



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 8—14 March

#### SUNDAY 8 MARCH

Sunday of Orthodoxy —John 1: 43-51

- 7.30– 11.00am  
Orthros and Divine Liturgy

#### 2020 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES have begun

(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 9 MARCH

- 8.00am  
Service of Presanctified Liturgy
- 10.00am  
Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
- 5.00pm  
Service of Great Compline

#### TUESDAY 10 MARCH

- 5.00pm  
Service of Great Compline
- 7.00pm  
Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group will meet in our Coburg Church Hall.

#### WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH

- 8.00am  
Service of Presanctified Liturgy
- 5.00pm  
Service of Great Compline

#### THURSDAY 12 MARCH

- 5.00pm  
Service of Great Compline

- 7.30—8.30pm



**TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP  
ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME !**

Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy games,  
In a friendly, relaxing environment.  
: In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church

#### FRIDAY 13 MARCH

- 7.00pm  
Service of Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos— Second Salutations to the Theotokos

#### SUNDAY 15 MARCH

GOSPEL READING: Mark 2: 1-12  
EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 1: 10-14, 2:1-12

### Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church  
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Fr Athanasios  
9383 4151

Fr Ephraim  
0490 378 215

Website:  
[stvasiliosbrunswick.com](http://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.

"The whole earth  
is a living icon of  
the face of God."



St. John  
of Damascus

### That Secret Things Might be Revealed...

"All images reveal and make perceptible those things which are hidden. For example, a man does not have immediate knowledge of invisible things, since the soul is veiled by the body. Nor can man have immediate knowledge of things which are distant from each other or separated by place, because he himself is limited by place and time. Therefore the icon was devised that he might advance in knowledge, and that secret things might be revealed and made perceptible. Therefore, icons are a source of profit, help, and salvation for all, since they make things so obviously manifest, enabling us to perceive hidden things. Thus, we are encouraged to desire and imitate what is good and to shun and hate what is evil."

- St. John of Damascus

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

In the 8th and 9th century, for more than one hundred years, the Church of Christ was troubled by the persecution of the Iconoclasts (those who hated Icons), beginning in the reign of Leo III (d. 741) and ending in the reign of Theophilus (d. 842).

After Theophilus' death, his widow the Empress St. Theodora, together with the Patriarch St. Methodius, established Orthodoxy anew. This ever-memorable Queen venerated the icon of the Mother of God in the presence of the Patriarch and the other confessors and righteous men, and openly cried out these holy words: "If anyone does not offer relative worship to the holy icons, not adoring them as though they were gods, but venerating them out of love as images of the archetype, let him be anathema." Then with common prayer and fasting during the whole first week of the Forty-day Fast of Great Lent, she asked God's forgiveness for her husband. After this, on the first Sunday of the Great Fast, she and her son, Michael the Emperor, made a procession with all the clergy and people and restored the holy icons, and again adorned the Church of Christ with them. Since time immemorial, the Church has venerated and loved the image of Her beloved Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ. We see this born out in early Church historical accounts to the present day, for the Icon is a testimony and confirmation that "God was manifest in the flesh...seen of angels, preached on in the world and received up into glory."

Indeed, the Icon reveals that it was THIS world that the Lord made His flesh, sanctifying it, restoring it (from the inside out,) filling it with His incorruptible Divinity, and raised to the Throne of the Godhead. This is the dignity which you and I share through (being made in His Image and through) baptism and must enter more deeply into through living our life for Him Who gave His life for us. St. John of Damascus tells us that "in times past, God, without body and form, could in no way be represented (Hence, the prohibition of the OT of Images.) But now, since God has appeared in the flesh and lived among men, I can depict that which is visible of God....[for Christ is "the image of the invisible God. (Col. 1:15.)] He continues in saying: "I do not venerate the matter but I venerate the Creator of matter, Who became matter for me, Who condescended to live in matter, and Who, through matter accomplished my salvation; I do not cease to respect the matter through which my salvation is accomplished." (PG 94:1245AB.) In Christ we find the fullest affirmation of the innate goodness of matter which now can be the medium of Divine Energy and Grace. Icons of Christ, of the Saints, and of the Mother of God are a pledge of the coming victory of a redeemed cosmos over a fallen one and show forth a restoration of the world back to its original purpose which is to glorify its Creator.

In the Icon we see a concrete example of matter restored through Grace in the life of the Church to its original harmony and beauty, now serving as a vessel of the Grace of the All Holy Spirit. As we commemorate the Sunday of Orthodoxy, we are not merely remembering an event of ages past but rather we are professing the triumph of Truth over heresy which the Icon proclaims. Theological, what is heresy but a distortion of the true and correct Vision of God which is salvation? And what is dogma, but the Words that describe that Vision of Who God is and what He is really like? Again, for the Orthodox, salvation is this Vision of God. Many of the Saints of our Church, from St. Paul to St. Silouan saw Christ in Glory and were completely altered down to the very fabric of their existence, being saved through it.

We represent in image Christ our God and Lord not only so that the incarnation is shown forth as real and true and not a phantasm or ghost, but even more so, to show forth the Face of God which reveals the pledge of this Vision of God which is salvation; We hear in the Canons of the Council of 867 we hear "If one does not venerate the Icon of Christ the Saviour, let him not see His Face at the Second Coming." The veneration of the Image of Christ is the pledge and our beginning to our own personal experience of the Vision of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. Therefore, my brethren let us venerate the Icon of the Saviour, of the Saints, and of the Mother of God and thereby proclaim the inherit goodness of the entire Creation and of its redemption, restoration, and transfiguration through the incarnation of Christ. It is now our turn to offer our own personal world as a Eucharistic sacrifice, redeeming and transfiguring the material world which we inhabit through our prayer, our fasting, and our thanksgiving to our Creator Who sustains us, enlightens us, and saves us through the incalculable Treasury of our Orthodox Faith which we have been given and which we celebrate today.

The Triumph of Orthodoxy happens in my personal life when Christ becomes incarnate through my keeping of the commandments. Orthodoxy triumphs when I become an Icon of Christ through my love and kindness to all those whom I encounter, being a vessel of His Presence. Orthodoxy triumphs when the falsehood of my passions is denounced and demolished and Christ is enthroned as King and God in my heart. Today is the first day of the rest of Great Lent. Let us fortify ourselves by abstaining from meat, from sin, and from devouring our neighbour with our criticism. Let us glorify God in the short time we have remaining in our life by doing works of charity, alms, and prayer. Let us build up the Church and one another, placing our time and talents into those things which will benefit us eternally and let us give thanks to God Who has brought us here today, given us the Treasury of the Orthodox Faith, of that Gift of the Undistorted Vision of God which is salvation for the world. The Triumph of Orthodoxy is the Triumph of the Only True and Living Way which leads the entire race of Mankind to salvation. Let us enter more deeply into it, embrace it, confess it, and fervently live our Orthodoxy through the grace and mercy of our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to Whom belongs all glory, now and forever, world without end. Amen.