

them, showing them good examples by our lives, and recovering for ourselves the precious baptismal grace of God, which is often covered by sin and neglect the rest of the year. The time of preparation for Great Lent commences with Great Vespers on Saturday, February 4 (the eve of our Annual Meeting, also a good time to make a confession as a parish). We call this day the *Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee*. The next three Sundays, that of *The Prodigal Son*, *The Last Judgement* and *Forgiveness Sunday* lead us to **Forgiveness Vespers, at 1:15 PM, on Sunday, February 26**. To say that I encourage every one of our people to come to this moving and essential Service of joyful-sorrow is inadequate. More strongly put: this Service is so important for each of us, that unless you are sick in bed, or in a coffin, be there! Why? Forgiveness Sunday Vespers offers you and me a chance to set things straight with each other—we ask forgiveness of each and everyone, without which we can't receive forgiveness from God. —*Fr. Lawrence*

PS: Lazarus Saturday is April 7, Palm Sunday April 8, Holy Week is April 9–13, Holy Saturday is April 14, and Pascha, April 15.

• NEW PARISH MINISTRY:

The Catechumen Karen Prisca Roselle has volunteered to be the coordinator of our new “Ride to Church” ministry. She will arrange for those who do not have transportation to get to Saturday evening Vespers, the Sunday Divine Liturgy, and other festal services as well. She will create a list of volunteers (from newsletter and word of mouth) and organize people by location. More on this to follow. If you have questions, or need a ride, speak to Prisca after the Liturgy.

• FROM THE ELDER PAISIOS OF MOUNT ATHOS:

*Father Paisios said:* As a person becomes more spiritual, so many fewer rights does he have in this life. It is obligatory to be patient, to accept injustice, to accept evil words from others. A crooked stick (perverted person) who is distant from God has many rights: to strike and shout and act unrighteously. Our rights God keeps for the other life. Out of ignorance, however, we often seek our rights here. Let us not damage things at all. If they [the unjust people] say anything to us, immediately we give them the right. And later we think we trust in God. That is a big joke. [This kind of] “human justice” doesn't mean anything to a spiritual person. But it is a great concern for the perverted person.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday ~ January 15, 2012

Saint Paul of Thebes

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• TROPARION OF ST. PAUL OF THEBES, Tone Eight:

With the streams of thy tears thou didst irrigate the barren desert and with sighs from the depths of thy soul thou didst render thy labors fruitful an hundredfold and becamest a beacon for the whole world, resplendent with miracles. O Paul our father, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Jan. 14: 11:30 AM, Baptism of infant Lucca Mattei  
3:30 PM, Catechism: *On Baptism*  
5 PM, Great Vespers, Confessions
- Sunday, Jan. 15: 9 AM, Confessions  
10 AM, Liturgy  
11:30 AM, Church School  
2 PM, *Wedding of Eugenia Killinger* (not 3 PM)
- Mon., Jan. 16: *Office closed*
- Wed., Jan. 18: Kazan Skete, 7:30 AM, Vespers Liturgy  
6 PM, Vespers  
7 PM, Women's book study at Owens home
- Thurs., Jan. 19: Kazan Skete, 9:30 AM, Liturgy and Water  
Blessing for Old Calendar Theophany  
6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim of Sarov

- YOUTH ACTIVITY PLANNING:

Parents of our high school-age children are invited to attend a meeting on Sunday, January 22, at 1 PM. **Topic:** Creating Orthodox soul-strengthening, faith-building and friendship-bonding activities, camp-outs, and retreats for our parish teens. We won't be discussing theology, theory, challenges or problems that confront our youth (that's for the retreats, etc.). Fr. Lawrence will simply lead a planning session for the above-named activities for the year ahead, using our resources, those that the Diocese makes available to us, and those of our sister parishes.

- PEARL OF GREAT PRICE:

Please join us for a "Book Event" at **7 PM, on Wednesday, January 25**. Author Veronica Hughes will be here to speak on her book *Pearl of Great Price*. Copies will be available for purchase from the St. Seraphim Bookstore (the author will sign your copy on the evening of the event). Visit [www.pearlofgreatpriceorthodox.com](http://www.pearlofgreatpriceorthodox.com) to read about the book, the author and to see a brief video filmed at the Monastery in Platina, where *Pearl* was written.

- WOMEN'S BOOK STUDY GROUP:

The January meeting will take place on January 18, at 7 PM at the home of Barbara Owens.

- TUESDAY EVENING STUDY GROUP:

Deacon Jeremiah Crawford will be presenting a series of talks on Orthodoxy and Islam, Tuesday evenings at 7 PM, starting January 24. The talks will be given at the apartment common-room, 1352 Oak View Circle, Rohnert Park. Call Debi Shrimplin at (707) 536-9112 for more information and directions.

- HOUSE BLESSINGS:

Please email or call me or any of the other clergy to schedule a house blessing. Fr. Lawrence will also be available to bless homes on **Tuesday, January 16, from 1:30–4:30 PM, and on Wednesday, from 11 AM–3:30 PM**. I am also available on other days, just call to schedule. If you would like to join me in visiting homes to bless them, on Tuesday and Wednesday, please let me know. —Fr. Lawrence

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 (see last week's announcement sheet for the words) 2) The entire family should be present. 3) Have the following items at your Icon Corner or on a table: icon, oil lamp or a candle, small bowl (cereal size) for the Holy Water. I will bring Holy 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. 5) Teach your children the way to receive the blessing of the priest.

- ANNUAL MEETING:

February 5, 2012, starting at 12:30 PM. All Parish Members are expected to attend this meeting. Of course, anyone may attend the meeting, but only formal parish members may vote or be elected to office (see last week's announcement on what constitutes membership). Nominations are to be submitted to Fr. Lawrence by February 1. No nominations for Parish Council office can be accepted from the floor during the meeting.

- TALK BY FR. JOHN CHRYSYSSAVGIS:

(from *Nativity of Christ, in Novato*): On Saturday, February 11, the Philoptochos Society of the Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Christian Church in Novato is honored to host Dr. Fr. John Chryssavgis who will lead a lecture and discussion. Fr. John is a deacon of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and currently serves as theological advisor to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I on ecological issues. He completed his doctoral studies in Patristics at the University of Oxford (1983), and his teaching since has covered wide-ranging theological, political, socio-cultural, liturgical, and ecological topics. His research has specialized in the ascetic thought and practice of early Christianity, especially from the desert tradition of Egypt (4th century) through the regions of Palestine (5th-6th centuries) and Sinai (7th century). The time of the talk will be announced.

- THE BEGINNING OF THE BEGINNING OF GREAT LENT:

Great Lent is coming. Thankfully, we have a time of preparation before it begins. Let's put it in perspective. Great Lent, also called *The Great Fast*, is many things: the season of fasting, repentance, increased prayer and worship, the Presanctified, the Canon of St. Andrew, almsgiving, and of course, a concerted effort to work on the acquisition of Godly virtues and love. It is also, and was originally intended to be, the time when the Church fasts, prays, and studies *together with the catechumens* as they prepare for baptism on Holy Saturday. We join them in their ascetic labors, thereby supporting