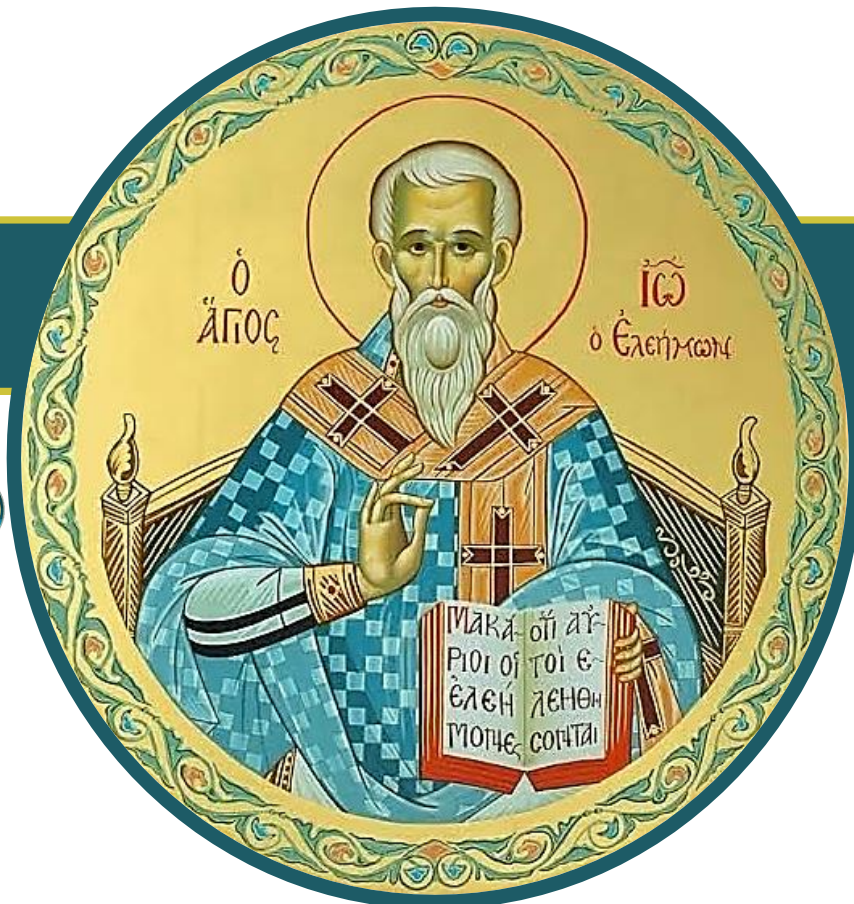




GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA
HOLY PARISH OF ST PARASKEVI,
ST BARBARA, & ST JOHN THE MERCIFUL

ADDRESS: 22 MARSDEN CRESCENT, ST ALBANS PHONE: 9367 2860
PARISH PRIEST REV. FR. DEMOSTHENES NICOLAOU: 0421 704 806
EMAIL: frdemos@stparaskevi.org.au WEBSITE: www.stparaskevi.org.au
HOLY SERVICES AND SACRAMENT BOOKINGS: admin@stparaskevi.org.au

ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΝΟΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ
PROGRAMME NOVEMBER



BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY
HAVE A BLESSED NATIVITY FAST
ΔΕΥΤΕ ΙΔΩΜΕΝ ΠΙΣΤΟΙ – ΚΑΛΗ ΣΑΡΡΑΚΟΣΤΗ
ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΙ ΟΙ ΕΛΕΗΜΟΝΕΣ, ΟΤΙ ΑΥΤΟΙ ΕΛΕΗΘΗΣΟΝΤΑΙ – ΜΑΤ 5:7



PROGRAMME NOVEMBER



MONDAY 1ST NOVEMBER: Holy Unmercenaries Kosmas and Damian, Venerable David of Evia, Matins, Divine Liturgy and Blessing of the Waters, 7:30 – 10:00am

WEDNESDAY 3RD NOVEMBER: Evening Divine Liturgy, Our Venerable Father George Karslides of Drama, 6:30 – 8:30pm

SUNDAY 7TH NOVEMBER: 7TH Sunday of Luke, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:30am

MONDAY 8TH NOVEMBER: Synaxis of the Chief Commanders Michael and Gabriel, and the Holy Orders of the Archangels, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

TUESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER: Saint Nektarios the Wonderworker of Aegina, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

WEDNESDAY 10TH NOVEMBER: Our Holy Father Arsenios of Cappadocia, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

THURSDAY 11TH NOVEMBER: Saint Mena the Great-Martyr, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

THURSDAY 11TH NOVEMBER: GREAT FESTAL VESPERS OF SAINT JOHN THE MERCIFUL, 7:00 – 8:00PM




FRIDAY 12TH NOVEMBER: OUR HOLY FATHER JOHN THE MERCIFUL, Matins and Festal Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

SATURDAY 13TH NOVEMBER: Saint John Chrysostom Archbishop of Constantinople, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

SUNDAY 14TH NOVEMBER: 8TH Sunday of Luke, Holy Apostle Philip, Our Father Among the Saints Gregory Palamas the Wonderworker and Archbishop of Thessaloniki, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:30am

✠ The Nativity Fast begins tomorrow, Monday 15th November. In preparation for the great feast of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we abstain from eating meat and dairy products from the 15th of November until the 25th of December. Fish can be eaten (except on Wednesdays and Fridays) until the 17th of December.

TUESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER: Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

SUNDAY 21ST NOVEMBER: THE ENTRANCE OF OUR
 LADY THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE, Matins and
Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:30am

MONDAY 22ND NOVEMBER: Our Venerable Father Iakovos Tsalikis, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

THURSDAY 25TH NOVEMBER: Holy Great-Martyr Catherine, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

FRIDAY 26TH NOVEMBER: Saint Stylianos of Paphlagonia, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

SUNDAY 28TH NOVEMBER: 13TH Sunday of Luke, Our Holy Father Stephen the Confessor, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:30am

MONDAY 29TH NOVEMBER: Saint Philoumenos the New-Martyr of Jacob's Well, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am

TUESDAY 30TH NOVEMBER: Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30 – 10:00am



**AN EXCERPT OF A HOMILY IN PREPARATION
FOR CHRISTMAS
SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

A feast is approaching which is the most solemn and awe-inspiring of all feasts. If one were to call it the metropolis of all feasts, one wouldn't be wrong. What is it? THE BIRTH OF CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE FLESH.

In this feast the Epiphany, holy Pascha, the Ascension and Pentecost have their beginning and their purpose. For if Christ hadn't been born according to the flesh, He wouldn't have been baptized, which is Epiphany. He wouldn't have been crucified, which is Pascha. He wouldn't have sent the Spirit, which is Pentecost. So from this event, as from some spring, different rivers flow - these feasts of ours are born. But not only on this account would it be right to give precedence to this day, but also because what happened on it is much more awe-inspiring than all other days. I say this because the fact that Christ died after becoming human was the consequence of that: even if He didn't commit sin, still he assumed a mortal body. And that too was an amazing fact: that, although God, He was willing to become human and to condescend to take so much on Himself that not even the imagination can embrace. It's this that is most awe-inspiring, and completely perplexing. Even Paul said in amazement: "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our piety" (1 Tim. 3:16). How great? "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). And again he says elsewhere: "For surely it's not with angels that God is concerned, but with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore He had to be made like His brethren in every respect" (Heb. 2:16-17).

On this account especially I embrace and love this day, and put my ardent love on show to make you share in my affection for it. Indeed, here lies the body of the Lord, not wrapped in swaddling-clothes as formerly, but attired completely with the Holy Spirit. Those who are initiated know what I'm saying. The Magi merely worshiped Him, whereas you, if you approach to communicate with a clear conscience, we permit to consume Him and go back home. Approach, then, bringing gifts - not gifts like the Magi

brought but ones that are much more solemn. They brought gold; you must bring temperance and virtue. They brought incense; you must bring pure prayers which are spiritual incense. They brought myrrh; you must bring humility and a humble heart and love. If you approach with these gifts, with great confidence you'll enjoy this holy table. For my part, I'm saying this now because I know quite well that on that day many of you will come forward and fall on this spiritual sacrifice. So that we don't do this to the detriment or condemnation of our soul but for our salvation, I'm calling you to witness beforehand, and I'm begging you to approach the holy mysteries after you've cleansed yourselves in every respect.

Please don't let anybody say to me: "I'm full of shame, I have a conscience crammed with sins, I'm carrying a very heavy burden." If you're sober, and pray and keep vigil, the appointed period of five days is sufficient to trim away your many sins. Don't look at how short the time is, but consider the point that the MASTER IS LOVING. The Ninevites were able to beat off God's considerable anger in three days, and the time-constraint was no hindrance, but their readiness of spirit captured the Master's generosity and was able to effect everything (cf. Jon. 3). The prostitute, too, coming to Christ in a brief critical moment washed away all her offenses (cf. Lk. 7). When the Jews made the accusation that Christ had admitted her and had given her so much confidence, He silenced them, and freed her from all evils, and, having approved her enthusiasm, He sent her away. What's the message? That she came with an ardent mind and a burning soul and a fervent faith, and she touched those holy and sacred feet, when she had let down her hair, let tears flood from her eyes, and poured out the perfume.

THE OBJECTS by which she bewitched people, she used to prepare the drugs of repentance. The objects by which she excited the gaze of the licentious, she used to weep tears. The locks of hair by which she tripped up many people so

they fell into sin, she used to wipe Christ's feet. The perfume by which she enticed, she used to anoint his feet. And you too therefore must placate God in turn by using the objects by which you provoked Him. Did you provoke Him by stealing money? Win Him over by giving away what you stole to those who've been unjustly treated, and give other things in addition; say in the words of Zacchaeus: "I give back four times everything I've stolen" (cf. Lk. 19:8). Have you provoked Him with your tongue and your abuse, by insulting many people? Propitiate Him in turn with your tongue, by sending up pure prayers, by blessing those who abuse you, by praising those who speak badly of you, by thanking those who wrong you. These actions don't require days or the passing of many years, but only right purpose, and they can be accomplished in one day. Keep aloof from wickedness, embrace virtue, desist from evil; promise to commit these sins no longer, and this will be sufficient for your defence. I TESTIFY AND GUARANTEE THAT, *if each of us that has sinned keeps aloof from their former evil ways, and promises God truthfully, that they won't touch them anymore, God will require nothing else for a substantial defence. I say this because HE IS GENEROUS AND MERCIFUL, AND JUST AS A WOMAN IN LABOUR LONGS TO GIVE BIRTH, SO HE TOO LONGS TO DISPENSE HIS MERCY - it's our sins that interfere with this.*

Let's pull down the wall, then, and right from that time begin the feast, renouncing all activities for these five days. "Farewell to the law courts, farewell to the council chambers - a plague on daily business, with its contracts and transactions. I want to save my soul. "What does it profit a person if they gain the whole world and lose their own soul?" (Matt. 16:26). The Magi came away from Persia; you must come away from daily business and travel towards Jesus. The distance isn't great, if we're willing. The point is that you don't have to cross the sea, or traverse mountain peaks, but if you sit at home, exhibiting piety and much compunction, you can see the wall being completely broken down, you can remove the obstacle, you can cut the length of the journey. "FOR I AM A GOD AT HAND," it says, "AND NOT A GOD FAR OFF" (Jer. 23:23), and "THE LORD IS NEAR TO ALL WHO CALL ON HIM IN TRUTH" (Ps. 145:18).

Don't you know that this table is full of spiritual fire, and just as springs gush forth the force of water, so too does the table contain a certain mysterious flame? So don't approach it if you're carrying stubble, wood or dry grass, in case you cause a bigger blaze and you burn your soul as it takes communion. But bring precious stones, gold, silver, in order to make the material more pure, in order to go back home having derived a great deal of profit. If you've got something wicked in you, get rid of it, banish it from your soul. Is it the case that someone has an enemy, and is suffering grievous wrongs at their hands? Let them bring the enmity to an end, let them restrain their inflamed and swollen attitude, so that internally they experience no tumult or disturbance. I say this because in communicating you are going to welcome a King. But if it's a King coming into your soul there must be abundant tranquillity, abundant silence and a deep peace for your thoughts. But your suffering grievous wrongs, and you can't stop being angry? Why, then, do you visit much greater wrongs and difficulties on yourself? Whatever the person does, your enemy won't inflict on you the kind of harm you inflict on yourself by not being reconciled with them but rather trampling God's laws under your feet. Did your enemy insult you? Is it on this account, tell me, that you then insult God? Refusing to be reconciled with the one who hurt you isn't so much a sign of taking revenge on them as of insulting God, Who laid down these laws.

So don't look at your fellow servant, nor at the magnitude of the wrongs they have done, but when you have put God and the fear of God into your mind, consider the following point. The excessive wrenching that you feel internally when, after countless evil acts, you force yourself to be reconciled with the one who hurt you, will be commensurate with the increased esteem which you will enjoy in the eyes of God, who ordered this course of action. And just as here on earth you will welcome God with great honour, so too will He receive you in heaven with great glory, as He pays you back ten-thousandfold for your obedience. May all of us attain this through the grace and love for mankind of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, honour, power and worship, for ever and ever. Amen.



ΙΕΡΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗΣ,
ΑΓΙΑΣ ΒΑΡΒΑΡΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ
ΤΟΥ ΕΛΕΗΜΟΝΟΣ
ΕΝΟΡΙΑ SAINT ALBANS ΚΑΙ ΠΕΡΙΧΩΡΩΝ



HOLY CHURCH OF SAINT PARASKEVI,
SAINT BARBARA AND SAINT JOHN
THE MERCIFUL
PARISH OF SAINT ALBANS AND DISTRICTS

www.stparaskevi.org.au