

## LITURGICAL SERVICES THIS WEEK

- Saturday, March 24: 5 PM, Vigil for Annunciation of the Virgin
- Sunday, March 25: 9 AM, Confessions  
10 AM, Festal Divine Liturgy followed by Church School & **Festal Agape Meal**  
1:15 PM, Vespers for the Archangel Gabriel / Leave-taking of Annunciation
- Tuesday, March 27: 7:30 AM, Matins  
1 PM, Funeral for Olga Gordenev in Colma at the Serbian Cemetery
- Wednesday, March 28: 7:30 AM, Matins  
6:15 PM, Presanctified, followed by meal and a reading from the Optina Elders
- Thursday, March 29: Parish Retreat: 9 AM–Noon, Matins—Canon of St. Andrew / Life of St. Mary of Egypt  
Noon, Presanctified  
5 PM, *Calistoga: Holy Unction for those recently confessed and ill (see pg. 3)*
- Friday, March 30: 6:30 PM, Akathist Matins to the Theotokos for the 5<sup>th</sup> Friday of Lent
- Saturday, March 31: 10:30 AM, Choir Rehearsal / 3:30 PM, Catechism / 5 PM, Great Vespers & Confession

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### The Great Feast of the Annunciation

ON MARCH 25 EACH YEAR, nine months before Christmas, we celebrate that great mystery that we confess each time we say the Creed: "...who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man." We are saying that God became man. St. Luke the Evangelist tells us that the Virgin Maiden of Nazareth conceived the Word of God, in other words, Jesus took flesh of the Holy Virgin Mary, when the Holy Spirit "overshadowed" her (Luke 1:35). To "overshadow" means that the same glory that filled the Temple, *brightly overshadowing* the Holy of Holies, came to the All-Holy Lady, who was already holy. Psalm 72:6 describes this moment of stillness and hiddenness: "He shall come down like rain upon a fleece, like showers that water the earth." So we call the Virgin *Theotokos* ("the one who gave birth to God"). Here is the union of divine and human—in the

person of the Word of God, Jesus. Here is the immediate deification of human nature, and our share in that return to paradise. The Annunciation, which means *announcement of Good News* is therefore the greatest news in the history of mankind. We enter into the joy and power of this feast at the Vigil and the Divine Liturgy, especially as we receive Holy Communion, which is an annunciation to each one who approaches in faith. We will celebrate once again on **Friday, March 31, 6:30 PM at the Service of the Akathist Hymn**. While many flock to see new movies, such as the *Hunger Games*, *John Carter*, and others, Orthodox Christians over the world will gather that evening, to offer words of praise and wonder: "Rejoice, Star that causeth the Sun to appear. Rejoice, Womb of the divine Incarnation... Rejoice, O Bride unwedded." (*Akathist Hymn*) Come, for we are all hungry for real joy, true good news—and the Virgin will share her joy with us!

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**PARISH RETREAT**—Fifth Thursday of Lent, March 29: Set aside Thursday morning for the Matins with the Great Canon (a nine-ode hymn) of St. Andrew of Crete, sung in its entirety. This hymn is a meditation in prayer through the Bible, teaching us the meaning of man's sin, his repentance and how the Lord constantly seeks and loves His creation. In the midst of this great poem we will also read the Life of Saint Mary of Egypt. Perhaps there are some parishioners who have never had the opportunity to hear the Great Canon, or even read the Life of St. Mary of Egypt...set aside the morning on March 29, and you will not be disappointed. Matins begins at 9 AM and runs until about noon. We will then begin the Liturgy of the Presanctified. The entire process will be over about 1:30 or 2 PM. Before receiving Holy Communion we normally fast strictly for about six hours.

## 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: [www.saintseraphim.com](http://www.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](mailto: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
Deacon Jeremiah Crawford .....	823-5878
Deacon Nicholas Carr .....	588-8753
Sub-Deacon Marc Richardson .....	545-4047
Nicolas Custer, Choir Director .....	584-9491
Nilus Veenis, Sacristan .....	526-2284
Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden.....	291-7452
Petar Griovski, Treasurer .....	762-4742
Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary .....	778-8528
Lisa Moroz, Sisterhood President.....	360-5119
Parmenas Davis, Church School Coordinator.....	823-2921
Serge Anderson, Teen Group Coordinator .....	291-7452
Lisa Moroz, Middle School Coordinator .....	360-5119
Shenina, Scrip Chairperson.....	321-7417
Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator .....	480-6106

## Raising Children

We spare neither labors nor means in order to teach our children secular sciences, so that they can serve well the earthly authorities. Only the knowledge of the holy Faith, the service of the Heavenly King are a matter of indifference to us. We allow them to attend spectacles [often on Sunday mornings] but we care little whether they go to Church and stand within it reverently. We demand an account from them of what they learned in their secular institutes—why do we not demand an account from them of what they heard in the Lord’s house? —*St. John Chrysostom*

A large part of the responsibility for a person’s spiritual state lies with the family. For children to be released from their various inner problems it is not enough for them to receive good advice, or to be compelled by force; nor do logical arguments or threats do any good. These things rather make matters worse. The solution is to be found through the sanctification of the parents. Become saints and you will have no problems with your children. The sanctity of their parents releases the children from their problems. Children want to have saintly people at their side, people with lots of love who will neither intimidate them nor lecture them, but who will provide a saintly example and pray for them. You parents should pray silently to Christ with upraised arms and embrace your children mystically. When they misbehave you will take some disciplinary measure, but you will not coerce them. Above all, you need to pray. —*Elder Porphyrios of Athens*

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## Reading the Holy Scriptures

When one undertakes to examine Scripture in an idle, intellectual way, he creates hatred and quarreling. Why? Because the intellect approach to Scripture does not help us to turn and reflect on our sins, but instead makes us focus on problems and concepts related to the study of Scripture, with the result that our logical and intellectual faculties are aroused to no real purpose. “Knowledge” by itself does not add anything. On the contrary, it encourages the cultivation

of the individual and his private sense of things; it fosters the self-sufficiency of his personal opinions, which he then seeks to justify and impose on others. This kind of approach to Scripture immediately places you in conflict with others; it opposes your will and opinion to theirs, prompting you to disagree and argue with them, and to make enemies of your brothers. Filled as I am with my own opinions about things, I am not able to receive anything from God. The correct way is to read Scripture with simplicity and to allow God to tell us what he wants to tell us. It’s one thing to read Scripture because you want to collect information, and another thing to read it because you want to acquire its true content, that is, the Holy Spirit. This kind of knowledge is the life of God (cf. Jn. 17:3), the entry and extension of God into our life; it is God’s descent and dwelling among us. We can judge whether or not our study of Scripture is authentic based on the number of tears we shed when we study. To be sure, I can also read Scripture without shedding tears, and without a strong sense of my sins, but with the hope that God’s grace, through the reading of Scripture, will break open my hardened heart. Read Scripture, then, but don’t forget about your sins and reduce Scripture to an object of intellectual inquiry, for at that point it ceases being the word of God and you start seeing it as something human. The criterion for your study should be this: the way you read the Bible should bring peace to your heart, communion with God, love of neighbors, and the consciousness of your own sinfulness: the recognition of how unworthy and ill-prepared you are to stand before God. — *Elder Aimilianos, On Abba Isaiah*

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **SACRAMENT OF HOLY UNCTION IN CALISTOGA:** Father Joakim Provatakis, the pastor at St. Simeon Orthodox Church in Calistoga, has invited our parishioners to join them for a Service of Holy Unction, starting at 5 PM, on Thursday, March 29. Archbishop Kyril of San Francisco will preside. Those who wish to be anointed must be baptized/christened Orthodox Christians who have very recently made a confession of sins, and are in need of the healing of physical ailments.
- **HIS GRACE, BISHOP BENJAMIN** is planning to join us for the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesday, April 4, 6:15 PM. We will all want to greet him and pray with him, and receive the Holy Mysteries from his hand. I encourage all of you to come on April 4, especially all the Catechumens. We will ask His Grace to speak to us after the Liturgy as we have our meal.
- **IT IS TRULY INSPIRING AND WONDERFUL** that our parish members take the Holy Mystery of Confession so seriously—I bring to witness the serious, sincere and contrite Confessions, the number of faithful who come to make Confession, and the frequency of those who come. Confession—like all Holy Sacraments—is a meeting with the Lord, the revelation of God’s love in a broken and hurting world, and a therapy of spiritual healing. Those who frequently confess know this, and understand that in preparing for and making Confession they see themselves in the light of God’s love, and are grateful for a new beginning, acceptance, the spiritual healing and purification that comes from the uncreated Grace of God pouring into the sinner, as the priest says the Prayer of Forgiveness and Absolution. All this—you cannot get on your own. There are some that have forgotten how good it is have their burdens lifted at Confession, and so they procrastinate in coming. I encourage you to come to confession here, or at another Orthodox church—anywhere, as soon as possible. There are plenty of priests in town who will stand as witness to your confession and give you the Apostolic Prayer of forgiveness (yes, that’s how old it is).
- **CONSIDERING THE ABOVE,** please remember that no Confessions will be heard after Holy Wednesday. There are those who like to wait until Holy Saturday. However, this year you are advised not to wait, as Fr. John will be serving at the Skete from Holy Thursday through Pascha. Brothers and Sisters: “Now is the acceptable time,” now is the day of repentance—Holy Week is the time of the Lord’s passion and many Services, and there is no time for confession.
- **ON LAZARUS SATURDAY, APRIL 7,** Jean Elizabeth Share will be baptized in the Protection Church, 9 AM. Her Godmother is Debi Mary Shrimplin. The Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Raising of Lazarus will immediately follow (beginning about 9:45 AM).
- **DECORATING AND CLEAN UP ON LAZARUS SATURDAY:** Our parish tradition for Lazarus Saturday (April 7) is to spend the afternoon decorating the Church with Palms, and to clean and polish the brass, windex all the windows inside and out, vacuum the floor cracks, and in general, prepare the church for Holy Week. The work party will begin at 1 PM. Please see Father Lawrence if you can help.
- **HOLY SATURDAY BAPTISMS:** the names of those being baptized, and their sponsors, as follows:  
Kathleen Franotovich (confirming); George Barsi (John Panages); Edwin Fauble (James Hood); Sean Esbjörn-Hargens (Vincent Rossi); Vipasana Esbjörn-Hargens (Matushka Ann); Athena and Tatiana Esbjörn-Hargens (Sarah Hamner); Elizabeth Kelly (Alexandra Harrison); Prisca Roselle (Catherine Veenis); Karen Katherine Hubbard (Catherine Ostling and Gregory Sanford); Geoffrey John Lake (George Artemoff); Rosalyn Thekla Andronico (confirming); Molly Theodora Hamner (Tamara Crawford). Total of thirteen.
- **PALM SUNDAY:** Palms are blessed at the Vigil for Palm Sunday—April 8. Palms will be given to you as you enter the Church. During the Prayer for the Blessing of the Palms (after the Gospel), hold your branches high in honor of the Lord, and the priest will walk around the church and sprinkle them with Holy Water. Palm Sunday follows Lazarus Saturday—we are summoned to behold our humble King, the vanquisher of death and the giver of life, Who raised Lazarus from the dead. “With our souls cleansed, and carrying branches, with faith let us sing Christ’s praises like the children, crying with a loud voice to the Master: Blessed art Thou, O Savior, who hast come into the world to save Adam from the ancient curse...” (Hymn of the feast)
- **MATINS OF HOLY FRIDAY,** served on Thursday evening, April 12, at 7 PM. We gather to hear twelve selections from the Gospel about the Passion of our Lord: “Today, He Who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon a Tree...” The depths of mankind’s evils and the height of God’s love are revealed to us as we stand by our Lord, holding candles to lighten the heavy and crushing sorrow of the day and to remind us that “in him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” (John 1) In past years this Service has not been well-attended. Is there anything more important than these holy days and the Services?

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## APRIL 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 - St. Mary of Egypt</b> • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> • 7:30 AM, Matins	<b>4</b> • 7:30 AM, Matins  • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified, <b>Bishop Benjamin here for the Service</b>	<b>5</b> • 7:30 AM, Matins	<b>6</b> • 7:30 AM, Matins  • 6:30 PM, Matins for Lazarus Saturday and <i>Final class for Catechumens and Godparents</i>	<b>7 - Lazarus Saturday</b> • 9 AM, Baptism & Divine Liturgy for the Feast • 1PM, Church cleaning/ polishing brass, decorating • 5 PM, Vigil for Palm Sunday (bless palms)
<b>8 - Entrance into Jerusalem</b> • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy and Procession to follow • Noon: Agape Meal • 12:45 PM, <i>Choir rehearsal</i>	<b>9 - Great &amp; Holy Monday</b> • 6:30 AM, Bridegroom Matins  • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	<b>10 - Holy Tuesday</b> • 6:30 AM, Bridegroom Matins  • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	<b>11 - Holy Wednesday</b> • 6:30 AM, Bridegroom Matins  • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	<b>12 - Holy Thursday</b> • 11:30 AM, Vesperal Liturgy (Mystical Supper)  • 7 PM, Matins (12 Passion Gospel Readings)	<b>13 - Holy Friday</b> • 9 AM, Royal Hours • 3 PM, Great Vespers of Holy Friday • 7 PM, Matins and the Lamentations, Psalter Reading all night	<b>14 - Holy Saturday, Strict fast</b> • Noon, Exorcisms • 12:45, 9 <sup>th</sup> Hour • 1 PM, Vesperal Liturgy & Baptisms • 5 PM, Reading of Acts • 11:30 PM, Nocturn • Midnight: Pascha
<b>15 - Holy Pascha</b> • 12 AM, Paschal Matins and Liturgy, Agape • 1 PM, Paschal Vespers, <b>Potluck BBQ</b> to follow	<b>16 - Bright Monday</b> • 9 AM, Matins and Paschal Liturgy (possible visit of Bishop)	<b>17 - Bright Tuesday</b> • 9 AM, Matins and Paschal Liturgy	<b>18- Bright Wednesday</b> • 10 AM, Kazan Skete, Paschal Liturgy • 6 PM, Paschal Vespers	<b>19- Bright Thursday</b>  • 6 PM, Paschal Vespers	<b>20- Bright Friday</b>  • 5 PM, BBQ and Movie Night	<b>21- Bright Saturday</b> • 9 AM, Paschal Liturgy  • 5 PM, Great Vespers
<b>22 - Thomas Sunday</b> • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal • 2 PM, Wedding	<b>23</b> <i>Office Closed</i>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>  • 6 PM, Vespers	<b>26</b> • Fr L in SF all day for Diocesan Council Meeting • <b>7 PM, Parish Council Meeting</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>  • 5 PM, VIGIL
<b>29 - Holy Myrrhbearers</b> • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal • 2:30 PM, Wedding	<b>30</b> <i>Office Closed</i>	<b>May 1</b>	<b>2</b>  • 6 PM, Vespers	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> • 9 AM, Work Party  • 5 PM, Great Vespers

• **PASCHA:** Following the Paschal Liturgy, at about 2:30/ 3 AM, we have the Agape in the Hall. You are invited to bring a Pascha basket of food and leave it in the Hall during the Service. The Pascha Baskets will be blessed by the Priest before we begin to eat.