

all my efforts seem fruitless, when my life seems to have passed in vain, Christ is still my Christ. He is there for me no matter what happens. He exists irrespective of my capabilities, capacities and comprehension. I might imagine that God is small. But God is great. I might think that God doesn't hear. But He does. And He has given Himself entirely to me, so that there's only one possibility of failure: for me to break off my relationship with the "One Who Is" (Exodus 3:14) — *Elder Aimilianos of Mount Athos*

• FAITH HEALER:

A man answered an altar call and asked the tel-evangelist to pray for his hearing. After three minutes of violent shaking and trying to push him over backwards the preacher ask, "how's your hearing?" The man replied, "I don't know. It doesn't take place until Tuesday at the courthouse."



ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 14, 2016 ~ Sunday of Zacchaeus

• RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION, Tone Four:

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of the Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse, and elatedly told the Apostles: death is overthrown, Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

• RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION, Tone Four:

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb, and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hades, and as Master, He has risen on the third day.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, February 13: 11 AM, Baptism of Tennyson baby
2 PM, Panikhida for Loul Moges
3:30 PM, Catechism, *On Baptism*
5 PM, Great Vespers, Confessions
- Sunday, February 14: 8:45 AM, Matins
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
12:45 PM, Sisterhood Meeting
- Tuesday, February 16: Greek Dance Class
- Wednesday, February 17: 6 PM, Vespers
- Thursday, February 18: Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship
7 PM, Scripture Study/McPherson home
7 PM, Parish Council Meeting

- ALTAR SERVER TEAM:

Team Cherubim (Ambrose, Christopher, Dimitrios).

- THIS WEEKEND:

This weekend Father Theodor has taken some of our young adults to the Monastery of St. John in Manton. During Matins on Sunday, therefore, the time for Confession will be limited. Any pastor will tell you that it is always spiritually best to confess either during the week, or on Saturday evening at the Vespers. One can “sleep on” the confession and the absolution, and the advice given, and digest it more completely. Trying to fit in a Confession before the Liturgy means that it might be rushed (either for the priest or the penitent), and we should never rush through the Holy Mysteries.

- ANNUAL MEETING:

We congratulate our newly elected parish council, who have been blessed by Archbishop Benjamin to serve: Serge Anderson, Bonnie Alexander, Lisa Ann Wespiser, Deacon Jeremiah Crawford, Kathy Ramos (*alternate*) and Leonard Carl (*alternate*). They join those who have one more year to serve: Debbie Buse, Alexander Stameroff, Tom Steven Pellizzer, Tito Vincente Ramirez and Dennis Campbell.

- TALKING IN CHURCH:

Don't. We should avoid conversation in the church even if the service has not yet begun. We should spend the time before services preparing for worship; necessary talking should be conducted quietly so as not to disturb the meditations of others. Let's save our conversations for the fellowship hall.

- PARTICIPATION AT THE LITURGY:

How do we define participation in the Divine Liturgy? Who is participating the most? Is it those carrying candles, those swinging the censer, or wearing robes? Is it the singers, the altar servers—must all boys be Altar servers; if yes, then what about girls? What about infants? They hear, see, smell and taste that which is ineffable and incomprehensible—like the rest of us. Do they not participate? Some people love to sing with the choir. Do those who refrain from singing not participate? The majority of men, women and children at the Divine Liturgy—and this has been true for all centuries and times—do not seem to **do anything** during the Liturgy. The singers, the servers, and yes, even the clergy, do what they do to enable the congregation to do what they are **there to do**, which is to pray—pray standing, kneeling,

sitting, singing or silent. Many of us have it backwards on this topic of participation. Those who pray are those who have been given the blessed opportunity of not having **to do anything but pray**. Very few members of the parish—again, this has always been true—function in some “hands-on” capacity during the Service, and that's how it is structured to be. The participants who find the most benefit at Liturgy are those who allow the hymns to enter their hearts and who strive to make the words of the hymns their very own: some sing with their voice, some sing in their hearts. Both are excellent. Additionally, Services in the Church are not a time for private prayers, but for sharing in the common worship, which is what the word “Liturgy” implies. It's about worship of God; and it is corporate worship, involving all those assembled in the Church. Orthodox piety is rich in actions which enable the whole person to worship, to follow the Service with one's body as well as one's mind and soul (infants hear with the soul rather than the rational mind). When our attention wanders, we have icons, incense, singing and processions to bring it back. The Liturgy is also a time when parents have the chance to teach their children how to pray, to direct their attention, to teach them inner discipline and church etiquette, and yes, when necessary, to take them outside for a little break. We will all get more out of the services if we pray actively rather than passively attend them.

—Fr. Lawrence

- INNER ATTITUDE

When going to the Holy Mysteries, go with simplicity of heart, in full faith that you will receive the Lord within yourself, and with the proper reverence towards this. What your state of mind should be after this, leave it to the Lord Himself. Many desire ahead of time to receive this or that from Holy Communion, and then, not seeing what they wanted, they are troubled, and even their faith in the power of the Mystery is shaken. The fault lies not with the Mystery, but with superficial assumptions. Do not promise yourself anything. Leave everything to the Lord, asking a single mercy from Him—to strengthen you in every kind of good so that you will be acceptable to Him.

—St. Theophan the Recluse

- FAITHFULNESS OF GOD:

Whether we believe or not, we belong to God. Whether we understand it or not, or feel His presence or not, or rejoice in that presence or not, He exists. He is my God. He is my Lord. Even during moments of darkness and terror, when God doesn't exist for me, He still exists. When I feel I'm a failure, when