

waters of the Scriptures and the fathers, to be transformed in our minds, hearts, and lives. To each of us is given the promise that we will “yield a hundredfold of fruit...hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart” (Luke 8:15). Christianity is not a faith for the elite, but for all who listen, look, and are transformed. Our icons are on the walls for the illiterate to contemplate; our Scriptures are read aloud in the vernacular language for all to understand; from the earliest days the sermon was given even to those who were not baptized, that they might eventually come to illumination. Christ’s gift is gloriously for the free, not those who are enslaved, for everyone, regardless of age, ability, race, or education. Though there are mysteries, these are hedged only for our protection, and we are meant to grow into them, all of us! Holy Things are for the Holy! We have a sure foundation, Jesus Christ himself, and will not be left in shallowness, so long as we apply ourselves to what we have been given. *Edith M. Humphrey, from her blog: A Lamp for Today*

- EXPRESSING GRATITUDE BEFOREHAND:

Prayer and fasting—when done with faith and from the heart—give us capacity to receive God’s grace. “Space” is made, so to say, for God in the soul by turning away from our own desires (whether good or bad desires). Tito Colliander, in the marvelous book, “Way of the Ascetics” put it this way: “Since the Fall [from Paradise] the will has been running errands exclusively for its own ego.” So some effort is required on our part to be free of ourselves and the power of our thoughts and impulses. In this effort we receive in return much more than what we offer. Of course, God’s grace is not earned; we only prepare ourselves to receive it. All this is especially true of our participation in the Divine Liturgy and reception of Holy Communion. *A question:* What is given to us in the Church as the most effective way to prepare for the Liturgy, to give us the “capacity” to carry the Holy Gifts within ourselves as communion with the Savior? Our practice in the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) is to make a confession at least once a month. We are also taught to say the *Prayers Before Holy Communion*, found in any common *Orthodox Prayer Book*, before receiving Holy Communion. Finally, the Tradition of the Church also strongly encourages us to attend Vespers on Saturday evening as part of our preparation for Communion.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



October 15, 2017

Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Two:
When Thou didst descend to death, O Life-Immortal, Thou didst slay hades with the splendor of Thy Godhead; and when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to Thee.
- TROPARION OF THE HOLY FATHERS, Tone Eight:
Most glorified art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast established the Holy Fathers as luminous stars upon the earth, and through them didst guide us all to the true Faith. O Most Merciful One, glory be to Thee.
- KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Two:
Hades became afraid, O Almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb. The dead arose, creation with Adam beheld this and rejoiced with Thee; and the world, O my Savior, praises Thee forever.

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- KONTAKION OF THE HOLY FATHERS, Tone Eight:

The preaching of the Apostles and the doctrines of the Fathers confirmed the one Faith in the Church. And wearing the garment of truth woven from theology on high, she rightly divideth and glorifieth the great mystery of piety.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Oct. 14: 5 PM, Vespers
- Sunday, Oct. 15: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
Noon, Agape Meal
- Wednesday, Oct. 18: **9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Holy Apostle Luke**
6 PM, Vespers

- OUR RESPONSE:

On Monday morning, when we all realized that the fires around us had devastated parts of this and other counties, a number of our parish members came to the church for solace and fellowship, but also, in order to be of service in a time of need. The Hall was cleaned and rearranged, pine needles were cleaned off the roofs, and the buildings watered down.

All week long we have had people here working hard to connect those in need with the resources available. In particular I want to thank George Barsi, Debbie Buse, Kathleen Rhodes, Sarah Hamner and Bonnie Alexander for handling phone calls, emails, text messages and personal contacts. Their compassionate response has been a blessing to many. We met on Thursday to discuss what we, as a parish, could best provide during the crisis.

Early Tuesday morning I fly to Portland, OR to attend the Diocesan Assembly (only the Diocesan Council meeting and dinner) and then quickly returned on Wednesday afternoon with the blessing and prayers of Archbishop Benjamin and Bishop Daniel, who have been in daily contact with me.

On Friday morning it became more than obvious, despite the hazy air and my hazy mental state, that I needed to be here, not in Greece, during these frightful days (my pilgrimage to Mt Athos was for Oct. 16–27). The process of canceling flights, Airbnb, transport, etc., having to do with

the trip, was trouble-free and cost free, oddly enough. I am grateful for that.

As of today, our parish has a fire relief fund set up on our parish website. We also have money ear-marked for us by the Russian-American Community Services (RACS) thanks to Fr. Alexander Krassovsky at Sts. Peter and Paul, and Mr. Nikita Buick from Holy Virgin Cathedral in SF. See: <http://racssf.org/index.php/donate>

Other info to share: Costco stores—with the help of Herman and Maria Vasques' nephew Ryan, who works for that chain—supplied us with a large pallet of items, which we will be distributing.

Mention must be made of the outstanding generosity of numerous parish members who made homes and rooms available to those who have been evacuated or lost their homes (Ramona and Florin Iancu, George and Kira Staykow and perhaps others have houses that burned down. I do not know about others).

On Wednesday evening Vespers was cancelled, since I was in transit from Portland, however when I returned, a group of us did a procession around the entire church property perimeter with the Icon of the Protection; on Thursday we had a *Service of Supplication for Rain* (the Lord's plan is obviously different); on Friday we sang the *Akathist for the Feast of the Protection* (it being the eve of the feast on the Old Calendar) and the Divine Liturgy this morning, Saturday, Oct. 14. Following the *Supplication Service* we benefited from a short talk by Silouan Green (a visiting friend) on PTSD, trauma and crisis, topics which he lectures on to groups like the CHP. On Thursday, Lukia Rose gave a very practical and useful talk on dealing with anxiety, fear and logismi and getting back into our bodies.

There are other plans in the works for responding and helping each other and those in our community. One such plan is childcare, arranged by Sarah Hamner and Gloria Collins. There will be **free** childcare for the community on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (10/16-18) from 8:30 AM–1:30 PM. Games, crafts, Legos, story-time, and lots of indoor fun. Snack and lunch are provided.

Finally, we will be tentatively expecting a visit by Bishop Daniel next Sunday. Stay in touch, volunteer where you can, reach out to those in need, be of service. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- FAITH OF THE HOLY FATHERS:

The faith is not something imparted only to the wise and those in authority, but to all of us, who are called to search out the truth, to drink deeply of the