





PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 1—7 DECEMBER 2019

SUNDAY 1 DECEMBER	14th SUNDAY OF LUKE, Luke 18, 35-43 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
<div> 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.</div>	
MONDAY 2 DECEMBER Osios Porphyrios, the Kafsokalyvite	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group will meet in our Church Hall.
WEDNESDAY 4 DECEMBER St Barbara, Great Martyr	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study
THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER St Savvas the Sanctified	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 7.30—8.30pm <div> TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP (Ages 13-19) In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church * ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME *</div>• 7.30pm Young Adults and Married Couples Bible Study Group at St. Vasilios, in the Church Coffee Room.
FRIDAY 6 DECEMBER St Nicholas the Wonderworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SUNDAY 8 DECEMBER	GOSPEL READING: Luke 13: 10-17 EPISTLE READING: Ephesians 4: 1-7



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.

As a friend talking
with his friend, man
speaks with God,
and drawing near in
confidence he
stands before the
face of the One who
dwells in light
unapproachable.

St. Symeon the New
Theologian

VOICE OF THE HOLY FATHERS ...

"...Filled with love, the holy Apostles went into the world, preaching salvation to mankind and fearing nothing, for the Spirit of God was their strength.

When St. Andrew was threatened with death upon the cross if he did not stay his preaching he answered: 'If I feared the cross I should not be preaching the Cross.' In this manner all the other Apostles, and after them the martyrs and holy men who wrestled against evil, went forward with joy to meet pain and suffering.

For the Holy Spirit, sweet and gracious, draws the soul to love the Lord, and in the sweetness of the Holy Spirit the soul loses her fear of suffering."

St. Silouan the Athonite, "Wisdom from Mt. Athos"

The Blind Man of Jericho

As Jesus was nearing Jericho, a blind man in the way called out:

'Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me'. Jesus asks what he wants from him, and the blind man begs that he may be given his sight. Jesus says to him: 'Thy faith hath saved thee'.

We can relate this gospel (Luke 18. 35-43) in a special way to the feasts of Christmas and Epiphany. On these feasts, the Church gives us the same answer that the crowd gave to the blind man of Jericho: '... he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by ...'

The great light of Epiphany must not shine in vain in front of those who are blind. Let us ask the Lord Jesus to open our eyes: 'What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?

- Lord, that I may receive my sight'.

Our eyes have become darkened by sin and they have lost sensitivity to the divine light. And yet, in God's intention, this vision should be mine. But is my faith strong enough for Jesus to be able to say to me: 'Thy faith hath saved thee'? The blind man of Jericho's faith was very strong, for the more they tried to silence him 'he cried out so much more, Thou son of David'

They also try to silence me – 'they' being my sins, my passions, the crowd of unbelievers. If I cry all the more strongly when sin tries to stop my voice, and if my call to Jesus rises above the voice of evil, then my faith is indeed a faith that is able to save. Is my faith really of that kind?

Source: *The Year of Grace of the Lord*, by a Monk of the Eastern Church

THE FEAST OF ST NICHOLAS

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Some time ago I remember overhearing a child ask her mother: 'Mummy, why does Father Christmas have a beard? And why does he wear such funny clothes?' Her mother could give no adequate answer, quite simply because she was not an Orthodox Christian. All Orthodox should know the answer to the child's questions. Father Christmas, or Santa Claus, has a beard and wears such unusual clothes because he is the folklore version of an Orthodox bishop - St Nicholas. Who was St Nicholas?

Born at the end of the third century, in about 280, Nicholas was a very devout young man who, still quite young, became a Bishop and then the Archbishop of the then great city of Myra, which is in the province of Lycia in Asia Minor, which is now called Turkey. There he was renowned for his charitable deeds. There he set up orphanages, hospitals, hostels for the mentally ill, fed the starving in famine, and set up a drainage system so that his people would not die from the diseases incurred by poor hygiene. There he freed captives unjustly imprisoned, saved sailors in stormy seas, redeemed young girls who were bound for child prostitution. In everything he did, he wanted to show that our destiny is not to live as animals, but as the children of God. This is why, as one of the 318 Fathers present at the First Universal Church Council which took place in the year 325 in Nicea, he could not support the blasphemies of Arius.

This Arius was a philosopher, and stood up at that Council and said that Christ is not the Son of God. Like all who make the wrong choices, that is 'heretics' in the language of the Church, in talking about the Person of Christ, Arius talked of himself. For like every single heretic in Church History, Arius replaced the understanding of God, theology, with the understanding of his own self, psychology. Not being able to accept God through Faith, they replace the transcendent Revelation of God, the Reality beyond their tiny minds, with the fruit of their own fertile imaginations and make God into sinful individuals like themselves. Arius indeed was not the Son of God. However, if we were to believe his words that Christ is not the Son of God, then of course Orthodox Christianity would no longer be the one, unique soul-saving Faith, but just another vain philosophy, a mere religion.

So it was that when this Arius blasphemed at the First Council, St Nicholas stood up and slapped him across the face. The other Fathers were horrified by St Nicholas' violent action, defrocked him and sent him away. St Nicholas did not justify himself by saying that he was trying to silence the demonic blasphemies of Arius, by saying that he was trying to bring this arrogant man to his senses, by saying that if Arius were right, then mankind was condemned to live as animals. Instead he accepted this punishment with humility. However, many of the Fathers saw around St Nicholas a vision of Christ and his Most Holy Mother returning to the saint his episcopal vestments. This was a divine vindication of the action of the saint and indeed he was quickly reinstalled as Archbishop of Myra.

If we were to read the life of St Nicholas up until his repose, we would find that it runs to many, many pages. But if we were to read his life since his blessed repose, we would find that it runs to many, many books. His life since his death is much longer than his life before his death. For he is one of those many saints who has continued to work miracles among all peoples and among all generations up until the present age.

True, today the once great city of Myra is no more. In what is now a Muslim country there stand only the ruins of the great Cathedral of St Nicholas and the ruins of the buildings he had raised up. But St Nicholas is still venerated there, including by Muslims. Indeed he is venerated all over the world, by Orthodox and Non-Orthodox alike. Here in Felixstowe, the chapel at the ferry is dedicated to him and looking out across the haven to the port of Harwich there is the huge spire of St Nicholas' church, for he is ever the protector of seafarers.

Of St Nicholas' latest miracles we would quote only one, which came to our attention from a sure source only recently. It was a few years ago, in the 1980's, that a Russian nuclear submarine was in trouble in the Pacific Ocean. Its engine had stopped and refused to restart. Even in those Soviet times, however, one of the young sailors remembered that his grandmother had told him that St Nicholas always protects sailors. And, despite everything around him, he remembered to pray to St Nicholas at that moment. And through his prayers the engine started up again, over a hundred sailors were saved and the world preserved from untold pollution. St Nicholas is among us still today, here and now, preserving all who pray to him from danger and evil.

Finally, there is one question about St Nicholas which we must answer. Why does everybody love St Nicholas? Why is he so popular? Why do Muslims venerate him? Why do even Protestants dedicate chapels to him? Why do Catholics revere him and guard his relics in Bari in Italy? The answer is simple:

Everybody loves St Nicholas, because St Nicholas loves everybody. Holy Father Nicholas, pray to God for us! Amen.