

to the Virgin Mary, specifically to her unique relationship to Jesus Christ. My point? When we celebrate the Feast, the 75th time since this parish was founded, we boldly approach the Theotokos, to thank her, to ask her continued intercessions, and to honor her. We approach the “Wine bowl pouring forth joy” to receive Christ; we stand before the “table laden with an abundance of mercies”; we are enlightened by the “Mystic Day” Who is our Lord Jesus. We can either do these things worthily, in a spirit of deep and joyful repentance, or we can do so thoughtlessly, carelessly or with interior distractions. Let us, like Mary, choose “the good part.” To do that, I encourage each of you to prepare for the feast by confession, and receive Holy Communion. Since Holy Communion is a work of the Church, and not an individualistic and private spiritual matter at all—since we are members of one another in the Church—I ask of all of you:

Clergy and Servers—make your confession so that when you serve in the Altar, you will do so with clean hands, “a pure heart, with a good conscience and with faith unfeigned” (1 Tim. 1:5). *Church Singers*—confess and prepare for Communion, so that the words you sing, the prayers you utter, will come from pure lips and pure hearts. *Holy People of God*— you and your children, make a confession and prepare for Communion for this feast, so that all of us, together, can say with confidence: “Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord, and who shall stand in His holy place? He that is innocent in his hands and pure in heart....” Only repentance through confession, not time, will grant this gift from God. And then, when we are communing of the Lord’s Body and Blood, we are in Jesus Christ. This union with God in the Liturgy makes us into a holy people (isn’t this holiness and unity one of the reasons that the Parish exists?). Another great miracle then occurs: the parish members from the founding in 1936 until today, are joined together in Jesus Christ in one song of praise together with all the saints and the whole Church, under the Protecting Veil of the Theotokos; for in Christ, all are alive and united. **Confessions can be heard either before or after services, or by appointment. Please consider your holy obligation to one another in this matter as members of the Body of Christ.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday ~ Sept. 25, 2011 ~ Tone Six
Venerable Father Sergius of Radonezh

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Sept. 24: 5 PM, Great Vespers, confessions
- Sunday, Sept. 25: 9 AM, Confessions / 10 AM, Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School
12 Noon, Coffee Hour
12:45 PM, Choir Rehearsal
- Mon., Sept. 26: 10 AM, Church Clean up
- Tues., Sept. 27: 6:30 PM, Rohnert Park Study Group
- Wed., Sept. 28: 5 PM, Confessions / 6 PM, Vespers followed by Confessions
- Thurs., Sept. 29: 6 PM, Akathist: Protection of the Theotokos, followed by Confessions
- Fri., Sept. 30: 9 AM, Water Blessing for the Feast
6:30 PM, Vigil for the Feast, with the Bishop
- Sat., October 1: 9:30 AM, Greeting of Bishop Benjamin and Divine Liturgy for the ***Parish Feast Day of the Protection of the Theotokos***
12 Noon, Luncheon Banquet, with guest speaker Fr. Thomas Hopko
2:30 PM, Concert of Renaissance choral music by *Carmina Chromatica*, in St. Seraphim
Great Vespers, *Time TBA, earlier than usual, in the Protection Church*

- PARISH FEAST DAY

The Feast Day of our Parish will be celebrated with Vigil on Friday evening, September 30 at 6:30 PM. We expect His Grace Bishop Benjamin, Father Thomas Hopko and our area clergy and choir singers to join us for this festive and important occasion. His Grace will preside at the Divine Liturgy, on Saturday, October 1, which begins at 9:30 AM.

- 75TH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET RESERVATIONS:

The Festive 75th Anniversary Banquet will follow the Divine Liturgy. Reservations are \$30 for adults, and \$10 for children for this buffet style catered meal. **Reservations are required for the caterer and must be made no later than today. No tickets will be issued for this festive meal. Instead, as you enter the banquet room, there will be a list of reservations and a seating chart. This will be an especially gala event as the meal will be served in our new Parish Hall under the roof that will be completed in time. All safety concerns are being dealt with. Please avoid cordoned off areas.**

- BUFFET BANQUET MENU

Filet of Salmon with Creamy Dill Sauce
Mustard Encrusted Pork Loin over Caramelized Onions and Cabbage
Marsala Mushroom Noodles
Roasted Red and Gold Potatoes with Fresh Rosemary
Mixed Field Greens, Roasted Garlic-Balsamic Vinaigrette
with pecans, cranberries, apples, goat cheese
Pumpkin Bread Pudding, Homemade Caramel Sauce

Wine will be provided by Rose and John Hunter of the Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Church in Novato. You will recall that our good friend, John, was instrumental in the creation of the Parish Master Plan. We offer the Lord our gratitude for his and Rose's loving dedication.

- TUESDAY EVENING STUDY GROUP:

The course being taught by Deacon Nicholas, "Orthodoxy and the Protestant Reformation," will have its second session on Tuesday, Sept. 27 at 7 PM. The class meets in Rohnert Park. See Debi Shrimplin for more info.

- WOMEN'S BOOK STUDY:

Next meeting will be on Wednesday, October 5, at 7 PM. Book and location to be determined.

- UPCOMING SPIRITUAL TALKS:

Dimensions of Noetic Prayer is a four part series of talks presented by Vincent Rossi 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 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.**

- ST. NICHOLAS BAZAAR:

Our Sister Parish in San Anselmo has invited us to join them for their 55th Annual Bazaar, taking place on Saturday, October 8, 2011. Enjoy crafts, Slavic foods, wonderful music and a rummage sale. This event serves as their primary fundraising effort for the year. One of the highlights each year is the choir concert, at 1 PM. This year's choir concert: "From the Hills of Northern California" will feature seven selections representing the liturgical and paraliturgical music of our beloved parishioner, friend and composer, Maia Arahamian, who fell asleep in the Lord on May 31, 2011.

- PREPARING FOR THE FEAST OF THE THEOTOKOS:

Last Sunday, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, I asked all of the parishioners to consider their participation in the Feast of the Protection. I made reference to phrases from the great Akathist Hymn. "Wine bowl pouring forth joy" and "Table laden with an abundance of mercies." "Dawn of the Mystic Day," "Ladder to heaven" and such things as these, all referring