

very small, the often fearful and confused against the unborn: a full blown war began on January 22, 1973, and since that date there have been over fifty million nameless unborn children who have been casualties, along with women, and men too, who have suffered in so many ways by being participants. Alas, also very many mercenary doctors who somehow think they are helping have contributed to this assault on the unborn. Ten, fifteen, twenty children die in school shootings, or accidents, and we rightly feel horrified, stunned. Fifty million children aborted is a statistic, and a number beyond comprehension. What to do? One should participate in something positive.

The 10th annual **2014 Walk for Life West Coast** will be held on January 25 in San Francisco. It is the second largest gathering of its kind after the March for Life in Washington, DC, attracting more than 50,000 participants in 2013. Look for the *Orthodox Christians for Life* banner on the southeast corner of the Civic Center plaza, near the children's play structure, and join in the witness to the sanctity of unborn life. The gathering begins at Civic Center Plaza in front of City Hall. The rally will be at the main stage from 12:30 to 1:30 PM. After the rally, the walk proceeds approximately 1.5 miles, from Civic Center Plaza down Market Street, to end at Justin Herman Plaza at the Embarcadero. For more information and a schedule of related pro-life events in the San Francisco Bay Area, visit www.walkforlifewc.com

• PIROSHKI ORDERS:

Just a reminder that we will be making Piroshki again this month on Saturday, January 18th. Lots of help will be needed to make the work go smoothly and quickly. Prep will occur during the week preceding January 18th: if you are available to help at that time, please contact me at bgriovski@sbcglobal.net. You don't need kitchen or cooking experience. We are happy to teach you, and there are many tasks. And even if you need to be seated there are plenty of things you can do to help. **Orders are due on Sunday, January 12th, and order forms are available in the Hall and at the Candle Stand.** Thanks in advance for your orders and for your help with this important activity. —*Bobbi (Eugenia) Griovski*

• NEEDS AROUND THE PARISH:

An additional Usher is needed for Sunday Liturgy, to serve once a month. Call Fr. Lawrence if you would like to volunteer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, January 5, 2014

• TROPARION OF THE FOREFEAST, Tone Four:

The river Jordan once turned back before the mantle of Elisha, after Elijah had been taken up into heaven, and the waters were divided on this side and on that: the stream became a dry path before him, forming a true image in which we are baptized whereby we pass over the changeful course of life. Christ has appeared in the Jordan to sanctify the waters.

• KONTAKION OF THE FOREFEAST, Tone Four

When the Lord descended today into the waters of the Jordan, He cried aloud to John: 'Do not be afraid to baptize me, For I am come to save Adam the first-formed man.'

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Jan. 4: 4:30 PM, Panikhida for Barbara McMillian and Natalie Hansen
5 PM Great Vespers, Confessions
- Sunday, Jan. 5: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, **Blessing of Water**, Agape Meal (no Church School)
- Monday, Jan. 6: 8:30 AM, Festal Matins, Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Water for Theophany
- Tuesday, Jan. 7: 9:30 AM, *Kazan Skete, Divine Liturgy for Old Calendar Nativity*
- Wednesday, Jan. 8: 6 PM, Vespers
- Thursday, Jan. 9: 7 PM, Master Planning Workshop
- Saturday, Jan. 11: 3:30 PM, Catechism—*On Reading the Bible*
5 PM, Great Vespers

- TODAY IS A FASTING DAY:

The day before Theophany is always a fast day. Since it falls this year on a Sunday, the fast is lightened, and we only fast from meat and dairy, all day. If it were another day of the week, we would be enjoined to fast strictly (that is, eating and drinking nothing) in preparation for Theophany.

- FESTAL CONGRATULATIONS:

I congratulate all of you, dear parishioners, brothers and sisters in Christ, on the Feast of St. Seraphim of Sarov (Jan. 2), and thank you for the great kindness, faith, love and zeal with which you live your Christian life. I thank all those who labored hard to make our Feast so joyous and full. Our Venerable Father Seraphim was, and is, a human manifestation of God's love, joy and faith. While we may not pray for a thousand days and nights on a rock, as he did (and he did it because he experienced God's light and transformation in his prayer), we may stay faithful in our own prayer rule each day and night. St. Seraphim was a healer and consoler for those sick and despondent—we ought, at the very least, to visit and intercede for those who are sick, despondent and lonely. St. Seraphim had the gift of disclosing and healing hidden sins in those who came to him. At least we should be examining and confessing our sins before our spiritual father and the Lord. There is much in our St. Seraphim to inspire and encourage us in the coming year.

- HOUSE BLESSINGS:

Please email or call Fr. Lawrence or Fr. John to schedule a house blessing.

- HERE'S HOW TO PREPARE FOR A HOUSE BLESSING:

1. Have a copy of the *Troparion of Theophany* so that you can sing with the priest. The words are included in this Announcement Sheet.
2. The entire family should be present.
3. Have the following items at your Icon Corner or on a table: icon, oil lamp or candle, small bowl (cereal size is fine) for the Holy Water (I will bring some Water with me if you do not have any), list of names of your family, living and departed, clearly marked.
4. Turn off TVs and radios, video games and cell phones.
6. Teach your children the way to receive the blessing of the priest.

- TROPARION OF THEOPHANY, Tone One:

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the

Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His Word. O Christ, our God, Who hast revealed Thyself, and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

- KONTAKION OF THEOPHANY, Tone Four:

On this day Thou hast appeared unto the whole world, and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, is signed on us who sing Thy praise: and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light Unapproachable.

- HOLY WATER OF THEOPHANY:

The practice of blessing water on the day of Christ's Baptism was already existent in the 3rd century. St. John Chrysostom calls this water *agiasma*— a holy thing. It has been known from ancient times that the Holy Water of Theophany does not go bad. This holy water is used to sprinkle and bless icons, liturgical articles, priestly vestments and crosses. It is also used to bless houses, food, automobiles and other articles. When received with faith, it has the power to cure both physical and spiritual infirmities. Although holy water cannot replace Holy Communion in any way, it can be taken by those who are deprived of the consolation of the Sacrament. During times of despondency, confusion and spiritual turmoil it offers tranquility and relief. For this reason Christians keep this blessed water in a special place in their homes and partake of it at any time. (The feast day of Theophany is also called *Epiphany*. Both terms indicate that God has revealed Himself to the world in Jesus the God and Man, and the Messiah, who teaches us to worship the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit).

- READING THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR:

A new calendar of readings is being prepared for a starting date of **February 1**. I invite all of you to join with me in reading, or re-reading, the entire Bible in one year. The Catechism on Saturday, Jan. 11 will discuss this topic. — *Fr. Lawrence*

- WALK FOR LIFE in SF:

There are two particular days in American history that many Americans will identify as days that will live in infamy: Dec 7, 1941, and Sept. 11 2001. But there is another infamous day, a day in which another war was launched, not nation against nation, but the strong against the weak and