



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 21—27 September 2025

<b>SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS , Mark 8: 34-38, 9:1</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 22 SEPTEMBER</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 24 SEPTEMBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Paraklesis to the Theotokos</li></ul>
<b>FRIDAY 26 SEPTEMBER</b> <i>Translation of St John the Theologian</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY 28 SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: Luke 5: 1-11</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: 2 Corinthians 6: 1-10</b>

### *Translation of St John the Theologian, 26 September* **Kontakion**

Who can tell thy mighty works, O virgin Saint? For thou pourest forth miracles, and art a source of healings, and thou dost intercede for our souls, as the Theologian and the friend of Christ.



### **Sunday following the Elevation of the Cross**

*"What Shall It Profit a Man..." (Mark 8:36).*

Some time ago there appeared a picture on the front page of a newspaper showing a fat sultan on an old-fashioned scale. In the weighing pan on one side was the sultan, his head adorned with a silk turban, a happy smile on his face. On the opposite side of the scale was a mountain of diamonds. The news article explained that the people were giving their sultan his weight in diamonds on the occasion of his anniversary. Since he weighed 264 pounds, one can only guess at the staggering value of the huge pile of diamonds!

The picture reminds us of what Jesus said in today's Gospel lesson. If you would place the whole universe on one side of a scale, He said, and then put one single soul on the other side, the soul would far outweigh the universe. "For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

#### **The Soul of the Swarm.**

A farmer once saw a great swarm of bees in a nearby forest. In an attempt to establish a bee hive on his farm, he bought a hive, went into the woods, caught a dozen or so bees and put them into the hive. The next day he caught a dozen more. But as fast as he caught them and turned them loose to gather honey for his hive, they went straight back — on a bee line — to the tree whence they came. Perplexed, he asked the beekeeper, "What is the matter with these bees? Why don't they stay in my hive?"

"The only way to move a swarm of bees to your place" said the beekeeper, "is to catch first of all the soul of the swarm. Once you catch the soul, all the rest of the bees will come and stay with you."

"What is the soul of the swarm?" asked the farmer.

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#### **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.

"The soul of the swarm is the queen. Catch her and all the rest of the bees, whose only object in life is to serve the soul of the swarm, will follow."

What the queen bee is to the other bees in the hive, that is what the soul is to man. All of man's instincts, desires, thoughts, and emotions obey the soul. If the soul is committed to Christ, so is man. Plato said once, "If head and body are to be well, we must begin by curing the soul."

### **What Is the Soul?**

The soul is not a part of the body, although the body houses it. Looking at his dead father's body in a coffin, a youngster said, "That's not my father. That's only the house in which he once lived." Jesus corroborates this when He tells His disciples not to fear those who could kill the body, but could not kill the soul. The soul is the real you, the part of you that is spiritual and thus not subject to physical death; it is the you that hopes, aspires, prays, suffers, loves, is tempted, sins, repents, and can be saved.

An unbeliever once argued with a minister that there could not possibly be such a thing as a soul. "After all," he said, "you can go to a medical laboratory and see for yourself that man is just so much lime, sugar, phosphorus, carbon and starch."

The minister begged to discontinue the conversation, only to be met with a rebuke from the unbeliever. "That was just what I expected. When you cannot reply logically to an argument, you refuse to carry on the conversation."

"But," replied the minister, "I am a reasonable man, and as such I must decline to hold an argument with so many quarts of water, so much phosphorus, so much lime, and so much carbon."

Take away from anyone the spiritual, the soul, and all you have left are a few chemicals worth little or nothing. But add to the physical part of man the soul, and man is worth more than the entire universe.

### **The Greatness of the Soul.**

The greatness and sacredness of man's soul lies in three facts: (1) it is created in the image of the eternal God; (2) the price paid for its redemption was the precious blood of the Son of God; (3) it is eternal and will outlast everything in the universe.

A good question to ask about anything in life is, "How long will it last?" For a moment? for a day? for a month? for a year? for a lifetime? or forever? God is forever. So is faith. So is love. So is the soul that lives with God.

There was once a king who had three hundred and sixty-five wives in his harem. He was very handsome, and loved to eat and have a good time. One day he visited a monastery. There he met a monk. He looked at him with great compassion. "What a great sacrifice you are making," he said to the ascetic. But the monk objected, "Your sacrifice is greater," he said. "How's that?" asked the king. "Because I have renounced that which passes, while you have renounced the eternal." Truly, that alone is important which endures forever.

A man once prayed, "Lord, tie me to something eternal. I tie myself to houses and lands and stocks and bonds and by some turn of fate, I lose them. I tie myself to a loved one and a single microbe comes and death snatches her away. I tie myself to a friend and the friendship vanishes. Lord, tie me to Your program, to service in Your kingdom, to You, God, that I might be tied to the eternal." Tied to God, the soul finds eternal security.

### **Gaining the World.**

To gain the whole world and to lose one's soul is the world's worst bargain, says Jesus. Here the word "world" means whatever man regards as the true essence of life. For some it is profit, for others success, for others fame, for others pleasure, etc. Suppose, for a moment, that man gains the whole world. It cannot keep him from trouble; it cannot give him peace of conscience; it cannot comfort him in sorrow; it cannot bring him peace in death; it cannot purchase heaven for him when he is gone. All he can do with the world after he has it, is to keep it until he dies; he cannot carry any of it with him to the other life.

A well-known movie star, who had gained all the world had to give, committed suicide. Commenting on her tragic life, a news magazine pointed out that she was one of the most beautiful girls alive. By using her beauty and her glamour she had married several men who could further her ambitions. She used and then discarded her husbands when she was weary of them, or they could no longer serve her. The cheapness of the treasures in which she had placed her trust was revealed in her miserably unhappy life. We cannot read her story without remembering the words of Jesus, "What does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

### **Losing Our Soul.**

To lose our soul is to lose the greatest treasure we have. When a thief stole his lamp, Epictetus said, "It is the thief who loses. I bought the lamp; it cost me a few pennies. But it cost the thief his soul." We lose our souls when we are no longer alive to God and His love. We lose our souls when we place some other person or thing at the center of life. We lose our souls when we move away from God and no longer experience the power of His presence. We lose our souls when we feel there is no longer any hope of forgiveness. It was to keep us from losing our soul that God sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Through Jesus, no person need lose his soul. Through Jesus, the door to God and salvation is ever open. Through Jesus we can now become alive toward God and toward our fellow humans. Through Jesus we can gain treasures far greater in value than the entire universe. "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

### **How Do We Get Ready?**

The Gospel lesson today tells us how to prepare for heaven. Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." If we are to concentrate on saving the soul, the secret is to deny oneself, to say no to sin. When asked the secret of her marvelous success with the violin, a young concert artist replied, "Planned neglect. I deliberately neglect other things in order to concentrate on the one task that is all-important." What makes a great chess player? Planned neglect. What makes a great author? Planned neglect. What makes a great Olympic swimmer? Planned neglect. What makes a dedicated Christian? Planned neglect of the less important things in life in order to concentrate on the all-important call of Jesus: "Follow me."

### **Is Your Soul Insured?**

"Daddy, is your soul insured?" a little boy asked his father one night. "Why do you ask that question," the father replied. "Well," said the boy, "I heard you tell Uncle David that you had your house insured, and you had your car insured, and your life insured, and I was just wondering if you had your soul insured."

Jesus is wondering the same thing. That is why today He asks each one of us, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul? For what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

- Excerpts from the book "Gems from the Sunday and Feasts Gospels" By Anthony M. Coniaris