



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 7—13 September 2025

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| SUNDAY 7 SEPTEMBER | SUNDAY BEFORE HOLY CROSS, John 3: 13-17 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy |
| 2025 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES (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 8 SEPTEMBER <i>Birth of the Theotokos</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall |
| WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos |
| SUNDAY 14 SEPTEMBER | GOSPEL READING: John 19: 6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30 EPISTLE READING: 1 Corinthians 1: 18-24 |

Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church
9387 7693

Fr Athanasios
9383 4151

Fr Ephraim
0490 378 215

Website:
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.

Nativity of the Theotokos

The first Feast of the Liturgical Year is the Birth of the Virgin Mary

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary Commemorated on September 8

"The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of mankind.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of mankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Saviour of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since St Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcome the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Sts Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Sts Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feast days at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

St Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. St Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all mankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion."

Source: <http://full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.com.au>



Sunday Before the Holy Cross | A Short Reading, a Succinct Summary

Published by Fr. Stavros Akrotirianakis

Jesus said, "No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life." For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

John 3: 13-17 (Gospel Reading for Sunday Before the Holy Cross)

I have often been asked "What do I need to believe in order to be a Christian?" The answer for what you have to believe is very simple.

God (not us, not a big bang, not a random act) created the world and He created it perfect. (Genesis 1)

The world fell through sin. (Genesis 3)

The word has been redeemed through the saving work of Jesus Christ. (John 3:16)

It is very simple. God created us perfect. We human beings messed up the perfect creation. And God gave us a chance to find the original perfection through the attaining of salvation. Salvation is our work in this life and our destination for eternal life (if we do the "work" in this life).

The Gospel passage from today is a few verses of a long discourse that Jesus had with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, who came to Him privately to ask Him some questions. This passage was not addressed to a large group of people, as many of Jesus' discourses were. In this short passage, Jesus tells Nicodemus that "no one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man." He doesn't reveal Himself as the Son of Man, but teaches Nicodemus, an obviously educated Jewish leader, in a way that no one had ever taught him. As Jesus often did, His insight opened up deeper dialogue, which led to deeper curiosity, which led people to believe in Him.

Jesus continued by referencing the Old Testament book of Numbers, Chapter 21: 4-9

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loath this worthless food." Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

(In case you were wondering, this is where the medical symbol with the serpents comes from, as well as the Orthodox bishop's staff having two serpents at the top of it.)

Jesus compared Himself (again in a hidden way) to the bronze serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness, which brought healing to all who looked upon it. Jesus said that "the Son of Man" (Him) would also be lifted up, (referring to being lifted up on the cross) that whoever believed in Him would not have only healing but eternal life.

John 3:16 is the most succinct summary of salvation: For God (the creator) so loved the world (even when it went away from Him through sin) that He gave His only Son, that whoever believe in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

He continues that the purpose of the Son coming into the world was not to judge the world but to save the world.

Now, there is one "condition" for us, in order for God's plan in sending His Son into the world to save the world to be fulfilled. And that is we need to believe. Many people miss that word. They read John 3:16 in this way: For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever merely lives and breathes for a while should not perish but have eternal life." This is obviously not what the passage says. We are, however, called to do more than live and breathe for a little while in order to attain salvation. We have to believe. What we believe is not limited to words but also involves actions, it requires not only hearing but DOING something.

As for the question "What do I need to do in order to attain salvation?" the answer there is a combination of your faith (love God), your works (love your neighbor) and God's grace and mercy.

Long ago, Moses prefigured Your precious Cross in himself, and he defeated Amalek and put them to flight. And David, that musician, called it a footstool and decreed that we worship You there, O Christ God. Today, as we sinners with unworthy lips kiss the Cross and worship You, Who accepted to be nailed to it, we extol You and pray: Lord, as You did for the Robber, count us worthy of Your Kingdom. (Doxastikon, Great Vespers of Holy Cross, Trans. by Fr. Seraphim Dedes)

Christ didn't come to judge us, but to save us. But we have a part to play in that as well. Play your part today!

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