

have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants.” The doing means nothing. We become human at the moment when, like the Publican, like the Prodigal Son, we have entered into the realm of broken-heartedness, into the realm of love which is a response both to divine love and to human suffering. This cannot be measured. We can never, on that level, say, “I am safe. I will come to the judgement and be one of the sheep,” because it will not be a question of whether or not we have accomplished the law, but whether this law has become so much ourselves that it has grown into the mystery of love. There, at that point, we will be on the fringe, on the very threshold of entering into that spring of life, that renewal of life, that newness of all things, which is Lent. We will have gone through all these stages of judgement, and will have emerged from blindness and from the law into a vision of the mysterious relationship which may be called “mercy” or “grace.” And we will be face to face with being human. But we must remember that to be human does not mean to be “like us” but “like Christ.” With this we can enter Lent and begin to experience through the readings of the Church, through the prayers of the Church, through the process of repentance, that discovery of the acts of divine grace which alone can lead us towards growth into the full stature of the likeness of Christ. I have brought you to the gate. Now you must walk into it. —*Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom)*

• CONGRATULATIONS:

We offer prayers and congratulations to Fr. Moses, one of the fresco painters, on the occasion of his ordination to the holy diaconate, this weekend, at his monastery. May the Lord grant him many years.

• NEW CHAIRS COMING:

Thanks to the generosity of two families in our parish, we have ordered wooden chairs (*school-house style*), with arms, to replace the metal office chairs we have used for the last ten or so years. The chairs will arrive in three or four weeks time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 10, 2013 ~ 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, March 9: 3:30 PM, Catechism: *An Overview of Great Lent*
5 PM, Vigil / Confessions
- Sunday, March 10: 9–10 AM, Confessions
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, *Blini Luncheon & Bake Sale to follow*
- Monday, March 11: Begin to fast from all meat products
- Tues., March 12: 7 PM, Rohnert Park Study Group
- Wed., March 13: 6 PM, Vespers - *Lenten Style*
- Thurs., March 14: Noon, Senior Lunch (potluck—no meat)
6 PM, Vespers - *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 *Carnival*—meaning “farewell” to meat until Pascha.

• FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS—March 17 / 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, March 17 at 1:15 PM.

• LENTEN CHARITY:

His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, has designated Project Mexico as our Diocesan Lenten Charity. In order to become familiar with the mission of Project Mexico, the parish has invited two representatives from that organization to speak with us on Sunday, March 31, at the Agape Meal. Please make plans to come and hear about why so many parishes in the Orthodox Church in America—of whatever jurisdiction—have gotten involved with the charitable work of Project Mexico.

• REPENTANCE:

- “Where shall I begin to weep for the actions of my wretched life? What first-fruit shall I offer, O Christ, in this my lamentation? But in Thy compassion grant me forgiveness of sins.”

- “Riding in the chariot of the virtues, Elijah was lifted up to heaven, high above earthly things. Reflect, my soul, upon his ascent.”

(Hymns from the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, sung during the first week of Lent)

One should not imagine that repentance consists of rooting around in one’s personal sins, engaging in self-flagellation, and striving to expose in oneself as much evil and darkness as possible. To truly repent is to turn from the darkness to the light, from sin to righteousness, to understand that our life has been unworthy of its high calling, to confess before God how insignificant we are, and confess that our only hope is God Himself. True repentance is when, standing before the face of God, Who, as the Apostle Peter says “hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light,” (I Peter 2: 9) we understand that life was given to us so

that we might become children of God, so that we might commune of the Divine Light. True repentance is reflected not so much in words as in deeds: in readiness to come to the aid of others, to be open with our neighbors, and not become involuted onto oneself. True repentance is understanding that, while we do not possess the power to become true Christians, God is capable of making us so. As it says in the *Great Canon* “wheresoever God wishes, the order of nature is overcome.” That is to say, where God so wishes, supernatural events occur: Saul becomes Paul, Jonah is brought out of the belly of the whale, Moses crosses the sea on dry land, the dead Lazarus is resurrected, Mary of Egypt is turned from a harlot into a great righteous one. For, according to the Savior “with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matt. 19:26). —Fr. *Victor Patahov*

• OUR THANKS:

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

• FRIENDS MEETING in Calistoga:

The monastery will present a talk on Sunday, March 10, at 4 PM, by Dr. Stephen Lloyd-Moffet, on “What Makes Orthodoxy Unique?” Dr. Moffet teaches religious studies at CalPoly, and is author of *Beauty for Ashes* a wonderful book about the spiritual transformation of a diocese in Greece. Vespers will be at 5 PM, followed by a potluck at 6 PM. All are welcome.

• FUNERAL FOR MOTHER AMVROSIA:

Abbess Susanna extends an invitation to come to the funeral services at the Skete for Mother Amvrosia, who fell asleep in the Lord on Thursday. Liturgy on Saturday, March 9, at 9:30 AM. Funeral on Monday, March 11, at 9:30 AM, burial in Healdsburg. Memory Eternal.

• THE LAST JUDGMENT—Matthew 25:31:

...Christ does not ask us to fulfill the law. He will not count the number of loaves of bread and of cups of water and the number of visits we pay to hospitals and so forth. He will measure our heart’s response. And this is made clear from the words of Christ in another part of St John’s Gospel, where he says, “And when ye shall