

THINGS TO REMEMBER FOR THE SUMMER

The following has been borrowed and adapted from another parish's newsletter.

THERE IS HARDLY a good reason to be less "Church-centered" in the summer than during the other seasons of the year. When that mysteriously happens, it means that the "summer vacation" mentality has intruded upon our understanding of what it means to be a member of the Orthodox Church. We ought to know full well that there is nothing "seasonal" about God. If the God Who exists, and Whom we believe in, were to withdraw His presence for a moment—for the "twinkling of an eye"—then we would simply cease to exist! God is "everywhere present and fills all things."

Here, then, are some suggestions meant to maintain our vigilance during the summer months:

- Inform one of the clergy if you are going to travel, so that we can pray for your safety and well-being.
- While traveling out of town, make a point of trying to be near an Orthodox parish on Sunday for the Liturgy. Sunday is the Lord's Day, from which a "vacation" makes no theological/spiritual sense!
- Visit another Orthodox parish. Such visits strengthen the sense of "connection" with other Orthodox Christians. If you intend on receiving Holy Communion while visiting another parish, please call ahead to the priest, or send in a note from the candle desk to the Altar, to ask a blessing to receive Holy Communion. It's awkward for a priest, during Holy Communion, to ask a visitor if he/she is Orthodox and has recently confessed.
- Make a pilgrimage to an Orthodox monastery. If you are "on the road" there is the possibility that a monastery may be in "striking distance" at least for a brief visit. Not all of our vacation time needs to be spent in the atmosphere of entertainment and "fun." Visiting a monastery can make a strong impact on impressionable children and strengthen their faith, and do marvels for adults as well. Possibly stronger and longer lasting than just a "Disneyland" type experience. And, of course, there are many good Orthodox summer camps for our children.

- Visit the Kazan Skete or Holy Assumption Monastery for a Service, and while there ask if you can provide help in any way.
- Remain vigilant in preparing for Holy Communion: respect and keep the weekly fast days of Wednesday and Friday; and keep a total fast (no food or drink) from at least midnight on the eve of the next day's Liturgy. Frequently confess your sins, etc., make your evening before the next day's Liturgy peaceful, come to Great Vespers! Saturday evening Vespers is not just for the "C"s (clergy, choir, catechumens, clergy children and new converts). In many places in the Orthodox world (maybe most) it would be considered irreverent to receive Communion on Sunday without attending Vespers the evening before. One is ill-prepared without it. The Saturday evening Vespers hymns (which repeat in an eight week cycle) are quite extraordinary in their beauty and theology—it's clear that the Church lavishes great care and presents Her best for this sacred evening time of praising the Risen Lord. Even if one cannot attend Vespers each and every Saturday evening, having *some* regular attendance would be spiritually very profitable.
- Participate in the Summer classes, and retreats.
- Be aware of, and keep the "summer fasts," further fulfilling the fasts by participating in the Feast Days they lead up to. The wonderful "summer pascha" of the *Dormition of the Theotokos* (Aug. 15) is preceded by a two-week fast that all serious and practicing Orthodox Christians need to observe.
- Choose a quality book related to the Faith for summer reading.
- Take a morning or afternoon and come to the church to care for something (grounds, garden, church).
- Do not let your daily rule of prayer lapse during the summer months. Perseverance, according to the saints, is one of the keys to an effective prayer life.
- Set aside time for the Parish Feast day of **St. Seraphim of Sarov, on July 18/19**. Plan ahead for the

services and make a confession in the week or days prior. Vigil, Sunday, July 18, at 5 PM. Liturgy, Monday, July 19, at 9:30 AM. There's great consolation in preparing for, and celebrating, the feast of our saint together as a parish.

- Do a good work for someone less fortunate than yourself (alms), for the parish or for someone who needs help, and thus emulate the virtue of the saint by deeds and not just by words.

If it is any longer even possible to experience anything resembling "leisure" in our fast-paced, high-pressured, and endlessly demanding schedules, it would most probably be during the summer months. Leisure is our most valuable time because it

is truly personal — with no boss or lucre involved. Therefore, it should be our most productive because it is totally to our own benefit. We may have the opportunity to do some of the things mentioned above without the pressures that we normally experience — beginning with such basic Christian practices as prayer, reading of the Holy Scriptures, attending more church services, etc. Again, this means resisting any temptation that leads us toward a "vacation" mentality away from our life in the Church. "Redeem the time" with mindfulness of God rather than just "fill the time" with mindless distractions. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Matt. 6:21) ✚

INFORMATION

Protection of the Holy Virgin & St. Seraphim of Sarov Church
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Our Parish Secretary may be reached at the Church office on Tuesday-Saturday, 9 AM to Noon, at 584-9491.

Fr. Lawrence Margitich may be reached at the Parish office phone, or at Lmargitich@sbcglobal.net. He is available Tuesday-Saturday, from noon onwards each day.

PARISH CONTACTS

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RECOMMENDED READING

PATH TO SANITY, by Dee Pennock. The subtitle tells us that the book will offer *Lessons from Ancient Holy Counselors on How to Have a Sound Mind*, and it does so with a straightforward and engaging style. One reviewer wrote that Dee Pennock's book "speaks of the therapeutic aspects of Orthodoxy with clarity, and elegant simplicity, and an amazing charm." It is a brilliant summary of the teaching of the Holy Fathers, not complicated or "academic" in style, on the subject of emotional, spiritual and mental sanity in the love of Christ. For example, on page 34 of this book we read that "the passion that strikes the 'desiring part' of our souls, our wills, is **Vainglory** (empty glory, or vanity). It puts into our will addictions to unnatural desires that act like drugs on us. By nature, our will would desire what our thinking power [also known as the rational, logical or noetic aspect] puts into it—the blessings we can enjoy in this life and in the next. But **Vainglory** plasters contrary desires onto our will, like tattered notices stuck up around a telephone pole, and makes us yearn for them..."

In another chapter we read the following: "Here's a basic spiritual rule. When our will doesn't want our mind to see truth, it produces an inky cloud of *willful ignorance*—that is, our **Pride**. **Pride** is erroneous thinking arising from accidental or deliberate ignorance of truth. The **Pride** (ignorance) produced by **Vainglory** is deliberate—like shutting your eyes against something you don't want to look at, and saying it's not there. The saints teach that **Vainglory** always leads into deliberate **Pride**, a willful ignorance of truth. *Who can escape pride if he is full of vainglory?* asks one (St. Nilus of Sinai). ...When God forbids what we want, we reject Him...we can easily form an opinion that whatever wrong thing we want is reasonable. The amount of willfulness in us will determine whether we're going to accept the truth or arm ourselves with opinions that support what we want the truth to be" (from pp. 151-152). Additional copies have been ordered for our Bookstore. ✚

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **A JOYOUS EVENT:** We will be looking forward to Sunday, August 1, 2010, the day of the baptisms of Garret, Sarah and Rowan Beatrice Hamner, at 9 AM, prior to the Divine Liturgy. The Hamner's moved here, as catechumens already, from Santa Fe, back in January. Please do keep in your fervent prayers all our catechumens: Edward, Jeff, Adriel, Jupiter, Katharine, Freddie, Niki, Desmond, Cheryl, Kira and Ryan.
- **FORT ROSS:** The annual Divine Liturgy at Fort Ross will be on Saturday, July 3, at 10 AM. Our Parish has once again been given the responsibility of providing all the items needed for the Divine Liturgy, and for decorating the chapel (Icons, flowers, candle stands, banners, etc.). Please see Father Lawrence if you are able to help take some items up to the Fort on Friday evening or early Saturday morning. We plan to be at the Fort by 8 AM, July 3, to begin the set-up and the Proskomedia.
- **OUR SISTERHOOD IS SPONSORING A RETREAT:** Fr. Andrew Morbey, rector of St. Mary Orthodox Cathedral in Minneapolis, MN, and a former rector of our parish back in the 80's, will be leading a retreat here at our parish on Friday, July 16 at 7 PM and on Saturday, July 17 at 9 AM.
- **THE YOUTH GROUP (30+ strong)** from St. Andrew Orthodox Church in Riverside, CA. will be stopping in Santa Rosa on July 14 to camp out on the parish lawn for the night. The group is on a trip which combines rafting the American River, camping out here and there, and a visit to the Monastery in Calistoga for a work day. Our youth group will greet them and prepare some refreshments and perhaps some entertainment.
- **ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX Church** in San Anselmo will be hosting a dinner-bingo-disco party for Orthodox youth from 6-10 PM on Friday July 30. Laurel Counts will be organizing rides to get our youth there (FYI, the bingo is "fun raiser" not a "fund raiser").
- **PARISH HIGH-SCHOOLERS:** please mark your calendars and plan to work the Gendi Ice Cream and Soda booth on the third weekend of September. The Youth Group did a great job last year; they are ready and eager for a repeat performance!
- **ALTAR SERVER WORKSHOP:** Our Parish Altar servers will get together on Saturday, July 11, at 3:30 PM, for a workshop on how to serve the Saturday night Vigil and the Liturgy with a bishop. It would be proper, as well, for all the servers to make a confession during or after Vespers. Dinner will be provided after the Vespers (pizza) here at the Church. Parents can pick up their children at 7 PM.
- **WE WELCOME the Cuneo family,** moving here to Santa Rosa. While Fr. Andrew could easily accept a parish assignment in any of the dioceses of the OCA, and "get things going" for himself and his family, he and Matushka Elizabeth and their three children have instead agreed to serve with us here at our parish as interns for a year. I hope that all of you will welcome them into your homes and your lives, and get to know these tremendously talented and faithful Christians. — Fr. Lawrence
- **MEMORY ETERNAL:** May the Lord grant rest, remission of sins, and the Kingdom of Heaven to His faithful servants, departed this life: the Archpriest Kirill Hartman, former rector of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Berkeley, and a dear friend of many in our parish; and Stephen Stan Greiwe, member of our parish who had been living at a convalescent facility for almost two years, a dear friend to many, and the step-father of Esther Carr.
- **GLENDI WORK** began at the end of May, with a short meeting of the "support group." Already now, letters and emails are being sent, calls, contacts and arrangements are being made, and a timeline is being worked out for August and September prep activities. Some will read this notice about the upcoming Glendi and sigh, others might groan, but hopefully, most will get out their calendars and reserve the dates of September 18 and 19 and the days prior to the Glendi Food Festival to help their Parish put its best foot forward, as it does a little outreach into the community. Loads of information will be coming your way in the next three weeks, so stay tuned. If you have questions, concerns or helpful comments, please call or email Father Lawrence, Bobbi Griovski, or Julie Wycoff (contact numbers are listed on page 2).
- **THE KAZAN SKETE** will celebrate its summer feast on Wed., July 21, at 9:30 AM. His Grace Bishop Benjamin will be present for the celebration.
- **CHURCH CAMP:** The Pacific Central Deanery has its church camp this year from July 4-10, at the St. Nicholas Ranch, in Dunlap, CA. (next to the women's monastery of the Life-Giving Spring). Fr. Lawrence will be at the camp from July 5-9. There is no cell phone service, so in an emergency, call the rectory phone to get in touch with Fr. Lawrence, and the info will be forwarded to him.