

preciate what God have given to us, and so it is by nature an ascetic journey, in other words, on this journey we surrender our souls to the will of God, and relinquish our control over the journey to Him whose birth we are about to celebrate. We fast so that we may be lifted above all those things which bind us to our worldly life, freeing ourselves to be united in Him. As we fast we are reminded that we depend on Him for our food and life itself. We feel the need for more than our daily bread. “Cleansing our minds through fasting, let us offer through our lives virtues instead of myrrh, preparing with faith our entry into the feast of the Nativity, storing up treasure in our souls and crying: Glory in the highest to God in Trinity.” How to fast? If you are ill, pregnant, a nursing mother, a young child, or on delicate medications, then you do not need to fast. Otherwise, starting on Nov. 15, abstain from all meat and meat products, all dairy and dairy products, eggs, as well as fish (except on weekends and holy days) and wine and olive oil (except on holy days as indicated in the calendar). During Advent we also 1) increase prayer, primarily intercessory prayer for the suffering world; 2) we attend Church Services more (primarily the Saturday evening Vespers); 3) we make a more regular and frequent Confession; 4) and we find the time and resources to do works of mercy. About this last aspect, St. Leo the Great says that the Nativity Fast is a sacrifice to God: “just as the Lord has generously granted us abundance of the fruits of the earth, so should we, during the time of this Fast, be generous to the poor.” May it be that each one of you will find great benefit and joy in this renewal of the last month of the year—the blessed time of the Advent Fast. —*adapted*

• **NOURISHING THE SOUL WITH THE WORD OF GOD:** Orthodox Christians love and trust the Bible. They read it regularly, study it with fervent prayer; seek guidance in understanding it. Daily reading reveals to us that the words of the Bible are “living and active.” Bible reading, like most other things, needs structure, or else nothing gets done. Toward providing structure, a daily Bible reading-plan is will be available to you by Thanksgiving. This plan aims at reading the entire Bible—starting December 1—over the course of one year. Surely it will be a daunting and challenging task, but also an extremely rewarding one. With the plan there will be information to help us in our goal. I hope you will enter into this great work of engaging with words of “spirit and life.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday ~ November 11, 2012

St. Nectarios of Aegina (moved from 11/9)

- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Six:
The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hades, and wast not tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin granting life. O Lord who didst rise from the dead: glory to Thee.
- TROPARION OF ST. NECTARIOS, Tone One:
The offspring of Selyvria and the guardian of Aegina, the true friend of virtue who didst appear in the last years, O Nectarios, we faithful honor thee as a godly servant of Christ, for thou pourest forth healings of every kind for those who piously cry out: Glory to Christ Who hath glorified thee, Glory to Him who hath made thee wondrous. Glory to Him Who worketh healings for all through thee.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Nov. 10: 3:30 PM, Catechism
5 PM, Great Vespers, Confessions
- Sunday, Nov. 11: 9 AM, Confessions; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
12 Noon, Agape Meal
- Tues., Nov. 13: **9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy at Kazan Skete**
12 Noon, Akathist to St. Herman
7 PM, Rohnert Park Study Group
- Wed., Nov. 14: 6 PM, Reader Vespers
- Thur., Nov. 15: Beginning of the Nativity Fast

- Sat., Nov. 17: 8:30 AM, Grounds Work Party
12 Noon, Blessing at Pleasant Hills Cemetery
3:30 PM, Catechism
5 PM, Great Vespers, Confessions

- FOR PARENTS:

Please supervise your children at all times, and most importantly accompany them if for any reason they need to leave the Church during the Liturgy.

- PRAYERS FOR THE ALL AMERICAN COUNCIL:

I ask your prayers: the OCA clergy and laity will gather in Parma, OH to elect a new Metropolitan, on Tuesday, Nov. 13. How to pray for us? Pray at home, for sure, but if possible, attend the Liturgy at Kazan Skete on Tuesday, and/or come to church to pray the brief Akathist to St. Herman of Alaska at Noon, and ask the Lord to grant us a blessed and holy Council.—*Fr. Lawrence*

- WORK PARTY—SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17:

Join us for a work party to finish the storage of Glendi equipment, and to winterize the property (stack and cover picnic tables, clear gutters, ditches, trim some branches, etc.) and to clean up the grounds. The work will begin at 8:30 AM, and go until about Noon.

- BLESSING OF CEMETERY GROUNDS:

On Saturday, November 17 at Noon, I will be blessing a section of the Pleasant Hill Cemetery in Sebastopol, dedicating it for graves of Orthodox Christians. Pleasant Hill has offered to reserve a section of the cemetery for us, and while the land is not being given to us, it will be set aside for us to purchase as need arises. I hope you will join me. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- A CERTAIN MAN—a synopsis of the Parable of the Good Samaritan:

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves. A certain man. Many early Holy Fathers identified this man as Adam, and by extension all of humanity. *Went down.* St. John Chrysostom said that this represents the descent of Adam from Paradise (Jerusalem)—the Garden of Eden, into this world (Jericho, 825 feet below sea level)—from glory to an absence of glory, from life to death. The man goes down intentionally, knowing the risks involved in the journey. No one forces him to go down to Jericho. *Fell among thieves which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving*

him half dead. The devil, or evil spirits deceived Adam and Eve, stripped them of God’s glory in Paradise. Wounded and half dead, not totally depraved. They experienced a darkening and fragmentation of the **nous** (the heart), and experienced alienation from God and knowledge of Him, unruly desires and thoughts, captivity to the passions, sin, suffering and death. *And by chance there came down a certain priest that way.* The priest is the Law, the Levite is the prophets, and the Samaritan is Christ. In the Gospel of John, some Jews in Jerusalem rejected Jesus with the insult, “...thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil” (John 8:48). The Samaritan went to the wounded man. Christ runs to the side of those who suffer and comes to their aid. Without this help, the victim has no hope for recovery or progress. For Chrysostom “the bandages are the teachings of Christ” which bind us to righteousness, the oil as a “holy anointing” of the Holy Spirit, Who heals that which is lacking. Wine is the Body and Blood of Christ, which gives immortal life when received with repentance and faith. *And set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.* Set him on his own beast, meaning the human nature of Jesus Christ who, fulfilling prophecy, bears “our sicknesses” (Matt. 8:17 quoting Isa. 53:4). The Inn is the Church, to which the wounded man is taken where all—Jew, Gentile and sinner—are welcome. It is the spiritual hospital where healing and transformation occur. The *two denarii* paid to the Innkeeper mean the Father and the Son. The Innkeeper is a type and symbol of every apostle, teacher, and pastor, to whom the Lord gave two pence, representing the two Testaments, Old and New. Just as both coins bear the image of the one king, so do both Testaments bear the words of the same God. When the Lord ascended into the heavens He left these two coins in the hands of the Apostles, and in the hands of the bishops and teachers of every generation. The Samaritan promises he will return, which represents the Savior’s second coming. Thus, the whole Parable has many levels of meaning, and is a catechism of faith.

- NATIVITY FAST:

The Nativity Fast begins on November 15. This season of abstinence and ascetic work, less strict than Lent, serves to refresh the ending of the year—mystically renewing our spiritual unity with God and preparing us for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ. The fast is the starting point for a spiritual journey to Christmas. We spiritual live the time of waiting (Advent) like the people of old anticipating the coming of the Messiah. This journey is one one that requires our development of greater humility so we can fully ap-