

December 13, following the Liturgy for St. Herman of Alaska. The students at St. Michael's Orthodox School will honor us with a special presentation on St. Lucia. We thank Lara Anderson for making the arrangements! All Seniors are welcome! Please join us and PLEASE let us know you will be coming: 707-584-9491.

- ROHNERT PARK STUDY GROUP:

The Group will meet this week, Tuesday, December 11, at 1354 Oak View Circle, #327, Rohnert Park, CA. 7 PM. For more information call Debi Shrimplin at (707) 536-9112.

- ANNUAL SAINT NICHOLAS PARTY—DEC. 15:

The annual St. Nicholas Party will take place on Saturday, December 15, starting at 3 PM with crafts and the decorating of the church hall Christmas tree. Vespers begins as usual at 5 PM. Following Vespers there will be a potluck (fasting foods please) and the singing of Christmas carols, with a visit from St. Nicholas! **Needs:** It would be great if teenagers and adults came to help with the children's crafts and clean-up. We need adults without small children to help with these tasks, so that parents that do have small children can take them to Vespers. For any questions or volunteering please contact Gloria Collins at 849-6135 or email her at gypsybootsie@att.net. You may also speak with Lara Anderson at 569-0175. We are all eagerly anticipating the celebration of the Blessed Nativity!

- A CHRISTMAS CAROL:

The St. Porphyrios Players of Holy Dormition Church present their annual production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Sunday, December 23 at 7 PM, at Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Church, 1110 Highland Drive, Novato.

- 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.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Conception of the Theotokos ~ Dec. 9, 2012

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- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Two:

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life-Immortal, Thou didst slay Hades with the splendor of Thy Godhead; and when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to Thee.

- TROPARION OF SAINT ANNA, Tone Four

Today the bonds of barrenness are loosed. For God hearkened unto Joachim and Anna, and though it was beyond hope, He clearly promised them that they should bear a divine child, from whom was born the Uncircumscribable One Himself Who became a mortal, and through an Angel commanded them to cry unto her: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace; the Lord is with thee.

- KONTAKION OF SAINT ANNA, "On this day Thou hast appeared...":  
All the world doth celebrate \* Anna's conception \* on this day with festive joy, \* because it came to pass through God; \* for by divine grace she hath conceived \* her that beyond words conceiveth the Word of God.

### ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, December 8: ***In Novato, at Nativity Church:*** 9 AM, Akathist to the Theotokos before the Myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon  
3:30 PM, Catechism in Protection Church  
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 9: 9–10 AM, Confessions  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy, 11:45 AM, Church School, Noon, Agape Meal  
**12:45 PM, Sisterhood Meeting**

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- Tues., Dec. 11: 7 PM, Rohnert Park Study Group
- Wed., Dec. 12: 6 PM, Great Vespers for St. Herman of Alaska
- Thurs., Dec. 13: 8:30 AM, Matins and Liturgy for St. Herman
- Sat., Dec. 20: 3 PM, St. Nicholas Party (crafts/set up)  
3:30 PM, Catechism  
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions  
6 PM, St. Nicholas Party continues (Potluck dinner, Caroling)

- SISTERHOOD:

A meeting will be held today in the Parish Hall, starting at approximately 12:45 PM. All are welcome, both women and men.

- THOUGHTS ON THE DAY OF THE CONCEPTION:

*On December 9 the Church celebrates the day of the conception within St. Anna of her who would be the Virgin Mary. St. Anna and her husband, St. Joachim, are mentioned at the end of most every Church service, because they are examples for us of humility, patience, purity of marital love, and faithfulness to the vow they made to God. Here are two short meditations:*

Joachim was a herdsman of the tribe of Judah from Nazareth of Galilee while Anna was from Bethlehem of Judea, the daughter of Matthan the priest of the tribe of Levi. At the age of twenty, Joachim took Anna as his wife. They are said to have lived together for nearly fifty years without producing a child, vowing that if they did, the child would be dedicated to the service of the Lord. James recounts that the priest Rueben rejected Joachim and his gifts on the Feast of the Dedication and the Feast of Lights because he was childless. Joachim retreated from the temple, taking his flocks far into the mountains, vowing to fast and to pray until the Lord looked upon him. Anna left the Court of the Women, and the temple, and returned home where she wept, bewailing her widowhood and her childlessness. The account explains that the Archangel Gabriel appeared to both Joachim and Anna announcing that they would conceive and that they were to go to the Golden Gate in Jerusalem, where they met and embraced, conceiving in their old age, and bore Mary at their home near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem. Joachim was eighty years old when he died and Anna was seventy-nine when they reposed in peace. Where there is barrenness, only an act of Almighty God will overcome the it. On this day we praise the

parents of the Virgin, for they were the spiritual and moral pinnacle of generations of faithful Jews of Israel, pure of heart, without selfish needs, completely dedicated to the Lord God, and faithful servants.

*From Father Alexander Schmemmann:* A marriage which does not constantly crucify its own selfishness and self-sufficiency, which does not “die to itself” that it may point beyond itself, is not a Christian marriage. The real sin of marriage today is not adultery or lack of “adjustment” or “mental cruelty.” It is the idolization of the family itself [or the relationship of the spouses], the refusal to understand marriage as directed toward the Kingdom of God. This is expressed in the sentiment that one would “do anything” for his family, even steal. The family has here ceased to be for the glory of God; it has ceased to be a sacramental entrance into his presence. It is not the lack of respect for the family, it is the idolization of the family that breaks the modern family so easily, making divorce its almost natural shadow. It is the identification of marriage with happiness and the refusal to accept the cross in it. In a Christian marriage, in fact, three are married; and the united loyalty of the two toward the third, who is God, keeps the two in an active unity with each other as well as with God. ...It is the cross of Christ that brings the self-sufficiency of nature to its end. But “by the cross, joy entered the whole world” (*Hymn of matins*). Its presence is thus the real joy of marriage. It is the joyful certitude that the marriage vow, in the perspective of the eternal Kingdom, is not taken “until death parts,” but until death unites us completely. —Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*

*From Elder Moses of Mount Athos:* We honor martyrs and saints, but we ourselves do not want to suffer any hardships, any postponements, any difficulties. Fasting is too difficult a task to accomplish; we feel resentful during an illness; we cannot tolerate any harsh words, not even when we are to blame, therefore how could we possibly tolerate injustice, slander, persecution and exile, the way our saints did? It is an indisputable fact that the contemporary, secular spirit of convenience, leisure and excessive consumerism has greatly affected the measure of spiritual living. Generally speaking, we demand a non-ascetic Christianity... Orthodoxy however has the ascetic Gospel as its basis.

- SENIOR LUNCHEON—THURSDAY, DEC. 13, 11 AM:

Our monthly Senior Luncheon Fellowship will be held on Thursday,