



## Parish Information Bulletin

2—8 October 2022

### 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.

#### SUNDAY 2 OCTOBER

2nd SUNDAY OF LUKE, Luke 6: 31-36

- 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 3 OCTOBER

- 9.00am  
Service of Holy Unction
- 10.00am  
Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall

#### WEDNESDAY 5 OCTOBER

- 5.00pm  
Paraklesis to the Theotokos

#### THURSDAY 6 OCTOBER

- 8.00—9.00pm  
➡ **TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP**  
(In Church Hall upstairs behind Church)  
**ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME**

#### SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER

GOSPEL READING: Luke 7: 11-16  
EPISTLE READING: 2 Corinthians 6: 16-18, 7:1

#### HOLY APOSTLE THOMAS—6 OCTOBER

##### Troparion

You were a disciple of Christ  
And a member of the divine college of Apostles.  
Having been weak in faith you doubted the Resurrection of Christ.  
But by feeling the wounds you believed in His all-pure passion:  
Pray now to Him, O all-praised Thomas to grant us peace and great mercy.

#### OSIA PELAGIA OF ANTIOCH—8 OCTOBER

A repentant sinner, she was born a pagan in Antioch and endowed by God with great physical beauty but she used this beauty to destroy her own soul and those of others, acquiring great wealth from her prostitution. One day, walking past the church of the holy martyr Julian, where Bishop Nonnus was preaching, she turned into the church and listened to the sermon, which was about the Dreadful Judgement and the punishment of sinners. These words so shook her, and wrought so great a change in her, that she was of a sudden filled with self-loathing and fear of God, and, repenting of all her filthy sins, fell down before St Nonnus, begging him to baptise her: 'Holy father, be merciful to me, a sinner; baptise me, and teach me repentance. I am a sea of iniquity, an abyss of destruction, a net and weapon of the devil.' Thus this penitent implored Christ's hierarch with tears. And he baptised her.

Blessed Romana, a deaconess of that church, stood sponsor to her at her baptism and, after that, as her spiritual mother, grounded her well in the Christian faith. But Pelagia was not content just to be baptised. Feeling the weight of her many sins and the pricking of her conscience, she decided on a great asceticism.

She gave away to the poor the enormous wealth she had amassed by her immorality and went secretly to Jerusalem, where, under a man's name as the monk Pelagius, she shut herself in a cell on the Mount of Olives and there began a strict asceticism of fasting, prayer and vigils. Three years later, St Nonnus's deacon, James, visited her and found her still alive, but when he went to her again a few days later, he found her dead body and gave it burial.

St Pelagia entered into rest in about 461. Thus that sometime great sinner, by repentance and striving, received the mercy of God, the forgiveness of her sins and sanctification, and her purified and sanctified soul was made worthy of the Kingdom of God.

## 2nd SUNDAY OF LUKE, Luke 6: 31-36

### BE MERCIFUL

**Luke 6:31-36:** *And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.*

*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,* Scripture says. Every word of God is life for man. And reading the Gospel, we have the opportunity to drink from this fountain of life. The very words of the Good News are life-giving, for they are suffused with the Holy Spirit. The fulfillment of these words is the way to the Kingdom of the Father.

*And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise,* says Christ, thus setting a high bar for His disciples, calling them (that is, us) to an active position in life. It is no longer "an eye for an eye" or "a tooth for a tooth," and it's not a call simply to not do to others what you yourself don't want. It is a call to do, a call to live and act. But how should we live and act? Not as is customary among the sons of this age, not as is characteristic of this fallen world. Christians should withstand the worldly spirit; their business is to be foolish for Christ's sake and commit acts that do not fit into the Procrustean bed of common sense.

"Strike a pre-emptive blow against your opponent," says modern morality. *Love your enemies*, says Christ. "Make a profit at any cost," we hear on every corner. *Lend, hoping for nothing in return*, the Son of God calls us. But if we look deeper, then we will understand that the Gospel is not proposing a new morality; it's not building some kind of moral system. The Gospel does not deal with ethical issues in general. It simply shows us a way of life—the way of eternal life.[1]

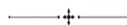
*But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return*—it would seem easy to say, but how difficult to fulfill. It is indeed not easy to fulfill, but Christ showed us the example of His life and His death. He truly loved His enemies, even praying on the Cross for those who crucified Him. He did good works: He comforted, He healed, He resurrected. He has given us His entire self; He became man for us, lived for us, and died for us—and He demands nothing from us for Himself in return.

To love one's enemies is nearly impossible for those who have no hope in the future life. An enemy is one who inflicts pain, who causes suffering. How could he be forgiven? How can you love him? It is impossible—unless we remember that *Christ died for us while we were yet sinners* (Rom. 5:8). We constantly inflict pain and suffering upon God—but He always pardons and forgives us.

It is extremely difficult to do good and lend without expecting anything, especially if you receive in return not "nothing," but malice, slander, and reproach. But Christ endured all of this—misunderstanding, envy, persecution, blasphemy, slander, malice, beatings, crucifixion, and death. And He not only thereby gave us an example—He is ready to help us in our every good deed. He supports our feeble hand, strengthens us in times of weakness and despair, and gives us hope in what seem like hopeless situations.

Christ promises a great reward for the fulfillment of His words: *Ye will be sons of the Most High*. What could be higher than that? Christ is the Son of God, and we will be sons of God. The Heavenly Father is kind to us, ungrateful and wicked—and we will be like Him if we do the same. The Lord is merciful, and we have the happy opportunity to draw near to our Creator and Saviour, if we do not seek justice for ourselves, if we do not treat others legalistically, but work so that our hearts would be forgiving, merciful, and loving.

[1] It would perhaps be more accurate to say that the Gospel is not *simply* building a moral system, for surely a Christian ought to be the most moral, the most ethical. But our good works must be done for God's sake, in synergy with Him. Good works attract the grace of God, which deifies us—thus the Christian life is infinitely more than a moral system, but it is certainly not the *lack* of a moral system.—Trans.



### St. John Chrysostom

Has someone grieved you, and insulted you; and mocked you? But consider how often you have done such things to others and even to the Lord Himself! Consider that you say, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." Consider, that if you do not forgive, you will not be able to say this with confidence. And where does it say that one who forgives his fellow-servants should receive remission of the sins committed against the Lord? But nevertheless we do receive such great loving kindness, because He is rich in mercy and pity.

Source: *Through the Year with the Church Fathers*, Pres. E. Harakas