



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 16—22 February 2025

<b>SUNDAY 16 FEBRUARY</b>	<b>SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON, Luke 15: 11-33</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>MONDAY 17 FEBRUARY</b>	Elderly Citizens Group Excursion to Red Hill
<b>WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Paraklesis to the Theotokos</li></ul>
<b>SATURDAY 22 FEBRUARY</b> <i>Saturday of Souls</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: Matthew 25: 31-46</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: 1Corinthians 5: 8-13</b>

### Lent - The Joy of Repentance

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann describes this as the sorrow that pervades the Lenten services that lead up to Pascha. He calls it “bright sadness.” Is not Lent itself a joyous gift from God? The Church Fathers refer to it not as a season of misery but of joy, a “springtime of the soul.”

It is a time to weed out the passions that trip us up on life. It is a time to focus on Christ and to find in Him our greatest joy. It is a time to ask God to heal us of all those things we hate about ourselves, all those things that mess up our lives and destroy us.

Let us rejoice every time we discover a new imperfection because through repentance and godly sorrow that imperfection (sin) can lead to forgiveness, joy and newness of life. Bishop Kallistos Ware observes that the purpose of repentance “is to see, not what I have failed to be, but what by the grace of God, I can yet become.”

Lent was not given to us by the Church to make our lives miserable. It is a God-given opportunity to remove from our lives all those passions that enslave us to set us free to experience “the glorious liberty of the children of God.” It is this “joy-creating sorrow” or “bright sadness” that leads to repentance which, in turn, leads to salvation and explodes with joy at Pascha.

(Anthony M. Conairis, *Holy Joy: The Heartbeat of Faith*)

### Praying for the Dead

God wants to help those who have died, because he feels pain for their salvation, but He does not, because He has nobility. He does not want to give the devil the right to say: how do you save him, when he did not labour? So, when we pray for those who have died, we give Him the right to intervene.

Further, God is touched more when we pray for the dead than for the living. That's why our Church has the offerings like the kolyva and the memorial services. Memorials are the best lawyer for the souls of the dead. They can even take a soul out of hell! And you at every Divine Liturgy read kolyva for the dead. The wheat has a meaning: “It is sown corruptible; it is raised incorruptible” (1 Corinth, chap 15, V. 42). It symbolizes the death and resurrection, according to the Scriptures.

Note: Kolyva is a dish made of wheat that is shared as part of memorial services in the Greek Orthodox church.

Saint Paisios the Hagiorite

Translated by Dr. Nick Stergiou

<https://www.orthodoxpath.org/saints-and-elders-counsels/praying-for-the-dead/>

### Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church  
9387 7693

Fr Athanasios  
9383 4151

Fr Ephraim  
0490 378 215

Website:  
[stvasiliosbrunswick.com](http://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.

## On Repentance

*Metropolitan of Gortyn and Megalopolis, Ieremias*

My Christian brothers and sisters, what will become of our sins, the multitude of our great sins? With those we committed when we were young and those when we were grown. And even in old age we don't abandon vile sin. And if you think about it, sin's a terrible thing because it blemishes our beautiful soul; it takes away our joy and makes us sad; and, worst of all, it separates us from God. But I have to tell you that you should be happy, because the cure has been found for the soul that's sinned and it washes and cleanses it of the ugliness of sin. And this remedy is the blood of Christ! Indeed. Christ's death on the Cross was a sacrifice for the remission of our sins: 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us of all sin' (1 Jn. 1, 7). Had Christ's blood not been shed, we wouldn't have been able to erase any transgression, not even a white lie, however much we tried. Let me say again: 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us of all sin'.

On our part, what's required for the remission of our sins is repentance. Repentance means that we humbly accept that we're to blame for what we've done, that we're guilty, that we shouldn't have done it and that, if we're tempted again in similar circumstances, we won't do it again. As we can see, repentance requires humility, because egotists can't say 'I've sinned'. But repentance isn't 'OK, I sinned'; it's a feeling of profound pain at having broken God's law, at the fact that God told us not to do something and we went ahead and did it anyway, in direct opposition to His all-holy will. That's a terrible thing! And this feeling makes us shed tears, the blessed tears of repentance.

But the kind of repentance we see in the lives of the saints, with sighs and groaning doesn't exist among us today, or is very rare. And so, my friends, what will happen? Without repentance we won't be saved? No. Because without repentance, the fact that Jesus Christ was crucified isn't enough. Our repentance is essential. As someone so beautifully and correctly put it, the flinty hardness called 'sin' is eroded by a mixture of two drops: one drop is the blood of Christ; the other is a tear of the sinner.

Since repentance is so necessary for our salvation- and our salvation is everything- let's make sure that we repent, truly and properly. Let's not delude ourselves and take care of other things while ignoring the main issue, which is repentance for our sins. Lots of Christians today experience utter exhaustion from their missionary work, from their pilgrimage trips, from carrying out charitable works, but it appears from their disappointing behaviour that they haven't learned the lesson of repentance at all. It's obvious from their demeanour and even their words that they haven't learned, that is, that they don't live their repentance.

In the first place, those who really live their repentance, not merely in a superficial way, never condemn another person. The pain over their own sins prevents them from judging others. Besides, those who are really living their repentance don't talk about their activities, advertising them in bulky tomes in which they present themselves to the best possible advantage. And, to tell you a third characteristic, those who are truly repentant continually condemn themselves for their actions. They aren't upset when others condemn them even if they do so on the basis of lies. Because they say: 'Even if the charges are lies, we have so many other, secret sins that other people don't know about. It's good that they condemn us: we do one thing and are punished for another'.

My Christian brothers and sisters, let us ask Our Lady the Mother of God to give us repentance. We should certainly go to a confessor to confess our sins. Not for him to read a prayer for us but to confess our sins. We'll be punished, not because we sinned, but because we didn't repent.

Source: [pemptousia.com](http://pemptousia.com)

## The Joy of Repentance

We read the Parable of the Prodigal Son during the pre-Lenten period because one of its central themes is repentance. Through the example of the Prodigal Son, as well as the compassionate love of the Father, the Church seeks to inspire and guide us to true repentance, to the sacrament of Holy Confession and to a new life in Christ. Great Lent is not simply a period of external practices such as strict fasting from foods but it is above all *an opportunity for prayer, inward reflection, confession of sins, conversion of the heart, and renewal of the mind* - that's what *metanoia* ("about face"/"change of mind") means.

In the teachings of Jesus repentance is connected not with gloom but with joy. When the Prodigal Son returned to his father's house he provided an occasion for great rejoicing. His father, who was all the while waiting for him, ran out to greet him, embraced him, kissed him, and immediately called for a resounding celebration. "Hurray! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet . . . get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast!" said the father (Lk. 15:22-23). When the older brother approached the house in the evening he heard dancing and music from within. This offended him. What was the reason for all the rejoicing? The father's words express it most eloquently: "My son was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found" (Lk. 15:24).

Our relationship with God is like that. When we are away from Him, He yearns for our return and waits for us. When we return to Him, we give Him great joy. We do not usually associate joy with repentance. We find it painful to admit our sins, faults, and wrongdoings. But we should know that to God repentance is a great moment of joy because it marks the return of a son or daughter to the loving and waiting Father. Repentance is not a religious duty to be fulfilled for the sake of God. Repentance is for us. It is the recognition of our unworthiness, the sincere confession of sins, and the complete trust in His grace: "Father, I have sinned against You. I am no longer fit to be called your son" (Lk. 15:21). For His part, the Father is not interested in dealing with us in a stern fashion, much less in humiliating us, but rather only in receiving us, embracing us, kissing us, and rejoicing with us. All of heaven rejoices for the return of a lost son or daughter.