

ORTHODOX MESSENGER

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Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Parish • Santa Rosa, CA 95407

The Blessedness of Simplicity and Following Christ

*From the blog of Hieromonk Alexis (Trader) author of the book **Ancient Christian Wisdom***

Saint Gregory Palamas in his letter to the nun Xenia distinguishes between needs and luxury. On the one hand, there are natural desires for food, clothing, and shelter that are a natural part of our human condition; on the other hand, there is an added insatiable desire to acquire material goods that comes not from our human nature [which was] created good, but from our passions, our fears, and our *philautia* [misplaced self-esteem or self-love].

In his counsels to people who would come to his monastic cell seeking advice and comfort, Elder Paisios would tell them that they must simplify their lives. He wisely recognized that the constant seeking after material possessions and the fleeting glory of this world brings heartache, pain, suffering, stress, and anxiety. A life whose goal is the acquisition of fame and fortune has no room for Christ. In his own inimitable way, Elder Paisios would tell them, “Secular people say, ‘How lucky are the wealthy people who live in palaces and have all kinds of conveniences!’ In fact, blessed are those who have succeeded in simplifying their lives and freeing themselves from the yoke of worldly progress, of the many conveniences that have become inconveniences, and have consequently rid themselves of the dreadful anxiety that plagues so many people today. If man does not simplify his life, he will end up tormenting himself. But if he simplifies it, all his anxiety will go away... These days I stress simplicity to lay people too, because many of the things they do are not necessary and they end up being consumed by anxiety. I speak to them of austerity and asceticism. I constantly scold them, ‘If you want to get rid of anxiety, simplify your lives!’ That is how most divorces start. People have to do too many things, they have too many obligations and it makes their heads spin. Both parents work and abandon the children, resulting in fatigue and nervousness, which causes small issues to turn into big fights and then to automatic divorces; that’s where they end up. But if they simplified their lives, they would find rest and joy. Stress is a catastrophe waiting to happen.”

In our consumer-driven society, we are constantly told that happiness is to be found in the acquisition of things

such as a new car, a new house, or a new television. In a sense, we become defined by these possessions and spend most of our energy and our effort paying for them. This is how we measure success and ultimately happiness. We start believing that we have to “keep up with the Joneses” in order to be valued and considered a success. Yet, the psalms provide plenty of warnings against precisely that type of thinking. Christ Himself told His followers, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

The Lord Christ leaves little room for ambiguity in His *Sermon on the Mount*. We can’t serve two masters. We will either choose to follow the wide path of material desires and passionate living or we will choose the narrow and straight path which leads to Christ.

Elder Macarius once wrote, “A life that is lived with a

INFORMATION

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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. He is available Tuesday–Saturday, from noon onwards each day.

PARISH CONTACTS

Fr. Michael Margitich, Pastor Emeritus	473-0314
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clear conscience and in humility brings peace, calm, and true happiness, while wealth, honors, renown and high position are frequently sources of many sins, and do not bring happiness.” The Elder knew this from experience for he managed a commercial estate prior to joining a monastery.

Like everything else in life, leading a simple life is a choice. It is a choice that takes a great deal of discipline and courage. The choice of the Apostles to forsake their nets and follow Christ required heroism and faith. And for us, even the small decision to stop hoarding requires a certain degree of heroism and faith. Most people, perhaps even your own family, will not understand such a choice. You may even be scorned and ridiculed for the choice. However, there is an undeniable freedom in not basing life choices upon the esteem of others. There is also a peace that accompanies such a simple lifestyle choice. Such a person recognizes that the Lord is his firm foundation and he would prefer to depend upon Him rather than a material possession or the opinion of mortal man. Such a person is blessed indeed for he has chosen to follow the Psalmist’s counsel, “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.” (Ps. 36:5–6).

UPCOMING DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

Last year the Diocesan Assembly meeting in Denver voted to hold the 2013 Assembly in Santa Rosa. We welcome the opportunity to share our parish life. Our task will be to host the one hundred or so delegates for meetings, church services, and meals. Bonnie Alexander and crew will be handling registration, Serge Anderson and crew will take care of the meals, and Debbie Buse will organize a welcoming committee. The tentative schedule for the Assembly is as follows:

On **Monday, October 7th**, clergy will attend a talk by Father

Ian Pac-Urar on pastoral issues, from 3–6 PM. Dinner will be served in the Hall at 6 PM. The second half of Fr. Ian’s talk will go from 7:30–8:30 PM. Priests will then be free to go to their hotel rooms.

On **Tuesday, October 8**, Fr. Ian will give the third section of his talk from 9–10 AM. Registration of delegates will take place from 3 PM until Vespers. Breakfast and lunch will not be provided, although there will be hearty refreshments available after 3 PM. *Vespers will be served at 5 PM.* The members of the Diocesan Council will hold a 6 PM meeting at a downtown restaurant. All other priests and delegates are on their own for dinner.

On **Wednesday, October 9**—St. Tikhon of Moscow day—the *Hierarchical Divine Liturgy will begin at 8 AM*, followed by breakfast, after which the Assembly will formally begin with an address by His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, and reports by all the departments. *Vespers at 6 PM*, followed by dinner in the Hall and an evening session.

On **Thursday, October 10**, breakfast will be served from 8–9 AM, followed by the final session of the Assembly, concluding at noon, the Lord willing.

Please consider giving some of your time and effort to make the 2013 Assembly a memorable one for the delegates. Help will be needed in the kitchen, providing transport from the Sonoma County Airport to Rohnert Parks hotels, registration, and church clean up. Speak to Serge Anderson if you can help in the kitchen; to Bonnie Alexander if you can assist with registration on Tuesday afternoon until evening; and Debbie Buse if you want to help out with hospitality and rides; and Nilus Veenis if you would like to clean the church before and after Divine Services. —Fr. Lawrence

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 40th DAY MEMORIALS: On Saturday, August 31, at 4:30 PM, we will have the 40th Day Memorial for Paraskevi Travelides, mother of our new parishioner Patrice Travelides. On Sunday, following the Prayers of Thanksgiving for the Liturgical New Year of September 1, we will also serve the 40th Day Memorial for Carl Jacob Basch.
- THE CATECHISM class this Saturday at 3:30 PM, in the Protection Church, will be on Holy Baptism, part 1; next Saturday, September 7, on Baptism, part 2.
- PLEASE KEEP in your prayers Edward Patrick O'Brien, who apparently fainted, then fell, hitting his head. He is at an SF hospital undergoing tests to determine the cause of his fall. Please continue to pray for Hadish Tesfu, who was hospitalized recently with severe abdominal pains. He is now resting at home, and visits would be appreciated. He lives at 2600 North Coast Drive, apartment #13G, which is off West Steele Lane, Santa Rosa.
- PARISH FEAST: When the Parish was founded in 1936 it was named after the Feast of the Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary, celebrated each October 1. Accordingly, Vigil for the Feast will be served on September 30 at 6:30 PM, and the Divine Liturgy on October 1 at 9:30 AM.
- BAPTISMS: Tamara Postal's twin sons will be baptized on Saturday, September 14, at 3:30 PM. All are invited.
- HIS EMINENCE, ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN has asked our Parish to extend a hand of fellowship and help to the All Saints Mission (Antiochian Archdiocese), pastored by Father Alexander El-far. The Mission is looking for a permanent place of worship, yet at the moment, they have nowhere to serve Sunday Divine Liturgies. Archbishop Benjamin spoke with me on Thursday, Aug. 29, to discuss the arrangements and details of our offer of help. For the short term, he has blessed the Mission to use the Protection Church on Sundays only, to serve Matins at 8 AM, and Divine Liturgy (in Arabic and English) at 9 AM. Please make every effort to welcome Fr. Alexander, his Khouria (wife) his son, Subdeacon Karim, and their small flock.
- SUNDAY MORNING CONFESSIONS: Please, try to make your confession on a day other than Sunday, in order to leave time for those who travel far to attend Liturgy, and for the elderly, to make a Confession.

SEPTEMBER FIRST ~ Liturgical New Year & Day of Care for the Creation

The careless and self-indulgent use of material creation by humanity, with the help of technological progress, has already started to cause irreparable damage to the environment. Unable to remain passive in the face of such destruction, the Orthodox Church, through us, invites all the Orthodox to dedicate the **First Day of September** of each year, the day of the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, to the offering of prayers and supplication for the preservation of God's creation.

— *Joint Statement of the Orthodox Primates, Constantinople, March 15, 1992*

CELL PHONE ADDICTION

Despite usurious "data plans" and preposterous sticker prices, nobody seems to be able to do without the doofus things these days. People feel lost without looking at the world through an electrical version of a toilet-paper tube. People fiddle with them incessantly. The average user has a relationship with his telephonic device not unlike that between Gollum and his precious. *From the website* — <http://takimag.com/>

PREPARING FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Our practice in the Orthodox in America is to prepare ourselves for receiving Holy Communion by fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays from meat and dairy, keeping a daily prayer rule, and praying the *Prayers of Preparation* during the days prior to the Liturgy. Saturday evening Vespers is also a wonderful beginning to the Lord's Day. Finally, those age seven and older who are receiving each week, should confess at least once a month, and certainly when your conscience reminds you.

GLENDI

• FOOD PREP and BAKING—What's happening:

1. The *Outdoor Bakery Cookie* Baking dates are scheduled for **Monday** September 2nd through 9th. We will prep the dough on Sundays and plan to start assembly at 5:00 pm on Mondays. Arrive as soon as you can and stay as long as you are able.

• WORK PARTIES – start at 9 AM:

1. September 7th.....Set up Glendi area, fence off areas, set up and repair booths, check equipment, inventory signage
2. September 14th....Continue with Glendi work
3. September 20th....Day Before Glendi Set up—Lots to do, starting at 9 AM sharp. See Father Lawrence, Geoffrey Lake or Joseph Anderson if you would like to join the Friday Set-Up Team.

*If you have not been asked to work at Glendi, or do not yet have a place to work before, during or after Glendi, please contact the **Glendi Staffing Manager, Lydia Nicholson at 838-0149.***

SPEAKING WITH DISCRETION

There is a rebuke which is not timely; and there is a man who keeps silent but is wise... There is one who by keeping silent is found wise, while another is detested for being too talkative. There is one who keeps silent because he has no answer, while another keeps silent because he knows when to speak. A wise man will be silent until the right moment, but a braggart and fool goes beyond the right moment. Whoever uses too many words will be loathed, and whoever usurps the right to speak will be hated. —

Wisdom of Sirach 20:1, 5–8

evening; who could not relate the life of their patron saint, and so forth. Christian faith is learned at home, for the most part. An living knowledge and internalization of the Orthodox Christian faith cannot happen in a Sunday church class. There was no Church School until recently in history, and yet families—parents and children—were martyred together bearing witness to the Christian faith (read the life of the early second-century martyrs Sophia and her three children...if you dare). Parents, make your home a little church, a place where God comes first.

FAMILY AND CHURCH

Our Parish Church School classes will begin after Glendi. Our teachers are excellent instructors, well-organized, and have extremely good material. However, please remember that the Church School classes are only twenty to thirty minutes long—even if every student came each and every week, the time spent in class is only enough to reinforce what the child should already be learning and practicing at home. Also, consistency in attendance is a major problem—a parental problem, which I hope all parents will take seriously. When they don't, we see that Christian youth come out of years of Sunday school and still don't know the basics of their own faith. I know Orthodox Christians who think that the Holy Trinity is God, Jesus, and Mary; who have never read the Gospels; who never pray; who have not once attended Vespers on Saturday

SEBASTOPOL CEMETERY

Pleasant Hills Memorial Park and Mortuary representatives will be visiting us **Sunday, September 8, 2013** to provide info on burials there. An Orthodox section of this Sebastopol cemetery grounds were blessed last November, and already some burials have taken place there. The representatives will be available after the Liturgy for those who would like more information. Waiting until a death occurs to make funeral and cemetery arrangements can be a stressful and confusing time for the bereaved, forcing them to make important emotional and financial decisions on one of the most difficult days of their lives. Moreover, many families faced with this type of emergency make decisions without considering all the options available to them. You are encouraged to have a greater awareness of the many options available to you, and of the benefits of planning ahead of time.

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 - Church New Year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • <i>Prayers of Thanksgiving for Liturgical New Year & Blessing of students</i> • Noon: Agape Meal 	2	3	4 • 6 PM, Vespers	5 • 6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim	6	7 • 9 AM, Glendi Work • 5 PM, <i>Vigil, Nativity of the Theotokos</i>
8 - Nativity of the Theotokos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • <i>Presentation on the Orthodox section of Pleasant Hill Cemetery</i> • Noon: Agape Meal 	9	10	11 • 6 PM, Vespers	12 • 6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim	13 • 9 AM, <i>Memorial Liturgy, Sakovich family</i> • 6:15 PM, <i>Great Vespers, Elevation of the Holy Cross</i>	14 - Fast Day* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, <i>Divine Liturgy for the Elevation of the Cross</i> • 11 AM, Glendi Set up • 3:30 PM, Baptisms** • 5 PM, Great Vespers
15 - Post-Elevation of the Cross <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal 	16	17	18	19	20 <i>Glendi Set Up Day</i>	21 - GLENDI DAY 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Glendi Set-up • 10 AM, Prayer • 11 AM, Glendi Opens • 4 PM, Great Vespers
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Glendi set-up and food prep all week </div>						
22 - Conception of St. John <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon: Glendi Opens <p style="text-align: center;">GLENDI DAY 2</p>	23 <i>Glendi take down and clean up</i>	24 <i>Glendi take down and clean up</i>	25 • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for St. Sergius of Radonezh • 6 PM, <i>Great Vespers, St. John the Theologian</i>	26 • 6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting	27	28 • 5 PM, Great Vespers
29 - St. Kyriakos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9–10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon: Agape Meal 	30 • 6:30 PM, <i>Vigil for the Protection of the Holy Virgin</i>	Oct. 1 - PARISH FEAST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, <i>Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Protection of the Holy Virgin</i> 	2	3 <i>(Fr. Lawrence in SF all day at meeting)</i>	4	5 • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Great Vespers

* The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, Sept. 14, is a Fast Day. Traditionally we eat only vegetables on this day, although since it is Saturday, wine and oil are allowed.

** Nolan and Colin Postal, nine year old twin sons of Tamara Postal, will be baptized at 3:30 PM, Saturday, September 14.

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

OCTOBER 2013 (provisional)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 - Protection of the Virgin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, <i>Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Protection (Parish Feast Day)</i> 	2	3 [Fr. L in SF all day at Mission Board meeting]	4	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, VIGIL
6 - St. Innocent of Alaska <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal 	7 - Diocesan Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-6 PM, <i>Pastoral Lecture for Clergy</i> • <i>Dinner</i> • 7:30-9:30 PM, <i>Lecture continues</i> 	8 - Diocesan Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9-10 AM, <i>Lecture continues</i> • 3 PM, <i>Registration & refreshments</i> • 5 PM, <i>Vespers</i> 	9 - Diocesan Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, Hierarchical Divine Liturgy • <i>Breakfast followed by Sessions of the Assembly</i> • 6 PM, <i>Vespers & dinner</i> 	10 - Diocesan Assembly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 AM, <i>Breakfast & concluding Session</i> 	11	12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:30 PM, <i>Wedding Rehearsal</i> • 5 PM, <i>Great Vespers</i>
13 - Holy Fathers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • 3 PM, Wedding of Nick and Vera 	14	15	16	17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, <i>Wedding Rehearsal</i> • 6 PM, <i>Vespers</i> 	18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, <i>Divine Liturgy for St. Luke</i> • 2 PM, Koult Wedding 	19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:30 PM, <i>Catechesis</i> • 5 PM, <i>Great Vespers</i>
20 - Martyr Artemios <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal 	21	22	23	24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, <i>Akathist</i> • 7 PM, <i>Parish Council Meeting</i> 	25	26 - St. Demetrios <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, <i>Divine Liturgy</i> • 3:30 PM, <i>Catechesis</i> • 5 PM, VIGIL
27 - Martyr Nestor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9-10 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal 	28	29	30	31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, <i>Vespers for the Unmercenary Healers Cosmas and Damian</i> 	NOVEMBER 1	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, <i>Great Vespers</i> • 5 PM, <i>Birthday celebration for Fr Michael and Matushka Eleanor</i>