

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 17, 2015 ~ Sunday of the Blind Man

morning prayer at 9:15 AM sharp, followed by a brief spiritual lesson with one of the priests, then crafts, games, snacks, folk dancing, music, and a wrap-up prayer at noon. Registration and Volunteer forms are available at the candle desk after Liturgy. We hope to have our core teen volunteers with us, and any other volunteers, age eleven and older. **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.

- MUSIC & POETRY, JUNE 5:

Share your performing talents on this Fast Free Friday evening at the *St. Seraphim Salon*. Sing – Play – Read – Celebrate! Potluck meal with spaghetti and salad provided begins at 6 PM. Sign up to perform and to dine: Vladimir, 707 479-9437, [ursusmjr@sonic.net](mailto:ursusmjr@sonic.net).

- FRESCOS:

Fr. Patrick is drawing the Great Martyrs George and Demetrius in preparation for the next frescos.

- ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON

Near the beginning of the Divine Liturgy we sing the hymn “Only-begotten Son and Word of God...” This hymn is a sort of mini-creed, summarizing the essentials of the Christian faith in the Holy Trinity the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ Jesus, the Word of God made flesh. Well worth learning by heart, the “Only-Begotten” dates from the sixth century and is attributed by the majority of contemporary liturgical scholars to the Emperor Justinian (482–565 AD), who was responsible for the construction of many churches, including the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) in Constantinople, San Vitale in Ravenna, St. Catherine at Sinai, St. John in Ephesus, the Nativity in Bethlehem, etc. Fr. Thomas Hopko, of blessed memory, claimed that “if a person can’t sing this hymn and if a person cannot proclaim this doctrine, then we would simply say they’re not Orthodox. It’s necessary to be able to sing this hymn with sincerity, with authenticity, really believing in it, really identifying with what it says as this synopsis of the Gospel itself, of all the major elements of the Orthodox Christian faith.”

- 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 16: 9:30 AM–4 PM, *Parish Council Retreat, Glen Ellen*  
5 PM, Vespers
- Sunday, May 17: 9 AM, Confessions / 10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
11:30 AM, Church School Classes  
Noon, Agape luncheon in Hall  
12:45 PM, Glendi Signage Meeting
- Tues., May 19: 6 PM, Matins for Leave-taking of Pascha
- Wed., May 20: *In Calistoga at St. Symeon's: 10 AM, Liturgy of Leavetaking*  
6:15 PM, Vigil for the Ascension of our Lord
- Thurs., May 21: 9 AM, Ascension Day Divine Liturgy

- TUESDAY EVENING: LEAVE-TAKING OF HOLY PASCHA:

The very same hymns that were sung at the Paschal Matins (without the procession and the Liturgy) will be chanted one final time at 6 PM on Tuesday, May 20, in St. Seraphim. Come and be spiritually nourished by the powerful hymns which celebrate the Lord's victory for us over death.

- NEXT SATURDAY:

Fr. Lawrence will be attending a meeting in Tempe, AZ on Friday and Saturday, May 22 and 23, back late Saturday night. On Saturday afternoon, a group from Holy Dormition will have a wedding rehearsal in St. Seraphim from 3–4 PM.

- NEXT SUNDAY:

Baptism of Miriam Brodeur on Sunday, May 24 at 9 AM. The Sisterhood will have a meeting after the agape meal. At 3 PM there will be a wedding in St. Seraphim (Skopp/Tolbert).

- SHOE DRIVE:

Most of us have a pair of good condition shoes in our closet that we no longer wear. Please bring those shoes to put them in the “Catholic Charities Shoe Drive” on the church porch.

- PRAYERS:

Pray for Kathie Franotovich, Thom Stewart, John Andronico, Hadish Tesfu, George Kielczynski (suffered a mild heart attack on Thursday), and Matushka Eleanor. Please let the office know if there are others.

- THE SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN:

The account 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).

- FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

Orthodox Christians the world over will celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of Christ with **Vigil on Wednesday, May 20**, and the **Divine Liturgy on Thursday, May 21**. I encourage all of you to participate in this feast day by coming to at least one of the festal services. Consider these words of one venerable pastor, who remarks that it is vitally “important for us that Christ ascended in His Body, that in this we see the invariable humanity of God. Having once become incarnate, the Savior always remains human, forever ‘uniting things on earth with the heavens’ (from the *Kontakion of Ascension*), and He took His humanity up to the right hand of the Father. Through His Body He opened to us the way home, and we in the Body of the Savior will be taken up to the Father. Is this, perhaps, the reason why Christians partake of Holy Communion with such awe, uniting with the Body and Blood of Christ, that in Him alone is our salvation, that in Him alone we rise from the dead, ‘in Him we live and move and have our being’ (Acts 17:28)? Finally, the ascension of the Lord in the flesh means that His Body, the Holy Church (Ephesians 1:23) is not a ghost, nor an abstract concept, not a hobby club, but a living and whole body. It is not enough, therefore, to just think about the Church, to sympathize with Christianity, to like it. It is not enough to know about the Church or to stop by now and again. One must be in the Church, live in her, live by the Body and Blood of the Savior. Only in the Body of Christ does the resurrection of the Savior become our resurrection, the ascension—our ascension, the heavenly Father—our Father, and the eternal life with God—our life.” (*Fr. Sergei Sveshnikov*)

- SAINT SERAPHIM WEEK FOR KIDS:

Our annual “Vacation Bible School” will be held from June 8–12 this year. Daily schedule here at the church will start with arrivals by 9 AM, a