

cultural fodder like *50 Shades of Grey*, based on the best-selling book. In this film and book, a playboy named Christian Grey (christian means “little christ”) enters into a relationship with Anastasia Steele (anastasia means “resurrection”). Grey sexually uses and abuses Anastasia, who finds herself drawn to the man despite his roughness. In the Bible, an abusive male sexual predator is an abomination. In secular culture, an abusive male sexual predator is a celebrity. The difference could not be more stark. ...*50 Shades of Grey* is disgusting, despicable and unerringly awful for women...It is representative of the new sexual progressivism and its amoral worldview...[it] speaks to where things are headed in our culture. We should not expect that postmodernism will protect women. It will do no such thing. We should not expect that it will ennoble men and call them to self-sacrificial responsibility. It will do no such thing. We should not expect that postmodernism will bless children and strengthen the family. It will do no such thing...There is one, and exactly one, source of ultimate hope for man-woman relationships today. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ. This gospel, the message of Christ crucified and raised for sinners like us, takes predatory men and fallen women and turns them into trophies of grace. This is not a limited redemption. The worst of the worst can be saved. The abusive, the predatory, the abused, the hopeless—all alike find everlasting salvation in the cross of Jesus as they turn from this world and run into the strong and safe arms of Christ.

• INVITING SOMEONE TO CHURCH

A few years ago *LifeWay Research* conducted a survey of 15,000 adults which showed that 67% of Americans say a personal invitation from a family member would be very or somewhat effective in getting them to visit a church; 63% of Americans say a personal invitation from a friend or neighbor would be very or somewhat effective in getting them to visit a church. Another survey indicates that only 2% of church members ever invite someone to church. It's like a middle school dance. Most people want to be asked to dance, but nobody wants to ask.

• CHORAL CONCERT PLANNED:

The **Yale Russian Chorus** will sing here on Sunday, March 8 at 5 PM. See Bobbi or Bonnie to purchase tickets (\$20 general admission and \$15 for students).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 15, 2015 ~ Last Judgment Sunday

- KONTAKION OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT, Tone One:
When Thou comest, O God, upon the earth in glory, the whole world will tremble. The river of fire will bring men before Thy Judgement Seat, the Books will be opened and the secrets disclosed. Then deliver me from the unquenchable fire, and count me worthy to stand on Thy right hand, O Judge most righteous.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Feb. 14: 3:30 PM, Catechism: *An Overview of Great Lent*
4:30 PM, Panikhida for Memorial Saturday
5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, Feb. 15: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School; Noon, *Blini Luncheon*
- Monday, Feb. 16: **Begin to fast from all meat products**
- Wed., Feb. 18: 8 AM, Matins - *Lenten style*
11 AM, Catechism Revisited: *Great Lent*
6 PM, Vespers - *Lenten Style*
- Thurs., Feb. 19: 6 PM, Vespers - *Lenten Style*
7 PM, Parish Council Meeting
- Friday, Feb. 20: 8 AM, Matins - *Lenten style*

• MEAT-FARE:

This week is the Sunday of the Last Judgment, so named because of the Gospel read at the Liturgy (Matthew 25:31–36) which describes that awesome Day of the Lord upon which we shall be judged. Today is also called Meatfare—or *Carneval*—and we bid farewell to meat until Pascha.

- FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS—February 22 / 1:15 PM:
In an Orthodox Parish there is really nothing to compare to the unique

Vespers of Forgiveness served on the very eve of Great Lent. Much has already been written about this Service elsewhere, and lots already has been said. All that remains is for us to come and to participate in the Vespers, ask forgiveness of each other, giving forgiveness to all—whether they ask or not—and supporting one another during the Lenten ascetic effort. The 40 days of Lent—a tithe of our year—begins on Sunday, February 22 at 1:15 PM.

- PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:

Thursday, February 19 at 7 PM.

- OUR THANKS:

A most sincere *Thank You* to Matushka Esther Carr and her crew for hosting the wonderful Blini Luncheon.

- PRELENTEN SERVICES:

This coming week we will serve Matins at 8 AM on Wednesday and Friday, and Vespers at 6 PM on Wednesday and Thursday. I've scheduled these daily services—with their Lenten character (hymns, Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, etc)—so that we can experience a little bit of Lent before Lent, and prepare ourselves so much the better. —*Fr. L*

- SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY CELEBRATION HERE:

Each year on the evening of the first Sunday of Lent—the feast of the Sunday of Orthodoxy—across the country, the parish faithful from all jurisdictions, Greek, Antiochian, OCA, Russian, Serbia, Ukrainian, Romanian, Bulgarian, you name it, gather for a Pan-Orthodox Vespers. This celebration on the first Sunday of Great Lent has also been going on in the Bay Area for decades, although most of the members of our parish are probably not familiar with the custom. Archbishop Benjamin has asked our parish to host the Pan-Orthodox Vespers this year, and we are of course, honored to do so. **The schedule for the day will be as follows:** at 9:30 AM, Sunday, March 1, Archbishop Benjamin and Bishop Daniel will arrive for the Divine Liturgy and be vested. *Please note, although the calendar for March indicates a start time of 10 AM, we will greet the hierarchs at 9:30 AM.* Later that day, other bishops, priests, deacons and faithful from the Bay Area will arrive for the 5 PM talk by Monk Patrick

on the Fresco plan and its theology. Vespers, with a litany and procession for the Feast, will begin at 6 PM. The Parish Sisterhood will host a reception with lenten refreshments. Please, mark your calendars for this important event.

- JUST IN TIME FOR GREAT LENT:

The title above alludes to the fact that each and every year, just before Great Lent, the media—whether it be in the movies, TV shows, books or interviews—dumps a large pile of filth, lies and blasphemy (not to mention just plain banality) upon the general public and on the church in particular. For the watchful Christian this is not really a problem, since the morality, or lack thereof, found in at least one currently popular film (*50 Shades of Grey*), stands in stark contrast with Christian virtue and purity. For the unsuspecting, it is not so clear. In the garden of paradise the serpent said to the woman “Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3, 4-5). A very wise priest noticed that the snake says we’ll know “good and evil,” but not that we can easily distinguish between the two, or choose the good consistently. We need the Gospel vision of human nature—based on Jesus Christ—that is one of redemption, restoration, hope, purity, love and decency, and we need to avoid that which compromises our “spiritual immunity.” We are not born with the ability to detect poison, we learn it. Please consider the following, written by Owen Strachan, assistant professor of Christian theology and church history at Boyce College:

Men are called to be heads, but in the image of Christ. They’re called to lay their lives down for their wives (see Ephesians 5:22-33). The Bible never enfranchises men treating women anything less than purely and lovingly (1 Peter 3:7). The man a godly woman submits to is not some goofball with a title he didn’t earn. To the fullest possible extent, with every fiber of his being, he’s supposed to love his wife like Jesus loves His bride. Nothing less than perfection is the standard for masculine conduct and manly headship. High stakes, these. Not so with secular culture. There is no extant moral code for men and women. Christianity is outmoded, bygone and repressive. In its place, the postmodern West has adopted, well, not much of any ethical standard, really. Into the vacuum come