



## Parish Information Bulletin

### CHRISTOS ANESTI ! CHRIST IS ARISEN!

**SUNDAY 26 APRIL**

**Sunday of Thomas—John 20: 19-31**

• **8.00am**

Orthros and Divine Liturgy

**SATURDAY 2 MAY**

• **8.00am**

Orthros and Divine Liturgy

*Transfer of Relics of  
St Athanasios*

#### Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church  
9387 7693

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.

#### Giving Thanks to God

Gratitude in a  
Christian is such a  
great thing that,  
along with love,  
it accompanies him  
into the future life,  
where he will  
celebrate the  
eternal Pascha with  
the righteous.



*St. Ambrose of Optina*

#### - On Christ in the hearts of the faithful.

*'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith' (Eph. 3:17).*

He has not Christ who only has Him on his tongue. Nor does he have Christ who only has Him on paper. Nor he who only has Him on the wall. Nor, indeed, he who has Him in a museum. He has Him in truth who has Him in his heart. For Christ is love, and the throne of love is the heart.

If Christ is in your heart, then He is your God. If He is only on your tongue, or on paper, on the wall or in a museum, then, even if you call Him God, He is a plaything for you. Beware then, O man, for none can play with God with impunity!

The heart is apparently a small organ, but God can abide in it. And when God abides in it, it is filled to overflowing and nothing else can stand in it. If, however, the whole world were to dwell in it, without God, it would remain empty.

My brethren, let Christ the risen and living Lord dwell in your hearts by faith, and your hearts will be filled to overflowing. For He can in no other way abide in your hearts than by your faith. If you have no faith, Christ will remain only on your tongue or on paper, or on the wall or in the museum. What use is that to you? What use is it to you to have life on your tongue but death in your heart? For if you have the world in your heart and Christ on your lips, you have death in your heart and life on your lips. Water on the tongue is of no help to the thirsty. Let the living Christ into your heart, and your thirst will be truly quenched, and you will know unspeakable sweetness.

O risen Lord, cleanse our hearts from the deadly guests in them, and do Thou Thyself abide in them, that they may live and glorify Thee. To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

St Nikolai Velimirovic

On Pascha Night, we read from the Gospel of St John: “In the beginning was the Word ...” St John clearly is taking the opening of his Gospel from Genesis, but, read in full view of Christ’s Holy Resurrection, his is a “new” interpretation of Genesis. The “Beginning” is the tomb of our heart, where we are created anew in the mystery of Christ’s death and Resurrection. This is a new interpretation that is not “new”, however, because it is “from the beginning” (cf. Jn 2:7&8); i.e., it’s what the creation was all about from the beginning but has only now been revealed in the mystery of Christ. I’m thinking St John is saying what St Paul says: the “Great Mystery of Christ and His Church” (cf. Eph 5:32) “that was hidden from ages and generations (i.e., from the beginning), but has *now* been revealed (“The hour is at hand!” (Mt 26:45); i.e., it was revealed most perfectly, most completely in the mystery of Christ God voluntarily subjecting Himself to death *in the flesh* on the Cross), which is the mystery of Christ in you, the hope of glory!” (cf. Col 1:26-27)

Beloved faithful: this means that Pascha night is *not* a religious celebration – certainly not for the faithful! For, on Pascha Night, the stone of calendar time was rolled back and we were standing no more in calendar time measured by the movement of sun, moon and stars. We “passed over” from the “Midnight” Hour of the Last Day of the LORD, and we stepped mystically, spiritually, theologically, into the empty tomb and into the First Day of the New Creation, the New Day of the Church’s Liturgical time, measured by the descending and ascending movement of the love of God and His Holy Mother. That’s why we can say that in that hour we were looking into the empty tomb not *as though we were* the myrrh-bearing women, but *with* the myrrh-bearing women, *with* St Peter and St John; for we were looking into the Rising Sun of the First Day that has dawned for us *in the flesh* of the risen LORD Jesus, in the space-time of this world, the *very same* Light of Christ that the darkness cannot comprehend (cf. Jn 1:4), the very same Light in whom is the Life that is the Light of the world, the same *uncreated* Light of the LORD Jesus Christ that was beginning to dawn even on the Sabbath when they laid the LORD’s Body in the tomb on Great and Holy Friday evening (cf. Lk 23:54). Our worldly time, i.e., was taken up into the New Time of the LORD’s Holy Pascha where everything is Today, for Christ, the Hope of Glory who was in the beginning with God and who is God is *in you*. That means that the Resurrection and the Life are *in you*. The Light the darkness cannot comprehend is in you.

We heard the angel’s proclamation. It was to us *with* the myrrh-bearing women. With the myrrh-bearing women, with St Peter and St John, we looked in the Spirit as the angel directed us and we beheld the place where He was laid. In the Spirit, we saw in our mind’s eye (the yards and yards) of the linen shroud *neatly folded*, and the napkin rolled up in a place by itself (cf. Jn 20:6-8); and if we wonder why such a small detail is big enough that it should be specially noted by the holy Evangelist, listen to the Psalmist (quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12): “In the beginning, O LORD, Thou didst establish the earth. The heavens are the work of Thy Hands (of the Son and the Holy Spirit – St Irenaeus). They will pass away, but Thou art forever. They all grow old like a garment; as a cloak wilt Thou fold them (or whirl them about) and they shall be changed” (Ps 101:25-27 LXX).

Beloved faithful, this means that Pascha for us is *not* a religious celebration. It is an icon, a *mirror*, that reflects the Great Mystery of creation that was hidden from ages and generations. Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, we read, “In the beginning,” as curtains that have been torn from top to bottom and we see inside, into the very root of creation that gives its meaning: it is “Christ in you, the hope of glory!” We see now that Christ is the very principle of creation, i.e., that Resurrection and Life are the very principle of creation.

“You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified,” the angel said to us. “He is not here! He is risen!” You seek the Word who was in the beginning. You seek the Word who was with God. You seek the Word who is God. You seek the Word in whom all things were made. You seek the Word who was crucified, who became by His death on the Cross perfectly one with you in your death so that He could change our old clothes, the linen shroud of death, and fold them neatly and lay them to the side with the holy napkin, and then clothe you with Himself in the riches of His Glory, in the Life and the Light of His Holy Resurrection that, like His death, is *in the flesh* – i.e., in *our* flesh – so that to put on Christ is to put on the Beginning of our new creation as a garment. It is to put on God Himself as our “wrap-around”. It is to become both in the flesh of our outer man and in the soul and heart of our inner man *perfectly one* with Him who was in the Beginning with the Father and the Holy Spirit; it is to become a child of God, for when we receive Christ, we receive the Seed of God into our soul and we are born not of flesh and blood but of the Spirit from above, and so we are born from above as “gods, sons of the Most High,” partakers of the divine nature.

Beloved faithful, Pascha reveals the meaning of your existence. To be and to be called a child of God, this is who you really are. “Gods, sons of the Most High, partakers of the divine nature, perfectly one with God in His Beloved Son, our LORD Jesus Christ,” this is what you were made to become; this is why you exist.

“Blessed are those who do not see and believe,” the LORD says to St Thomas. “Let us purify our senses, and we shall see Christ,” we hear the Church telling us on Pascha Night. For, having descended into the tomb of our heart and cleansed it, transfiguring it into a bridal chamber, we will see Christ not “out there” but “in here”, as we “purify our senses”; i.e., as we deny ourselves and take up our Cross and follow Christ to crucify, to put to death what is earthly in us – the idolatry of our disobedience, the harlotry of our self-love.

Beloved faithful, disobedience is the face of our death; death is the substance of our disobedience. Beloved faithful, obedience is the face of Christ’s death. Death is the substance of His obedience. That’s why He shatters death by His death. He destroys it from within. He explodes the disobedience of death with the obedience of His love to the Father in His deep compassion for us whom he created in His own image and likeness.

When, therefore, we turn away from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life in order to deny ourselves and to take up our Cross for the sake of Christ – i.e., out of love for Christ – and to follow Christ into the darkness of our death in the tomb of our heart, we are turning to the Light of Christ that is in you; we are walking in the Light of Christ even as He is in the Light of the Glory He has with the Father from before the world was made. We are clothing ourselves in His obedience; and so, when we deny ourselves and lose our life in Christ, we find ourselves deep in the root of our heart, and we begin to live not the biological life of the world that grows old like a garment and passes away, but the Life of Christ who was in the Beginning with the Father in His Holy Spirit.

“Let us bring a hymn instead of myrrh, and we shall see Christ!” we heard on Pascha Night. What shall we see if we Christ? We shall see the love of God that abides forever, that was incarnate and became perfectly one with us even to the point of sharing in our death that we might share in all the riches of His Glory. When we see Him, says St John, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Beloved faithful, when we see Him, we shall become lovers of the Beloved who first loved us. This is the hope of glory for the sake of which we now endure the shame of the Cross, the shame of self-denial, of losing our life, that we may see Christ and become perfectly one with Him in the joy, the Glory of His Holy Resurrection in the love of God that abides forever. Amen!