



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 4—10 September 2022

SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER	12th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 19: 16-24 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
2022 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 5 SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
THURSDAY 8 SEPTEMBER <i>Nativity of the Theotokos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SUNDAY 11 SEPTEMBER	GOSPEL READING: John 3: 13-17 EPISTLE READING: Galatians 6: 11-18

*God loves us more than a father, mother,
friend, or any else could love,
and even more than we are able to love ourselves.*

St John Chrysostom

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary - Commemorated on September 8

"The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of mankind.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of mankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Saviour of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since St Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcome the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Saints Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Sts Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feast days at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

St Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. St Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

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.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all mankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion."

12th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 19: 16-24

"What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" (Verse 16). This question was addressed to Jesus by the rich Jew in today's Gospel reading. To receive eternal life is a key issue that everyone should be concerned with, especially since our earthly life is short. Our life will continue forever in our future homeland. As the Apostle Paul writes: "here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" (Hebrews 13:14). How then will we obtain eternal life? What answer did the Lord give to this vital question? **"If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments...and come follow Me"** (verses 17 & 21).

Usually, when people hear that we have to apply God's commandments in our own lives, they feel unsettled. Is it even possible in our days to apply the commandments of God? But if it were not possible, would God give them to us? Would God, who is a loving Father and full of such love and wisdom, force His children to do things they cannot do? What reasonable father gives rules to his children which are impossible to obey? The Evangelist John confirms this from his personal experience: "God's commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). The Lord has said it also: "My burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). Besides, the Lord does not leave us alone in this endeavour. In every difficulty, He comes with His divine Grace and strengthens us. So when something is difficult or impossible for people, we can see that "with God all things are possible" (verse 26).

We must understand that God gave the commandments to humanity for our sake, as any affectionate father does when they instruct their child. It is for the child's benefit that a father does this, not for any personal interest. Whether we keep the commandments of God or not, it does not affect God's divine essence. He does not gain or lose anything by our obedience. It is His children who are affected by obeying or disobeying God's command. We could say that the commandments of God are like "Instructions to Mariners." As it is known, at any moment there are worldwide instructions issued to seafarers, who are informed of the weather conditions in the oceans of the earth, in order for them to take their measures and regulate the course of their ships. This is the role of God's commands in the course of our own "ship," which opens up in the ocean of life. They guide us how to safely get to our final harbor.

Yet the Lord, in answering the rich Jew who was following the commandments, added this: **"And come follow me."** It is not enough to just obey the commandments of God. If we are cut off from Christ and His Church, we will not be able to keep the commandments in order to reach the harbor of the Kingdom of God. As we heard today, when the disciples asked Jesus "Who then can be saved?" He answered: "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (verse 25-26). The Lord had also said to His disciples: "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

My dear brothers and sisters, these promptings of the Lord are interrelated: "keep the commandments" and "come follow Me." You cannot say that you believe in Christ and follow Him if you do not keep His commandments! The Evangelist John clearly writes: "He who says 'I know Christ,' and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not with him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are with Him" (1 John 2:4-5). With all the means offered to us by our Church, let us struggle to follow the steps of Christ in obedience to His will. Then we can be sure that His love will give us a happy eternal life with Him. Amen

St Pucheria the Empress Commemorated on September 10

The Holy Right-Believing Empress Pulcheria, daughter of the Byzantine emperor Arcadius (395-408), was coregent and adviser of her brother Theodosius the Younger (408-450). She received a broad and well-rounded education, and distinguished herself by her wisdom and piety, firmly adhering to Orthodox teaching. Through her efforts the church of the Most Holy Theotokos was built at Blachernae, and also other churches and monasteries.

Through the intrigues of enemies and of Eudokia, the wife of the emperor Theodosius the Younger, Saint Pulcheria was removed from power. She withdrew into seclusion, and lived a pious life. Without her beneficent influence, conditions in the capital deteriorated. She returned after a while, following the urgent request of her brother. Then the unrest provoked by emerging heresies was quelled.

After the death of Theodosius the Younger, Marcian (450-457) was chosen emperor. Saint Pulcheria again wanted to withdraw into her seclusion, but both the emperor and officials entreated her not to refuse the throne, but to marry the emperor Marcian. For the common good she consented to become Marcian's wife if she were allowed to preserve her virginity within the marriage. They were married, but lived in purity as brother and sister.

Through the efforts of Saint Pulcheria, the Third Ecumenical Council was held at Ephesus in 431 to address the heresy of Nestorius; and also the Fourth Ecumenical Council which was convened at Chalcedon in the year 451, to deal with the heresies of Dioscorus and Eutychius.

Saint Pulcheria built the church of the Mother of God at Blachernae at Constantinople, and also found the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (March 9).

Throughout her life Saint Pulcheria defended the Orthodox Faith against various heresies. After giving away her wealth to the poor and to the Church, she died peacefully at the age of fifty-four in the year 453.