



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 28 March - 3 April 2021

SUNDAY 28 MARCH

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

- 7.30am
Orthros and Divine Liturgy

2021 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 10.30am 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 29 MARCH

- 8.45am
Service of Holy Unction
- 10.00am
Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
- 5.00pm
Service of Great Compline

TUESDAY 30 MARCH

- 5.00pm
Service of Great Compline

WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH

- 8.00am
Service of Pre-sanctified Liturgy
- 5.00pm
Service of Great Compline

THURSDAY 1 APRIL

- 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 refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment.

: In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church

FRIDAY 2 APRIL

- 6.30pm
Service of Akathist Hymn to The Theotokos
— Third Salutations to the Theotokos

SUNDAY 4 APRIL

GOSPEL READING: Mark 8: 34-38, 9:1

EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 4: 14-16, 5: 1-6

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.

Mark 2: 1-12

We know from reading the Bible that Jesus did many miracles and healed many people. Many of them were people he “found” in the temple, or sitting by the side of the road. We read of instances where family members asked Christ to come heal one of their loved ones. What makes this healing miracle stand out, to me anyway, is that in this case, the Paralytic who was ultimately healed by Jesus was brought to Him by four friends. We don’t know whether it was the Paralytic who asked the friends to take him to the Lord or whether it was the four friends who suggested it to the Paralytic. What we do know is that the four friends not only brought the man to Jesus for healing, but they had to think creatively of a way to get him to Christ when the house was too crowded for them to enter.

Undaunted, the men decided to remove the roof above Christ and lower the man to Christ so that he could be healed. Because Christ told him to take up his pallet (bed) and walk, we know that the friends also lowered the bed with the man on it. Because they lowered him from the roof, these friends had to get their friend and his bed on the roof of the house. Imagine trying to do this with someone, laying even on a cot, trying to get this person on the roof of your house and not hurting him. And doing it with just four people. That in itself would be a “miracle”.

Bottom line, this man needed Christ to heal him. He wouldn’t have gotten to Christ without the help of these friends. Thus, the friends played a vital role in the healing of a Paralytic.

In a nutshell, this is how Christianity works. We are saved by God and healed by Him but this takes place in the context of a Christian community. This is why there is a saying “one Christian is no Christian,” because Christians exist in relationship to other Christians. We need one another in order to get to Christ.

So, what is it we need from friends? The thing we need most is encouragement, not just encouragement in life, but specifically encouragement to be a Christian. In the case of the Paralytic, he needed tangible assistance. But he also needed encouragement. Because either he approached his friends about going to Christ and they encouraged him, or they came to him initially and encouraged him to go. A good friend is there to offer tangible support but also the intangible things. When is the last time you prayed with a friend? Or lent a sympathetic ear? Or a voice of reassurance? How about voicing gratitude for a friendship? Or serving a friend, doing something totally self-less in order to help someone else?

We need friendship, but we also need spiritual friendship. We need people to encourage us to pray, worship, and behave. We need people to hold us accountable. And sometimes we need people to tell us the good news of God again, when we are going through a hard time. Everyone goes through periods where God feels like He is far away. Spiritual friends help friends to keep God front and center. When one is falling down, the other picks them up with encouragement. I can’t stress enough the need for good friends and how important it is to be a good friend. Because, as this miracle shows, friends are essential in the salvation equation. Because sometimes it is the encouragement of friends that gets us to Christ, who provides healing in this life and salvation for eternal life. Be a good friend!

2nd Sunday of Lent, Mark 2: 1-12

Be still

The second Sunday of every Great Lent we celebrate the memory of Saint Gregory Palamas, who lived in a distant 14th century. He is widely considered to be the patron saint of Christians who practice silence and stillness in their life.

These are the people, mostly hermit monks, who try to isolate themselves from the world, by going into uninhabitable places. Their goal is to maintain silence of the heart and of the mind, rejecting the chaos of this world.

So why would we commemorate this particular saint today, the patron of the silent way of life? We are not monks, we are not in the process of isolating ourselves from the world. The reason we remember Saint Gregory today is that we learn, or remind ourselves, of the meaning of silence and stillness.

How is our life going? Do you ever catch yourself spinning and running nonstop? Your schedule is overbooked. Your kids schedule is overloaded. Do you ever feel like a guinea pig running in a wheel – you keep running but it turns out you are stuck in the same place?

That's our life sometimes, or maybe most of the times – endless noise, constant chaos, and what seems like aimless movement. The whole life of a modern person is accompanied by sounds and noises. A person, especially one living in a city, lives in a relentless noise – cars are roaring, people are walking and talking, airplanes flying above, subway trains underground, the air itself is full of noise.

Noise pollution not only damages us physically, it also prevents us from having that spiritual stillness that is necessary to stay in touch with the Lord. It's not only the monks who need calm and quiet.

Whether we like it or not, today we are not accustomed to silence. Silence reminds us of something that absolutely terrifies us – it reminds us of death. We used to have TVs and radios to fill the silence, to kill the voice of our conscience in our head. Now we have smartphones, iPads, notebooks, Alexa, heck, we can even have a conversation with our watch and refrigerator at the same time!

The point is, even if we wanted to, we can't have silence anymore. All this turmoil and vanity devours our life, we are no longer able to be with ourselves, to examine our being, to pray in silence. And this hustle continues until our very last breath.

Today, it requires a serious effort to become still and quiet. Like a monk, radically rejecting the world and going away into a desert or woods ... Think about it, shutting down the Wi-Fi makes our house a desert. To have even a tiny bit of silence, we become radical.

Sometimes only something horrible or catastrophic is able to slow us down, to wake us up, something like a natural disaster or a physical injury. Then we realize that we've been running pointlessly in the same place. We can't even remember where we were supposed to run, we just know that someone said run and we ran. But where or why ... who knows.

There are many reasons why we need silence in our life. But none is more important than conversation with God. We tend to complain that God does not hear us because for all the things we have asked Him, He has not responded once. Well, can we actually hear Him when we are in constant chaos? It's like, try having a conversation with a person next to you while blasting rock music as loud as your speakers allow you. How can we feel God's grace when we are deafened and blinded and aimlessly running?

Long time ago, God told His people, "Be still and know that I am God" (*Psalms 46:10*), all we need to do is be still (*Exodus 14:14*). God's voice is *always* heard in silence. Always.

That's why, every Great Lent we remember the patron saint of silent way of life. Every Great Lent we are called to incorporate some stillness into our life. Even if you think that you lead a quiet way of life, try spending at least 5 minutes every day, in the morning and in the evening, in complete silence, to test your theory, and to reconnect with God.

We learn God's will in silence. We learn to see ourselves when we are silent. We see Christ working in our life when we are silent.

Be silent and know God.



St. Gregory Palamas

St. Gregory Palamas (fourteenth century), whose feast is celebrated on the Second Sunday of Lent, taught that the "something more" is life with God. As a young scholar, monk, and later Archbishop of Thessalonike, he was an inspiring example to his contemporaries. The central teaching of St. Gregory was that through faith, prayer, and the sacraments of the church, Christians experience a personal sharing in the life of God. The life and work of St. Gregory can be summed up by two key words in the Orthodox Christian tradition: "theosis" (divinization or becoming like God) and "hesychasm" (quietude or prayerful stillness before God).