

Samaritan's return 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, although less strict than Lent, takes effort if it is 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 spiritually live the time of waiting (Advent) like the people of old anticipating the coming of the Messiah. The waiting is also a journey towards humility, which is necessary in order to fully appreciate God's gift in Christ; 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 keep us from God, 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 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 others, especially the suffering world; 2) attend Church Services more (if you don't normally come to Saturday evening Vespers, then begin now); 3) make a regular and frequent Confession; 4) 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*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday ~ November 16, 2014

St. Matthew the Evangelist

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• 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, not being 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. MATTHEW, Tone One:

O holy Apostle Matthew, intercede with the merciful God that He grant unto our souls forgiveness of offenses.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Nov. 15: 3:30 PM, Catechism, on the *Mystery of Marriage*  
5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, Nov. 16: 9:30 AM, Reception of new catechumen, Lars Noren  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
11:45 AM, Church School  
12 Noon, **POTLUCK Agape Meal**
- Tues., Nov. 18: 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting
- Wed., Nov. 19: 6 PM, Vespers, Potluck and a talk by Fr. Deacon James Hughes, on *Christian Education and children*
- Thur., Nov. 20: *At Kazan Skete, 8 AM, Divine Liturgy*  
6 PM, Great Vespers: *Entrance of the Theotokos*  
7 PM, Master Planning Meeting
- Friday, Nov. 21: 8:30 AM, Matins and Liturgy for the Feast

- Sat., Nov. 23: 3:30 PM, Catechism, on *Holy Unction*  
5 PM, Great Vespers

- CATECHISM REVISITED:

“Catechism Revisited,” will be offered on Wednesdays from 11 AM to Noon. The first session will be on Wednesday, Nov 19, on personal prayer. All are invited; bring your friends. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- TALKS ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND OUR CHILDREN:

Father Deacon James Hughes, former headmaster of St. Michael’s Orthodox School in Santa Rosa, will be giving two presentations here. November 19 and 26 following the 6 PM Vespers and the lenten food potluck. This lecture, followed by a brief question and answer period, will address aspects of education of children in the Orthodox Church.

- CHRISTMAS SHOE BOXES:

A gentle reminder to bring any completed shoeboxes to the parish hall this Sunday. We will be dropping them off at the Samaritan’s Purse church site. Thank you to all who gave funds toward this project or did a shoebox. And to Dauphne Russell who brought this “giving project” to our parish. For our local children in need, we will do another round of making shoebox gifts in December. We will also be giving to the family staying in the Catholic Charities room St Seraphim supports. Date TBD.—*with thanks, Kira Staykow*

- MEETINGS THIS WEEK:

**Parish Council** on Tuesday, November 18 at 7 PM, and **Master Planning** on Thursday, November 20, following the Great Vespers for the feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos.

- WOMEN’S RETREAT:

Mother Melania from Calistoga will lead a women’s retreat at the Monastery of St John in Manton, December 12–14. Call the Monastery of St John at 530-474-5964 for more information.

- ST. SERAPHIM / ST. NICHOLAS BBQ:

Last Sunday evening parents and children from St. Nicholas parish in San Anselmo joined us for an early evening potluck BBQ. There were about thirty children of various ages, and twenty adults. After eating well, and enjoying our new friends, the evening concluded with a look at the frescos in the church and a short prayer. The parents are grateful to those who organ-

ized and worked at the BBQ.

- 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 (the town of Jericho is 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, ignorance of the glory of God, 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