

ORTHODOX MESSENGER

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Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Parish • Santa Rosa, CA 95407

SELF-ASSESSMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

*From the blog of Hieromonk Alexis (Trader) author of the book **Ancient Christian Wisdom***

THE SAINTS OFTEN REMARKED how people manage with great enthusiasm, creativity, and intelligence to get ahead in worldly affairs, but often fail to make a comparable effort when it comes to the spiritual life. Saint Seraphim of Sarov in his conversation with Nicholas Motovilov used the analogy of acquiring money to help his spiritual child understand how one should strive to acquire the Holy Spirit. With respect to a detailed examination of how one has spent one's day in terms of actions pleasing or displeasing to God, "Saint Theophan the Recluse even suggests that it be done with 'the mathematical accuracy of a business ledger'" as I mention in *Ancient Christian Wisdom*. But how are we to go over our day in a way that can help us to crystalize our spiritual goals, to identify our strengths and our weaknesses, as well as to use this knowledge ultimately to become better Christians, to confess more fully, to pray more earnestly, to receive Holy Communion more worthily, and to love less selfishly?

For the sake of performance assessment in many occupations, industrial psychologists suggest considering productivity, absenteeism, peer ratings, and supervisor ratings. ...it occurs to me that some of these same approaches may be usefully applied in the most important job of all, the job of being a Christian. In terms of productivity, we can look at our prayers. The fathers of the desert used prayer ropes to be sure that they said the prayer "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me" a certain number of times each day, sort of like a spiritual quota.

Although one might dismiss such concerns as not particularly spiritual or deep, most monks will be able to tell you that they experience a palpable difference when they pray less, even when their prayer happens to be dry. We can also consider the quality of our product, which provides a window into the deeper, spiritual dimension. Is our prayer from the heart or are they just words?

We can likewise consider productivity in terms of almsgiving (that is particularly quantifiable), in terms of acts of kindness, in terms of forgiveness, in terms of filling each and every commandment in the Gospel of Christ. Looking at our productivity as Christians does not seem to be out of place in a sincere effort to assess where we are in

our journey towards Christ.

Psychologists providing employers with assessment guidance also suggest considering **absenteeism**. In the context of the spiritual life, at a base level, we can ask about our attendance at Church and our presence there from the moment the bell rings. Psychologists consider specific categories of absenteeism such as justified versus unjustified, sickness versus non-sickness, voluntary versus involuntary, explained versus unexplained, and certified illness versus casual illness. Some of these same categories can be applied for absence from Church in terms of why we made the choice and our spiritual commitment underlying that choice. But even more important than absence from Church is *being present before God in Church, being present not just in body, but also in mind, in spirit, and in heart*. And given that Christianity was never meant to be a Sunday only affair, one can also consider absenteeism from willingly striving to be in God's presence throughout the day.

A final useful tool is peer-ratings and supervisor-ratings. Saint John Chrysostom notices that *philautia* blinds us with blinders that can only be removed by those who are hostile to us. [*Philautia*—pronounced *fi-lav-ti-ah*—is egotism, self-esteem based on what others think, admiration of others, or our possessions*]. 'Under the influence of *philautia* we do not see our own failings, while those who are hostile to us often see them quite accurately.' Although it may be too threatening to ask someone who is not kindly disposed towards us about our failing, we can still choose to ask a close Christian fellow-struggler who dares to be honest with us for some precious feedback about where we need to strive more earnestly. Finally, in Confession, we can also ask for guidance about which weaknesses we should struggle to correct, which strengths we should build on, and what is the ideal model of the Christian we desire through the grace of God to be. There do seem to be spiritual analogues to productivity, absenteeism, peer-ratings, and supervisor-ratings. May we use them to move forward in the spiritual life as they are used to move forward in the secular world.

* [What is the opposite of *philautia*? A compassionate heart full of love for all creation, a heart that humbly rec-

INFORMATION

Protection of the Holy Virgin & St. Seraphim of Sarov Church
90 Mountain View Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95407
Parish office phone: 707-584-9491 / fax: 585-9445
website: www.saintseraphim.com

Our Parish Secretary—Fr. John Ramos— may be reached at the Church office Mon., Tues. and Wed., 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
Deacon Jeremiah Crawford	861-9974
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
Shenina, Scrip Manager	321-7417
Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator	480-6106
Debbie Buse, Hall Event Manager	696-4986

ognizes that it is connected with all of creation, and a mind that cherishes humble thoughts, kind thoughts, and loving thoughts. And above all, a soul that feels good about herself because she knows that she was created in the image and likeness of God, and looking towards God is an infinite source of joy and delight.]

MONTH OF FASTING AND FEASTING:

On August 1 we begin the Dormition Fast. This time of preparation for the Feast of the Dormition of the Virgin (August 15), and so we do not eat dairy, eggs, or meat. To benefit spiritually during this time, our thoughts and activities are best focused on spiritual things. In order to honor the Theotokos, the Small Supplicatory Canon will be sung frequently (see calendar). You are invited to bring a list of names of loved ones and the sick and suffering for prayer during this Service to the Theotokos.

August has great importance for us, since it is the last month of the Church Year with feasts of profound relevance. First of the month's feasts is that of the **Procession of the Holy Cross**, with Vespers on July 31 at 6 PM and Liturgy at 9 AM on August 1. On August 5, at 6:15 PM, we will celebrate Vigil for the **Great Feast of the Transfiguration**; the next morning, August 6 at 9 AM, we will serve the Holy Liturgy with the blessing of fruit (bring a basket of fruit) and the vineyard to follow. At 9 AM, August 10, the Divine Liturgy for the **Feast of St. Lawrence of Rome**. In addition to the other saint days in the month (St. Nonna, Prophet Samuel, St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, St. Irenaeus of Lyon, Sts. Florus and Laurus, St. Cosmas the Aetolian) we are given the last great feast of the year, that of the Repose, or **Dormition of the Theotokos** on August 15. This is a *summer Pascha* in so many ways, as you may experience yourself. Finally, we will finish the Church Year with Vespers for the **Beheading of St. John the Baptist**, 6 PM, Aug. 28. Let us begin August with the Cross—and carry the one Christ gives each of us; let us celebrate the Lord's Transfiguration—and heed the invitation to join Him in His Uncreated Light and be transformed; let us cele-

brate the repose and resurrection into the Life of the Age to Come of the Holy Theotokos—and in her death and glorification, see the path we must follow. —Fr. Lawrence

Preparing for Confession

JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 3 And why beholdest thou the speck that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Matthew 7:1-5

...when we see a weakness in someone, the very fact that we notice that weakness means that that sin is also in us. You remember the “speck” in someone else’s eye and the “log” in your own? What is it, this speck? A speck grows into a log, and a log is a *passion* [which an impulse, feeling, desire driven by intrusive thoughts, that causes us to sin]. The speck is a sin; that is, a concrete manifestation of that *passion*. But if we do not know what kind of tree it is, or what kind of log, if we don't even know that they are harmful, then we will never suspect what the speck is all about. As it is now expressed, “Everyone understands things according to the degree of his depravity.” And so we notice in another person specifically that sin, we understand specifically that passion, which is in us ourselves.—Protopriest Valerian Krechetov, Moscow

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **MEMORY ETERNAL:** We offer our condolences to the Basch family. Carl Jacob Basch peacefully reposed in the Lord on Saturday, July 20. The funeral and burial took place on Thursday, July 25. The Men's Funeral Team prepared Carl's body on Wednesday, prayerfully washing, anointing and dressing it. We thank all those who came to read the Psalter before the tomb. On Friday, St. Paraskevi day, a funeral service was done for Frances Paraskevi Traveledes at Daniel's Chapel of the Roses, with burial at Pleasant Hill. She reposed on Sunday, July 21.
- **CONGRATULATIONS** to Dr. Theodore Rasumoff, a son of this parish now living in Arizona, and Dr. Claudia Coello from Honduras, who will be united in the Mystery of Holy Matrimony at 3 PM, Sunday, in the Protection Church. They extend an invitation to the parish to attend the service.
- A "GLENDI HEADS" meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 30th beginning at 6 PM in the church hall. If you run a food booth or area at the Glendi, we ask you to attend the meeting.
- **THE SENIOR LUNCH Fellowship** for August will take place on the Feast of Dormition, August 15, in Calistoga. Since the Sisters there will be celebrating their Monastery Feast that day, the Parish Seniors made plans at the last luncheon to join them for the Liturgy and the festal meal. See next item for time of Liturgy in Calistoga. Those who would like to carpool please call the Parish Office at 584-9491, and we will help arrange it.
- **CALISTOGA FEAST DAY:** Dormition will be celebrated in Calistoga at the Monastery as follows: Vigil for Dormition, Wednesday, August 14 at 5 PM. Hierarchical Liturgy on Thursday, August 15 at 9 AM. Lamentations Vigil for the 3rd Day, Friday, August 16 at 6 PM, and Liturgy on Saturday, August 17 at 9 AM.
- **CATECHISM** classes are held on Saturdays at 3:30 PM, in the Protection Church. All are welcome to attend. Topics coming are: *July 28:* Concluding remarks on Salvation; *August 3:* Veneration of the Theotokos; *August 10:* Preparing for Confession and Communion; *August 17:* No class; *August 31:* On Baptism, part 1; *September 7:* On Baptism, part 2.
- **THE SISTERHOOD** (and hopefully, with the interested, supportive and helpful "brotherhood") will meet on Sunday, August 11, at approximately 12:45 PM.
- **MATUSHKA ANN** has requested a Work Party for Saturday, August 17, starting at 9 AM. *Projects:* trim low-hanging branches on trees in preparation for Glendi, weed area behind the Hall and Sunday School, clean the ditches, and much more.
- **THERE WILL BE A BABY Shower** for Marina Glanville, on Sunday afternoon, August 18 in the Parish Hall. See the flyer for more info or speak with Lukia Rose.
- **FROM THE BOOKSTORE:** July 19 was a day of celebration for us in the Parish. Not only was it the day that we venerate the relics of our patron, Saint Seraphim, it was also the 60th anniversary of Fr. Michael being ordained to the Holy Priesthood. Have you read the account of it on the Diocese of the West website, www.dowoca.org? If not, you will want to do so and relive—or learn of—the joy we shared that day. Among his many attributes Fr. Michael is a wise and engaging speaker with more than four score years of knowledge and closeness to Christ. We will all want to have a copy of the CD recording of some of his most moving sermons. "Meditations on the Word" which was released in 2005 and is still available in the Bookstore (\$10)... Another CD on special offer at this time, also at \$10, is "The Spiritual Testament of Priest Confessor Sergius of Kasimov." We are continually stocking the shelves with new titles. Please stop by. While you are in the Bookstore, ask to see the selection of small, inexpensive Akathist booklets. They offer beauty and inspiration along with personal knowledge of our beloved saints.
- **SUNDAY LUNCHEONS:** Taking on preparation for a Sunday Agape Meal, or being part of a prep team, is not as complicated as it looks. There are many parishioners that might like to help out, yet are unsure how to get involved. To facilitate the process, during August, Lisa Moroz and Fr. Lawrence will be asking parish members if they will be part of a Meal Prep Team.
- **OUR PRACTICE** in the Orthodox in America is to prepare ourselves for receiving Holy Communion by making a frequent confession, once a month being the norm. One would also do the Prayers of Preparation, found in any common Orthodox Prayer book, before coming to Liturgy.

PAINTING THE DOME

FATHER PATRICK AND DEACON MOSES are now in their final preparations for painting which will begin in about a week. The first fresco will be the Pantocrator (which means, “Ruler of all”), Jesus Christ. There have been many building projects here at the parish (rebuilding the faulty dome; stucco and waterproofing the Church; making a forecourt in front of the Church; the Hall and storage buildings, etc). The painting of the dome is perhaps the culmination of all our work. The Church of St. Seraphim was planned and built around the Pantocrator and all the other frescos, and when complete will clearly show that the Church temple is an icon of at least two things: God’s creation—now fallen and suffering—healed and glorified after the General Resurrection. Here is the Kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit in the holy people, and the Lord Jesus Christ ruling all things, and all of creation is alive with the glory of God. Secondly, the Church temple is an icon of the human person as a living temple of God as God created us to be in which He dwells in the heart—then we find that the Kingdom of God within us, as Jesus said. When we see the frescos on the walls and domes, we begin to sense that we are indeed in the Kingdom of God. Our spiritual understanding is elevated, and we are invited to be transformed by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. This is why such a great amount of energy, time and money have been devoted to the Church building and the dome. —*Fr. Lawrence*

GLENDI

WHAT’S HAPPENING

• FOOD PREP and BAKING:

1. Piroshki Prep and Frying: Completed. Thank you to Bobbi Griovski, Vicki and Ray Basch and crew!
2. Tiropita, Spanikopita and Galaktoboureko are being prepared on August 7, 8, 9 and two days the week of August 12th dates TBD. Workers are needed every day. Contact Shenina at 575-3422.
3. The Outdoor Bakery Cookie Baking dates are scheduled for **Mondays beginning August 5th** through September 9th. We will prep the dough on Sundays and plan to start assembly at 5:00 pm on Mondays. Arrive as soon as you can and stay as long as you are able.
4. This year several persons will help coordinate the baking of a particular pastry. Bobbi Griovski will chair the Ginger cookies; Catherine Carpenter will chair the Greek cookies, Lahana (Tamara) will chair the Biscotti and Catherine Ostling will chair the Banitsa. All are welcome to join in. Contact Bobbi Griovski at 762-4742.

• MEETINGS:

1. The next GLENDI Heads meeting is scheduled for Tuesday July 30th at 6 PM in the Parish Hall.
2. A Booth Chair meeting is scheduled for Tuesday August 20th at 6 PM—also in the Parish Hall. Contact Esther Schau at 799-6077.

• WORK PARTIES – start at 9 AM:

1. August 17thParish Grounds Work Party; take out some Glendi equipment and inventory; Glendi sign posting
2. September 7thSet up Glendi area
3. September 14thContinue with Glendi work
4. September 20thDay Before Set-up—Lots to do, starting at 9 AM sharp

Contact Joe Anderson or Fr. Lawrence after Liturgy or Geoff John Lake at 415-342-3852 for details and to help.

*If you have not been asked to work at Glendi, or do not yet have a place to work before, during or after Glendi, please contact the **Glendi Staffing Manager, Lydia Nicholson at 838-0149.***

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

AUGUST 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
July 28 –St. Panteleimon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal (Potluck) • 3 PM, Wedding 	29	30 <i>(Fr. Lawrence in Calistoga all day)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Glendi Heads Meeting 	31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Great Vespers for the Procession of the Holy Cross 	1 - Dormition Fast Begins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Procession of the Cross • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon to the Thetokos 	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon 	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Great Vespers
4 - Martyr Evdokia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal 	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6:15 PM, Vigil for Feast of Transfiguration 	6 - Transfiguration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Transfiguration & Blessing of fruit 	7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Supplic. Canon 	8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Supplic. Canon 	9	10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for St. Lawrence of Rome • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Great Vespers
11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 12:45, Sisterhood Mtg. 	12	13	14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6:15 PM, Vigil for Dormition 	15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Dormition and end of the Fast 	16	17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Work Party • 3:30 PM, Baptism of Tamara Mayo's twins • 5 PM, Great Vespers
18 - Martyrs Florus & Laurus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 3 PM, Baby Shower 	19	20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Glendi Heads Meeting 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Fr. Lawrence away this week, back 8/27 </div>		23	24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Great Vespers
25 - Apostle Bartholemew <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal 	26	27	28 <i>(Feast Day at Rose Ave Parish)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Great Vespers, Beheading of St. John the Baptist 	29 - Strict Fast Day <i>(Feast Day at Christ the Savior, Anza Street)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting 	30	31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Great Vespers

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2013 (provisional)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 - Church New Year • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy and Prayers of Thanksgiving • Noon: Agape Meal	2	3	4 • 6 PM, Vespers	5 • 6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim	6	7 • 9 AM, Glendi Work • 5 PM, <i>Vigil, Nativity of the Theotokos</i>
8 - Nativity of the Theotokos • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal	9	10	11 • 6 PM, Vespers	12 • 6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim	13 • 9 AM, <i>Memorial Liturgy, Sakovich family</i> • 6:15 PM, <i>Great Vespers, Elevation of the Holy Cross</i>	14 - Fast Day • 9 AM, <i>Divine Liturgy for the Elevation of the Cross</i> • 11 AM, Glendi Set up • 5 PM, Great Vespers
15 - Post-Elevation of the Cross • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal	16	17	18	19	20 <i>Glendi Set-Up Day</i>	21 - GLENDI DAY 1 • 8 AM, Glendi Set-up • 10 AM, Prayer • 11 AM, Glendi Opens • 4 PM, Great Vespers
22 - Conception of St. John • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon: Glendi Opens GLENDI DAY 2	23 <i>Glendi take down and clean up</i>	24 <i>Glendi take down and clean up</i>	25 • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for St. Sergius of Radonezh • 6 PM, <i>Great Vespers, St. John the Theologian</i>	26 • 6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting	27	28 • 5 PM, Great Vespers
29 - St. Kyriakos • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal	30 • 6:30 PM, <i>Vigil for the Protection of the Holy Virgin</i>	Oct. 1 - PARISH FEAST • 9:30 AM, <i>Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Protection of the Holy Virgin</i>	2	3 <i>(Fr. Lawrence in SF all day at meeting)</i> • 6 PM, Akathist to the Protection of the Virgin	4	5 • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Great Vespers