

# ORTHODOX MESSENGER

JULY 2013, Vol. 22, Issue 7

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

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## ON SILENCE

*The first half of the following article appeared in the June 9 Announcement Sheet. Presented here, in honor of the upcoming Feast of Saint Seraphim of Sarov on July 19, is the remainder.*

IT WAS IN SILENCE that the Lord spoke to the Prophet Elias. The prophet was afraid when he was to hear the voice of God, so he hid in the rocks, in a cave. But the Lord called him and stood him on the mountain top. First there came a great wind, so strong as to throw around the boulders of the mountain, but the voice of the Lord was not in the great wind. Then came an earthquake, but the voice of the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then came a great fire, but the voice of the Lord was not in the fire. The Lord then spoke to the Prophet in a voice as if out of the eye of the hurricane - as it is written, "in a small still voice" (a small quiet voice).

It was in silence that Our Lord was born in Bethlehem. We sing "Silent Night, Holy Night" even though we might not pay close enough attention to the words. We sing the French carol, "Minuit chrétiens, also known as the Cantique de Noël, and in English, "O Holy Night." We sing these and other carols which refer to the silence at the time of the Lord's birth, but usually we're too busy partying to think about the import of the words, and to take the time to listen at midnight to hear the angel voices....

In the Divine Liturgy on Great and Holy Saturday, the Hymn of the Cherubim is replaced by the hymn, "Let all mortal flesh keep silent, and in fear and trembling stand, pondering nothing earthly minded. For the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, comes to be slain, to give Himself as food to the faithful." We sing the words, but do we follow through and try to keep silence for even that one short time? Can we muzzle our mouths and set a guard over our lips for just that one short day? Or do we carry on with our bustle and fuss of preparation for blessing the baskets of Paschal foods and wearing the right clothing in the Easter Parade?

It was in silence that Our Lord came to the Apostles, walking across the waves of the sea. Our Lord quieted the storm, and walked out to the Apostles not in a

show of dramatic magic but as a quiet and miraculous wonderful example of the revelation of the Teacher of the Apostles as the same Creator of the Universe, revealing His authority over His creation to His faithful students. The Apostle Peter understood intuitively that this authority was meant to be shared with the Apostles, and he asked the Master to allow him to also walk upon the waves to meet the Lord. Like Saint Peter, we are sinful men. We cannot long sustain this vision of God in our hearts and lives. However, by returning to peace and quiet, we can always restore that personal, intimate, powerful strength to our lives.

It was in silence that our Lord went to live in the desert for 40 days (from which we learn to Fast in order to prepare for feast days which approach us). It was in silence that Our Lord stood before Pontius Pilate, not answering him even one word, as He stood accused and condemned. It was in silence that our Lord hung for many hours on the Cross, speaking only seven words (or seven times). After His long trial, suffering, agony and death, we read in Holy Scripture that a great silence descended on the earth, and the earth quaked in fear. When the Son of God gave up His life for our sake, the angels in heaven hid their faces in trembling awe at the magnanimous saving action of Our Savior.

Our Lord's silence during His forty days in the desert and His long hours on the Cross is not an empty silence. In some texts in the Old Testament, silence is equated with the realms of death. But the silence of Our Lord is another kind of silence, a silence filled with forgiveness, with healing, with love, with strength, with glory, with peace, with revelation, with teaching, and most importantly with peace.

It is not at all easy to find silence and quiet in the world we live in. We surround ourselves with portable electronic devices and noisemakers, with automobiles, trains, public announcements, with television, with every form of distraction invented to prevent us from thinking. We all know people who cannot abide silence, who find it necessary to speak non-stop, even if they have nothing to say. We know children, who, when they feel lonely, make

## INFORMATION

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Fr. Lawrence Margitich may be reached at the Parish office  
phone, or at [Lmargitich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Lmargitich@sbcglobal.net). He is available Tues-  
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any kind of noise to drive away the silence. It is necessary to remember that silence and quiet are much more than the simple absence of noise. Silence and quiet are the peace and love and joy which surround our hearts and minds and souls when we choose to live in the presence of God.

The saints found the peace of God in many places and in many ways. It was in silence that Saint Mary of Egypt lived in the desert for fifty years, seeking repentance and quiet for her soul. It was in silence that Saint John of “The Ladder” lived in the monastery for forty years before he wrote his famous guidebook to the spiritual life. It was in silence that Saints Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas lived and it was about silence that they wrote. They wrote about the Church teaching called *hesychasm* (from the Greek word for inner quiet), the monastic practice of silence which teaches those who pray and contemplate in silence to attain the vision of the uncreated light, God’s energy and glory.

The saints found the Peace of God in many places and in many ways. We do not presume to tell you that the only way for us to find this peace is in a monastery or a forest or a place with no noise. Instead, the peace of God will come to us in our hearts and minds and souls when we strive ceaselessly to hear God and to do God’s will in all things and at all times. In our weary world, we are so used to noise that we are sometimes even shocked by silence. Silence has become something almost alien to us. However, if we truly want to see the Lord and live with Him always, we will teach ourselves to find peace and quiet even when we are surrounded by noise.

As children we had to be taught again and again not to slam doors, not to bang china together, not to leave the radio, television, audio equipment blaring, to take off our shoes so as not to clomp noisily around the house. When someone is sick in bed, we have to be reminded to keep our voices down. How many times must our parents remind us to come next to the person we wish to

talk with and not to shout across a room or from one floor to the next. It was difficult for our parents to teach us these lessons, perhaps because there seemed to be no explanation for them. It was only repetition which taught these lessons. It’s even more difficult to learn these lessons when our parents were guilty of making great noise. Some children simply cannot learn to be quiet – perhaps because we never show them our example. And for those of us who never learned to be quiet as children, learning this lesson is particularly difficult as adults. We can learn to keep silence and practice quiet when we say our daily prayers. Usually we say our prayers aloud, but we should also add to our prayers a time for silence, and sit quietly in the presence of God. One of the Holy Fathers was approached by a priest who told him all his troubles and woes and asked for a Word of advice. The Father told him that he must keep silence for thirty minutes each day. The priest thought that the Holy Father had not heard him correctly, so he began to tell him again about how terribly busy he was and how much time was taken by his work. But the Holy Father listened and told him that if he was such a terribly busy and important man, then he must certainly not keep thirty minutes of silence each day, but at least sixty minutes of silence.

The difference between the silence and quiet we make for ourselves and the silence which is a gift from God is that the silence we make is temporary. The island of noiselessness which we make for ourselves is only a temporary oasis and refuge. The next noise we hear explodes our human silence the way a bubble bursts at the prick of a pin. But the quiet which God gives us, the silence of the Peace of God, is something which can be a source of great power and permanent healing and joy, learning and illumination, blessing and forgiveness when it is a gift which we cherish and allow to grow

and multiply in our lives. Of course, we have the freedom to ignore this wonderful gift - but no one in his right mind would turn down such a blessing. Instead, we greet this wonderful gift with joyful humble gratitude.

It is only in this silence of our hearts and souls that we can find again the Peace of God which is beyond understanding. Jesus silenced the storm and came walking across the waves. In silence He hung on the Cross. In silence, He came through the locked door and greeted the Apostles, "Peace be to all of you." And when He left the apostles to return to His Father, he said "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). It is in this silence which the Holy Spirit works. The dramatic miracles of our Lord as recorded in the New Testament, which we hear about in the Gospel lessons on the Sundays after Pascha, are quite different from the quiet way the Holy Spirit grows with us in this world. Only if we keep silence, only if we learn to quiet our souls and minds and hearts, can we hear the Holy Spirit when He speaks to us. When Our Lord commands us to keep the Sabbath day holy, and for us, in the New Testament times, to keep holy the Lord's day, which is Sunday, we understand this command to mean that we keep this day as a day of peace, a day of beauty and quiet, a day for the Lord to be with us in all we do.

Of course there is a time to speak and act, but we must remember that there is also a time to keep quiet. The Lord Himself taught and acted and did miracles in the

world for thirty three years, but He also teaches us of the need to be silent and to listen. In the days after His glorious Resurrection, we cherish the silence which can teach us about how to live and work in the world. But He will send us again into the world, to do His work as His children and heirs, His coworkers and His friends. And, with the peace of God in our hearts, we will be able to face any challenge which the world throws before us. With the peace of God in our hearts, we will be able to think through any problems which present themselves. With the peace of God in our hearts, we will be able to find the strength to withstand any danger or fear which threatens us.

For these reasons I dare to suggest that along with prayer and fasting, repentance and almsgiving, we add silence to the list of elements 'making a good Lent,' keeping silent "for at least 30 minutes a day," as that Desert Father said. As the tongues of fire sit in powerful speechless silence on the heads of the Apostles at the feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the feast of Pentecost, the Apostles clearly heard the Word of God. We too must learn to take the time to learn silence and quiet so that we can hear the Word of God when He speaks to us, not only with our ears, but in our hearts and souls and minds.

—*From an article in the Orthodox Church in Japan's "Seikyo Jiho" Magazine, by Father John Udics, here updated and expanded*

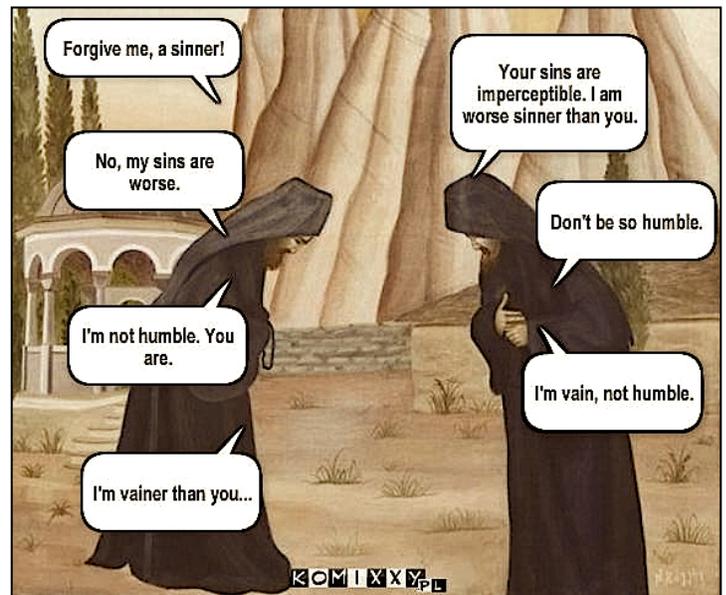
*Acquire the Spirit of peace...St. Seraphim of Sarov*

## EQUAL RIGHTS

SUPPORTERS OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE speak of attaining equal rights with heterosexual couples. Those who write about these issues do not limit their arguments to the pursuit of equality, but are quite open in stating that their goals are far more wide-ranging. One reads about the re-imagining of marriage, family, sex, relationships, gender, and human nature. This debate is not just about "marriage equality" and we would be wise to read the prophetic book *The Abolition of Man*, by CS Lewis, to try to understand that there is a redefinition of words, ideas and norms going on in this debate. It seems to me that there is a push to do away with traditional categories based on nature, physiology, and the need of families and society for children to have both a mother and a father. Full benefits for all couples in civil unions should not be denied—whatever the sex (in the current debate, one has to use the word "gender" instead of sex). But this is not a matter of "equality." The question remains: how can two people of the same sex—who cannot physically produce children—be equivalent to opposite-sex couples who can produce children (recognizing that of course not all couples do have children)? How can there be an "equal right" to something that is physically impossible to achieve? Those of us who ask these simple questions, and who do not "celebrate" the goals and norms of "this world" will be called hateful, homophobic and religiously bigoted, even if we steadfastly avoid judging or condemning others. All we can do—and it is a great deal—is to witness to the Kingdom of God, its joy, truth and love. As has always been the case, some people, many, will be offended by that witness and the Kingdom. Let's remember that to "witness" does not mean "to agitate, pontificate or denigrate." Finally, and crucially, one has the sense that Christians who do not agree with the new "social doctrine on marriage" approved by our courts may very soon find themselves deprived of the freedom of religion and speech. Traditional Christians will be told to leave their religion in Church. Such is the way, in all times and places, of the heresy of secularism.

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ON HOLY SPIRIT DAY we were blessed with the visit of Archbishop Benjamin and Metropolitan Tikhon. Pictures have been posted on the parish website. His Beatitude spoke about his conversion to Orthodox Christianity, and graciously answered many questions from parishioners about the Church.
- JULY 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration: The Annual Pilgrimage Divine Liturgy at Fort Ross will be served, on July 4, at 10 AM. Our parish is responsible for setting up the Altar for the Liturgy, and our choir will be singing the responses. Bring a picnic and enjoy the day, celebrating not only our nation's independence, but our protection under God, and the historical and spiritual legacy of Fort Ross.
- AROUND THE PROPERTY: The Rectory front porch was rebuilt and painted (the floor and roof were in danger of collapse), a new front door installed, a new window installed in a bedroom, bathrooms recaulked, a bedroom painted, a ceiling fan installed and a new heater purchased for the living room. We thank Anderson Woodworking for taking care of the project, and we thank the anonymous donor who gave \$5000 for materials and labor.
- IN PREPARATION for painting the dome, scaffolding will be erected on Monday, July 8. Help will be needed on Friday, July 5, to make a protective wall around the iconostasis, and again on Sunday after Liturgy, when we will move all the furniture out of the way of the work. Please see Fr. Lawrence if you can assist.
- THE SENIOR LUNCH Fellowship is scheduled for Thursday, July 11, at Noon. This will be a potluck lunch.
- ST. SERAPHIM WEEK: Our annual St. Seraphim Week (SSW) of activities for children will take place Monday, July 15 to Thursday, July 19, ending with the Liturgy for the Feast of St. Seraphim of Sarov. The SSW is open to all children and their friends, age 3 to teen. Parish teens are invited to assist in teaching. See Father Lawrence or Gloria Collins if you are interested. Registration forms are available at the Candle Desk.
- SAINTS PETER AND PAUL Russian Orthodox Church, on Stony Point Rd. will be celebrating its patronal feast: Vigil on Thursday, July 11, at 6 PM, and the Hierarchical Liturgy on Friday, July 12, at 9:30 AM. Those who wish to commune must have had a confession in the days or week prior, no longer.
- THE FEAST OF OUR TEMPLE, the "Glorification of St. Seraphim of Sarov" is July 18 and 19. Vigil on Thursday, July 18 at 6:30 PM, and the Divine Liturgy, with His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin, on Friday, July 19, at 9:30 AM.
- CATECHISM classes are held on Saturdays at 3:30 PM, in the Protection Church. All are welcome to attend.



### SPIRITUAL COUNSELS

- It is better to be persecuted than to persecute; it is better to be crucified than to crucify; it is better to be insulted than to insult; it is better to be slandered than to slander.
- Self-justification has no place in the life of a Christian, and can be found nowhere in Christ's teachings.
- If you love meekness, you will see peace within your soul. And if you become worthy to acquire peace, you will rejoice in any trial.
- The lips and the heart that give thanks to God in any trial or temptation receive His blessing and Divine grace.
- When your life is according to God, do not be saddened over afflictions and your ferocious passions, for God will take them from you one fine day. Neither fear death, because God has prepared future goodness in order to make you higher than death. — Archimandrite Justin (Parvu) of Romania, reposed January 16, 2013

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## JULY 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>June 30 - All Saints</b> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 2 PM, <i>Wedding of Kira and George</i>	1	2	3	4 • 10 AM, <b>Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at Fort Ross</b>	5 <i>Prep iconostasis for scaffold</i>	6 • 3:30, Catechism • 5 PM, VIGIL
<b>7 - All Saints of Russia/America</b> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	8 <i>Scaffold to be erected under dome</i>	9	10 • 6 PM, Vespers	11 • Noon, Senior Lunch ( <i>potluck</i> )	12 • 9:30 AM, Feast Day Liturgy of <i>Sts. Peter and Paul Church</i> , Stony Point Road	13 • 9 AM, Memorial Divine Liturgy for Sakovich family • 3:30, Catechism • 5 PM, VIGIL
<b>14 - All Saints of Mount Athos</b> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	15 • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for St. Vladimir of Kiev	16	17	18	19 • 9:30 AM, Hierarchical Liturgy for St. Seraphim, with Archbishop Benjamin	20 • Retreat in Calistoga with Archbishop Benjamin, see flyer • 5 PM, Great Vespers
<b>21 - Prophet Ezekiel</b> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	22 • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Holy Myrrhbearer Mary Magdalene	23	24 • 6 PM, Vespers for Dormition of St. Anna	25 • 6 PM, Vespers for St. Jacob of Alaska • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting	26	27 • 3:30, Catechism • 5 PM, VIGIL
<b>28 - Apostles of the 70</b> • 9 AM, Confessions • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 3 PM, <i>Wedding of Ted Rasoumoff and Claudia Coello</i>	29	30	31 • 6 PM, Great Vespers for Procession of Holy Cross	August 1 • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy and Water Blessing for feast of Procession of Holy Cross <i>Dormition Fast begins</i>	2 • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon to the Theotokos	3 • 3:30, Catechism • 5 PM, VIGIL

*St. Seraphim Week for Kids, 9 AM – Noon, Monday – Thursday*

• **Of special interest:** July 4<sup>th</sup> Divine Liturgy at Fort Ross. Senor Lunch Fellowship on July 11 at Noon. Feast Day of our Sister Parish, Sts. Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church on Stony Point Road. 9:30 AM. St. Seraphim Week for Kids, Mon. July 15 – Thurs., July 18, 9 AM to Noon. Our Parish Feast Day Vigil and Liturgy on July 18 and 19. Wedding of Ted Rasoumoff and Claudia Coello, from Tucson (Ted was baptized in this parish as an infant).

Holy Assumption Monastery

invites you to

# “The Jewish Roots of Christianity”

Saturday,  
July 20<sup>th</sup>



## Schedule

- |          |                             |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| 9:00 am  | Session 1:<br>Continuity    |
| 10:00 am | Break                       |
| 10:15 am | Session 2:<br>The Synagogue |
| 12:15 pm | Akathist                    |
| 1:00 pm  | Lunch                       |
| 2:00 pm  | Session 3:<br>The Temple    |
| 3:30 pm  | Closing                     |

Co-sponsored by the **Patriarch Athanagoras Orthodox Institute**  
Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California

**Speaker: His Eminence, Archbishop BENJAMIN**

Limited Capacity – RSVP today!

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*No fee – suggested donation \$30*