

THE ENTRY OF THE THEOTOKOS - Nov. 21

THE ENTRY of the Holy Theotokos into the Temple is one of the twelve major church feasts and is numbered among those that affect our salvation. What takes place on this day? The three-year-old Child, the Most-holy Virgin Mary, is brought by Her parents to the temple of Jerusalem. She is placed on the temple steps and, moved by Divine revelation, the high priest Zacharias comes out to Her and leads Her into the Holy of Holies—the place where God Himself was mysteriously present, the place which no man could ever enter except the high priest, who, moreover, went in only once a year and not without sacrificial blood. And it is precisely this place, the Holy of Holies, which the Virgin Mary enters, preparing herself to be a new, living sacrifice—the mother of the Christ, the Savior of the world, Who will sacrifice Himself in order to deliver all men from sin and death. This holiday is “wondrous,” as sings the Church, not finding words to express the inexpressible joy, hope and expectation which commence with today’s event. ...[the pure young virgin maiden Mary] will be brought up in God’s temple—a place of holiness, purity and the power of God. She will be nourished by Divine grace, in order to become capable of containing Divinity Itself, so that the mystery of God’s incarnation could take place through Her. She must become used to conversing with the angels, in order to harken to the Archangel Gabriel’s glad tidings. She must encompass God within her heart, in order to truly become a new temple of God.

We are all familiar with the words of the Apostle Paul: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” This mystery is revealed to us because we are called upon to become the temples of God, and this is the reason for today’s celebration.

...Remember that our salvation has actually come to pass already, and it is not only a remembrance. Over and over again we are given the Nativity Fast and the approach to the Nativity of Christ in order for our life to become truly more profound, truly deepen with the knowledge of the one unique mystery—that God has become man, that He is present in the life and destiny of each one of us. He always hears our every prayer, because there is no longer that curse which used to hang over every person, there is no longer that inescapable and ineffaceable stamp of evil which tainted mankind before Christ’s incarnation. The way to heaven is open to every person. We must only desire and want genuine truth, genuine beauty, and the light which had once shone for us, the light which the Lord sometimes gives back to us, and without which everything becomes extinguished. What can we bring to the Lord on this feast day? The parents of the Most-holy maiden Mary—Joachim and Anna—brought Him their own child, but what shall we give the Lord? Does the One to Whom belongs the entire earth and before Whom all the stars in heaven shine need the candles and the vigil lights which we offer to God? They are needed only to testify to the meaningfulness of our prayers and our standing before God. There are no other sacrifices which we can offer Him except one, of which He says: “Son, give Me thy heart,” because our heart is the only thing which does not yet fully belong to Him. He has given us His own heart and wishes us to give Him ours. He, Who loves us and gives all of Himself for us, is waiting for our love in return. Let us pray to God that we may learn this love. —*Archpriest Alexander Shargunov*

Vespers will be served on Sunday, November 20 at 1:15 PM, and the Matins and Divine Liturgy on Monday, November 21, beginning at 8:30 AM.

PATH OF SALVATION

I WILL NOW TELL you what is most important for everyone’s salvation. It can be briefly stated as follows: “Have faith and receive the Divine Grace who guides us in the Christian life through the Divine Mysteries. Live according to the commandments of God and the guidance of the God-sent shepherds. Be in a living relationship with the Church.” So that you may better understand how very necessary this is, compare the journey of salvation to a regular road trip. In order for the traveler to walk easily and safely, he needs to have light, clear direction, and himself be healthy and strong. Furthermore, there must be a guide to help and point in the right direction in case of difficulty, as for example before a

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Parish Contacts

Bobbi Griovski, Parish Secretary	584-9491
Fr. Michael Margitich, Pastor Emeritus	473-0314
Fr. John Schettig, Second Priest	318-1559
Fr. Theodor Svane, Intern Priest	(914) 282-0867
Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden	291-7452
Martin Thong, Treasurer	888-7888
Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary	338-4962
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fork in the road or at an intersection. In a similar manner, for the journey of salvation, there must be light, that is, correct faith; there must be clear directions, that is, the divine commandments; one must have spiritual health and vigor, that is the powers of the Divine Grace obtained through the Divine Mysteries; there must also be those who know the way and can provide guidance, that is, the shepherds of the Church. All this takes place within the bosom of our holy Church. Everyone who works well for his salvation is united with the Church. All those who have been saved followed this path, and all those who are being saved walk on this path. There is no other way to salvation.

—an excerpt from *St. Theophan the Recluse and his letters entitled “Preaching Another Christ”* which can be read in its entirety at the following website: www.orthodoxwitness.org/documents/PAC-pages.pdf

ON SPIRITUAL READING

WHEN YOU READ a worldly magazine or newspaper, it is light and agreeable reading, you easily believe in everything in it. But if you take up a religious publication or book to read, especially one relating to church matters, or sometimes when you begin reading prayers you feel a weight upon your heart, you are tormented by doubt and unbelief, and experience a sort of darkness and aversion. Many acknowledge this. From what does it proceed? Of course, not from the nature of the books themselves, but from the nature of the readers, from the nature of their hearts, and chiefly from the Devil, the enemy

of mankind, the enemy of everything holy: “he takes away the word out of their hearts” (Lk. 8:12). When we read worldly books, we do not touch him and he does not touch us. But as soon as we take up religious books, as soon as we begin to think of our amendment and salvation, then we go against him; we irritate and torment him, and therefore he attacks us and torments us on his side. What can we do? We must not throw aside the good work, the reading or prayers that are profitable to our souls, but we must patiently endure and in patience save our souls. —*St. John of Kronstadt*

IMAGINING THE PERSONALITY OF THE EVIL ONE

I DOUBT HE’S even very interesting; I mean, to the extent that the devil has any personality to speak of at all—even if the story is true and he was once an archangel or something of that sort—he must by now be a pretty sordid, unimaginative, and dreary little fellow. He would have to be so monstrously self-absorbed: not a brilliant conversationalist, not a philosopher and wit, not a bon-vivant or perverted aesthete, but just some tedious little troll, full of spite and resentment. He’s probably a monomaniac who talks about nothing but his personal grievances and aims, and in the bluntest, most unrefined language imaginable—the sort of person you try your best to get away from at a party. —*Ambrose Hart*

ST. BASIL ON FASTING

It is necessary most of all for one who is fasting to curb anger, to accustom himself to meekness and condescension, to have a contrite heart, to repulse impure thoughts and desires, to examine his conscience, to put his mind to the test and to verify what good has been done by us in this or any other week, and which deficiency we have corrected in ourself in the present week. This is true fasting.

PARISH NEEDS: stuff to do around here

Scrape wax off church floor; Clean and polish brass candle stands in St. Seraphim; Sweep the olives from the forecourt of St. Seraphim; Move picnic tables from lawn to storage building porch; Fix choir door in St. Seraphim; Return yellow security posts in front parking lot to their place.

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- SENIOR LUNCH FELLOWSHIP: Thursday, November 10 at Noon.
- THE CATECHUMENS and INQUIRER LECTURES continue on Saturday afternoons at 3:30 PM. Topics: Nov. 5—The Human Being; Nov. 12—On Sin; Nov. 19—Jesus Christ the Son of God; Nov. 26—Jesus Christ the Savior of the world. Talks will be held in the Library.
- ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR at Saints Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church. Sat. Nov. 12, 10 AM–4 PM, and Sun. Nov 13, 11 AM–4 PM.
- PERMACULTURE WORKSHOP at Holy Assumption Monastery, led by Luke Currier, Friday, Nov. 11 from 6–8 PM; Sat. Nov 12 from 9 AM–3 PM and Sun. Nov. 13 from 12:30–2:30 PM. Call the monastery at 707-942-6244 to register for this very interesting event.
- ON THANKSGIVING DAY, NOVEMBER 24 at about 5 PM or so, the Parish will welcome guests coming with the Redwood Gospel Mission NOMADIC SHELTER project. Our parish volunteers will provide a Thanksgiving dinner, a meditation on the Gospel, some light musical entertainment, and a warm and safe place to sleep (the RGM brings clean and bedbug-free mats). The Nomadic Shelter is a program in which the Redwood Gospel Mission of Santa Rosa has partnered with thirty local church communities—each taking one night a month for the next four months—to provide a safe place for prescreened homeless folks (many of them women and children) to be brought by the Mission for the night. Arrival is expected about 5 PM, departure about 6:30 AM. Mission staff and parish volunteers will stay the night to care for the guests. Any questions about volunteering should be directed to the parish coordinator of the program, Ambrose Ryan Inlow, at (707) 490-4700.
- FOURTH ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER PROJECT “FAMILIES TO FAMILIES”: Help provide Thanksgiving dinner for 100 Sonoma County families living in poverty. \$50.00 provides for a full Thanksgiving Dinner Food Box. If you, or your family, are not able to sponsor a full box, please consider sharing a box with other church members! In an effort to make this charity effort efficient we will be accepting monetary donations only (checks can be made out to St. Seraphim Church/charity). Help will be needed in putting together individual boxes (times to be announced). This effort is extremely appreciated and impactful. If you have any questions you can contact Amy Ramirez Margitich at fosasquatch@gmail.com or Serge Anderson at s.anderson4990@sbcglobal.net.

GLENDI WRAP UP

THE GLENDI COMMITTEE is pleased to announce that our Glendi Chair, Alex Stameroff, will submit a check for \$30,000 to Father Lawrence and the Church Council. Proceeds are designated to the Building Fund. The Charity donation will be made after our final accounting is completed. Many thanks to all of you who worked and contributed to a very successful Glendi 2016! All Glendi Booth Heads and workers are invited to attend a **Wrap Up Meeting** on Thursday November 10, 2016 at 6:00 PM in the church hall. Pizza and drinks will be provided. The Glendi income and expenses will be reviewed in some detail along with requests for equipment, etc. We will also discuss ways to request sponsorship or donations of food and supply items to reduce expenditures in the future. Any outstanding receipts for reimbursement should be submitted to Barbara Owens, csowens@comcast.net or Tel: 544-1948, by this Sunday, November 6th, so that Barbara can prepare the final accounting to be reviewed at the meeting. If anyone has donated a food, supply or other item over \$100 in value, please email me a list of the item(s) and dollar amount. The Glendi committee will add these donations to our future estimates. You may also apply for a tax deduction receipt —again that would be requested from Barbara Owens.

INTENTIONALITY

THE SCRIPTURES and the Tradition of the Church teach us to give in a planned and deliberate way, rather than randomly, as we *might* have extra money (there are many scriptural verses regarding this). *Proportional giving* is one way (there are others), to give with intentionality: the person blessed with very little, as well as the one blessed with greater financial means, may both set aside a percentage of what they have in thanksgiving—God will give the increase. Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick asks: “How do you know if you’re serious [about giving]? Well, to start with, if you’re spending more on cable TV or other forms of entertainment every month than you’re giving to the Church, it’s a safe guess that you’re not being serious about giving. I love the phrase “put your money where your mouth is.” It’s definitely true. Jesus says almost exactly the same thing when He says, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:21, Luke 12:34). Where we put our money proves where are hearts are. Where is your heart?” —*Fr. Lawrence*

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

NOVEMBER 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 • 6 PM, Vespers	3	4 - Kazan Icon • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy at Kazan Skete, Archbishop Benjamin	5 • 3:30 PM, Catechism: <i>on the Human Being</i> • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Vespers • 6 PM, <i>Honoring the Saints</i> potluck and celebration
6 - Unmercenary Healers • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 12:45 PM, Sisterhood Mtg.	7 • 6 PM, Vespers for St. Michael the Archangel	8 - St. Michael • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy	9 • 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank • 6 PM, Vespers	10 • Noon, Senior Lunch • 6 PM, Glendi Wrap-up meeting	11	12 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>on the meaning of sin</i> • 5 PM, Vespers
13 - St. John Chrysostom • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal	14	15 Nativity Fast begins (abstinence from meat and dairy, etc.)	16 - St. Matthew • 7 AM, Divine Liturgy • 6 PM, Vespers	17	18	19 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>on Jesus Christ the Son of God</i> • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Vespers
20 - Forefeast of the Entry • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 1:15 PM, Vespers: <i>Entry of the Theotokos to the Temple</i>	21 - Entry of the Theot. • 8:30 AM, Matins and Divine Liturgy for the <i>Entry of the Theotokos</i>	22	23 • 6 PM, Vespers	24 - Thanksgiving Day • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy (Great Martyr Catherine) • 5 PM, Nomadic Shelter	25	26 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>on Jesus Christ the Savior</i> • 5 PM, Vespers
27 - St. James the Persian • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal	28	29 • 6 PM, Vespers	30 - St. Andrew the Apostle • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy	DECEMBER 1 • 8 PM, <i>Cantiamo Christmas Concert</i>	2 • 8 PM, <i>Cantiamo Christmas Concert</i>	3 • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>on Repentance and Faith</i> • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Vespers, <i>followed by presentation by Fr Nicholas Andruchow of Project Mexico</i>

• Rehearsals are taking place for the Nativity Play, scheduled to be performed on Sunday, Dec. 18 in the evening. See Carmen Anderson or Gloria Collins for details.

• St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in San Anselmo will celebrate its Patronal Feast with Vigil on Monday, December 5 at 7 PM, and Divine Liturgy on Tuesday, December 6 at 9:30 AM.