





## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 27 July—2 August 2025

<b>SUNDAY 27 JULY</b> <i>St Panteleimonos, Great-Martyr</i>	<b>7TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 9: 27-35</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</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 28 JULY</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 30 JULY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Paraklesis to the Theotokos</li></ul>
<b>THURSDAY 31 JULY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>8.00—9.00pm</b>  <b>TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP</b> <b>ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME</b> Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment. * <b>Downstairs in the building behind the Church</b>  Find St Vasilios Greek Orthodox Parish Brunswick on Facebook and, Instagram <b>@stvasiliosgreekorthodoxchurch</b></li></ul>
<b>FRIIDAY 1 AUGUST</b>  <b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> <i>Dormition Fast: 1—14 August</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5.30pm</b> <b>PARAKLESIS TO THE THEOTOKOS</b></li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY 3 AUGUST</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: Matthew 14: 14-22</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1: 10-17</b>

### ST PANTELEIMON, GREAT-MARTYR, 27 JULY

#### Kontakion

O Champion and Martyr of God, imitating the Merciful and bearing from Him the grace of healing, cure our spiritual ills by your prayers, and set free from the temptation of the eternal enemy those who ceaselessly cry out, "Save us, O Lord."

### 1 AUGUST: BEGINNING OF FAST FOR THE FALLING ASLEEP OF THE THEOTOKOS

The fast begins on 1st August and ends 15th August when Orthodox Christians celebrate the Feast of the Falling Asleep (Koimesis) of the Theotokos. This great feast honours the Virgin Mary through whom the mystery of the incarnation took place. As our Lord's Mother, we seek her intercession to her Son for our every need. She listens, comforts, and prays for us. This is evident by the many miracles that are performed by her; the countless number of churches that are built in her honour. During this period of fasting there is a Paraklesis service to her each evening (except for 5th August when there are Vespers for our Lord's Transfiguration, 14th August, and Saturday evenings). Attending the Paraklesis services gives us the opportunity to honour the Theotokos and seek her aid for ourselves and others.

### 7TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Matthew 9: 27-35

#### How We See and Speak Reveals the True State of our Souls

The men whom Jesus Christ healed in today's gospel lesson could not have had any illusions about their circumstances. The blind men sat by the road and begged, for that was all that they could do in that time and place in order to survive. We do not know the mental state of the man who was possessed by a demon and unable to speak, but others had to bring Him to the Lord for deliverance. Obviously, these men were living in miserable ...../

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at the Church every  
Monday to Friday  
between 4.00 and 6.00pm  
for Holy Confession and  
any spiritual need.

conditions. The blind beggars were Jews who asked for mercy from the Son of David, a Jewish term for the Messiah.

Even though their faith was far from perfect, as symbolized by their blindness, the Lord had mercy on them and restored their sight.

The man who was unable to speak was a Gentile, which is why the people responded, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel," while "the Pharisees said, 'He casts out demons by the prince of demons.'" Due to their idolatry, the mouths of the Gentiles had been shut to the glory of God, and the dominant assumption among the Jews at that time was that the Messiah would come to bless them, not the other peoples of the world. But Christ's mercy restored the man's speech, cast out the demon, and provided a sign of how He came to bring salvation to the entire world. In today's epistle reading, St. Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, both Jews and Gentiles, that "together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We Gentiles may now know and glorify Him every bit as much as the descendants of Abraham, for the ancient promises extend to all who have faith in the Messiah. The Holy Spirit has united the divided tongues of the tower of Babel such that people of all cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities may join together in the praise of God as full members of the household of Christ in faith.

It should be no surprise that the Lord restored the abilities of sight and speech to these suffering men. To see is to know and experience in ways that transcend rational description. The spiritual eyes of Peter, James, and John were opened to behold the divine glory of the Lord, to the extent that they were able, at His Transfiguration, when they saw Him radiant with brilliant light. We know God through the eye of the soul, the *nous*, not as a symbol or idea, but by true participation through His grace or divine energies. Christ's restoration of the sight of the blind men provides an icon of what He has done for fallen humanity blinded by sin, wandering in the darkness of those enslaved to the fear of death, and unable to share in the life of God. In Him, the eyes of our souls are restored, cleansed, and healed so that we may know the Lord not in images and ideas, but as a Person in Whose life we truly share as His living icons.

Likewise, our ability to speak has profound spiritual significance, for the Lord taught that "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." (Luke 6:45) The Scriptures contain many warnings about the dangers associated with mindlessly running our mouths. We read in the Psalms, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." (Ps. 141:3) Christ taught that we will have to give an account for every idle word that we speak, "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matt. 12:36) It is not what goes into our mouths, but what comes out of them that defiles us. (Matt. 15:11) As St. James wrote, the tongue is small, powerful, and very difficult to control: "It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell." (Jas. 3:6) The uncomfortable truth is that how and what we speak reveals the true state of our souls. Think about that for a moment. Whether we are embracing Christ's healing is not an inscrutable secret, but is plain for all to hear in the words we speak every day. And especially if we have fallen prey to the temptation to slander and condemn others, we must remember what the Lord said, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." (Matt. 7:1-2) We all need to be on guard against the temptation to speak about others in ways that serve only to bring judgment upon ourselves.

Like the men in today's gospel reading, we all need the healing of the Lord for our eyes, our mouths, and every aspect of who we are. Though physical and spiritual sight are different, there is no question that what we fill our eyes with impacts our hearts. That should be obvious, but perhaps we think that we are too sophisticated to be corrupted by pornography, unrealistic standards of physical beauty, video games and films that glorify sex and violence, and the many images of superficial happiness found on social media. Most of what passes for news or entertainment today is designed to inflame our passions in order to bring power and money to the sponsors, whoever they may be. We may want only to be entertained or informed, but we are surely also being shaped in ways that threaten to make us more accustomed to the darkness of serving the false gods of this world than to the brilliant light of Christ. The less that we fill our physical eyes and ears with what inflames our passions, keeps us from seeing ourselves and our neighbours as living icons of God, and otherwise weakens us spiritually, the more we will be able to open the eyes of our souls to experience and know the Lord from the depths of our hearts. Above all, we must not let pride convince us that keeping a close watch on our eyes, ears, and mouths is a calling only for other people. None of us is so advanced spiritually that we can safely let our own guard down before such common temptations.

As St. Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, concern for the wellbeing of neighbours must take precedence over our own desires. "Brethren, we who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbour for that which is good for his edification." We must not speak and act as though our will must always be done or think that we have some personal characteristic that makes it necessary for us to always have the last word. Whether in the family, the life of the Church, or in any other setting, we must not speak and act with such spiritual blindness that we lose the humility of blind beggars who know that they must cry out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." We must not become such slaves to our passions that we lose the ability to see our neighbours as living icons of Christ and to speak to them and treat them with selfless love.

Too many people in our day become blind with rage and resentment over the smallest perceived slight and think that patience, forgiveness, and humility are signs of weakness. It is, of course, the other way round, for there is no greater weakness than to become blinded and paralysed by our passions. Those who persist in such conditions are very different from the blind beggars, for they are so convinced of their own superiority that they will never call out for the Lord's healing mercy. Unlike the man whose speech was restored, they will remain powerless before the passions that have destroyed their ability to use their tongues to praise God and bless their neighbours.

In order to avoid such blindness and paralysis, we must keep a close watch on what we say and on what we allow to influence how we see our neighbours. When thoughts and feelings of anger, hatred, resentment, or condemnation begin to appear, we must not allow them to darken our spiritual vision or reach our lips, but must instead focus on the words of the Jesus Prayer as we open our hearts to Christ for healing. It is only by mindfully and consistently embracing the struggle to unite ourselves to Him in this way that we will find deliverance from the blindness that can keep us from sharing in the divine life. If you remember nothing else from this homily, remember that how we treat and speak to our neighbours reveals the true state of our souls. So let us all say from the depths of our hearts, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." - Fr Philip LeMasters