



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 14—20 May, 2023

CHRISTOS ANESTI ! CHRIST IS ARISEN!

SUNDAY 14 MAY	Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, John 4: 5-42 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
2023 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES - 2023 (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 15 MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
WEDNESDAY 16 MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
THURSDAY 17 MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8.00—9.00pm ➡ TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP 2023 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
SUNDAY 21 MAY	GOSPEL READING: John 9: 1-38 EPISTLE READING: Acts 26: 1, 12-20

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.

Love sinners, but hate their deeds, and do not disdain sinners for their failings,
so that you yourself do not fall into the temptation in which they abide....
Do not be angry at anyone and do not hate anyone, neither for their faith,
nor for their shameful deeds ...
Do not foster hatred for the sinner, for we are all guilty...
Hate his sins, and pray for him, so that you may be made like unto Christ,
who had no dislike for sinners, but prayed for them.
St Isaac the Syrian

“Even if you are not what you should be, you should not despair. It is bad enough that you have sinned; why in addition do you wrong God by regarding him in your ignorance as powerless? Is he, who for your sake created the great universe that you behold, incapable of saving your soul? And if you say that this fact, as well as his Incarnation, only makes your condemnation worse, then repent; and he will receive your repentance, as he accepted that of the prodigal son (Luke 15:20) and the prostitute (Luke 7:37-50). But if repentance is too much for you, and you sin out of habit even when you do not want to, show humility like the publican (Luke 18:13): this is enough to ensure your salvation. For he who sins without repenting, yet does not despair, must of necessity regard himself as the lowest of creatures, and will not dare to judge or censure anyone. Rather, he will marvel at God’s compassion.”
St. Peter of Damaskos

Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, John 4: 5-42

One of the greatest things that the Orthodox Church has is a living tradition of Saints who are great examples, who preached the Gospel, and bring the faith to those around them. If they had not lived out a Godly life then many of us would have not been here today worshipping the one true God. Because of this we know that Christ is glorified through his Saints. One of those great Saints that received the light of Christ and passed it on was the saint we hear about today in the Gospel reading, the Samaritan woman, also known as St. Photini in Greek or Svetlana in Russian. It's no wonder that her name translated means light specifically, because she was the one who received the light of Christ, transformed her own life and then brought this transformation to those around her. .

In the Gospel reading today the Apostle John relates how Christ came to a city of Samaria and travelled to Jacobs well. To put it in context, Samaria was generally not a place where Jewish people would go. While Christ was there, a woman came to collect water. St John says that she came to get water at around the 6th hour which is noontime. To anyone in that time this would be strange because noon was the worst time to be doing work especially getting water. The Sun was hot at that time especially in the Middle East. This makes sense, as we see she is a sinful woman, having had 5 husbands and living unmarried with a man. She would definitely have been shunned by the community so in order to not make any contact, she went at the time when most certainly no one would be drawing water from the well. However to her surprise not only was someone there but it was the very God-man.

The next thing that should strike us in the Gospel is that Christ being a Jewish man, began to talk to a Samaritan and even a woman. In Jewish culture at that time, it was unheard of for a Rabbi, to speak to a Samaritan, let alone a woman. And yet Christ comes and offers to give her the "living water" which is actually the grace of the Holy Spirit and salvation. This sinful woman is accepted by Christ and given this great gift. Immediately after realizing she was speaking to the Messiah sent to save Israel, she went out to her village and began to preach to those around her about Jesus. We know that from tradition she eventually had repented and was baptized. She later became a great Apostle and brought many souls to Christ. She was so strong in her faith that she even converted the daughter of the Emperor Nero. Hearing that his daughter had been baptized, he sent St. Photini to her death. She met a martyr's death for Christ by being thrown down a dry well.

What we can see is that her life is one that while she was living in a state of sin, Christ called out to her, and gave her great grace. He did so because he knew she would turn and follow him. She would give up her life and take on the path of sainthood. She became a great Apostle for Christ. All this happened because of a chance encounter with the living God. Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh says "Every Saint is offered to us as an example; but we cannot always emulate the concrete ways in which a Saint lived, we cannot always repeat their way from earth to heaven. But we can learn from each of them two things. The one is that by the grace of God we can achieve what seems humanly impossible; that is, to become a person in the image and likeness of God, to be - in this world of darkness and tragedy which is in the power of lies - a word of truth, a sign of hope, the certainty that God can conquer if we only allow Him access to our souls"

So as we have this Saint set forth as an example for all of us, let us keep in mind that we too are called by Christ. We too have a chance encounter with the living God, through Holy Communion. Now we are placed in the world to bring the Gospel to those around us, as did the Samaritan woman. So therefore, are we actively doing this? Are we trying to bring those around us to Christ? Some people might ask, how should we bring the Gospel to those around us.

Well, I would start and say to ask yourself this question, do those around us even know we are Orthodox Christians? Not just because we told them, but do they see in our Godly deeds, or our sinful ones? If they saw us as we were would we be any different than people around us? As Christians we should be different. People notice the smallest details. So I ask again, do we act like Christians? Do we jump in immediately and participate in gossip with those around us or instead defend those who are being criticized? Do we lay aside earthly cares, or do we have all the latest and greatest electronic gadgets? Do we live a life of prayer or do we only think about the latest movies on Netflix or Disney?

St. Photini expelled her sinful way of living and that is how she was able to preach the Gospel to those around her. Let us too be like the Samaritan woman, and "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

- Fr Andrew Gliga