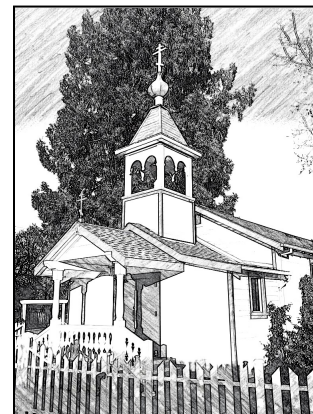


ANNOUNCEMENTS

THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

March 11, 2018 - Veneration of the Precious Cross



- 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.

- TROPARION OF THE CROSS, Tone One:

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation.

- KONTAKION OF THE CROSS, Tone Seven:

The fiery sword no longer guards the gate of Eden, for in a strange and glorious way the wood of the Cross has quenched its flames. The sting of death and the victory of hades are now destroyed, for Thou art come, my Savior, crying unto those in hades: "Return again to Paradise."

- INSTEAD OF THE TRISAGION:

Before Thy Cross, we bow down, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, March 10: 3:30 PM, Catechism *On Marriage and Monasticism*
4:30 PM, Panikhida for Joseph Gumper
5 PM, VIGIL, bringing out of the Precious Cross
- Sunday, March 11: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape luncheon in Hall
12:45 PM, Sisterhood Meeting in Hall
12:45 PM, *Q&A, Junior and Senior High Students with Fr. Lawrence (porch)*
- Tues., March 13: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
6 PM, Panikhida for Joseph Gumper
- Wed., March 14: **10 AM, Funeral for Joseph Gumper, Burial in Sebastopol, Memorial Meal to follow**
[Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts postponed until Friday evening]

- Thurs., March 15: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship
- Friday, March 16: 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, eve of St. Patrick Day

- MEMORY ETERNAL:

On Friday morning, Mr. Joseph Gumper, our beloved Sunday Greeter, reposed in the Lord. Joseph served the Lord in this parish in many ways, and he will be missed. I will prepare a brief eulogy, for the Memorial Meal (on Wednesday afternoon), and will list all those ways in which Joseph gave of himself. The Funeral Services will be held as follows:

Saturday, March 10, Panikhida at 4:30 PM. Tuesday, March 13, Panikhida at 6 PM.

Wednesday, March 14, Funeral at 10 AM, followed by the burial and a Memorial Meal

Please note: The Wednesday Presanctified will be postponed until Friday at 6:15 PM

- SISTERHOOD MEETING:

Please join us after the Agape lunch at 12:45 PM in the Parish Hall for our Sisterhood Meeting, Sunday, March 11. The evolving Sisterhood Changes Committee has met a few times working on developing the new direction Fr. Lawrence has suggested for the Sisterhood. We need and welcome ***all feedback*** on the pros and cons of the proposed ideas we formed. It's important we take care of each other and take time to listen to any concerns through this transition. Nothing definite has been decided at this point—and while there may (or may not) be changes in the Sisterhood structure, the organization is not being disbanded. Any questions please contact me by phone at 415.279.0353 or by email at

kirastaykow@gmail.com — *Kira Staykow and Fr. Lawrence*

- ENTERING THE CHURCH:

...so easily do we enter the divine temple, forgetting so easily that the church into which we come is a small part of a world that has chosen to be alien to God, that has rejected God, lost interest in Him; and that the few believers have created for God a place of refuge—yes, the church is the fullness of Heaven, and at the same time a tragic place of refuge, the only place where God has a right to be because He is wanted. And when we come here, we enter into the divine realm. We should come into it with a sense of awe, not just walk into it as into a space but walk into it as a space which is already the divine Kingdom. If we were in that mood we would, when we come to the doors of the church, be, however little, like Mary of Egypt. We would stop and say, 'How can I come in?' And if we did that with our whole heart, broken-heartedly, with a sense of horror of the fact that we are so distant from God, so alien, so unfaithful to Him, then the doors would open and we would see that we are not simply in a big space surrounded with walls but we are in a space which is God's Heaven come to earth. Let us therefore learn from this experience what it means to go step by step towards the Resurrection, because in order to reach the Resurrection we must go through Calvary, we must go through the tragedy of Holy Week and make it our own, partaking with Christ and His disciples and the crowds around in the horror, the terror of it; and also experience it as a scorching fire that will burn in us all that is unworthy of God and make us clean. And perhaps one day, when the fire will have burnt everything which is not worthy of God, each of us may become an image of the burning bush, aflame with divine fire and not consumed... Amen.

—*Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of London*

- CHURCH CAMP:

There will be an informational meeting about the Diocesan Church Camp on Sunday, March 18, during (after?) the Agape Meal. We will welcome Kathy Pieracci and John Rhodes, assistants to the camp director, who will give us a full report on the new camp site. The Church Camp will be held from July 8th–14th.

- UNCTION AT STS. PETER AND PAUL:

Father Alexander Krassovsky has invited our clergy and faithful to participate in a “General Unction” at Sts. Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church on Stony Point Rd, Monday, March 19 at 5 PM. ***Please note, the date on the March calendar has been changed. The correct date is Monday, March 19, 5 PM.*** “General Unction” in distinction to the Unction Services at our parish, is served not only for the physically ill, but to any Orthodox Christian in need of God’s help during Great Lent. Fr. Alexander reminds us in his invitation that if you plan to attend, Confession prior to the Service is required. Plan to make your confession by Saturday, March 17, or Sunday, March 18. Fr. Alexander also indicates that Holy Unction may only be received once a year, and not repeated in different parishes.

- CATECHISM ON HOLY UNCTION:

Those who will attend the Holy Unction at our sister parish will also want to attend the class on this particular holy mystery, Saturday, March 17 at 3:30 PM, in the Parish Library.

- SUNDAY OF THE VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS:

On the Third Sunday of Great and Holy Lent, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Services include a special veneration of the Cross, which prepares the faithful for the commemoration of the Crucifixion during Holy Week. ...[the feast] also reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ. As we have “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24), and will have mortified ourselves during these forty days of the Fast, the precious and life-giving Cross is now placed before us to refresh our souls and encourage us who may be filled with a sense of bitterness, resentment, or depression. The Cross reminds us of the Passion of our Lord, and by presenting to us His example, it encourages us to follow Him in struggle and sacrifice, being refreshed, assured, and comforted. ...As they who walk on a long and hard way and are bowed down by fatigue find great relief and strengthening under the cool shade of a leafy tree, so do we find comfort, refreshment, and rejuvenation under the Life-giving Cross, which our Fathers “planted” on this Sunday. Thus, we are fortified and enabled to continue our Lenten journey with a light step, rested and encouraged. ...as the Holy Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is placed in the middle of the Fast, as the ancient tree of life was placed in the middle of the garden of Eden. By this, our Holy Fathers wished to remind us of Adam’s gluttony as well as the fact that through this Tree has condemnation been abolished. Therefore, if we bind ourselves to the Holy Cross, we shall never encounter death but shall inherit life eternal. ...At the Vigil of that day, after the Great Doxology, the Cross is brought in a solemn procession to the center of the church and remains there for the entire week—with a special rite of veneration following each service. It is noteworthy that the theme of the Cross which dominates the hymnology of that Sunday is developed in terms not of suffering but of victory and joy. More than that, the theme-songs (*irmoi*) of the Matins Canon ...is a paraphrase of the Paschal Canon “This is the day of resurrection, let us be illumined, O people...”

- CONCERT HERE:

The Green Mountain Singers (part of Sonoma Bach) will give a concert of 15th century sacred choral music—entitled *Sacred Realms, the Eternal City*—at St. Seraphim Cathedral on Saturday, March 17, 8 PM and Sunday, March 18, 3 PM. For more info visit: www.sonomabach.org

- THOUGHTS ON ANNUNCIATION—Celebrated on March 24 and 25:

Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word. It is humble, but also a little surprising. God’s angel has told her what will happen. God’s fiat is always accomplished: in the creation, God spoke, and it was so. But Holy Mary, the Theotokos, offers her own echoing “fiat”: “let it be.” She willingly offers herself in synergy with the living God. After all, God has gone out of his way to send the announcing angel, and has dignified Mary with conversation: her response may not be absolutely required, but it is desired. Moreover, to say yes will cost her something—the consternation of her fiancé, her reputation among some who hear of the irregularity, the pain of seeing her Son rejected. With her consent, God will work with her, so that the God-Man is conceived of the Father and the Virgin Mary. Not by the “will of man,” as John’s gospel puts it, but by God’s will, and the open-hearted consent of a young woman, full of grace.

In contrast to the first woman, who was not grateful for God’s provision of the tree of life, but wanted what was forbidden, and what ultimately brought the downfall of all her children, this young woman responds to the angel’s enjoinder to “rejoice” and embraces God’s will. She becomes the mother of our Salvation, the one who will bear our Savior, the second Adam. Almost as soon as she speaks in openness to the angel, she hurries to see her cousin Elizabeth, and the joy spreads: Elizabeth exclaims, “The babe in my womb leaped for joy”, and “Blessed is the one who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what the Lord spoke.” Mary then overflows out of the fullness of her heart: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” Her song speaks with joy and confidence of the overturning and fulfilling power of a God who has not abandoned his people, nor the human race, but finally has visited them and us fully, decisively, transformingly.

And so, with the announcement of Gabriel that we remember [on Annunciation], we are ushered into the holy of holies, the deep recesses of the human heart where God visits us, and where he desires to dwell. It must never cease to amaze us that the omnipotent, self-sufficient Holy Trinity desires to dwell with us. The Father of all lights, and the Lord of heavenly hosts sees something in humanity that he wills to enter and transform, making Humanity fully alive. And so his Spirit will overshadow the young Mary, and something—no, Someone—revolutionary will come into our world. Gabriel comes not only to announce something to Mary, and thus to us, concerning the incarnation of God the Son. Gabriel, in his annunciation, also is the catalyst for the response of this holy young woman, the jewel of God’s own people: she says “yes” for us to the living God!

With her, let us trust the word that is spoken, and receive the Word who is engrafted by means of the Spirit. In her very womb, the Word will grow and thrive, becoming the true Light who enlightens all the world. In our hearts, may that same One dwell, making us more and more what He has in mind for us to be—those who can, like the Theotokos, also trust, also say yes, and also work together with the Living God as he brings wonders to pass. —*Edith M. Humphrey*