

THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS

THE BIRTH OF OUR Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is a source of joy and consolation. In the person of the Mother of God, God gave as a gift to the world a Being before whom so many people would bow down and offer so many prayers, before whom rivers of human tears would flow. The Mother of God so fully and vividly expressed herself concerning herself with the words of the hymn: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior (Lk. 1:46-47). Her whole life lies in this: Her soul magnifies the Lord for the wisdom of creation, for love and goodness. And this regardless of the sorrows and suffering that filled her heart at the foot of the Cross.

And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. In this lies her constant state of being. She has seen human weakness and vice. She sees them also now, and as a mother, her heart is wounded. But despite this, she remains on the heights of contemplation of heavenly sanctity, and her spirit ever rejoices in God her Savior, Who gave Himself as a sacrifice for the redemption of mankind. In this deep understanding of our spirit with the joy of being God's Birthgiver lies the source of the Theotokos's influence on the hearts of the faithful and those who pray to her. Truly, so many people who in faith have recourse to her maternal aid receive help and consolation.

Here at St. Seraphim Cathedral we celebrate the Nativity of the Theotokos with *Great Vespers and Lity on September 7 at 6:15 PM, and Matins and Liturgy, September 8 at 8:30 AM.* If you unable to come to the Divine Liturgy, then find ways to celebrate the holy day at home: e.g., bake a cake for the birthday of the Theotokos; sing the Troparion and the Kontakion; read the story of the Nativity from the OCA website:

<https://oca.org/saints/lives/2017/09/08/102541-the-nativity-of-our-most-holy-lady-the-mother-of-god-and-ever-vi>

Troparion of the Nativity of the Theotokos, Tone Four:
Thy nativity, O Virgin Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to all the world; for from thee hath shone forth Christ our God, the Sun of Righteousness, annulling the curse and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting.

Kontakion, Tone Four:
By thy Nativity, O Most Pure Virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death. Delivered from the guilt of sin, thy people keep the feast as they sing unto thee, the barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, who sustains our life!

ON THE HOLY CROSS

THE ULTIMATE REASON for Christ's death must be seen in the mortality of man. Christ suffered death, but passed through it and overcame mortality and corruption. He quickened death itself. By His death He abolishes the power of death. "The dominion of death is cancelled by Thy death, O Strong One." And the grave becomes the life-giving "Source of our resurrection." And every grave becomes rather a "bed of hope" for believers. In the death of Christ, death itself is given a new meaning and significance. "By death He destroyed death."

...In the Epistle to the Hebrews the redeeming work of Our Lord is depicted as the ministry of the High Priest. Christ comes into the world to accomplish the Will of God. Through the eternal Spirit He offers His own self to God, offers His blood for the remission of human sins, and this He accomplishes through the Passion. By His

blood, as the blood of the New Testament, of the New Covenant, He enters heaven and enters within the very Holy of Holies, "behind the veil" [referencing the veil of the Temple]. After the suffering of death He is crowned with glory and honor, and sits on the right hand of God the Father for ever. The sacrificial offering begins on earth and is consummated in heaven, where Christ presented and is still presenting us to God, as the eternal High Priest — "High Priest of the good things to come" as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, as the minister of the true tabernacle and sanctuary of God. In brief, as the Mediator of the New Covenant. Through the death of Christ is revealed Life Everlasting, "the powers of the age to come" are disclosed and shown forth. In the blood of Jesus is revealed the "new and living way," (Heb 10:20) the way into that eternal Sabbath, when God rests from His

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mighty deeds.

Thus the death of the Cross is a sacrificial offering. And to offer a sacrifice does not mean only to surrender. Even from a merely moral point of view, the whole significance of sacrifice is not the denial itself, but the sacrificial power of love. The sacrifice is not merely an offering, but rather a dedication, a consecration to God. The effective power of sacrifice is love (1 Cor. 13:3). But the offering of the sacrifice is more than the evidence of love, it is also a sacramental action, a liturgical office, or even a mystery. The offering of the sacrifice of the Cross is the sacrifice of love indeed, “as Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance” (Ephes. 5:2). But this love was not only sympathy or compassion and mercy towards the fallen and heavy-laden. Christ gives Himself not only “for the remission of sins,” but also for our glorification. He gives Himself not only for sinful humanity, but also for the Church: to cleanse and to hallow her, to make her holy, glorious and spotless (Ephes. 5:25). The power of a sacrificial offering is in its cleansing and hallowing effect. And the power of the sacrifice of the Cross is that the Cross is the path of glory. On the Cross the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him (John 13:31). Here is the fulness of the sacrifice. “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” (Luke 24:26). The death of the Cross was effective, not as a death of

an Innocent One, but as the death of the Incarnate Lord. “We needed an Incarnate God; God put to death, that we might live” — to use a bold phrase of St. Gregory of Nazianzus. ...Further, the death of the Cross is the cleansing of the whole world. It is the baptism by blood of all creation, the cleansing of the Cosmos through the cleansing of the Microcosm. “A purification not for a small part of man’s world, not for a short time, but for the whole Universe and through eternity,” to quote St. Gregory of Nazianzus again. —Fr. Georges Florovsky, from the book “Creation and Redemption”

THE FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS—SEPTEMBER 14

We will celebrate the Feast of the Elevation of the Precious Cross (also called “The Elevation...”) with Vigil on September 13 at 6:15 PM, and the Divine Liturgy on September 14 at 9 AM. One of the features of the Vigil the eve before is the solemn procession of the Cross at the end of Matins, as we sing the Trisagion Hymn. September 14 is a Strict Fast day on account of the Holy Cross.

INSTEAD OF GLENDI—September 16 & 17

TWO EVENTS are being organized for the third weekend of September, when Glendi normally takes place.

- ON SATURDAY, September 16, there will be a Men’s Group Work Party to clean and organize the storage building, 9 AM–1 PM. There will be something for everyone: sweeping, dusting, moving items, organizing shelves, and so forth. Let Fr. Lawrence or Serge Anderson know you are coming. BBQ Lunch for workers and families included.

- ON SUNDAY, September 17, Fr. Patrick, our fresco painter, will give a talk at 4 PM on the Descent into Hades and the Women at the Tomb (these are the frescoes just being painted). Following the talk there will be a potluck BBQ. Bring something to grill and a side dish to share. Drinks (wine, beer, soda, juice and water) will be provided.

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **UPCOMING POTLUCK and TALKS:** Mother Melania from Holy Assumption Monastery will give a series of talks on the small book [“Theology of the Body”](#) by the Orthodox writer Jean Claude Larchet: Thursdays, September 14, 21 and October 5 at 6 PM. The talks will be preceded by a potluck. Small Compline will follow the talk.
- **HOLY MYSTERIES:** Marriage of Rebecca Cash and Hanne Aftim, Sunday, September 3 at 2:30 PM. Marriage of Emmelia Lewis and Joseph Anderson, Sunday, October 8 at 3 PM.
- **SINCE THERE IS NO GLENDI THIS YEAR,** the “piroshki crew” decided to get to work and do a fundraiser. Order forms were sent through SSPF and are also available at the Candle Desk and Parish Hall. Orders are due on Sunday 9/17/17. Prep will begin Wednesday 9/20 with chopping of herbs, eggs, mushrooms, and onions; Thursday 9/21 will be for the mushroom and meat fillings; and Friday 9/22 cabbage filling. Final pinching and frying will occur on Saturday 9/23/17 starting at 9 AM. We need a crew of eight to ten people for maximum efficiency, for at least five hours (come in shifts). Clean-up and packaging will take another couple of hours, for several people, so we need everyone who can possibly come. Please contact Bobbi Griovski at bgriovski@sbcglobal.net or 707-477-8418 or Kira Staykow at kirastaykow@gmail.com
- **ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH INTERNATIONAL FOOD and MUSIC FESTIVAL,** Saturday, October 7, 10:30 AM–3 PM. Slavic foods, live music with the “Nikolai Ensemble” and a choral concert at 2:15 PM. Vespers at 4 PM. Location: St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, 102 Ross Avenue, San Anselmo, CA. 94960. Call 415-454-0982 for more information.
- **“PHILOTIMO as Sacramental to Marriage”** – The word “philotimo” has many meanings: to sacrifice, to understand and to act—with joy—for the good of the other person. A retreat on marriage wellness, in relation to “Philotimo,” will be led by Father Timothy Pavlatos, who serves at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Portland, OR., is a licensed marriage and family therapist and is the Family Wellness Ministry Director for the SF Diocese of the Greek Orthodox Church. The retreat is set for October 14. See the flyer for more information.

DISCERNING OUR SINS, PREPARING FOR COMMUNION

MANY ARE THEY WHO, communing rarely, collapse into sins; but others again, partaking more frequently, guard themselves often from much evil, since they fear [are in awe of] Holy Communion... Thus, if, being human, we should err by certain small and forgivable sins—for instance, should we be carried away by our tongue, our hearing, or our eyes; or, being deceived, should we fall into vainglory, sorrow, or anger, or other such things—let us reproach ourselves, and let us confess our sinfulness before God, and so let us partake, believing that Holy Communion is for the remission of our sins and our purification. If, on the other hand, we should commit heavy sins that are evil, carnal, and impure, and we are resentful of our brother, let us not dare approach the Divine Mysteries until we have repented of those sins. — *St. Anastasios of Antioch*

BEST TIME FOR CONFESSIONS

OUR BISHOPS TEACH us to receive Holy Communion frequently. They also teach us that preparation is essential, as is a frequent Confession (*at least once a month*, or as often as the conscience dictates), not because Confession fulfills some sort of religious obligation, but because of the spiritual benefits we receive with a regular examination of thoughts, deeds, words and conscience (and one might also mention St. Paul’s stern admonition in 1 Corinthians 11:28). At the end of a confession, we hear the *Prayer of Absolution of Sins*, granting an “image of repentance, forgiveness of sins, pardon, deliverance, union with the Holy Church through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The words of Psalm 50 come alive: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me...restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation...”

As is obvious, ***time is limited for Confessions on Sunday mornings*** (9–9:50 AM), so everyone is encouraged to make a confession on any other day:

- Tuesday–Friday, Noon–5 PM, from 7 PM on—by appointment.
- Wednesday and Saturday, 4 PM–Vespers, and after Vespers
- Schedule by calling the office, emailing, texting or calling Fr Lawrence’s cell at 707-217-4556

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 - St. Phanourios <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Lity for St. Phanourios • Noon, Agape Meal 	28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers 	29 - Beheading of St John Strict Fast Day <i>Feast Day of Christ the Saviour Parish, Anza St. San Francisco</i> 9 AM, Divine Liturgy	30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers • 6:30 PM, Retreat Planning Meeting 	31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Potluck and Talk by Fred Krueger, Akathist <i>Glory to God for All Things</i> to follow 	SEPTEMBER 1 Liturgical New Year	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, Confession • 5 PM, Great Vespers
3 - Hieromartyr Anthimos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 2:30 PM, Wedding 	4	5	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers 	7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6:15 PM, Great Vespers with Lity 	8 - Nativity of the Theotokos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins and Liturgy 	9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, Confession • 4 PM Children's Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers
10 - Martyr Nymphodora <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School begins today • Noon, Agape Meal 	11	12	13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Memorial Divine Liturgy (Sakovich family) • 5 PM, Food Bank • 6:15 PM, Vigil with bringing out of Cross 	14 - Elevation of the Cross <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy Strict Fast Day • 6 PM, Lenten Potluck and Talk by Mother Melania 	15	16 - "No-Glendi" Saturday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Work Party to clean storage building • 4 PM, Confession • 5 PM, Great Vespers
17 - St. Sophia and Daughters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 4 PM, Talk by Fr Patrick on the north side frescoes • Potluck BBQ to follow 	18	19	20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piroshki Production • 6 PM, Vespers 	21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piroshki Production • 9 AM, Memorial Divine Liturgy (Sakovich family) • 6 PM, Potluck, Talk by Mother Melania 	22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piroshki Production 	23 - Conception of St John <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy • Piroshki Production • 4 PM, Confession • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers
24 - Proto-Martyr Thekla <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal 	25	26	27 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers 	28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noon, Senior Lunch • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting 	29	30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, Confession • 5 PM, Vigil for the Protection of the Theotokos
OCTOBER 1 - Protection Feast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Liturgy with Procession • Noon, Agape Meal 	2	3	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers 	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Potluck, Talk by Mother Melania 	6	7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, Confession • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers

• Thursdays at 6 PM: **Potluck meal**, with a talk by Mother Melania on the book *Theology of the Body*, by Jean Claude Larchet 9/14, 9/21 and 10/5.