

“today” that happens in the power of the Holy Spirit at the services of the Church. Very practically speaking, when we sing that “today the light of Christ shines upon the world” we really mean it. Despite our sins, His light, His birth, His glory and holiness shine within the human person who is united to Christ and who is striving to live in that light. And because He is God and Man, we are recreated “today,” refreshed, restored, and the peace of the cave of Bethlehem is then in our heart “today” and the light of the star is in our soul and mind and body, our repentance, our prayers, our love for God and neighbor and the poor take the place of the gifts of the magi, today. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• BELIEVING

That word **believe** is *pistis* (in Greek) and its various forms. It doesn't mean to believe facts. The Lord isn't asking the father [with the possessed boy, Mark 9:14ff) to try really hard to believe certain facts, just as in the story of Peter Pan, at the pantomime everyone is asked to believe very hard in the existence of fairies. Jesus is asking the man to **trust**, and to trust in one “who can do all things.” If you can trust God then all things are possible to him who trusts God. And the father offers that trust which he finds within himself, full of fears and anxieties undoubtedly. And this is all that is asked of us all, whether at the beginning of the Christian journey or near its end. That we give to God all that trust of which he is worthy, and which we have, by experience, come to realize is his due. The father in this case had surely heard of other miracles which Christ had performed, and he placed his trust, limited as it was, in Christ in the hope that he might also take care of his son. We also begin with the experience of others, through reading the Scripture, the lives of saints, and observing the character and behavior of those around us who are Christians. And at some point we also offer our limited and fragile trust to God, the gift of our faith, and even as we cry out “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief,” we find that all things are possible. Not because of us, and not because we have forced ourselves to believe something that we are not convinced of. But because we have begun to place our trust in the almighty and loving heavenly Father. —*Father Peter Farrington, London School of Orthodox Christian Studies*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, January 18, 2015

- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Seven:
By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death; to the thief, Thou didst open Paradise. For the myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy, and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy.
- KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Seven:
The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. Hades is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry: the Savior has come to them that have faith. Enter, ye faithful, into the Resurrection.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Jan. 17: 1 PM, Altar Server Workshop
5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, Jan. 18: 9:30 AM, Akathist *Nurturer of Children*
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
Noon, Agape Meal
- Monday, Jan. 19: Kazan Skete, Old Calendar Theophany: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy and blessing of water
- Wednesday, Jan. 21: 6 PM, Vespers, potluck and talk on the American saints
- Thurs., Jan. 22: 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting
- HOLY COMMUNION:
We welcome our visitors and our guests this morning, and would remind them, as well as all Parish and Church members, that the reception of Holy

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Communion is reserved for Baptized and Chrismated Orthodox Christians, only. No Orthodox Christian should approach the Chalice to receive Holy Communion unless he or she has prepared by fasting, prayer (especially the “Pre-Communion Prayers”) and a recent participation in the Holy Sacrament of Confession. We confess our sins when our conscience dictates, but certainly, no less than once per month for those that receive Communion weekly. If you are a visitor to the Church, we most cordially invite you to our Sunday meal.

• ANNUAL MEETING:

Each year at the Annual Meeting we thank the Parish Council members for their service, and elect new members to fill the places of those whose two-year terms are expiring. Those whose terms are expiring are: Debbie Buse, George Barsi, Tom Pellizzer, Kristine Tellefsen and David Winterton. Our Alternates, Ole Kern and Ryan Duval, have served their terms of service, as well. Since the Council consists of nine members, plus two alternates, this year we need at least SEVEN candidates to fill the slots. The five with the most votes serve as Council Members, the next two will serve as Council Alternates, who are asked to attend and participate in all meetings. Those who have one more year to serve: Serge Anderson, Bonnie Alexander, Amy Ramirez Margitich, Thom Stewart. The following people have agreed to be candidates for Parish Council 2015: Debbie Buse, David Winterton, Vladimir Baer, Alexander Stameroff, Dennis Campbell, Tito Ramirez, Ole Kern, Ryan Duval, Rachel Dovey, Kristine Tellefsen and Tom Pellizzer. Other names will be gratefully received as Candidates, however, names MUST BE received before January 24, and with the agreement of the nominee. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• WALK FOR LIFE:

“We know that it is killing, but the state permits killing under certain circumstances,” says the founder of a Milwaukee abortion clinic. Camille Paglia, the outspoken feminist, is even more blunt: “The pro-life position, whether or not it is based on religious orthodoxy, is more ethically highly involved than my own tenet of unconstrained access to abortion on demand...Hence I have always frankly admitted that abortion is murder, the extermination of the powerless by the powerful. Liberals for the most part have shrunk from facing the ethical consequences of their embrace of abortion, which results in the annihilation of concrete individuals and not just clumps of insensate tissue.” ...despite forty years of pro-abortion

propaganda, half of all Americans still describe themselves as pro-life. Since their activism began, peaceful pro-lifers have endured jeers, contempt, unjust arrests, and even violence. Though the media has largely ignored their witness (even as it has covered fringe extremists, never part of the authentic pro-life movement), they have marched on nonetheless. This January 24, some sixty thousand people are expected to participate in the **Walk for Life** in San Francisco. As they do every year, they will speak, pray, and bear witness to the fundamental right to life that every American citizen is entitled to. Certainly, a strong Orthodox Christian presence is to be desired. I encourage you to make every effort to be in San Francisco on Saturday, January 24. Liturgy and the consecration of Bishop-Elect Daniel will take place at 9:30 AM at Holy Trinity on Van Ness and Green Street. The **Walk for Life Rally** begins at 12:30 at the Civic Center, followed by the Walk at 1:30 PM. Call or speak with Deacon Jeremiah Crawford to arrange transport (707-861-9974).

• ORTHODOX WOMEN'S RETREAT:

The Sisterhood will host a Retreat for Orthodox women of all ages on Saturday, **February 7, from 9 AM–5 PM** in the Parish Hall. Our guest speaker is biblical scholar and Ancient Faith Radio Host, Presbytera Jeannie Constantinou. Our topic: **Humanizing Mary; Discovering the Reality of her Life**. Registration forms are in the Narthex and online at the www.saintseraphim.com. Register now—don't wait until the Jan 25 deadline—and your check will be held until the week of the Retreat. Day-care will be provided by the Anderson family; a count is needed as soon as possible. Contact Juliana Veenis, Deanna Panages, Meghan Inlow or the Church office (584-9491) for more information.

• THE LITURGICAL “TODAY:”

What does it mean when we use the word “today” in our church hymns? For example, on Palm Sunday at the Vigil we sing “Today the grace of the Holy Spirit assembled us...” What it means is that the power of the commemoration is not just historical memory, some event of the life of Christ or a saint—the significance of which is limited by time and space. Since the past is gone and the future is not “here,” all we have is NOW. So when we sing “Today Christ is hung upon the Cross...” or “Today the Lord enters the waters of the Jordan...” we are entering into the power of that initial moment, which is always relevant and timeless. The Living Jesus Christ is real, now, here, for us, not yesterday or tomorrow. That's the