



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 23 February — 1 March 2025

<b>SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY</b>	<b>JUDGEMENT (Meatfare) SUNDAY, Matthew 25: 31-46</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>2025 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES - BEGINS ON 2 MARCH 2025</b> (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) <b>Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal.</b> 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.	
<b>MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>9.00am</b> Service of Holy Unction</li><li>• <b>10.00am</b> Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall</li></ul>
<b>WEDNESDAY 26 FEBRUARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Paraklesis to the Theotokos</li><li>• <b>7.00pm</b> <b>Divine Liturgy in ENGLISH</b></li></ul>
<b>SATURDAY 1 MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY 2 MARCH</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: Matthew 6: 14-21</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: Romans 13: 11-14, 14: 1-4</b>

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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.

#### Cheesefare Sunday

Sunday 23 February is the last day meat can be eaten before Pascha. During the coming week (including Wednesday and Friday) to next Sunday we may eat all dairy foods and fish. Lent begins on Monday 3 March.

#### Saturday of Souls

*Give rest, O Christ among the Saints to the souls of Your servants, ,  
where there is no pain, no sorrow, no grieving, but life everlasting.*  
Kontakion

#### Third Sunday of Triodion—Sunday of the Last Judgment

*“When the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on his glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and He will place the sheep at His right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and feed Thee, or thirsty and give Thee drink? And when did we see Thee a stranger and welcome Thee, or naked and clothe Thee? And when did we see Thee sick or in prison and visit Thee?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’ Then He will say to those at his left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to Thee?’ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.’ And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*

Matthew 25:31-46 (Gospel Reading on the Sunday of the Last Judgment)

There are three very important lessons to be taken from this Sunday's Gospel reading on the Last Judgment. The first is that when we die, we will all face a judgment before God, as to whether we are worthy to "inherit the Kingdom prepared. . . from the foundation of the world. (Matthew 25:34) It seems to me that the judgment is either "overstated"—i.e. God is going to rain hellfire and brimstone on everyone—or "understated"—i.e. God is going to just rubber stamp everyone and let all come in. There are others who will say "I'm for sure going to heaven," as if there is no judgment or somehow they get to bypass it.

What can be said for certain is that there will be a judgment on all people, and those whom God deems worthy will enter into the Kingdom of heaven, while those not deemed worthy will depart "into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (25:41) The prospect of a judgment seems a little daunting. I've often wondered, "just how merciful or judgmental is God going to be?" As for those who think that God will admit everyone—i.e. God wouldn't discriminate, would He?—the answer is clearly that He will not admit everyone, only those that HE (not we) has deemed worthy.

The judgment will be based on not only our beliefs but our actions, the second lesson of today. Christianity is a faith of action, not of theory or theology. The most basic action is to love in a way that honours God and serves others. Love is an action, not a theory. There are some specific actions that Christ calls us to take.

We are to feed those who are hungry—this includes those who are hungry for food, (i.e. donating food for food drives or working at a soup kitchen) hungry for attention, (offering time) hungry for encouragement, hungry to belong, hungry to feel love.

We are to give drink to those who are thirsty—this includes again providing food and drink to those who are hungry (i.e. helping our local charities that provide food), thirsty for knowledge (helping a co-worker), or for knowledge of God (teaching your children about God), or thirsty for hope (again, providing encouragement).

We are to welcome the stranger—this includes the new person who has joined our church, the new neighbour who moved in next door, the new co-worker who just started a job, and the new student who just moved to a school.

We are to clothe the naked—this includes donating clothes to those who are poor but also building up people who have no self-esteem and who feel "naked" when it comes to confidence.

We are to visit the sick—this is the easiest one to understand. Visit hospitals, visit people at home who are sick.

We are to come to those in prison—this is the one that is easiest to do but most often overlooked. This refers not only to those who are incarcerated—it is not easy to get cleared to visit a prison and we may not even know someone who is incarcerated. But there are people who live in prisons of poverty, disease, learning disabilities, etc. Are we kind and compassionate to them?

These are all actions that show love for others, and bring God's love to others. Being a Christian is not just about piling up good deeds, but showing love under the umbrella of faith in God.

Many of us are familiar with the Frank Outlaw quote:

Watch your thoughts, they become words;  
Watch your words, they become actions;  
Watch your actions, they become habits;  
Watch your habits, they come character;  
Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.

This quote certainly rings true in today's Gospel lesson. For the actions of the righteous became habits, so much so, that in doing them they didn't even realize they were loving God. Love and service were so natural to them. And the inactions of the unrighteous also became habits, so much so that when Christ confronted them about not serving Him because they did not serve others, they didn't realize that by being indifferent to others they were being indifferent to Him. Indeed the habits of both shaped not only their character, but their eternal destiny. This is the third lesson. That we should build up good habits when it comes to serving others. Service to others and love for others should become as natural as breathing. Building and maintaining Godly habits will shape a Godly character, which will lead to a destiny to spend eternity with God.

*When You come down to the earth, O God, in Your glory, all things will cower tremulous, and a river of fire will draw before Your Judgment Seat; the books shall be opened up, and public knowledge will things hidden be. Rescue me, then, I pray, from unquenchable fire, and count me worthy to stand at Your right hand,  
O You, the most righteous judge.  
(Kontakion, Sunday of the Last Judgement, Trans. by Fr. Seraphim Dedes)*

Make it a goal to serve in at least one of the six ways stated in today's Gospel today and every day!

Published by Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis

<https://myocn.net/third-sunday-of-tridion-sunday-of-the-last-judgment/>