

the glory of Pascha. It is, rather, the fulfillment of Pascha, and a movement upward toward the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the joyful revelation of our destiny in Christ. —*adapted*

- PASTORAL INTERNSHIP:

Our Parish Council decided to continue the internship program this summer (and after) by hosting Alexander Norton, from St. Tikhon's Seminary (he is neither married nor ordained. We hope he will be with us for a brief internship from late June–August 8. We will need to provide accommodations for him, expecting his arrival around June 18. Please contact me as soon as possible if you have any possible leads for a place for him to stay. Sometime near the end of September we hope to receive another intern and his wife to be with us for a year. The newly married JJ. (John) and Janine Kotalik currently live and work in Seattle, where he (a grad from St. Tikhon's Seminary) directs the choir at St. Spyridon Orthodox Cathedral (OCA). Planning for the long-term, we hope to convert the Sunday school rooms to an apartment (and at the same time convert one of the storage building bays to two classrooms). We would share our intern with Holy Trinity Cathedral in SF, where he could assist Fr. Kirill a couple days a week, and work here the rest of the time. We hope for an ordination to the Holy Diaconate either before or during his internship. Let us all pray for God's blessing upon the internship program. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- SAINT SERAPHIM WEEK FOR KIDS:

Our annual “Vacation Bible School” (children age 10 and under) will be held from June 11–15. Daily schedule here at the church will start with arrivals by 10 AM, a morning prayer at 10:15 AM sharp, followed by a brief spiritual lesson with Fr. Lawrence, then crafts, games, snacks, folk dancing, music, and a wrap-up prayer at 1 PM (please note that the time has moved from 9–Noon). Registration and Volunteer forms (age 17 and up for volunteers) are available at the candle desk after Liturgy. **Parents, godparents and grandparents:** it is very important that we have your involvement. Not only do our children need this, but we as a church community need to be involved with our children! Please contact Gloria Collins at (707) 849-6135.

# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

## PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



**May 13, 2018**

Sunday of the Blind Man (John 9:1–38)



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Five:

Let us the faithful praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death and to raise the dead, by His glorious Resurrection.

- KONTAKION OF THE BLIND MAN, Tone Four:

Being blinded in the eyes of my soul, O Savior, I come unto Thee, O Christ, as did the man who was born blind. And in repentance I cry to Thee: of those in darkness art Thou the most radiant Light.

- KONTAKION OF PASCHA, Tone Eight:

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades. And didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women: Rejoice; And giving peace unto Thine apostles, O Thou who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, May 12: 5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, May 13: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
11:30 AM, Church School  
Noon, Agape at the Courtyard (coffee and donuts)
- Wed., May 16: 6:15 PM, Vigil for the Ascension of our Lord
- Thurs., May 17: 9:30 AM, Ascension Day Divine Liturgy  
Senior/Retired Fellowship Brunch

### • AGAPETODAY:

The Parish Hall has been rented for use for a wedding reception Sunday, so our normal Sunday Agape meal is simplified to coffee, fruit and pastries.

### • THE SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN:

The Gospel account (John 9) teaches us an important lesson about the relationship between faith and evidence. We often think that if God gives us enough of the right kind of evidence, our faith will follow naturally and inevitably. But this Gospel account clearly contradicts this theory. Evidence is important (we don't have a blind faith), but it is not the final and decisive issue. Both the Pharisees and the Blind Man had the same abundance of evidence—yet they responded in totally different ways. The main obstacle to faith in Jesus is not insufficient evidence, but rather—in the light of that evidence—unwillingness to humble oneself before God and set aside intellectual pride which cannot fathom the mysteries of the Kingdom.

While the formerly blind man gradually moves into the bright vision and clarity of faith, those who question and resist the sign plunge further and further into the shadows of unbelief. The distinction made in the Gospel is not between those who are blind and those who see, but rather, between those who know that they are blind and those who claim that they see. And the controversy surrounding this miracle indicates that then as today, “people loved darkness rather than light” (John 3:19). —*adapted*

### • LEAVE-TAKING OF PASCHA:

After Wednesday we will no longer use the greeting “Christ is risen” or sing

the hymn of Pascha. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a reality for us, and something we confess and affirm when we recite the Creed in our daily prayers. On Wednesday, which is the eve of the Ascension of the Lord (which we also confess when we recite the Creed) until the following Friday, we sing this hymn: *Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy Disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit. And they were assured by the blessing that Thou art the Son of God and Redeemer of the world.*

### • FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

Orthodox Christians the world over will celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of Christ with **Vigil on Wednesday, May 16**, and the **Divine Liturgy on Thursday, May 17**. I encourage all of you to participate in this feast day by coming to at least one of the festal services. Even though it is mentioned in the Creed, the Feast of the Ascension of Christ does not seem to occupy a place of honor in the worship practices of most Orthodox Christians. The Feast is always on a Thursday—Forty Days after the Resurrection (see Acts 1)—and never on a Sunday, so, alas, most parishioners miss the great blessing of this Feast. What are we missing? One pastor describes it as follows: Ascension is the vindication of the crucified, buried and risen Lord Jesus, the initiation of His reign over all creation, and His power made present in us. “It is the glorified flesh of the Incarnate Word of God which has entered into the very bosom of the Trinity in the Person of Christ. As St. Leo the Great, the Pope of Rome (+461) taught: ‘With all due solemnity we are commemorating that day on which our poor human nature was carried up, in Christ, above all the hosts of Heaven, above all the ranks of angels, beyond the highest Heavenly powers to the very throne of God the Father.’ This is simultaneously our ascension and our glorification, since we are united to Christ through holy Baptism as members of His Body. Therefore, St. Paul can further write: ‘For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.’ (Col. 3:3) Out of our physical sight, we now ‘see’ the glorified Christ through the eyes of faith. St. Leo further explains how important this spiritual insight is: ‘For such is the power of great minds, such the light of truly believing souls, that they put unhesitating faith in what is not seen with the bodily eyes; they fix their desires on what is beyond sight. Such fidelity could never be born in our hearts, nor could anyone be justified by faith, if our salvation lay only in what is visible.’ The Feast of the Ascension is not a decline from