

The Old Testament, A Lamp for Today

—*Edith M. Humphrey, New Testament Professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

...THE NEW TESTAMENT and the Fathers model for us a way of reading the Old Testament that Jesus himself taught the disciples, both on the road to Emmaus, and in the upper room—we are to see that the Law, the Prophets and the Writings witness to him, even though this may not have been entirely clear to the original Old Testament writers, and certainly not to the original readers of these books. As Jesus put it, “you search the Scriptures and they testify of me.” As St. Paul reminds us, the Torah had only a penultimate glory, and pointed to the Glorious One who has come among us (2 Cor 3). Moses only saw God’s back; Elijah heard a still small voice; Ezekiel saw “the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God.” But “God has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” (2 Cor 4:6) This shining of the Lord gives us a special wisdom, when we read together with the fathers and the whole Church, in discerning the deeper meaning of the Old. As St. Paul puts it, the figures of the Old Testament were an integral part of events that took place, but in taking place these became types (molds, models) for our warning and for our benefit (1 Cor. 10:11). And as St. Peter puts it, the Old Testament is “the prophetic word made more sure, ... a lamp shining in a dark place” (2 Peter 1:19).

It is important, then, that we READ the whole Bible, not simply the Psalms and the New Testament. Knowing the Old Testament as familiarly as the apostles did will deepen our appreciation of the New Testament, and bring us closer to Christ, who himself said, “God’s word cannot be broken.” St. John Chrysostom, introducing the book of Genesis, puts it this way: “Reading the Holy Scriptures is like a treasure. With a treasure... anyone able to find a tiny nugget gains for himself great wealth; likewise, in... Sacred Scripture, you can get from a small phrase a great wealth of thought.... The Word of God is ... also like a spring gushing with overflowing waters ...

[G]reat is the yield of this treasure and the flow of this spiritual fountain.”

Let us begin, then, with the first lesson taught to the disciples on Emmaus and in the upper room (Luke 24: 27; 24:44). To his confused and traumatized disciples, who did not yet understand the significance of the cross, Jesus opened the Scriptures, bringing together the strange victorious figure from Daniel 7’s vision, the Son of Man, with that other luminous figure of Isaiah 41 through 53, the Servant who Suffers. As he said to them, “the Son of Man” (elsewhere he says, “the Christ”) “had to suffer and so enter his glory.” Once the apostles discerned the harmony of these two strange figures, there was no going back: the One who represents Israel, the One who represents the whole of humankind, suffered death and so entered into resurrected, ascended, godly glory, taking our human nature with him. He is the “standing slaughtered Lamb” (Rev. 5), the Lamb and the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 1:19;5:4). He is the one who called them and calls us, too, “to take up our cross,” that is “to suffer so that we might also be raised” (Phil. 3:10-11).

The Old Testament takes on a glory, a color, a meaning, that it could never have had without this One who confirms it. So, everywhere in the Old Testament we see Him. By the lamp of the Old Testament (2 Peter 1:19), along with the proclamation of the New, may we learn not simply to place our feet properly as we walk with Christ, but to seek a complete transformation of our lives, as we grow together into the likeness of Christ. The seasons of the Nativity and Theophany lead us directly into a costly discipleship, as we remember the myrrh given by the magi for Jesus’ burial, and the descent of our Lord into the depths of the Jordan for our sake. In this Old Testament we have a light “shining in a dark place” to which we will “do well to pay attention” (2 Peter 1:19)—for he has gone into the deep darkness first, and he will bring us through it, until the dawn comes.

THE MEETING OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE ~ February 2

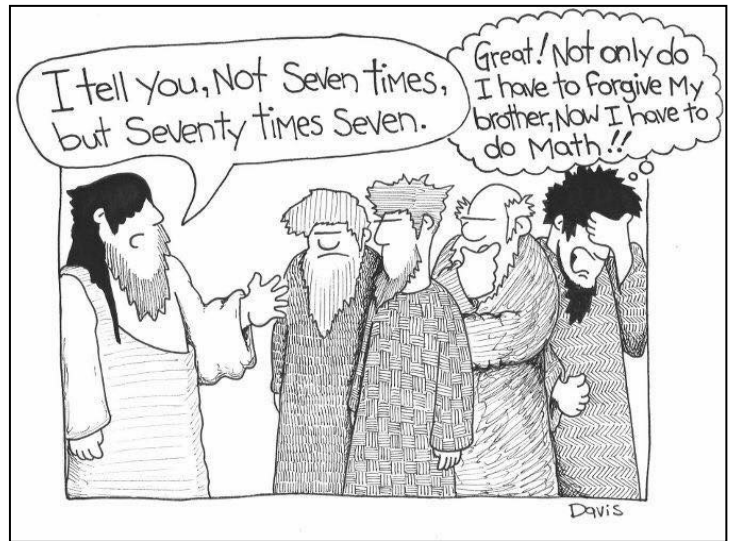
THIS GREAT feast day of the Lord and the Theotokos is celebrated on February 2, forty days after Nativity. The Jewish Law stipulated that a male child must be brought to the Temple forty days after birth, so of course, the Church celebrates that significant moment in the life of our Savior. The entire event is recorded in Luke 2:22–40. St. Luke tells us that the ancient priest Simeon, waiting in the Temple, met the infant Jesus and recognized Him as the Christ, the Messiah, the one he and all the Jews had been promised so long ago. Each Vespers we hear the words of St. Simeon: “Lord, now lettest

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 St. Seraphim of Sarov Church
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 Parish office phone: 707-584-9491
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The Rector, 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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Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy words, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.” Simeon’s was a long life of expectation, watchfulness, service to God, praying in the Temple—such is the model for our own church attendance. With him was the righteous Anna, who foretold the sorrow that the Theotokos would experience much later, there at the foot of the Cross. In this profound encounter of the Lord, His Mother and step-father Joseph, Simeon and the Righteous Anna we see once again our God’s deep humility: Jesus took on human

nature—which had fallen into corruption and death—in order to reconcile man with God. And He came to us as a child, in obedience to His parents. We know the end of the story, and so recognize—along with St. Simeon—that Jesus is the mover of history and He has given it a goal: the salvation of mankind. As we celebrate the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, singing the hymns in Church during Vespers, Matins and Divine Liturgy, we begin to understand something about what God did in the Old Testament. Strange things start to make sense, to fall into place: it was Jesus the Word of God that gave the Law to Moses, that spoke to him in the burning bush and on Mount Sinai; all the Jewish rites of purification are but a foreshadowing of baptism; the bloody sacrifices of animals in the temple are the prefiguration of the forgiveness of sins, the cross, death and resurrection of the Lamb of God. The place where God’s glory was experienced, the Temple of Jerusalem, was itself but a foreshadowing, a type, of the Church, and of the heart of the disciple of the Lord. One of our parish members, Gretchen McPherson, wrote that “in the Church calendar we have these layers of history and sacrament and celebration constantly orienting us to the deepest realities of life. The light and truth that we draw from the lives of the saints and from the events of our salvation history are not random ideas in our individual heads, but are shared experience with the whole Church family as we worship together by means of all the graces and sacraments pertaining to each season. **Vespers:** Monday, Feb. 1 at 6:15 PM. **Matins and Liturgy:** Tuesday, Feb. 2 at 8:30 AM

THE WORD “AMEN” is an ancient Hebrew word used throughout the Liturgy. It is always an affirmation of the certainty and truth of what has just been said and may be variously understood to mean—Truly—So say we all—So be it—or—Let it be so. Most simply, it means *Yes!* Amen is our *Yes* to God. The Hebrew root means “to be firm, confirmed, to be reliable, have faith, to believe.” We find the word *Amen* used by the apostle Paul to end two of his letters (Romans 15:33; Galatians 6:18); and it is the very last word of the Bible, closing it like a seal: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!” (Revelation 22:21). Thus, when we say *Amen*, we are expressing our assent and confirming that which is said in the Scriptures and the Liturgy as being true and the foundation on which we build our lives. In saying *Amen* our whole life and being are engaged in an act of faith. To say this word is to make a commitment to Christ.

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING is scheduled for Sunday, February 7, directly after the Divine Liturgy (lunch will not be served, so bring one). Report Booklets will be distributed after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, Jan. 31.
- HOUSE BLESSINGS: Lent begins on March 14, actually at Forgiveness Sunday Vespers on March 13. I am available for house blessings up until then. Call me to schedule a house blessing for a day and time that is convenient for you. —Fr. Lawrence
- THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK distribution will take place on Wednesday, February 10. Volunteers: please try to arrive by 5 PM.
- THE YOUNG ADULT GROUP will take a weekend pilgrimage with Fr Theodor to the Monastery of St. John of San Francisco, located in Manton, CA. Feb. 13–14. If you are a young adult, you're invited. See Fr. Theodor, Tyler-Rose Counts or Alicia Krueger if you are interested.
- THE SENIOR/RETIRED LUNCH will be held on Thursday, February 18, at Noon. All retired and seniors are invited.
- PARISH COUNCIL: Meeting on Thursday, February 18, at 7 PM.
- OUR PARISH WILL host the Nomadic Shelter once again on February 25. Guests arrive about 6 PM.
- SUMMER CAMP INFO: see the flyer below, or visit the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SaintEugeneCampPage
- FATHER LAWRENCE will give a forty-five minute overview of Great Lent—a practical approach—on the porch of our Parish Hall, Sunday, February 28, at about 12:30 PM.
- DIVINE LITURGY at the Skete (9:30 AM): Wed. Feb. 3 (St. Maximus the Confessor); Wed. Feb. 10 (Ss. Ephraim and Isaac the Syrians); Mon. Feb 15 (The Meeting of our Lord); Wed. Feb 24 (St. Blaise, St. Dimitry of Prilutsk, St. Gobnait)

SISTERHOOD ELECTIONS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS will take place at the next Sisterhood meeting—February 14, 2016. There is no formal membership in the Sisterhood—it's open to all. We are an organization comprised of women, and some men, who practice diverse ministries (nurturing the community life of the parish, care of the temple and of vestments, organizing mercy meals, retreats, fundraisers and supporting charitable causes, etc.). The Sisterhood has three Officer positions with a two-year term: President, Treasurer and Secretary.

Father Lawrence has suggested that all parish ministry leadership positions be limited to two terms, with an option to serve a third (one can step down for the sake of not only not getting locked into something for life, but to allow someone else to participate). With my deepest appreciation for all of the support the parish brings to the Sisterhood, I'm throwing my hat in again to be a candidate for another term as President. However, I would gladly offer my full support to any that would like to take on this role. Juliana Veenis is offering to be a candidate again to serve another term as Treasurer. She would support anyone that would like to run for this position as well. Catherine Carpenter has completed her term and done an excellent job as our Secretary. Deanna Panages has indicated she'll be interested in being the next Secretary. We welcome ALL that would like to be candidates for ANY of the officer positions! Please contact me or Father Lawrence with any questions or to let us know if you'd like to run for an officer position. With gratitude for our parish family! —Kira Staykow, 415.279.0353



GET YOUR
APPLICATIONS IN
EARLY
2016 CAMP DATES
JULY 3RD THRU
JULY 9TH



Start making your memories this year by joining us in the hills of Dunlap, CA for a week of exciting and fun activities while creating lifelong friendships among other Orthodox Christians. Please use this flier as a means of making monthly payments for your camper.

*Remit payments to: Kathy Pieracci, Camp Treasurer
9535 Sun Poppy Way
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762*

A payment recap will be sent with Camp Applications in May with your balance due.

*2016 CAMP FEES
\$385 per camper, with discounts for siblings*



You are invited to
attend a Talk by
Father Stephen Freeman

**Monday, February 8, 2016
at 7 PM**

*at the Protection of the Holy Virgin Parish
St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Church
90 Mountain View Ave. Santa Rosa, CA. 95407*

*No Charge, although donations will be welcomed
Please call 707-584-9491 to reserve a spot*

Father Stephen's address is entitled *Beyond Shame*

The Elder Sophrony said, "The way of shame is the way of the Lord," and taught his disciples to "bear a little shame." This discussion focuses on the meaning and dynamics of shame and its importance as a tool in the spiritual life. It looks at the difference between true shame and toxic shame and points to the way of healing.

Fr. Stephen is the rector of St. Anne Orthodox Church in Oak Ridge, TN (OCA). He is the author of numerous articles on theology and modern culture. His books include *SHAPING OUR FUTURE* (1994) and *EVERYWHERE PRESENT: CHRISTIANITY IN A ONE-STORY UNIVERSE* (2011). He is the author of the popular blog site [Glory to God for All Things](#), with an average of over one million views per year. He also authors the podcast [Glory to God](#), heard on Ancient Faith Radio.

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PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 • 6:15 PM, Great Vespers for the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord	2 - Meeting of the Lord • 8:30 AM, Matins and Divine Liturgy • 7 PM, Greek Dancing	3 • 6 PM, Vespers	4 • 7 PM, Scripture Study at McPherson Home	5	6 • 5 PM, Great Vespers
7 - Hieromartyr Vladimir of Kiev • 8:45 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy (no church school today) • 12:30 PM, ANNUAL MEETING/Parish hall	8 • 7 PM, Talk by Fr. Stephen Freeman	9 [Fr. L. in Sacramento at Deanery Meeting] • 7 PM, Greek Dancing	10 • 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank • 6 PM, Vespers	11 [Fr. Lawrence in SF all day for Diocesan Council] • 7 PM, Bible Study at McPherson Home	12	13 • 11 AM, Baptism of Tennyson baby • 3:30 PM, Catechism, on Holy Baptism • 5 PM, Great Vespers
14 - Zacchaeus Sunday • 8:45 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 12:45 PM, Sisterhood Mtg	15	16 • 7 PM, Greek Dancing	17 • 6 PM, Vespers	18 • Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship • 7 PM, Bible Study at McPherson Home • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting	19	20 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, on Holy Chrismation • 5 PM, Vespers (beginning of the Lenten Triodion)
21 - Publican and Pharisee • 8:45 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal	22	23 Fr. Lawrence and Theodor in Portland for the Mission Retreat • 7 PM, Greek Dancing	24 - No Fast	25 • 6 PM, Nomadic Shelter	26 - No Fast • 6 PM, Greek Dinner-Dance and Silent Auction	27 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, on Confession • 5 PM, Vespers
28 - Prodigal Son • 8:45 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 12:30 PM, "Porcb-Lecture" on Great Lent, by Fr. Lawrence	29	March 1	2 • 6 PM, Vespers	3 • 6 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, Bible Study at McPherson Home	4 - St. Daniel of Moscow • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy	5 (Fr. Irenei in Calistoga for a Talk) (no catechism today) • 5 PM, Vespers

- ALTAR SERVER TEAMS: Feb. 7-Team Seraphim (Gabriel S., Noula, Simon, Thomas); Feb. 14-Team Cherubim (Ambrose, Christopher, Dimitrios)
Feb. 21-Team Seraphim; Feb. 28-Team Cherubim; March 6-Team Seraphim

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

MARCH 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb. 28 - Prodigal Son • 9 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 12:30 PM, "Porch-Lecture" on <i>Great Lent</i> , by Fr. Lawrence	29	1	2 • 6 PM, Vespers	3 • 6 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, Scripture Study at McPherson Home	4 - St. Daniel of Moscow • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy	5 <i>(Fr. Irenei in Calistoga for a Talk)</i> (no catechism today) • 5 PM, Vespers
6 - Last Judgment • 9 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal	7	8 • 6 PM, Vespers for the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste	9 • 8 AM, Matins • 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank • 6 PM, Vespers	10 • Noon, Senior Lunch • 6 PM, Vespers	11 • 8 AM, Matins	12 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>on the Holy Priesthood</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
13 - Forgiveness Sunday • 9 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 1:15 PM, Vespers of Forgiveness	14 • 8 AM, Matins • Noon, Sixth Hour • 7 PM, Canon of St. Andrew	15 • 8 AM, Matins • Noon, Sixth Hour • 7 PM, Canon of St. Andrew	16 • 8 AM, Canon of St. Andrew • Noon, Sixth Hour • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts/Meal	17 • 8 AM, Matins • Noon, Sixth Hour • 7 PM, Canon of St. Andrew	18 • 10:30 AM, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts and Canon to St. Theodore the Recruit	19 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>on Marriage</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
20 - Sunday of Orthodoxy • 9 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy with Procession of icons (no Church School today) • Noon, Agape	21	22 • 8 AM, Matins	23 • 8 AM, Matins • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts/Meal	24 • 8 AM, Matins • 6 PM, Nomadic Shelter • 6:15 PM, Vigil with Lity for Annunciation	25 - Annunciation • 5:30 PM, Vespersal Liturgy for Annunciation	26 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>on Holy Unction</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
27 - St. Gregory Palamas • 9 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal	28	29 • 8 AM, Matins	30 • 8 AM, Matins • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts/Meal	31 • 8 AM, Festal Matins: St. Innocent of Alaska	APRIL 1 • 8 AM, Matins	2 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>on the Mystery of Death and the Funeral</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers