

they had never heard such wonderful singing in church. Following the Divine Liturgy there was a procession to the “Jewel in the Crown” of the parish, the Protection Church, where a *Molieben* was sung in honor of the Theotokos, and to beg for her continued intercessions for us unworthy sinners. When the *Molieben* ended, there was a refreshing reception of much-needed coffee, lemonade and water prepared by the men and women of the Parish. (We used to just say the “Sisterhood,” but both sisters and brothers helped set up). We made our way to the large 40’x100’ tent, rented especially for this occasion, and enjoyed a delicious catered meal, a slide-show of photos from the parish history (available at <<saintseraphim.com>>), and a dynamic and inspiring talk by Father Thomas Hopko (also available online). We thank all those that labored to make our meal such a beautiful experience! We thank His Grace, all the priests and deacons, and Subdeacons, singers, and parishioners, cooks, laborers and so forth; despite whatever personal failings, all gave of themselves for the glory of God, and to honor the All-Pure Lady Theotokos, on Her Feast! Glory to God for all things.

• FROM ELDER PAISIOS, MONK OF MOUNT ATHOS:

Some people tell me that they are scandalized because they see many things wrong in the Church. I tell them that if they ask a fly: “Are there any flowers in this area?” it will say: “I don’t know about flowers, but over there in the heap of rubbish you can find all the filth you want.” And it will go on to list all the unclean things it has been to. Now, if you ask a honeybee: “Have you seen any unclean things in this area?” it will reply: “Unclean things? No, I have not seen any; the place here is full of the most fragrant flowers.” And it will go on to name all the flowers of the garden or the meadow. You see, the fly only knows where the unclean things are, while the honeybee knows where the beautiful iris or the hyacinth is. As I have come to understand, some people resemble the honeybee and some resemble the fly. Those who resemble the fly seek to find evil in every circumstance and are preoccupied with it; they see no good anywhere. But those who resemble the honeybee only see the good in everything they see. The stupid person thinks stupidly and takes everything in the wrong way, whereas the person who has good thoughts, no matter what he sees, no matter what you tell him, maintains a positive and good thought.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday ~ October 9, 2011

St. Tikhon of Moscow

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, October 8: 5 PM, Great Vespers, Confessions
- Sunday, October 9: 9 AM, Hours, 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School
- Tues., October 11: 7 PM, Rohnert Park Study Group (on *Orthodoxy and the Protestant Reformation*)
- Wed., October 12: 6 PM, Daily Vespers
6:30 PM, First of a four-part series of talks on prayer
- Thurs., October 13: 6 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim
- Sat., October 15: 3:30 PM, Catechism, in St. Seraphim (*on the Church building*) followed by Vespers at 5 PM.

• DIMENSIONS OF NOETIC PRAYER:

Vincent Rossi will give a four part series of talks on the art and practice of inner prayer according to the teaching of the holy neptic Fathers of the *Philokalia*. It covers the indispensable keys to the practice of the Jesus Prayer, the Prayer of the Heart and unceasing prayer, and culminates in a look at the possibilities and actuality of contemplation and the experience of union with God. The first talk is entitled and is about *Climbing the Ladder of Prayer*; the second is entitled and will cover *Between Passion and Dispassion: Growth in Attention and Prayer*; the third will focus on *Approaching Pure Prayer and the State that Jesus Confers*, and the last will be entitled *Heaven in the Heart: Prayer as the Door of Contemplation*. Because of the absolute centrality of the subject and the depth in which it will be covered, Vincent requests that anyone wishing

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to attend these talks should commit to attending all four, and should optimally be a communing Orthodox Christian and in an active relationship with a spiritual father or mother. If you are interested, please sign up for the class with either Vincent or Fr. Lawrence. There is no fee for this class.

Dates of talks: Wednesdays, October 12, 19 and 26, at 6:30 PM sharp. The final talk will be on Sunday, November 6, 2011, at 4 PM, at the Monastery in Calistoga.

• UPCOMING RETREAT:

Archpriest John Dresko, rector of St. Paul Orthodox Church in Las Vegas, NV, will be giving a talk on Orthodoxy and stewardship entitled “Caring for God’s Gifts” on **Saturday, November 12, 2011, 2–4:30 PM**. Father John is a uniquely gifted man and a wonderful speaker and teacher, who has labored in many areas of Church life: Youth Director for the Diocese of the Midwest, Budget Director for the same diocese, Editor of *Orthodox New England*, Director of Communications for the Diocese of New England, Director of Stewardship for the OCA, and Metropolitan Council member. In addition, Fr. John served as a chaplain in the US Air Force. He is now pastor of St. Paul Orthodox Church, in Las Vegas, the largest parish in the Diocese of the West. Why is Fr. John coming? At a Sisterhood meeting recently, the topic of how to be a good steward came up, and it was decided to ask Fr. John to come and speak. Our parish is growing and as such, is facing new challenges. Fr. John will help us explore those challenges (growth of membership, financial issues, fund raisers and tithing, charitable works, etc.). There is no cost to attend the retreat. Fr. John will also give the homily on Sunday, Nov. 13, and speak after the Liturgy.

• COLLEGE AGE RETREAT

October 28–30 at the Monastery of St. John of SF, in Manton, CA. The retreat will be entitled: “Getting to know God” and will be guided by Archimandrite Meletios, Abbot of the Monastery. The retreat is geared to college-age adults. The participants will join the monks for all monastic services and meals. There will be abundant opportunity for the young people to meet each other and engage in spiritual dialogue. The cost of the retreat is \$120.00 per person for the entire weekend. Scholarships are available; no one will be turned away. Those who are interested are invited to contact Father Lawrence, who will assist in making arrangements for the trip to Manton.

• MEMORY ETERNAL:

Please keep in your prayers, Jerry Ellwood, departed this life on Saturday, October 1. The Ellwoods are our neighbors, living at the farm next door. Jerry was sick for many years, and finally reposed, with faith in the Lord (he was a very fervent Protestant Christian). He leaves his wife, Mary Ann, and children Emily and Andrew.

• OUR PARISH FEAST:

Last Saturday our parish celebrated its Feast, the Protection of the Holy Virgin, as it does each October 1. How unique and wonderful this year’s celebration was! We were very blessed that His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, came for both the Vigil the night before, and the Divine Liturgy on Saturday. Many faithful, perhaps over 125, were at the Vigil and were anointed with the holy oil and heard the wonderful festal hymns sung magnificently by our choir, under the brilliant direction of Reader Nicolas. Among the clergy visiting at Vigil were Fr. Thomas Hopko, our guest of honor, Fr. Stephan, from San Anselmo, Fr. Roman from Berkeley, Fr. Peter Perekrestov from Holy Virgin Cathedral in San Francisco, Fr. Andrew Cuneo (who flew up from San Diego for the feast day), our dear neighboring priests from Holy Dormition on Rose Ave., Frs. Michael and Philip and Deacon Samuel, and Deacon Brendan who came from SF to join us. Our own dear Fathers John both heard confessions throughout practically the entire 2-1-2 hour service, which is not surprising, as I had made a heartfelt plea that all parishioners confess so that they could pray, sing, commune and rejoice with a pure and cleansed heart. What a beautiful thing to behold so many faithful making their confession! The next morning, October 1, we gathered for the greeting of the Bishop and the Divine Liturgy. Three hundred and thirty faithful (our parishioners and many visitors) sixteen priests, seven deacons, subdeacons, servers and a forty-voiced choir greeted His Grace with the traditional hymn “From the rising to the setting of the sun, the Name of the Lord is to be praised; blessed be the Name of the Lord from henceforth and forevermore.” The singing of the choir, the people and the clergy at the Divine Liturgy was full, beautiful, pious and humble. Father Thomas Hopko, the retired Dean and professor of Dogmatics at St. Vladimir’s Seminary in NY, gave a soul-stirring homily—which is now posted on the parish website. It was a joy to hear the premier of a new Cherubic Hymn (“Let us who mystically represent...”), composed by Nicolas Custer, as well as his Anaphora (“A mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise”). Many of the clergy commented that