sake of Christ is a means to the attainment of the Holy Spirit. Note that only good deeds done for the sake of Christ bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Everything else that is not done for the sake of Christ, even if it is good, does not bring us a reward in the life to come, not does it bring the grace of God in this life. This is why our Lord Jesus Christ said, "*He who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*" (Matt. 12:30).

St. Seraphim of Sarov, *Conversation on the Goal of the Christian Life*



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 Paraclisis to Panagia, followed by Bible Study —5.00—6.00pm in Church.

All welcome—make enquiries.

The Last Judgment: Don't Be Surprised

When You, O God, shall come to earth with glory, *all things shall tremble and the river of fire shall flow before Your judgment seat; the books shall be opened and the hidden things disclosed! Then deliver me from the unquenchable fire, and make me worthy to stand at Your right hand, righteous Judge!* (Hymn of the Last Judgement)

Sounds pretty frightening – and it is meant to be. The Church in its hymns uses these words to describe the Last Judgment:

Dreaded
Awesome
Fearful

What most bothers us as 21st Century Christians about the Judgment Day is not the thought that sinners will be condemned to the fires of hell and damned for all eternity – in fact on that point we tend to like retributive justice for sinners because they finally get what they deserve – what actually bothers us is that WE – each of us – You and me – are going to be held accountable for everything we said and did in this life. We are OK with others – the sinners – being held accountable, but why should we be judged? That God might even think about judging you or me based on our behavior, that is hard to swallow – Let Him judge sinners, murderers, perverts, terrorists, criminals, liars and the lazy, and leave the rest of us alone.

Actually many of the Jews in Jesus' day had a similar thought. They were anxiously awaiting the Day of the Lord, because they believed on that day God would finally and completely condemn and annihilate all of Israel's enemies and oppressors. On that day God would judge and condemn to hell the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Philistines, Canaanites. The Jewish people would finally be avenged!

What these folk's ignored was that the prophets had been warning that the Day of the Lord was also going to be a day of Judgment for God's own people, and that God would start the judgment with Israel. All of us who think God is going to judge "someone else" – we Orthodox or we Americans – also need to take the prophets' message to heart – judgment begins with us.

And we might begin to feel a little hot under the collar about this. All the porn we looked, all the times we were drunk, all the times we lied, all the times we were greedy, selfish, angry, enraged, sexually immoral, jealous, envious, bickering and contentious – for all of this we are going to be judged by God. As St. Paul says all those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. It's not just that we are going to have to give account for this behavior, we are going to be condemned for it at the Last Judgment.

Dreaded
Awesome
Fearful
Judgment

But then the Lord Jesus shocked His followers when He spoke about the Last Judgment. Jesus did not say that at the Judgment Seat all Jews or that all Christians will be declared righteous and everyone else will be condemned as sinners. Saint and sinner will be assembled before God, and God will judge us based upon:

Our mercifulness
Our kindness
Our love for others
Our concern for the well-being of others.

Jesus says we will be judged in the same way and by the same criteria we judged and criticized others. If we thought the poor and needy were not worthy of our time, our attention, our possessions, we will find ourselves so judged by God who will not share His time, attention and possessions – namely His Kingdom – with us. The Kingdom belongs to Him, not to us. Just like we think our possessions belong to us and not to some beggar.

God's judgment is a judgment of our hearts. The proper defense before the dread Judgment Seat is loving others, being merciful to others, showing mercy to the least of Christ's brothers and sisters.



A story from the lives of the saints:

St. Martin of Tours was a Roman Army Officer who was entering a city one cold, wet, wintry day.

A beggar asked him for money, but Martin had none with him. But seeing the man shiver with cold, Martin came down off his horse, took his sword, and cut his soldier's cloak in half. His cloak was like a large warm poncho. He wrapped the beggar in this half portion of his cloak.

That night, Martin had a dream in which he saw Christ standing in the wintry cold wearing an old tattered cloak. An angel approached Christ dismayed at how the Lord was dressed. "Lord," the angel said, "where did you get that old, torn cloak?" Jesus responded, "My servant Martin gave it to me."

Martin thought he gave his cloak to a beggar, but as today's Gospel teaches us what we give to the least of the brothers and sisters of Christ, we give to the Lord Jesus Himself.

Note: Martin didn't give his whole cloak, he shared half of it with the beggar. He didn't impoverish himself, but provided for another from his means.

We each have that same chance to share what we can with those in need. We don't have to deprive ourselves of everything, but certainly can share some things by ministering to the Lord Himself.

There will be surprises for us on the Judgment Day as we see in the Gospel:

Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

And the wicked will say: And Lord, when did we see you a stranger and not welcome you, or naked and not clothe you? (Matthew 25:37-41)

Both the blessed and cursed are going to be in for a surprise on Judgment day. Don't you be surprised!