

From the Bone of Adam: St. Irenaeus on the Creation of Eve

...St. Irenaeus looks specifically at the creation of woman, the fashioning of Eve. He writes the following:

While man was walking around in Paradise, God brought before him all the animals, and commanded him to give names to them all. And whatever Adam called each living being, that was its name. And God decided also to make a helper for the man. For in this manner, God said, “It is not good for man to be alone. Let us make a helper fit for him, since among all the other living things, no helper was found equal and like unto Adam. And so God himself cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and put him to sleep. And, that a work might be accomplished out of a work, sleep not yet being in paradise, it came upon Adam by the will of God. And God took one of Adam’s ribs and filled up flesh in its place, and he built up the rib which he took into a woman, and in this way brought her before Adam. And he, seeing her, said, “This at last is bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh, and she shall be called *woman*, for she was taken from her man.

That reading is of the 13th chapter of *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* [cf. Genesis 2:19-23].

It is clear that St. Irenaeus here is commenting upon and directly exegeting [interpreting] the text from Genesis, and in fact about a quarter of that passage [just quoted] is from the Genesis account of Eve’s creation. What is of particular importance and such revealing insight is the emphasis that St. Irenaeus draws out of this unique moment. Adam has been placed in paradise, and all of creation, all of the animal kingdom brought to him, he as its lord. And elsewhere in the text, St. Irenaeus draws attention to the fact that Adam is *kyrios*, lord of creation. And all the animals are brought to him *as* their lord, to be his companion. But not just his companion—this is St. Irenaeus’ insight—to be his helper.

St. Irenaeus uses a very specific vocabulary throughout this passage. Adam is provided with these animals that he may find a helper, not just someone to be a companion and a friend, but someone to assist him in growth, in maturation, in the life that God has fashioned for him. And he calls in due course, as the Scriptures say, all the animals before him. He gives names to them all. He sees

their function, he finds their identity, and, as the text says, whatever he called them, that was their name.

St. Irenaeus’ real insight comes in this observation mid-way through that text: among all other living things, no helper was found equal and like unto Adam. In all of creation, Adam was unique: the human handiwork of the Lord. The dust he had fashioned with the his own hands into a human creature is unique and precious, unlike all else. As much as all of the animals that were brought to their lord were helpers in certain ways, were companions in certain manners, Adam remained, in a profound manner, alone. Who was like and similar unto him who could help him unto salvation? The only way for this to be accomplished, St. Irenaeus finds in the text, is for someone truly like him, of his own flesh, of his own bone, to be his companion and aid, and so Eve comes about from the rib of Adam.

In some styles of interpretation that have been found or have been popular over the past decades and years, Eve’s creation out of Adam—woman’s creation out of man—has been misread as a kind of misogyny or a second-class status to female sex. Man is created directly by God but woman is a derivative of the “better” male creation. So has this text from Genesis been misread, not only in recent decades, but also throughout the centuries of history.

St. Irenaeus, on the other hand, finds a much more spiritual, beautiful vision to the text. It is not that Adam is created first and therefore better, and Eve, as a derivation of Adam, is lesser; rather that true companionship—the kind of companionship that allows one to be a helper likened unto one who is helped—means that one *must be* truly, intimately connected, united, of the same spirit, the same flesh, the same bone. In the case of Adam and Eve—the first family, the first human community—this connection is so intimate that their very origins are united.

God does not simply create two people side by side and insist: “Be a community; be a family. Help one another.” Rather, he draws one from the other, so that they are, by their very nature, interconnected, the companions, down to the very levels of flesh and bone, of one another. Their very existence is designed to be of benefit to the other. This is not simply true in terms of Eve’s relationship to Adam, but also of *his* relationship to her. They

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

Our Parish Secretary—Bobbi Griovski—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, Second Priest	318-1559
Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden	291-7452
David Winterton, Treasurer	331-9085
Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary	338-4962
Kira Staykow, Sisterhood President	(415) 279-0353
Shenina, Scrip Manager	321-7417
Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator	480-6106
Debbie Buse, Hall Event Manager	696-4986

share the same flesh; they share the same bones. The role of Christians, the role of all humans to be the helpmeet of all others, is *built in* to our nature. To be a community, to be of assistance and support in growth and development to those around us, is not an option; it's not something we do with ourselves simply because we have made the choice so to do. It is something built into our very fabric as human creatures. "My creation, your creation" means that we are intrinsically connected.

So what is natural is to be helpmeet, to be support, to be companion to those we encounter. What is deeply *unnatural* is to absent ourselves from such relationships; to view compassion, love, alms, as optional extras in the way we interact with those around us. Sometimes in the world today we characterize people who are extremely compassionate, extremely forgiving, who offer their lives wholly to the service of others: we characterize them in the modern vernacular as almost super-human in their relationships to others, super-human in the way they offer themselves to strangers. But, in fact, such people have discovered how to be *truly* human, whereas those of us who live in broken relationships, who see a brother or sister, and rather than seeing a companion who can help us and whom we can help in our spiritual life, we see a stranger, a foreigner, an other. We are the subnatural, the subhuman examples of life in this world. Those who have offered themselves to the other demonstrate simple, natural, precious, true humanity. This is what the Genesis story can show us.

This is what St. Irenaeus finds in a passage that has either traditionally been misinterpreted or has been ignored as insignificant. Yet in this act of Eve receiving her substance, her being, from Adam, we find the very foundation of Christian community. We find the true source and substance of our responsibility, one for another, and we find the true blessing of human creation: that in all of creation, we are, one to another, unlike anything else. We are truly helpmeets, or so we can be in repentance and self-offering. When we see our brother, when we see our sister, let us look upon them with eyes informed by this knowledge. In all creation, there is none like them but us, their brothers and sisters in this life. The weight is on our shoulders to love, to forgive, to help, to support all whom we encounter, whatever their circumstances and whatever ours, that we, as one family created by the Lord Jesus Christ, may grow into his redemption and love. Through the prayers of our father among the saints, Irenaeus of Lyons, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

—Archimandrite Irenei (Steenberg) • October 12, 2009

PREPARATION FOR FREQUENT RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

HOW TO PREPARE for Holy Communion? Examine yourself, says St. Paul. This can mean many things. Examine your love for God (do you pray, have you skipped Liturgy and other services?), your love for your neighbor and the practical ways in which you manifest that love; examine whether or not you love your enemies. Have you forgiven each person, and just as importantly, have you asked to be forgiven for your sins, whether new ones or ancient ones still on "your account?" Examine if you complain, if you have resentments or anger, if you swear, judge others in thought, word and deed; if you give thanks to God daily, to ask for His divine mercy and help. In order to give yourself some self-discipline, which helps one to avoid sin and demonstrates obedience to the Lord and not the belly, abstain from meat and dairy on Wednesdays and Fridays (truly, it is not so difficult!); keep a total fast from midnight Saturday until Communion on Sunday. As for prayer: yes, daily prayer is critical. Pray the *Prayers before Communion* in the prayer book during the week. Certainly confess *at least once a month*, and more frequently if sins weigh on your conscience. Read the Holy Scriptures regularly, so you may be familiar with the Savior's words. Trust in Jesus Christ and the Church and the teachings of the Church—which is His Body. "Take, eat: this is My Body which is broken for you, for the remission of sins. Drink of it, *all of you*: this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sin." —Fr. Lawrence

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **SUPPLICATORY CANON TO THE THEOTOKOS:** The Dormition Fast begins on August 1, and ends on the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, August 15. During the fast we abstain from meat, dairy and eggs on all days, and wine and oil on most weekdays. The Fast prepares us for the Feast of the Dormition. During the fifteen days of the fast we will occasionally serve the Supplicatory Canon (Paraklesis) to the Theotokos. This is a service of supplication for the health, salvation, and welfare of the living. It's a way in which we honor the Theotokos, and remind ourselves of her greatness, and in so doing, prepare ourselves to celebrate her dormition (death as a falling asleep) on August 15. This service was composed by a monk named Theosterictos, some time in the 9th century. In many monasteries this service is done daily after Vespers, and during the Dormition fast, in many parishes as well. When coming to the service, please bring a list of names of your family, friends and loved ones and so we can pray for them.
- **TWO VERY IMPORTANT FEAST DAYS THIS MONTH:** While all the activity for Glendi is taking place, let's not forget that our primary vocation as humans is worship and thanksgiving to God—it is what sanctifies and deepens the meaning of all our other work. The glorious Transfiguration of our Lord on Mount Tabor is celebrated with a Vigil on Wednesday, August 5 at 6:15 PM, and the Divine Liturgy at 9 AM, Thursday, August 6. Bring a basket of fruit to be blessed at the conclusion of the Liturgy. We will also venture into the vineyard to bless our grapes.
The Dormition of the Theotokos—her death and translation to the Age to Come—will be celebrated with a Vigil at 6:15, on Friday, August 14. For the Divine Liturgy we will make a pilgrimage to the Monastery of the Assumption (Dormition) in Calistoga. Carpool will be arranged. The Hierarchical Liturgy will begin at 9 AM. Liturgy will not be served here.
- **PLEASE NOTE** the weekday 7 AM Divine Liturgies: August 19, 26 and Sept. 1.
- **WORK PARTY:** With Glendi approaching, we need to have all our facilities and grounds in tip-top condition. A work party has been scheduled for 9 AM, August 22, to take care of the grounds, the garden and the kitchen. Speak with Matushka Ann for more info at 707-477-0808.
- **CATECHISM REVISITED:** Fr. John will teach a course on reading Holy Scripture, Wednesday Aug. 12, 26 and Sept. 2, at 11 AM.

GLENDI is September 19 and 20.



GLENDI WORK PARTIES: There will be at least two work parties for setting up booths, parking, shade, electrical, the stage, etc. Mark your calendars for **9 AM–1 PM, Saturday, September 5 and 12.**
YOU AND GLENDI: See our Glendi Chief Alexander Stameroff or speak with Lydia Nicholason or Father Lawrence to offer your help during Glendi. Two areas where staff will be needed are Sanitation and Children's area.

FLYERS & POSTCARDS: Please take a handful and distribute.

GLENDI BAKING SCHEDULE: Come for an hour or two in the afternoon, be home by dinnertime. Or stop by after work to help package cookies for freezing. The work is easy, no baking experience needed. And it's fun, too! Even an hour's help is most welcome. Please plan to come. Thanks in advance for your help. —*Catherine Ostling*

DATE	TIME	PROJECT(S)	LEAD BAKER(S)	DOUGH PREP
Mon., Aug 3	3 PM	Greek Twists	Catherine Carpenter	Catherine C. (on Sunday)
Tues., Aug 4	3 PM	Bourbon Balls	Bobbi Griovski	N/A
	5 PM	Shortbread (indoor)	Kristine & Jeanie	N/A
Mon., Aug 10	3 PM	Greek Tea Cakes	Catherine Carpenter	Catherine C. (on Sunday)
Tues., Aug 11	3 PM	Bourbon Balls	Bobbi Griovski	N/A
	5 PM	Lemon Bars	Kristine & Jeanie	N/A
Mon., Aug 17	3 PM	Chocolate Crackle Cookies (?)	Jeanie Carl	Jeanie (on Sunday)
Tues., Aug 18	3 PM	Banitsa (no bake)	Catherine Ostling	N/A
	5 PM	Shortbread	Kristine & Jeanie	

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

AUGUST 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					31 • 6:15 Vespers, for Procession of the Cross	1 - Dormition Fast Begins • 5 PM, Great Vespers
2 - Archdeacon Stephen • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 12:45 PM, Glendi Staff Meeting	3 • 3 PM, Glendi Baking	4 • 3 PM, Glendi Baking • 5 PM, Glendi Baking • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon to the Theotokos	5 • 6:15 PM, Vigil for Transfiguration	6 - TRANSFIGURATION • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Fruit	7 • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon to the Theotokos	8 • 11 AM, <i>Trisagion for Don Brown</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
9 - Glorification of St. Herman • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 1:30 PM, Vespers for St. Lawrence	10 - St. Lawrence • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for St. Lawrence of Rome, Brunch • 3 PM, Glendi Baking	11 • 3 PM, Glendi Baking • 5 PM, Glendi Baking • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon to the Theotokos	12 • 11 AM, <i>Catechism Revisited</i> • 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank distribution • 6 PM, Vespers	13 • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon to the Theotokos	14 • 6:15 PM, Vigil for Dormition (here)	15 - DORMITION • In Calistoga, 9 AM, <i>Divine Liturgy for the Monastery Feast of Dormition</i> • 5 PM Great Vespers
16 - Icon "Not Made by Hands" • 9:30 AM, Akathist, <i>Nurturer of Children</i> • 10 AM Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	17 • 3 PM, Glendi Baking	18 [Fr Lawrence at Deanery Meeting all day] • 3 PM, Glendi Baking • 5 PM, Glendi Baking	19 • 7 AM, Divine Liturgy • 6 PM, Vespers	20 • Noon, Senior and Retired Lunch Fellowship • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting	21	22 • 9 AM, Work Party: Grounds, Garden and Kitchen • 5 PM Great Vespers
23 - St. Irenaeus of Lyon • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	24	25 [Fr Lawrence in Calistoga at Monastery all day]	26 • 7 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11 AM, <i>Catechism Revisited</i> • 6 PM, Vespers	27	28 • 6:15 PM, Vespers, feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist	29 - Strict Fast Day • 5 PM Great Vespers
30 - St. Alexander of Constantinople • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	31	September 1 • 7 AM, Divine Liturgy, <i>Liturgical New Year & Day of Thanksgiving for the creation</i>	2 • 11 AM, <i>Catechism Revisited</i> • 6 PM, Vespers	3	4	5 • 9 AM, Glendi Work Party • 5 PM, Great Vespers

• CATECHISM REVISITED: Wednesdays at 11 AM on August 12, 26, Sept. 2. Topic: *A brief course on reading Holy Scripture, presented by Father John*