

HOLY SATURDAY—a short reflection

HOLY SATURDAY is a unique day in the year. Orthodox Christians devote this day – and the Holy Week which precedes it – entirely to the Lord Jesus Christ, forgoing all their other regular activities. On Holy and Great Friday afternoon we serve Vespers (3 PM), and so begin the Holy and Great Sabbath Day watch at the Lord’s Tomb. Remembering His suffering and burial we fast – we do not eat, if possible, on Friday, and we fast – again, if possible – until after Communion on Saturday. Undoubtedly some of us need a bit of sustenance to make such a long stretch, so we might eat and drink just what we need, and no more. Besides fasting we also try to keep an inner and outer quiet (no music, no TV, radio, newspapers, gossip, and little conversation). Why? Because when humans are in sorrow, when they are overcome with grief, when they ponder on the mysteries of evil and sin, on God’s love and redemption, they can’t eat, they can’t talk, they can’t “be normal.” Yet we know that the Lord rose from the dead, and because of our hopeful expectation, peculiar to Holy Saturday, that God will decisively act and raise us too, we are not despondent. Such is our preparation for the Holy Saturday Vespertal Liturgy, (it begins at 1 PM – to receive Holy Communion at this Liturgy we normally fast at least six hours – according to our strength).

During the Vespers we hear fifteen readings from the Old Testament. At the fifteenth reading, taken from the book of Daniel, we hear about the Three Holy Hebrews cast into the furnace because they would not worship the idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. We hear of the faithfulness of these Three Youths, Ananias (‘Yah is gracious’), Misael (‘Who is what God is?’), and Azarias (‘Yah is keeper’) who were preserved unharmed amidst the flames – even their hair was untouched – by the descent of the Angel of the Lord, that is, the Son of God. Walking about in the furnace, as though in the midst of dew, they sang the universal hymn of praise to God.

This amazing deliverance from fire and a hopeless situation is said to prefigure the incarnation and the resurrection of the Son of God, and the

deliverance of His creation from death. In response, we also sing: “O praise ye the Lord, and supremely exalt Him, unto the ages” as we proceed to the baptismal font, where the catechumens will be illumined by water and the Spirit. We will then proceed back into the Church, singing “As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” – now we understand the meaning of the white robes given to the newly baptized: they, and we, have put on Christ – and no longer are we under the dominion of sin and death (Rom. 6:3-11), but “alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11) to Whom we are joined and now share in the Divine Life of Jesus the God-Man – for He is the Head and we are His Body, the Church.

At this point our Paschal Vigil takes a definite turn toward celebration, as we sing “Arise, O God, and judge the earth, for Thou hast given an inheritance among all the nations...” The purple covers and vestments are changed to white, both to honor the white-robed newly-illumined members of the Church (who have “put on Christ”) and the Lord, who appeared to the holy women in the shining white of the Resurrection. We then hear the entire 28th chapter of St. Matthew, and learn of the Lord’s rising from the dead, the surprise of the women disciples, the attempted “cover-up” of the rising, which shortly would be known to everyone, and the ascension of Jesus, Who now reigns as our King and the King of all creation at the Right Hand of the Father.

Despite the joy at hearing of Christ’s rising from the dead and our incorporation into the life of the Age to come, we are reminded to be sober and silent as we prepare for Communion, and for the midnight celebration later: *“Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and ponder nothing earthly-minded, for the King of kings, the Lord of lords, cometh forth to be an offering, and to give to all the faithful His own self for heavenly food. And before him tread choirs of angels, with every principality and power; the Cherubim with countless eyes, the six-winged Seraphim, veil their faces to the presence, and their voices rise in the hymn: Alleluia.”*

– Fr. Lawrence

INFORMATION

Protection of the Holy Virgin & St. Seraphim of Sarov Church
90 Mountain View Ave, Santa Rosa, CA. 95407
Parish office phone: 584-9491 / fax: 585-9445
website: saintseraphim.com

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

Fr. Michael Margitich, Pastor Emeritus	473-0314
Fr. John Schettig, Assistant Pastor	318-1559
Fr. John Ramos, Attached.....	570-9849
Fr. Andrew Cuneo, Assigned.....	914-255-5434
Deacon Jeremiah Crawford	377-4094
Deacon Nicholas Carr.....	588-8753
Sub-Deacon Marc Richardson	545-4047
Nicolas Custer, Choir Director	584-9491
Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden.....	291-7452
Petar Griovski, Treasurer	762-4742
Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary	778-8528
Xenia Pribyl, Sisterhood President.....	217-7630
Fr. Andrew, Church School Coordinator	914-255-5434
Laurel Counts, Youth Group Coordinator.....	795-5739
Scrip, Shenina	321-7417
Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator	480-6106

Friday of Holy Week, and keep watch until morning—as a group—before the Tomb of the Lord. The reading will begin right after Matins of Holy Saturday is over, at about 9:30 PM. Reading goes until about Noon on Saturday, when it will be time to have the final exorcisms of the catechumens prior to the beginning of the Holy Saturday 1 PM Vespers Liturgy. There will undoubtedly be open spots for adults to participate as usual in this annual work, and you are encouraged to find a time to read. Karinna has prepared permission slips for the kids to take home and sign. These will be distributed on Sunday. We also could use a few chaperones to help with the kids.

- **CANDLE MAKING FOR KIDS:** How wonderful it would be for our kids to learn something about making Church Candles, to actually make some candles, and to carry those candles in the Paschal Procession! Thanks to Gene Borissenko, we can do just that. Gene is planning to have a candle-making lesson on Palm Sunday, April 17 after the Divine Liturgy. He will be setting up a little operation outside, and invites all the kids and parents to join him.
- **SIGN UP SHEETS** are now posted for those who would like to help out during Holy Week. For Monday – Saturday we will need church cleaners each evening, candle desk attendants in the evening, folks to help with dying easter eggs, polishing lampadas, and setting up/taking down for the Holy Saturday repast after the Vespers Liturgy. Also there is a sign up for the Psalter after Matins on Friday night, along with the youth (see above) and the Reading of the Book of Acts, which begins after the Vespers Liturgy and continues until 11:30 PM.

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **UPCOMING PARISH LITURGICAL “RETREAT”:** The Thursday of the Fifth Week of Great Lent— April 7 this year—is a special Liturgical day, with Matins from 9 AM—about noon. The Canon of St. Andrew and the Life of St. Mary of Egypt are included in this Matins, which is why it is so lengthy. The Liturgy of the Presanctified will follow immediately.

- **CHOIR MEMBERS:** Reserve the date of Saturday, April 9, 2011 for our mandatory Holy Week/Pascha Rehearsal. Rehearsal will begin at 10:30 AM.

- **RETREAT IN NOVATO** at Nativity of Christ orthodox Church: Father Meletios, Abbot of the Monastery of St. John in Manton, CA., will give a series of talks on “Repentance, What It Is and What to Do With It.” The Retreat will be held on Saturday, April 9th, beginning at 9:30 AM. Call Rose Hunter, at 415-497-8300 for more information. The Retreat flyers can be found in the Narthex.

- **WORK PARTY:** Saturday, April 16. Following the Festal Divine Liturgy of Lazarus Saturday we plan on having a Church Clean-Up Day—cleaning inside and outside the church in preparation for Holy Week and Pascha. We will also be decorating the Church for the Palm Sunday Vigil and Liturgy. Perhaps someone would be willing to make a brunch after the Liturgy, to feed the troops and to honor the newly-illuminated Panteleimon Ryan Duval, who will be baptized that morning at the Russian River, provided the water is not too turbulent.

- **LENTEN CONFESSIONS:** Heard anytime except Mondays. Please arrange with one of our Priests. You will want to make a Confession in order to prepare worthily for receiving the Holy Mysteries during Holy Week and Bright Week. Parents, if your child is over seven years of age, now’s the time to bring him or her to make a Confession.

- **PLEASE REMEMBER** that Confessions will be heard up to and including Holy Wednesday, but not after, due to time constraints.

- **KARINNA THOMPSON**, one of choir members, has offered to organize the junior high and high school kids in reading the Psalms through the whole night on

Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 24, 2011

Began with prayer at 7:07 PM. Attending: Fr. Lawrence Margitich, Serge Anderson, Bonnie Alexander, Lew Baer, Preston Booker, Debbie Buse, Gary Collins, Petar Griovski, Ole Kern, Sergei Moroz, Denise Pellizzer, Xenia Pribyl (Sisterhood President) Absent: Nick Nicholson.

1. January 27, 2011 meeting minutes were accepted as submitted.
2. Rector's Report: (a) Looking forward to Forgiveness Sunday as Great Lent approaches. Hopes and expects all Council Members to be present. (b) Oath of office will be administered on Sunday, February 27. (c) Father highly recommends the retreat with Fr. Artemi Vladimirov at the Geary Street Cathedral on Sunday, April 3.
3. Treasurers' Report—Statement of January, 2011: (a) \$3127.75 more spent in January because annual insurance premium was paid and the PG&E bill trued up to the tune of \$6000+. (b) The bladder in the pressure tank had to be replaced recently. The septic system for the duplex had to be pumped out last week. These items (\$1500-2000) will appear in next month's report.
4. Grounds and Facilities Report. Building Maintenance list: (a) Immediate and future maintenance projects: Domes for Protection bell tower, main dome & cross—Serge has the domes in his shop. (b) Replacement Solar inverters are here—Serge also has these. (c) Waterproof area around upper 2nd story-altar window—we need someone to fix this. Lew will call a Petaluma roofing co. to see what they recommend. (d) Fixing leak in Protection (from bid) Peterson-Dean will fix for about \$500. (e) Baptismal Font—Tile work is being finished, waiting for dry weather.
5. Old Business:
 - a. Preparation of grounds for construction of Storage/Hall Enlargement
 - b. Move the portable building (we will keep this building as storage throughout the construction)
 - c. Arrange the move of the Yard Work Container (we keep this building too)
 - d. Renovation of Cottage—Fr. Lawrence/Greg Sanford will manage. Renovate floors, painting, window replacement, replacing small area of tile, ripping out back porch, etc. Start March 1, end ASAP.
 - e. Accommodations for Fresco Monks - Proposal—Gary Collins to manage this
 - i. Relocate the two "monk" trailers to solar panel field, and renovate the larger trailer (fix kitchenette and bathroom)
 - f. Demolition or Moving of Red Shed—Ole Kern to handle
 - g. Purchase of new Play Equipment, post-construction: Fr. L and Nick. We are being picky about what is appropriate. Preston will take down the current set; sell or remove
 - h. Parish Offices—Greg Sanford, Denise Pellizzer, Bonnie Alexander [on hold for now]
 - i. Sunday Lunches—Debbie Buse to communicate with Prospora makers to coordinate refrigerator placement. Debbie also to coordinate if we need a tent rental, placement, Port-a-potties, washing, cooking equipment
6. New Business: (a) Work Party, Saturday, February 26 at 8:00 AM.
7. Next meeting will be Thursday, March 31, 2011. Meeting adjourned with prayer at 8:20 p.m.

APRIL 30: FAREWELL TO BRIGHT WEEK, FAREWELL TO THE PARISH HALL

Following Vespers on Saturday, April 30, we will gather for a potluck meal and entertainment provided by some of our musically talented fellow parishioners. We'll bid our fond and tearful adieux to the Hall which will be "closed for renovation" soon afterwards. Details will be announced.