

October 1: Protection of the Mother of God

CALLING ON THE SAINTS, through communion in prayer, deepens the consciousness of the catholicity [a rich word, meaning universality, fulness of truth] of the Church. In our invocation of the saints our measure of Christian love is exhibited, a living feeling of unanimity and the power of Church unity is expressed; and, conversely, doubt or inability to feel the intercession of grace and the intervention of saints on our behalf before God witnesses not only to a weakening of love and of the brotherly and Church ties and relationships but also to a decrease in the fullness of faith in the value and power of the Incarnation and Resurrection.

One of the most mysterious anticipations of the Orthodox Church is our contemplation on the “Protecting Veil of the Mother of God,” of her constant standing in prayer for the world, surrounded by all the

saints, before the throne of God. *Today the Virgin stands forth in the church and invisibly with the choirs of saints prays to God for us; the Hierarchs bow down with the Angels, the Apostles and the Prophets rejoice, for the Theotokos of God prays to the eternal God for us.* Thus the Church remembers the vision which was once seen by St Andrew, the fool for Christ's sake. And that which was then visibly revealed remains now and will stand for all ages. The Protecting Veil of the Mother of God is a vision of the celestial Church, a vision of the unbreakable and ever-existent unity of the heavenly and earthly Church. And it is also a foreseeing that all existence beyond the grave, of the righteous and the saints, is one untiring prayer, one ceaseless intercession and mediation. For love is the “union of all perfection.” And the blessedness of the righteous is an abiding in love...—*Fr Georges Florovsky*

What Should Orthodox Christians Do Before Coming to Church

WHILE GOING TO CHURCH, imagine that you are going to the home of the Heavenly King, where you must stand with fear and joy just like in heaven before the King... (*St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, 1724–1783*)

You begin to prepare for church when you wake up in the morning and know: I am going for a meeting with the Lord. You are preparing a bit differently, you are dressing a bit differently, you try to chatter less, so that nothing unworthy can scatter this depth of the moment at which you find yourself in church. You are serious while going there as well: you feel as if you are going to meet someone very special or someone who you really love—the most precious person in your life.

According to the church rules, one should read prayers while going to church. When you reach the church, you stop for a moment: this is the house of God, this is His abode. You make a sign of the cross not just before the icon above the entrance, but before the whole church: this is the place where God dwells. And when you cross the threshold, you stop again and stand still for a moment. Then a person makes a sign of the cross: in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I came there in the name of God, and I will not bring anything

with me which is unworthy of Him. It would be even better to say that anything unworthy must be purified there, washed away with repentance and renewal of the soul. Perhaps, during the whole week we lived in an unworthy state. When we come to church on Sunday, we must make the sign of a cross, stop in the church and say like the publican: Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner! I have come to the place where Your power can renovate me, where Your love can hold me, where You can teach me with Your word and purify me with Your act. Even a priest should say so when he comes there: Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner! I am entering the place, which is burning with a flame. I am going to pronounce the words, which are so holy that they can burn my mouth and light up my soul. Alternatively, they can turn my soul to ash, if I pronounce them unworthily, with deceit and hypocrisy. **I will meet Christ in this church**, I will come to an icon and kiss it. How will I do this? Will I do this just like Judas did, when he was going to betray Christ? Or like a child, who kisses his mother? Or like a person, who kisses the hand of the person with great reverence and whom he respects most in the world?

—*Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, 1914–2003*

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“Why do you wear that black cassock?”
“The priest’s cassock is the flag of the Church...”
—Blessed Elder Amphilokhios of Patmos (1889-1970)

WHY DO ORTHODOX CLERGY wear black cassocks? In the earliest days of the Church, it does not seem that clergy wore any distinctive garb except liturgical vestments. Outside the Divine services bishops and priests wore regular clothing, as did the deacons.

It seems reasonable to assume this was because Christians were often persecuted during the first centuries, and clerical garb would therefore be tantamount to suicide. Also, there was no need to alter their standard wear. The early priesthood was understood in the context of Jewish tradition, and standard, non-liturgical wear was not different from that of others. So for the first three centuries, priests wore the same clothes as ordinary people. Tunics were normal clothes, and when shorter robes became fashionable, priests kept the longer more conservative tunics. It seemed right for the clergy not to follow the vain changes of worldly styles.

The Council of Braga in Portugal (572) mandated that clergy wear tunics reaching to the feet. The Quinisext Council (692, i.e. the conclusion of the Sixth Ecumenical Council) stated: “None of those ... of the clergy shall wear clothes unsuited to them, either while still living in town or when on a journey: but they shall wear such clothes

as are assigned to those who belong to the clergy.” (Canon XXVII) The English word “cassock” derives from the early French *casaque*, meaning “a long coat.” The Russian word for the cassock is *подрясник* (*podryasnik*), and the Greek is *αντερί* (*anteri*) or *ράσον* (*rason*). The color black indicates spiritual poverty. Moreover, it is a color of mourning and death. A black cassock is to remind a priest that he “dies to the world” every day and immerses in eternity. Blackness symbolizes giving up bright colors—and what worldliness brings—its glittering, honors and entertainment. Also, stains are visible on black, reminding the priest that he is held to a higher standard (black was also the least expensive color to dye). His sins and failings will be more visible and judged more harshly than those of other people. In our very secular world, the wearing of the cassock continues to be a visible sign of belief and of the consecration of one’s life to the service of the Lord and His Church. —Fr. Andreas Blom, St. Gabriel Orthodox Church (OCA), Ashland, OR. (*adapted*)

ANGELS UNAWARES ~ October 5:

The **Nomadic Shelter** program has been renamed “Angels Unawares,” in reference to Hebrews 13: *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them who suffer adversity...*” Guests will arrive about 6 PM, departure about 6:30 AM. Michael and Rachel Dovey are the coordinators for the program this year. Volunteers are needed for the October 5 kick-off from 4–8 PM. Any questions call Michael or Rachel Dovey at (707) 799-4117.

FAREWELL TO DEAR FRIENDS

This weekend we are bidding a sorrowful farewell to two dedicated, involved and prominent members of our parish. Thom Anastasios Stewart has been attending St. Seraphim (and before that, Protection) with his late parents since 1985 or so. Over the last eleven years especially, his participation and contributions of time, talent and treasure cannot be measured. Thom and Tanya are moving to Arizona. The Feast of the Protection (also Thom’s birthday) will be his last day with us. We are also sad to say goodbye to Kendra Sophia Meshnik this month. She’s been with us only a couple of years, but, during that time she’s been a great blessing to our parish, and we have seen her bright and energetic faith lived out each and every week. Kendra will be returning to Oregon. God bless them both. —Fr. Lawrence

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **UPCOMING POTLUCK and TALKS:** Mother Melania from Holy Assumption Monastery will give the last in the series of talks on the small book [“Theology of the Body”](#) by the Orthodox writer Jean Claude Larchet: Wednesday, October 4 at 6:30 PM. Please note the change of date from Thursday to Wednesday. On Wednesdays, Nov. 1 and 8, Fr. Edward Henderson from St. John Orthodox Church in Berkeley will join us to speak about the Russian Orthodox Old Believers, AKA Old Ritualists. We will have our potluck meal during the talks. Please bring a dish to share.
- **HOLY DORMITION PARISH** is holding Harvest Fair on Saturday, September 30, from 12:30–8:30 PM. There will be children’s games, live music, folk dancing, baked goods, food booths, archery, a tea room and more. Holy Dormition is located at 1521 Rose Ave, Santa Rosa.
- **ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH INTERNATIONAL FOOD and MUSIC FESTIVAL**, Saturday, October 7, 10:30 AM–3 PM. Slavic foods, live music with the “Nikolai Ensemble” and a choral concert at 2:15 PM. Vespers at 4 PM. Location: St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, 102 Ross Avenue, San Anselmo.
- **HOLY MYSTERIES:** Marriage of Emilia Lewis and Joseph Anderson, Sunday, October 8 at 3 PM. Baptism of Moses Morgan, Sunday, October 29 at 9 AM.
- **CHILDREN’S CHOIR REHEARSALS:** Saturdays, October 7, October 21, November 4, at 4 PM in the Protection Church.
- **PARISH RETREAT WITH Fr. Timothy Pavlatos**, Saturday, October 14 at 9:30 AM. See the Flyer for more info. Fr. Timothy is an excellent teacher and speaker, and I promise that those who attend the retreat will be edified and inspired. —Fr. Lawrence
- **DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY:** The annual gathering of parish clergy and delegates with our Vladyka Benjamin will take place at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Portland, OR, from October 10–12. Our parish delegates, approved by the Parish Council, are George Barsi and Preston Booker.
- **PILGRIMAGE:** Thanks be to God, my sons and I will be making a pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain of Athos, in northern Greece, during the second half of October. We depart the evening of Sunday, October 15, and return Friday, October 27. Please give me your prayer lists so I can remember you and all your loved ones before God at all the holy places. Fr. Kirill Sokolov will substitute for me on the one weekend I will be absent (Oct. 21/22). —Fr. Lawrence
- **CATECHISM CLASSES** begin on Saturday, October 28 at 3:30 PM, in the Parish Library. Eight classes will be taught before Nativity, and another eight before Pascha. All are welcome to attend, not just catechumens.

HONORING THE SAINTS:

THE SAINT SERAPHIM CHURCH SCHOOL warmly invites you to our 3rd Annual *Honoring the Saints* party in the Parish Hall on Sunday, October 29 at 5 PM. We will provide dinner and crafts, and children (of all ages!) are asked to come dressed as a saint. This event has been a wonderful opportunity to develop greater understanding and knowledge of the lives of the saints while, deepening our reverence for them. For those who wish to participate, we suggest the following:

- Select a saint (patron saint or another) soon!
- Read your saint’s story over and over until you can talk easily about his or her life.
- Collect items for a costume that represent the time period and place where the saint lived. Find an icon to help with this.
- Consider props that might also suit, e.g., a cross for a martyr, a pen for a Gospel writer, an obedient animal friend (such as St. Seraphim’s bear or St. Gerasim’s lion), a staff for a bishop, or sword for a warrior saint.
- Prepare and practice a short (1–3 min) presentation to give during the Guessing Game. Remember to keep the identity of your saint a secret.

After each participant presents the story, the audience makes guesses as to the saint you have chosen. This year, we are asking that only children over age 5 present their saints to the group. Younger children are encouraged to dress up and know their saint’s story, but they do not need to keep it a secret! If you would like to volunteer, please see Gloria Collins, Sarah Hamner, or Fr. Lawrence. We are looking for six soup-makers, four salad-makers, and six craft volunteers, plus set-up and clean-up crews. Thank you! —*Sarah Hamner*

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

OCTOBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 - Protection of the Theotokos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:45 AM, Arrival of Iveron Icon of the Theotokos • 10 AM, Greeting of Archbishop Benjamin, Divine Liturgy • 2 PM, Wedding 	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, KAZAN SKETE, Divine Liturgy with the Iveron Icon of the Theotokos 	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Going Away party for Kendra Meshnik 	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers • 6:30 PM, Potluck and Talk by Mother Melania 	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM and on, Angels Unawares (Nomadic Shelter) 	6	7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, Wedding Rehearsal • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers
8 - St. Pelagia the Penitent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal (<i>outside</i>) • 3 Pm, Lewis-Anderson Wedding 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <i>Fr Lawrence and delegates in Portland for Diocesan Assembly</i> </div>					14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, Retreat led by Fr. Timothy Pavlatos • 5 PM, Great Vespers
15 - Fathers of the 7th Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal 	16 <i>Fr. Lawrence on Pilgrimage to Mount Athos, returns Oct. 27</i>	17	18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Reader Vespers 	19	20	21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers
22 - St. Averky <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal 	23	24	25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Reader Vespers 	26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noon, Senior Lunch 	27 <i>Fr. Lawrence returns from pilgrimage</i>	28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:30 PM, Catechism on <i>The True God</i> • 5 PM, Vespers
29 - Martyr Anastasia of Rome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 5 PM, <i>Honoring the Saints</i>, Parish Hall 	30	31	November 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers • 6:30 PM, Potluck and Talk by Fr. Edward Henderson: <i>Old Believers</i> 	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 PM, Partish Council 	3	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:30 PM, Catechism on <i>The Human Being</i> • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers