



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 3—9 December 2023

Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church
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Fr Athanasios
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Fr Ephraim
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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 3 DECEMBER	14TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, Luke 18: 35-43 <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 4 DECEMBER <i>St Barbara, Great-Martyr</i> <i>St John of Damascus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER <i>St Savas the Sanctified</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER <i>St Nicholas the Wonderworker</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER	<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 10 DECEMBER	GOSPEL READING: Luke 13: 10-17 EPISTLE READING: Ephesians 6: 10-17

We make known to all that a Greek Language School operates in our Parish.

- **Primary school classes: every Saturday, from 9.00am to 12.30pm**
- **High School classes: every Monday, from 5.00 to 8.30pm.**

For inquiries and enrolments : 0401 051773

St Barbara Great-Martyr - 4 December

Apolytikion

Let us honour the holy Barbara for, with the aid of the Cross as her weapon,
she crushed the snares of the enemy, and was rescued from them like a bird.

St Nicholas of Myra the Wonderworker—6 December

Dismissal Hymn

The truth of your deeds
has set you before your flock
as a standard of faith, an example
of meekness and a teacher of self-control.
Thus you acquired greatness through humility
and spiritual wealth through poverty.
O Father and Hierarch Nicholas,
intercede with Christ, our God,
that he may save our souls.

St. Savas the Sanctified—5 December
Troparion

With the streams of your tears you cultivated the barrenness of the desert;
and by your sighs from the depths, you bore fruit a hundredfold in your labours.
You became a luminary, shining upon the world with miracles.
O our righteous Father Sava, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.



14TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, Luke 18: 35-43

Seeing the Invisible God: The Need for a Pure Heart

The Gospel Lesson – Luke 18:35-43

At that time, as Jesus was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Sermon notes

1] The blind man already knew something of Jesus for although he cannot see what is happening, when he hears Jesus of Nazareth is coming by he begins shouting for Jesus' attention. He knows Jesus has no money to give him, but he has obviously heard of the miracles of Jesus. It is obvious that the blind man could **see** who Jesus was based on what he knew about Him and what he believed about Him. The blind beggar not only never saw Jesus before he never saw anything Jesus had done. But he had the eyes of his heart to see, and there was purity enough in his heart for him to see God!

2] The Iranian movie, THE COLOR OF PARADISE, has a scene in it in which a blind carpenter takes on as an apprentice a blind boy whose poor father sees only as a terrible burden which he wants to be rid of. The boy explains his sadness to the blind carpenter – God doesn't love him for He made him blind. No one wants him, not even his own father. The blind carpenter points out that God is invisible, eyes will not help you see God. In fact those with eyes think they can see things about God which they cannot. Eyes will not help you see God. To be born blind is a gift from God for those with eyes keep trying to use their eyes to see God, while the blind already know this is not possible and so skip that deception and immediately use the eyes of their heart to seek God. Seeking God is a matter of faith not sight. Seeing is believing? In the Gospel lesson, believing is seeing.

3] St. Paul reminds us that God is invisible in the Epistle to Timothy –

*"To the King of ages, immortal, **invisible**, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1 Timothy 1:17)*

This is why Jesus spoke about those with a pure heart seeing God. You can't see the invisible God with your physical eyes! You need to work on your inner self, your soul, the eyes of your heart to see God. Clearing away all manners of impurities from the heart is needed to see God. Even if you have 20/20 vision, without purity of heart, you won't see God.

4] The blind man already sees that Jesus can give him sight before Jesus does anything! Jesus gives to the blind man what the blind man already believes. Jesus doesn't even claim to heal the man, he tells the blind man, "your faith has made you well." The fact that the man could see with the eyes of his heart enabled his eyes to be opened. As St. Paul says, *"for we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7).

5] The people in the Gospel lesson are interesting as well, for they **see** the miracle and praise God. None of them benefitted from the beggar being given sight and yet they praise God. They were able to see and rejoice in the good fortune of another even though they themselves did not benefit from what Jesus did. In fact they had just a few minutes earlier tried to prevent the blind beggar from disturbing Jesus. But their hearts are good as they were able to see what God is doing. [I think we Christians don't always have that ability to rejoice in the good fortune of others. We are often selfish and self-centred, jealous and envious. We more often rejoice in the misfortune of others. What the Germans call Schadenfreude. We seem more likely to take pleasure in the misfortune of others than to find pleasure in the good fortune of others from which we don't personally benefit]. We would do well to learn from this crowd – even if we don't experience a miracle in our lives, we need to be thankful for every blessing others receive, even the despised people whom we often want to shun and push aside.