

The Mystery of Matrimony—St. Nikolai Velimirovich

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cling to his wife and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). It is God’s will that the human race multiply; it is God’s artful manner how the human race is being multiplied. It is God’s mystery how man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife. To leave your parents does not mean to abandon your parents but rather to become parents yourself. When children become parents, they are no longer only children, but are companions of their parents. When wedded sons learn of the mystery and pain of childbirth, they then respect their parents even more. The marital union can never free a man from having respect and obedience toward his parents. The original commandment of God to honor your parents must be fulfilled. But, according to the natural cycle of things, a man leaves his parents and becomes a parent himself; he becomes a founder of a new future while his parents depart, having completed their role in the world. However, everything is not in “leaving” the parents. By a certain incomprehensible mystery, man clings to his wife and detaches himself from his parents. St. Theodoretus writes: “Christ Himself left his Father on high and united Himself to the Church.”

My brethren, matrimony is a great and miraculous mystery, one of the greatest mysteries of God’s plan. A pure and honorable marriage is overly replete with sublimeness. A pure and honorable marriage, in the fear of God, is a vessel of the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Whoever disdains marriage disdains the Spirit of God. Whoever defiles marriage with impurity, blasphemes against the Spirit of God. Whoever abstains from marriage for the sake of the kingdom of God must, in a different manner, prepare himself as a vessel of the Holy Spirit and, in the spiritual realm, make himself fruitful in order not to be cut down as the barren fig tree.

O God, Holy Spirit Almighty, assist those who are in the state of matrimony, that in purity, fear and mutual love be as the Church of God in which You joyfully abide and govern all things for good.

The Two-fold Mystery of Marriage

“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church” (Ephesians 5:32). Great is the mystery when a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife. The apostle himself, who was raised to the third heaven and

who saw many mysteries of heaven, calls the physical union of men and women in marriage on earth “a great mystery.” That is the mystery of love and life and only the mystery of Christ’s bond with His Church is greater. Christ is called the Bridegroom and the Church, the Bride. Christ loves His Church so much that, because of Her, He left His heavenly Father—remaining with Him, of course, in unity of substance and divinity—and descended to earth and attached Himself to His Church and suffered for Her so that, by His Blood cleanse Her from every sin and spot and make Her worthy to be called His Bride. With His love He warms the Church, with His Blood He feeds the Church, and by His Holy Spirit He causes the Church to live and sanctifies and adorns Her. What a husband is to a wife, so Christ is to the Church. Man is the head of a woman and Christ is the Head of the Church. A husband loves his wife as his own body. A woman listens to her husband and the Church listens to Christ. A husband loves his wife as he loves his own body and Christ loves the Church as His own Body. A husband loves his wife as he loves himself and a wife reveres her husband, and Christ loves the Church as He loves Himself and the Church reveres Christ. Since no one hates his own flesh but rather warms and nourishes it so also Christ warms and feeds the Church as His own Body. And every individual human soul is the bride of Christ the Bridegroom and the assembly of all the faithful is the bride of Christ the Bridegroom. The kind of relationship of a believing man toward Christ so also is the relationship of the entire Church toward Christ. Christ is the Head of that great Body which is called the Church, and which is in part visible and in part invisible.

O my brethren, this is a great mystery! It is revealed to us according to the measure of our love toward Christ and of our fear of Christ’s judgment.

O Lord, Gentle Savior cleanse us, save us and adorn our souls that we may be worthy of the immortal and indescribable unity with You in time and in eternity. To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

FEAST OF ST. SERAPHIM

SAINT SERAPHIM OF SAROV, perhaps the most well-known of the Russian saints, died on January 2, 1833. Before he reposed he said that “...the Tsar will come to us [to the

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

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
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

monastery] with his whole family. What joy there will be and they will sing the Easter service in summer.” And indeed, on July 19, 1903, the Tsar and half a million other pilgrims came to Sarov for the ceremonies of the glorification of the Hieromonk, Seraphim of Sarov. Because our temple is dedicated to the memory of St. Seraphim, we celebrate not only on the day of his repose (January 2) but also on July 19. Read what Elder Paisios of Mount Athos said about saint days: “...during liturgical services, our mind will be absorbed by the events we are celebrating [assuming we know something about the Saint] and we will follow with great reverence the chanting of hymns. When our mind thinks divine thoughts, we get to live through these holy events, and in this manner we are transformed. We think of a Saint for whom we have a special devotion, or of the Saint whose feast day we are celebrating, and our mind rises higher toward Heaven. And when we keep the Saints in mind, they keep us in mind too, and they come to our assistance. This is how we can start a friendship with them, one that will last forever. And so, even though we may live alone, we will actually share our lives with everybody: with the Saints, the Angels, the whole world. Imagine, being alone, and feeling their company! This is the living presence of the Saints who are God’s children and will reach out to help us, their poor brothers and sisters. Our Saints have shed blood, sweat and tears for the love of Christ. We should always celebrate them with reverence, and they will be there to help us. Every time we hear their *Synaxarion* ‘On this same day, we commemorate Saint...’ we must rise to our feet, like soldiers standing at attention when the names of their fallen comrades who died heroically are being read. ‘On this day of the month soldier so and so...fell in action heroically defending the country in such and such a front.’”

HOW SHOULD WE CELEBRATE THE SAINT DAY? In an extremely simple way: we prepare for the feast by making a confession sometime soon before it or at the Vigil. We attend the Vigil the evening before the feast to hear the hymns about the saint, to be

anointed and receive the Holy Litia bread. We come to the Liturgy on the Feast, and so receive a full measure of the saint’s blessings. We reverently receive Holy Communion, which is a participation in the Body and Blood of Christ, in Whom the saint dwells. We thank God that He is glorified and “made wonderful in His Saints” as the Psalm says. We do a good work in the name of the saint, perhaps an anonymous work of mercy for the poor, or an offering to the Church in honor of the day. At home we discuss the saint’s life, the sermon on the day, and the various ways in which the hymns illustrate the holiness of the saint. We pray that the holiness of the day will extend even to the following days.

SCHEDULE FOR SAINT SERAPHIM DAY: Vigil—Wednesday, July 18 at 6:15 PM. On **Thursday, July 19, at 9:30 AM** we will greet His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, and begin the Divine Liturgy. Following the Liturgy please plan to stay for a festive meal. Since the feast of the great Prophet Elijah is the next day, we *may* serve Vespers after the meal.

Thou wast truly blessed, O righteous Seraphim,
having acquired riches by poverty and, by tears, joy,
which thou didst grant abundantly to those who came to thee.
And now thou dost pour forth the light of miracles and dost heal all who with faith run unto thee.

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **MANY YEARS:** The parish rejoices on the occasion of the baptism of Maximo Rossi, the son of Gabriel and Maya Rossi of Eureka. The baptism took place on Sunday, July 1 before the Divine Liturgy. We congratulate Kate and Keith Feigin, who's son Will James, will be baptized on Saturday, August 4 prior to Great Vespers (we've postponed the date from July 7). We also congratulate Paul Byron Burch and Katherine Karen Hubbard who will be joined in Holy Matrimony on Sunday, July 8, at 3 PM. Many Years!
- **LUNCH FELLOWSHIP:** The next Senior/Retired parishioner luncheon will be on Thursday, July 26 at Noon, in the Parish Hall. Lunch and beverages will be provided at no charge. Parishioners and spouses over 60 years of age are invited to take part. Please call the Church Office to reserve a spot. Luncheons are also planned for June 14 and July 26.
- **WE THANK** Catherine Ostling for her wonderful presentations on the origins of iconography last month, and look forward to more presentations by her in the future.
- **TUESDAY EVENING ROHNERT PARK STUDY GROUP:** The last of the summer series of lectures on Tuesday evenings will take place on July 10. Vincent Rossi will be speaking on the topic "Time and Eternity." The talk will be given at 7 PM, at #307, 1352 Oak View Circle, Rohnert Park, 3rd floor. Call Debi Shrimplin at (707) 536-9112 for more info. Another series is being planned for right after Glendi.
- **TABLE TENNIS:** A ping-pong table has been purchased for the Parish Youth (and anyone else). It is kept in the Storage building, and may be taken out on Sunday after Liturgy. We are STILL looking for a responsible person to be in charge of taking it out and putting it away each week. Please see Father Lawrence if you are interested in handling this.
- **WE THANK EUGENE BORISSENKO** for his diligent and expert work in rebuilding the red shed into a beautiful two room cottage for the monks to stay in when they are painting here. Fathers Patrick and Moses express their deepest gratitude to the Parish and to Eugene. Eugene and his daughter Anastasia have just relocated to Cobb in Lake County, and so will be attending Church there at the Monastery of St. Gregory of Sinai. We are very sorry to lose these wonderful folks.
- **CELEBRATION AT FORT ROSS:** In honor of the 200th anniversary of Fort Ross, there will be a Divine Liturgy at the Fort on Saturday, August 25, starting at 10 AM, served by twelve bishops, about 40 priests, many deacons and a possible fifteen hundred faithful. Clergy are expected from the Moscow Patriarchate—Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfayev), Archbishop Justinian of NY; the Russian Church outside of Russia—Archbishop Kyrill of SF, Bishop Theodosy of Seattle; and the OCA—Metropolitan Jonah and Archbishop Benjamin. The choir of the Geary Street Cathedral will be singing the responses in Slavonic, and our choir, under the direction of Nicolas Custer, will sing the responses in English. More info to follow on transportation and parking.
- **THE ST. SERAPHIM WEEK FOR KIDS** is our version of the traditional "vacation Bible School," and will take place July 16, 17 and 18, 9 AM until Noon. Please see Gloria Collins or Lara Anderson for more information and to register.
- **WE ARE HAPPY** to host the Youth Group of St. Andrew Orthodox Church/Riverside, CA. on Saturday evening, July 7. The group of about 30 teens will be spending the night here and will join us for the Divine Liturgy and then make their way to Mount Shasta for a camping trip.
- **GLENDI:** Our organizational staff is very busy laying the foundations of the best Glendi ever. Look for a Glendi information sheet in the next week or so, which will have names of those running food booths, proposed cooking schedules, and so forth.

PLANNED GIVING

*An Interview with Fr Jim Kordaris by Lou Kircos for the magazine of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, **The Orthodox Observer.***

Orthodox Observer: Fr Jim, what is Planned Giving and why is there this new emphasis on it?

Fr. J: The members of the Stewardship Committee of the Archdiocese recognized the need to help people and parishes with this important aspect of supporting our Church. Let's say that someone is a committed steward of

their parish throughout their lifetime, giving of their time and talent as well as their treasure. What can they do for their Church after they are gone? They can continue their support through a planned gift.

OO: Is this a difficult thing to do?

Fr J: Well, we've just made it easier by providing all the necessary information. It's very important and it needs to be done right. It's not particularly difficult, but we always recommend that anyone contemplating a planned gift

have their plans reviewed by a competent lawyer. An estate plan might include wills, trusts or other documents that are best pre- pared and reviewed with a lawyer that has significant experience in the area. If the amount involved is \$10,000 or less, we have papers that are probably safe to use, but even in that case, it's best if the individual or couple consults with their lawyer or financial planner.

OO: What if someone doesn't have a lawyer and wants to make a planned gift to the Church?

Fr. J: We are identifying volunteers in every Metropolis that stewards can consult regarding these matters. A parish in the Detroit Metropolis has a lawyer that will prepare a will at no cost for anyone that is leaving a portion of their estate to the local Church. Other parishes have professionals that will answer basic questions so that someone thinking about a gift to the Church can get answers on a confidential, no-cost, no-obligation basis.

OO: What can happen if people don't put their wishes into a will? Can't the family just do what the person wanted anyway?

Fr. J: This can be a big problem. How can the family or the executor of the estate know what an individual really wanted if they didn't put it in writing? In fact, if it's not in writing, the executor of the estate has very precise legal guidelines that must be followed. Let me give you a sad example. In a Midwest parish, a very generous contributor of the parish recently passed away. She had no children, and through the years she and her husband had made many generous gifts to the parish. On many occasions, she told the priest and other parishioners that the Church was in her will. As time went on, she said that she had taken care of her extended family during her life and was leaving the bulk of her estate to the Church. She went into the hospital unexpectedly and never recovered. When her will was reviewed, it was found to be over 20 years old. Her lawyer said she had made many appointments to come and change her will, but for various reasons it just never got done. The will hadn't been changed and there was nothing in the will leaving a bequest to her parish. The heirs of her estate didn't give anything to the local parish, the parish of which she had been a member for over 20 years. The real tragedy in this is that the woman's wishes weren't carried out. She clearly wanted to provide in her estate for the Church she so lovingly supported during her life. But that didn't happen. People need to make sure their papers reflect what they really want done. We want to communicate the importance of completing a will and we're trying to make that easier for people.

OO: What about so-called Living Wills?

Fr. J: In Living Wills we give our loved ones and our doctors instructions on how we want to be treated in medically difficult situations. It is important that a Living Will take into consideration our Orthodox faith. There are many prayers that are given in situations of grave illness or just before our Lord's calling. In many cases, the person must be aware of what is happening. The wish to have an Orthodox priest present should be clearly stated in a person's living will. Without it, these final expressions of faith may be lost if the person is heavily sedated, or worse, is allowed to die before these final prayers, Holy Communion or Confession can be offered. To make this easier for our Orthodox faithful, we worked with Aging With Dignity, a non-profit organization, to prepare an Orthodox Living Will. This document is easy to understand and is legally binding in 42 states. It incorporates Orthodox values and we have made it available to all our parishes.

OO: Have you seen other situations where a person's wishes need to be clearly stated?

Fr. J: Yes there are many, so let me give you another example. A person dies and doesn't leave clear instructions for their funeral. In haste and with a lack of information, the person is cremated. Then the family seeks to have an Orthodox Christian funeral or memorial service. One of the saddest things a priest has to do, is inform a family that a funeral or memorial service cannot be performed if the person has been cremated. At this most difficult time when comfort and understanding are needed, the priest is required to inform the family that a funeral and/or memorial service will not be permitted. But this wouldn't happen if a person's burial instructions in writing and specified that an Orthodox funeral must take place and that cremation cannot be considered.

OO: What do you say to those that might think the Church is just looking for money in this process?

Fr. J: All of our gifts are from God. He has given us all we have and more, free choice. Many of our faithful recognize this and give freely and lovingly to their Church all their life. We find that many want to continue that support through a gift from their estate. We don't say that this is required. We are saying that if a person wants to continue to support their church, they have to reflect their wishes in their estate planning. What the committee has done, is to provide the tools for carrying out those wishes. We have also stressed education and pastoral concerns. The Orthodox Living Will has nothing to do with money, but is so important for our people to have. In addition, we have pre-

pared “Making it easier to say good bye—Do you have a Plan?” This is an informational piece that discusses Orthodox end of life issues, and explains much of the meaning and importance of funerals and memorial services.

OO: Where can people get more information about Planned Giving or living wills?

Fr. J: First they should talk with their local priest. A legal or financial professional in the parish may already be identified to help on a confidential, no-cost, no-obligation basis. Also, parishes have been encouraged to start an *Eternal Light Society*. This society consists of people that have committed to remember the Church in their wills and have communicated that to their parish. In addition, legal and financial professionals are being identified at the Metropolis and Archdiocese level that can help.

OO: What is the *Eternal Light Society Sunday*?

Fr. J: We are encouraging each parish to hold an *Eternal Light Society Sunday*. On this day, the *Eternal Light Society* is explained to the community. A memorial service is held for

past members of the society. In addition, an *Artoclasia* service (Lity with bread, wheat, wine and oil) is held for the living members. In this way we remember those that have supported the church through planned giving and also express our appreciation to those that have committed to support the Church in their own wills and estate planning.

OO: What has been the initial response to the Planned Giving Initiative?

Fr. J: The program has been long-awaited and well-received. People already want to remember the Church in their planned giving. We are only providing the tools for the parishes to facilitate these gifts in a thoughtful and sensitive way.

Lou (Lazaros) Kircos serves as the Stewardship Subcommittee on Planned Giving chairman and is a member of the Archdiocesan Council, the Detroit Metropolis Council and two local parish councils. He is also an Archon and a member of Leadership 100.

A Sermon for the feast of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco

By Archimandrite Demetrios (Carrelas) at the Divine Liturgy at Holy Virgin Cathedral, Geary Street, in San Francisco June 30, 2012

What a sacred honor it is for this sinful and unworthy priest to be in the presence of the living holy relics of one of our Lord’s true Shepherds of souls: our holy Father among the Saints, John of Shanghai and San Francisco! Some of you present today were blessed to have worshipped with St. John, and directly received his Spirit-filled teachings and guidance, before God called him into His Heavenly Kingdom. And yet, far from leaving you few eyewitnesses as orphans, our All-Compassionate Savior has made St. John accessible to everyone here and to the entire world. What overflowing Grace has God poured out upon our humble Shepherd! Who can number the countless thousands of souls who—through prayers, letters and/or kneeling before his sacred, incorrupt body—have received soul and body healings for themselves and for others?

Indeed, as these words—taken from his Akathist—exclaim, St. John is: a “helper of all who call upon [him] with faith,” an “infirmery where every ailment is healed,” “refreshing water for those perishing in the heat of sorrows,” one “who works wonders for those who come to [his] relics with faith and love,” one “whose love knows no bounds of country and race,” and a “fountain of miracles poured out by God!”

In addition to his miracle-working powers, we are

also blessed to have his Spirit-filled teachings for the nourishment and healing of our wounded souls. And how desperately we need those teachings today, my beloved sojourners on the sea of life! They are words of one who has become the Gospel of Jesus Christ in his thoughts, words and actions. They are words of a true Shepherd, and not those of a hireling, who—as the Lord says—“sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf seizes them and scatters the sheep”—that noetic wolf, the evil one, who comes “to steal, and slay, and destroy” as many souls as possible.

While he walked amongst us, St. John was God’s instrument to protect a large number of souls from the devil’s efforts to destroy them. Today, he continues to be God’s instrument—on an even greater scale—to transform those who seek his divine intercession: so that the various afflictions and injustices one encounters in life become sources of joy and hope, rather than sorrow and despair; so that the loss of such temporal things as material wealth and physical well-being, give birth to spiritual treasures and soul healings that are eternal; so that one’s superficial self-centered existence, becomes a profound Christ-centered life!

Permit me to share a few ‘spiritual morsels’ from

the great banquet of his teachings. St. John reminds us that “God’s grace always assists the struggler...What is important is not victory, or the position of a victor, but rather the labor of striving towards God and devotion to Him.” The Saint refers to these words of St. Paul: that God’s “power is made perfect in weakness” (II Cor. 12:9); and he adds that “the power of God is effective when a person asks for the help of God, acknowledging the weakness and sinfulness of his nature.” This is why St. John believes that “humility and striving towards God are the fundamental virtues of a Christian.” Are these primary virtues alive in the trenches of our daily lives? An old priest once told me: “This temporal life will be either one of agony or struggle: with Christ it is a struggle, without Him, it is agony.” Today, do our lives personify someone who is struggling with Christ, or in agony without Him?

In a sermon he gave over fifty years ago, St. John lamented that “public life had departed from Christian paths.” O my dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus, what would our holy Hierarch say about the condition of society today? In the last 39 years we have “legally” slaughtered 56 million pre-born babies upon the ungodly altar of privacy, convenience and profit. Euthanasia is now legal in at least two states, and strong efforts are in place to make this a national pastime in a few years. Many high-level politicians and judges are now assaulting the institution of marriage. Last year, the President declared that the entire month of June is now to be celebrated as National LGBT Month, so as to seemingly bestow our Nation’s approval on these soul-destroying lifestyles. And the organization of Planned Parenthood, in addition to killing over 300,000 babies a year for profit, is seeking to brainwash even our grade school children with their sex education literature, which destroys the Christian virtues of purity and modesty, and glorifies all sins of the flesh! Our Nation has replaced God’s Truth with man’s fallen reasoning. Do not these words of the holy Prophet, Isaiah, succinctly describe the condition of our society today? “Woe to them that call evil good and good evil; who make darkness light and light darkness...Woe to them who are wise in their own conceit...who justify the ungodly for rewards, and take away the righteousness of the righteous” (Is. 5:20-23)!

Only God’s Truth, as preserved in our Holy Orthodox Faith, can save our society from its rapid descent into irreversible perdition. Our beloved holy Hierarch, Fr. John, devoted every fiber of his being to upholding the true doctrine and moral integrity of our Holy Orthodox Faith. He daily entreated our Lord to both help and strengthen

him to actively “labor unto death” for that Truth. And, through the grace of God, he continues that active labor! By his example, we see that Holy Orthodoxy cannot simply be a part of our lives. It cannot be something that we turn on and off, like the appliances we use. Our Holy Faith must be present in all aspects of our lives: from the way we worship God in the Divine Liturgy, to the way we drive our cars; from the manner in which we make the sign of the Cross, to the manner in which we prepare a meal, raise our children, or perform our secular work. Only by striving with all of our strength to live the Faith in this manner can we come to truly know Christ—to truly know ourselves.

Because he incarnated God’s Truth in all of his words and actions, St. John received a number of heavenly crowns; which include: Confessor, Defender of the Faith and—in a spiritual sense—Martyr. Today in the United States, where are the defenders of the Faith? Where are the confessors? Where are the martyrs? Where are those, both clergy and laity, who—like St. John—are being “reproached, persecuted, and having every evil word being said falsely against them on account of Christ and His One True Church?” Is it possible that we have allowed both the demands and sensual pleasures of our society to put us in a state of spiritual lethargy and indifference—as individuals, as parishes, as jurisdictions? Is it possible that we have lost touch with the true *fronema* (mindset) of our Faith, and replaced it with the politically correct, compromising and secular humanistic mindset of our society?

Beloved Orthodox Christians, is it not the time for all of us to beg our Savior’s forgiveness for the occasions in which we ourselves have compromised, watered-down—even denied—the sacred Truths of our Faith, in our thoughts, our words, our actions? Is it the not time to bend the knees of our hearts to the Lord—entreating Him to raise up martyrs, confessors, and defenders of the Faith, who—like our St. John—will be His instruments to proclaim and uphold the true doctrine of Holy Orthodoxy—some of whom may be standing amongst us at this very moment?

Archimandrite Demetrios (Carrelas) is chaplain of the Holy Monastery of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh)

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

We welcome our visitors and our guests to the Divine Liturgy, and would remind them, as well as all Parish and Church members, that the reception of Holy Communion is reserved for Baptized and Chrismated Orthodox Christians.

No Orthodox Christian should approach the Chalice to receive Holy Communion unless he or she has prepared by fasting, Prayers Before Holy Communion and a regular and **recent participation** in the Holy Sacrament of Confession. *Recent* means: within the last month.

You are asked to remember that the Saturday evening Resurrectional Vespers, which is served at 5 PM each and every Saturday, is *very much* a part of a proper preparation for Holy Communion.

If you are a visitor to the Church, and would like to speak to a priest about Orthodoxy, please call or see Fr. Lawrence after the Divine Liturgy.

RAISING GODLY CHILDREN: A Beginning

Parents, take the initiative to find out what your children are learning in Church School. Build upon the weekly lessons at home with supplemental teaching. Also, build upon the Scripture readings, hymns, and commemorations of Saints and feasts that the children encounter in the Divine Services of the Church. Explain to your children what the readings and hymns mean and tell them the stories of the Saints and feasts commemorated. Educating your children means that you must be educated in the Faith yourself. This is the parents' responsibility.

Immerse yourself in the life of the Church. Worship and pray in as many of the Divine Services as possible, attend adult education classes, read the Holy Scripture, and consult the commentaries and sermons on the Scripture by the Holy Fathers. In the home, set up a family altar or icon corner. Read the Scripture readings and lives of the Saints daily. Pray together as a family every day, at least in the morning and/or evening.

Make a big deal of feast days. Take the kids to the Divine Liturgy and enjoy a special meal to celebrate the day. Celebrate the Name Day of the children with a celebration. Tell the story of the patron Saint's life and explain how to emulate his or her life as an Orthodox Christian. At the family icon corner/altar make sure to have an icon of the child's patron Saint alongside the icons of the parents' patron Saints. Ask the clergy to visit your home, to bless it, and to explain to the family the significance of this event. Encourage the clergy to develop an outreach program involving visitations to homes in order to teach families how to practically live the Faith in the home as a "domestic church." Strive to be a holy example within the home, as well as in public, for your children to follow. (*notes from a presentation by His Grace Bishop THOMAS, at Orthodox Institute 2009, Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center, Bolivar, Pa., November 5-8, 2009*)

"What saves and makes for good children is the life of the parents in the home. The parents need to devote themselves to the love of God. They need to become saints in their relations to their children through their mildness, patience, and love. They need to make a new start every day, with a fresh outlook, renewed enthusiasm and love for their children. And the joy that will come to them, the holiness that will visit them, will shower grace on their children. Generally the parents are to blame for the bad behavior of the children. And their behavior is not improved by reprimands, disciplining, or strictness. If the parents do not pursue a life of holiness and if they don't engage in spiritual struggle, they make great mistakes and transmit the faults they have within them. If the parents do not live a holy life and do not display love towards each other, the devil torments the parents with the reactions of the children. Love, harmony and understanding between parents are what are required for the children. This provides a great sense of security and certainty." —from *Wounded by Love: The Life and Wisdom of Elder Porphyrios*

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

JULY 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 - Sts Cosmas & Damian • 9 AM, Baptism • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal • 12:45 PM, Choir Rehearsal	2 • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting	3 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;"> <i>Fr. Lawrence at St. Nicholas Ranch for Summer Camp</i> </div>	4	5	6	7 • 5 PM, Great Vespers <i>(Riverside Youth Group here camping out)</i>
8 - Martyr Procopios • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal • 3 PM, Hubbard/Burch Wedding and reception	9	10	11 • 6 PM, Vespers	12 • 9 AM, Memorial Divine Liturgy for Sakovich family • <i>Fr. L in SF at Diocesan Council Mtg.</i>	13	14 • 5 PM, Great Vespers • 6 PM, Wedding Rehearsal
15 - St. Vladimir • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal • 3 PM, Wedding (group from Sacramento)	16 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;"> St. Seraphim Week for Kids: 9 AM–Noon </div>	17	18 • 6:15 PM, Vigil for St. Seraphim	19- St. Seraphim Day • 9:30 AM, Liturgy for St. Seraphim and Festal Meal • Time TBA, Vespers for Prophet Elijah	20 <i>[Fr. Lawrence going to Indiana for wedding of Steve and Beth, back Sunday night]</i>	21 • Time TBA, Kazan Icon Feastday Liturgy at the Kazan Skete • 5 PM, Great Vespers
22 - St. Mary Magdalene • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal	23	24	25 • 6 PM, Vespers	26 • Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship • 6:30 PM, Akathist to St. Panteleimon • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting	27	28 • 5 PM, VIGIL
29 - Martyr Seraphima • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal	30	31 • 6 PM, Vespers for the Procession of the Cross	AUG. 1–Dormition Fast • 9 AM, Blessing of Water for the Feast • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon to the Theotokos	2 • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon	3 • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon	4 • 4 PM, Baptism of Feigen Baby • 5 PM, Great Vespers

• July 18/19: His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin is planning to be with us for the Summer Feast of St. Seraphim of Sarov