


• PREPARING TO SAY YOUR PRAYERS:

The first preparation consists in rejecting resentment and condemnation of our neighbors. This preparation is commanded by our Lord Himself: When you stand praying, He orders, forgive, *if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father, Who is in heaven may forgive you your offenses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who is in heaven forgive you your offenses.* Further preparation consists in the rejection of cares by the power of faith in God and by the power of obedience and surrender to the will of God; also a realization of one's sinfulness and the resultant contrition and humility of spirit. The one sacrifice which God accepts from fallen human nature is contrition of spirit. *If Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would have given it,* says His Prophet to God on behalf of everyone who has fallen and remains in his fallen state. It is not merely some partial sacrifice of body or soul, but even total holocausts do not please Thee. The sacrifice for God *is a contrite spirit; a contrite and humble heart God will not despise.* St. Isaac the Syrian repeats the following saying of another holy father: "If anyone does not recognize himself as a sinner, his prayer is not acceptable to God." —St. Ignatius Brianchaninov, *The Arena*

The St. Porphyrios Players Present
Charles Dickens'
A Christmas Carol



Saturday, December 13 & Sunday, December 14 at 7:00 pm
St. Seraphim Orthodox Church
90 Mountain View Ave. Santa Rosa, CA 95407
Suggested Donation: Adult \$10 Children \$5
For Tickets & Reservations call: (707) 545-5688

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saint Ambrose of Milan - Dec. 7, 2014

• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone One:

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, / while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, / Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, / granting life to the world. / The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: / Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ; / glory to Thy kingdom; / glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

• TROPARION OF ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN, Tone Four:

The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, / an icon of meekness and a teacher of temperance; / for this cause, thou hast achieved the heights by humility, / riches by poverty. / O Father and Hierarch Ambrose, / intercede with Christ God / that our souls be saved.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Sat., December 6: *In San Anselmo: 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas of Myra and Lykia*
5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sun., December 7: 9 AM, Confessions
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
- Wed., December 10: 11 AM, Catechism Revisited, *On Sin*
5:30 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank
6 PM, Vespers
- Thurs., December 11: Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship
6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim
7 PM, Master Planning Meeting

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- Friday, December 12: 6:15 PM, Great Vespers: St. Herman of Alaska
- Saturday, December 13: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy: St. Herman
10:30 AM, Parish Grounds Work Party
3:30 PM, Catechism on *Holy Unction*
5 PM, Great Vespers
7 PM, *A Christmas Carol*, production of the *Porphyrios Players*, in the Parish Hall

- SISTERHOOD MEETING:

The Parish women are invited to a Sisterhood Meeting in the Parish Hall, at 12:45 PM. FYI: there is no formal membership in the Sisterhood. It's an organization comprised of women, and some men, who practice a diverse ministries (nurturing the community life of the parish, care of the temple and of vestments, organizing meals, retreats, fundraisers, etc.). Our meeting will be focused on organizing the Orthodox Women's Retreat with Presbytera Dr. Jeannie Constantinou, on February 6 and 7. Also to be discussed: Parish Feast of Jan. 2, reception of Bishop Daniel on Jan. 25, and piroszki production.

- NOMADIC SHELTER—FIRST NIGHT:

We thank the Redwood Gospel Mission for bringing the Nomadic Shelter ministry to our parish. The first "Shelter Night" went incredibly well, thanks to Ambrose Inlow's organizational work. Gabe Griovski made a wonderful dinner, which was so appreciated by our thirty or so guests. Alexandra Clark, one of our high school students, played the piano beautifully. Father Lawrence gave a short meditation on the Christmas story, and why the Lord was born in lowly Bethlehem, homeless, rather than in powerful Rome. Our volunteers—about a dozen of you—conversed with the guests and made them feel welcome and valued. One volunteer wrote the following: "Thank you so much for partnering with Redwood Gospel Mission to provide a night for people in need. I had the honor to speak with five or six people and get to know them a bit. I have worked with the homeless, but in a much less intimate setting and often second hand supervising the people who worked directly with the clients. I usually knew the children more than the parents, even though I met the parents and knew that they were living in a car, garage, shelter, or even under a bush, I never had the kind of experience I had last night. The gratitude of the participants was overwhelming. The talk

on the Nativity was beautiful. The music helped people forget, for a couple of hours, their circumstance. In many ways I think the parishioners there benefited more than the participants—I know I did. Thanks again for a beautiful and unforgettable evening." —*a volunteer*

- CONFESSIONS DURING THE LITURGY?

It's been the practice here for many years, and will continue, for confessions to be heard before the Divine Liturgy (9–10 AM). Eventually, confessions were being heard during the Liturgy, up to the Beatitudes. This is not entirely proper, as Confession, being a Holy Mystery in and of itself, shouldn't be "tucked into" the Divine Liturgy (there are exceptions now and then). Many of you have expressed the feeling that the faithful—which includes the clergy—should be able to participate in the Liturgy from the beginning. So, once the bells ring, we will aim to begin the service together. Confessions are also heard Tuesday—Saturday by appointment, and during and after Vespers on Saturday evening.

- NEXT SUNDAY:

Our monthly singing of the *Akathist, Mother of God, Nurturer of Children*, will take place next Sunday, December 14, at 9:30 AM.

- SENIOR LUNCH FELLOWSHIP:

Thursday, December 11th. all seniors and retired folk are invited to lunch in the Parish hall at noon. In addition to a scrumptious soup luncheon to be prepared for us by Eugenia Dada, we'll also be honored with the presence of our very own illustrious Choir Director, who will lead us in singing Christmas Carols. It will be a fun afternoon—so come one and all.

- WINTER WORK PARTY:

A parish work party is planned for **Saturday, December 13**, beginning about 10:30 AM, after the Divine Liturgy for St. Herman of Alaska. Tasks: clean gutters on all buildings, stack and cover picnic tables, clean ditches, clean the church windows, rearrange parts of the storage building, etc.

- SAINT NICHOLAS PARTY, DECEMBER 20:

The Church School children and staff are very excited to be presenting a Christmas play, *The Song of Simeon*, directed by Carmen Anderson, on Saturday, December 20 following Great Vespers and a potluck. Call Gloria Collins at 849-6135 or email her at gypsybootsie@att.net.