

# ORTHODOX MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2013, Vol. 22, Issue 11

Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary / St. Seraphim of Sarov Parish • Santa Rosa, CA 95407

---

## THANKSGIVING DAY

Thanksgiving Day is not primarily about family, although we do all we can to bring our families together to enjoy each other and the traditional feast. It is not really about food, although, without doubt, we all expend effort and expense to provide a meal worthy of the day. It is not about football, although many of us enjoy the afternoon game on the TV. Thanksgiving is about gratitude to God for his great blessings to us. How we express our gratitude is incredibly important for us, as Christians.

My suggestions would be as follows: plan to attend the Divine Liturgy on Thanksgiving Day. The Liturgy and the Eucharist are essentially about thanksgiving to God. Prepare yourself well for the reception of Holy Communion. At the end of the Divine Liturgy we will sing a portion of the wonderful Akathist, *Glory to God for All Things* to give further song to our feelings of gratitude. Secondly, make an offering for the poor in the name of your family, or someone in your family that has fallen-asleep-in-the-Lord. Nothing elaborate, nothing official—just give to or help someone in need. Thirdly, by all means, have a wonderful feast day. Yes, we will have just started the Fast for Nativity. If you can keep the fast and the feast, then do so. I offer you a few words from Father Sergei Sveshnikov from Oregon, on this subject.

“...in my opinion, there would be nothing wrong if diocesan authorities or even parish rectors chose to relax some fasting rules on this day, especially in those parishes which are composed of mostly American converts to Orthodoxy, who not only have many non-Orthodox family members, but have grown up with the tradition of celebrating Thanksgiving in a certain way. Perhaps, a token morsel of turkey and a symbolic piece of pie with a heartfelt prayer to God, thanking Him for His boundless mercies to us, is a better witness to Orthodoxy than a senseless discussion among non-Orthodox family members of which foods are allowed and which are not. A true fast is about much more than food. An Orthodox Christian would do well abstaining from gossip, back-

biting, and judging, as well as gluttony, drunkenness, and other sins and passions which may find for themselves fertile soil at the Thanksgiving table.

Second, keeping a strict fast in America is rarely a problem at all. There are many Americans who do not eat turkey, or pie, or mashed potatoes for any number of reasons—various health and weight-loss diets, vegetarian and vegan convictions, and others. Most American families seem to have absolutely no problem with someone declining one dish in favor of another and having tofu instead of meat, salad instead of cake, or fruit instead of ice-cream. Nobody seems to get offended or upset, and Orthodox Christians should stop making belly-pleasing excuses for why they cannot keep the fast.

One thing I would absolutely discourage is for people to individually decide whether they will keep the fast or relax it. Our fasts are the common fasts of the whole Church; and we should fast as one body or feast as one body. If our Christian family is keeping a strict fast, then we must also keep a strict fast, even if our biological family will not approve of this. Of course, we must observe our fast with all gentleness, piety, and discretion, without flashy advertisements of our self-righteousness.” (*Fr. Sergei Sveshnikov*)

Glory to Thee for calling me into being,

Glory to Thee, showing me the beauty of the universe,

Glory to Thee, spreading out before me heaven and earth, like the pages in a book of eternal wisdom,

Glory to Thee for Thine eternity in this fleeting world,

Glory to Thee for Thy mercies, seen and unseen,

Glory to Thee through every sigh of my sorrow,

Glory to Thee for every step of my life's journey,

For every moment of glory,

Glory to Thee, O God, from age to age.

—*from the Akathist Glory to God*

## 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](http://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](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  
Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden.....291-7452  
Petar Griovski, Treasurer .....762-4742  
Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary .....778-8528  
Lisa Moroz, Sisterhood President .....360-5119  
Shenina, Scrip Manager.....321-7417  
Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator .....480-6106  
Debbie Buse, Hall Event Manager .....696-4986

## THE NATIVITY FAST

Advent—a time of preparation for Nativity—begins on Friday, November 15, and with it comes the Church's call to us to keep a fast. We abstain from meat and meat products, dairy and eggs until Christmas. During weekdays we abstain from wine and olive oil (these are allowed on weekends). How we begin this fasting period is crucial for its success. This year we will begin the Forty Days of Advent with a Divine Liturgy (9 AM, Nov. 15). We will begin with a planned effort to consciously focus our energies to increase prayer, to attend Church more zealously, to do works of mercy, to set aside time for spiritual reading, and to be moderate in diet and entertainment. Without doubt, the holiday celebrations, menus and events are going to come into direct conflict with our efforts to fast. As for Thanksgiving Day, enjoy it, with moderation and thanksgiving. As for all the other days of the Fast, we will all make our choices to abstain—and the effort is impossible without the help of our Savior—and so, we look forward to the blessings of Christmas and beyond.

## USHERS

Six-year old Angie, and her four-year old brother, Joel, were sitting together in church. Joel giggled, sang and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had had enough. "You're not supposed to talk out loud in church." "Why? Who's going to

stop me?" Joel asked. Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two men standing by the door? They're hushers." **Your Hushers for the month are:**

First Sunday of the Month: .....Thom Stewart and Alexander Stameroff  
Second Sunday: .....Joseph Anderson and Thom Stewart  
Third Sunday: .....George Barsi and Esther Schau  
Fourth Sunday: .....Joseph Anderson and ? (**looking for a once-a-month volunteer**)

## TUESDAY NIGHT STUDY GROUP

*A series of talks will be presented on **The Protestant Reformation: An Orthodox Perspective**  
Classes will be held at 7 PM, in the home of Cathy and Nilus Veenis, 1670 Fulton Road, Santa Rosa. 526-2284*

- **November 5:** A History of the Papacy from St. Peter through the Renaissance, Deacon Jeremiah presenting
- **November 12:** The Precursors; Hus, Wycliffe, et al., Deacon Nicholas
- **November 19:** Luther and a "formal Orthodox response" to the Reformation, Deacon Jeremiah
- **November 26:** Calvin, Zwingli and the "Reformed Tradition," Deacon Nicholas
- **December 3:** The Radical Reformation, Deacon Jeremiah
- **December 10:** The English Reformation, Deacon Nicholas
- **December 17:** The Counter-Reformation, Deacon Jeremiah

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- THE FEAST OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL and all the Heavenly Hosts is on November 8. Vespers will be celebrated on Thursday, November 7 at 6 PM. The Divine Liturgy will be served on Friday, November 8 at 9 AM. A number of parishioners will celebrate their name day, foremost among them, Father Michael.
- FATHER LAWRENCE AND MATUSHKA ANN will be gone from Nov. 9–12, traveling to San Diego to serve as Godparents for Philip Cuneo, Elizabeth and Fr Andrew's newborn.
- ATTENTION ALL SENIORS: we are planning a potluck Thanksgiving Lunch on Thursday, November 14th at 12 noon. George Barsi has graciously agreed to stuff and roast and carve a 25 pound turkey and bring it to the hall for our luncheon. He is happy to turn over the drippings to anyone who wants to make the gravy—and maybe potatoes. Everyone else needs to bring a favorite Thanksgiving side dish to round out the meal. Some suggestions: pie, cranberries, fruit salad, yams/sweet potatoes, more pie, wine or cider... whatever suits your fancy. We usually have between 22-32 attendees, so keep that in mind when you are preparing your dish. Please plan on coming to enjoy great food and great friends, especially since the lunch will be held on the day before the Nativity Fast begins.
- ADULT EDUCATION: Besides the Tuesday Night Study Group, you are invited to participate in the Saturday afternoon Catechism classes that meet in the Protection Church, at 3:30 PM. Topics: **Nov. 9**, the Church Temple, what and where; **Nov. 16**, Creation, mankind's vocation, the Fall; **Nov. 23**, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ; **Dec. 7**, Church as Spiritual Hospital. Classes continue through December. All are welcome. Come, and receive a spiritual vaccination.
- CATHOLIC CHARITIES: Fr. Lawrence has arranged for Amy Ramirez Margitich and her colleague from the family shelter of the local **Catholic Charities** to come to our Agape Meal on Sunday, November 17. They will speak to us about how we might participate in working with the shelter located downtown. Of the various ways our parish can get involved, one would be to fund a room at the shelter for a year by offering \$100 per month.
- DIVINE SERVICES AT KAZAN SKETE: **Monday, Nov. 4**, Divine Liturgy at 10 AM (Hours at 9:30), for the Monastery Feast of the Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. **Thursday, Nov. 14**, 8:00 am (Hours at 7:30) for Ss. Cosmas and Damian. **Thursday Nov. 28**, 10:00 am (Hours at 9:30) First Day of Nativity Fast, St. Herman, St. Paisius, Thanksgiving Day (if you plan to join us for the Thanksgiving meal, call to let us know: 707-542-7798). We are grateful for your praying with us, with love in Christ, M. Susanna and Sisters.
- PLEASE GIVE consideration to attending the "Passport to Hope" dinner for IOCC at Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Church, in Novato, on Sunday, Nov. 10.
- THE PARISH OFFERS its congratulations and gratitude to Matushka Eleanor and Father Michael on the occasion of the celebration of their birthdays, wedding anniversary, and Fr. Michael's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination to the Holy Priesthood. Many Years!
- CHARITABLE WORK: Please take a look at the website for FOCUS North America. FOCUS is a national movement of Orthodox Christians, united in faith and joined by a desire to provide action-oriented and sustainable solutions to poverty in communities across America. FOCUS has operations and youth volunteer experiences in more than 25 cities in the United States. To learn more or to donate, visit [www.focusnorthamerica.org](http://www.focusnorthamerica.org).
- YOUTH WORKERS in OCA parishes in the greater Bay Area area are organizing a trip to PROJECT MEXICO for July 15–21. Parents, please encourage your teen to get involved. Info available soon. For now, see: [www.projectmexico.org/Home.aspx](http://www.projectmexico.org/Home.aspx)
- PERSECUTION IN SYRIA: The militia of the *Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant* (ISIL), the faction that in several regions of Syria monopolized the armed insurrection against the regime in Damascus in recent days, have organized a burning of Bibles and Christian books in front of the Greek-Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation in Raqqa. Christians do not riot in response to this, they pray.

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

# NOVEMBER 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>October 27</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Baptisms</li> <li>• 10 AM, Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:30 AM, Church School</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> </ul>	28	29	30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Vespers for the Unmercenary Healers Cosmas and Damian</li> </ul>	1	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 PM, Great Vespers</li> <li>• 5 PM, <b>Benefit Dinner for Fr Michael &amp; Matushka Eleanor</b></li> </ul>
<b>3 - Unmercenary Healers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Confessions</li> <li>• 10 AM, Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:30 AM, Church School</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> </ul>	4	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 PM, <i>Study Group: History of the Early Papacy</i></li> </ul>	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Archangel Michael</li> </ul>	9 <i>[Fr. Lawrence in San Diego]</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism</li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>10 - St. Nectarios of Aegina*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Confessions</li> <li>• 10 AM, Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:30 AM, Church School</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> <li>• IOCC Dinner, Novato</li> </ul>	11	12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 PM, <i>Study Group: Hus, Wycliffe, et. al</i></li> </ul>	13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Feast of St. John Chrysostom <i>no Vespers</i></li> </ul>	14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noon, Senior Lunch</b></li> <li>• 6 PM, Akathist</li> </ul>	15 - <b>Nativity Fast Begins</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, St. Paisius Velichkovsky</li> </ul>	16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism</li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>17 - St. Matthew the Evangelist*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Confessions</li> <li>• 10 AM, Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:30 AM, Church School</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> <li>• <b>Catholic Charities here</b></li> </ul>	18	19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 PM, <i>Study Group: Luther and Orthodox response</i></li> </ul>	20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6:15 PM, Great Vespers for the Entrance of the Theotokos</li> </ul>	21 - <b>Entrance of Theotokos</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8:30 AM, Matins and Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 6 PM, Akathist</li> <li>• <b>7 PM, Parish Council</b></li> </ul>	22	23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism</li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>24 - Great Martyr Catherine</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Confessions</li> <li>• 10 AM, Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:30 AM, Church School</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> <li>• Tea for the parish girls</li> </ul>	25	26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 PM, <i>Study Group: Calvin, Zwingli and the Reformed</i></li> </ul>	27 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	28 - <b>Thanksgiving Day</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy &amp; Akathist <i>Glory to God for all Things</i></li> </ul>	29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Great Vespers for St. Andrew the Apostle</li> </ul>	30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, Sakovich memorial</li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>

• The commemoration days of Sts. Nectarios and Matthew have been moved from Saturday to Sunday to allow full celebration.

• The Tuesday night Study Group meets at the home of Catherine and Nilus Veenis, 1670 Fulton Rd. 526-2284