

• A HYMN OF THE PREFEAST •
O earth and ye that are born on earth,
leap for joy and adorn yourselves;
the Torrent of Delight is baptized in the river,
drying up the flood of evil,
and gushing forth divine remission.

• FESTAL CONGRATULATIONS:

I congratulate all of you, dear parishioners, brothers and sisters in Christ, on the Feast of St. Seraphim of Sarov which we celebrated on January 2. I thank all those who labored hard to make our Feast so joyous and full: the adorning of the Temple with flowers, trees and ribbons, the decoration of the Hall, the beautiful table settings, the wonderful food, serving the guests, cleaning, the magnificent singing and Church reading, and the Altar servers who made everything ready for our Archbishop. Let the feast continue in your lives: Our Venerable Father Seraphim was, and is, a human manifestation of God's love, joy and faith. While *we* may not pray for a thousand days and nights on a rock, as he did (which he did because he experienced God's light and transformation in his prayer), we can stay faithful in our own prayer rule each day and night. St. Seraphim was a healer and consoler for those sick and despondent—at the very least we ought to visit and intercede for those who are sick, despondent and lonely. St. Seraphim had the gift of disclosing and healing hidden sins in those who came to him. At least we should be examining and confessing our sins before our spiritual father and the Lord. There is much in our St. Seraphim to inspire and encourage us in the coming year. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• WALK FOR LIFE IN SF:

The **2020 Walk for Life** will take place on January 25 in San Francisco (Noon). Flyers are available in the Narthex. We hope to provide transportation for those who are interested in going. See Fr. Lawrence for information.

• COMMEMORATION BOOKS:

Please update your commemoration books for the year.

• WEDDING ~ JANUARY 19:

On Sunday, January 19 at 3 PM, Carmen Zlata Baudi and Landis John Sims will be joined in Holy Matrimony. All are invited to the service.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



January 5, 2020

Eve of Theophany



• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Four:

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: "Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!"

• TROPARION OF THE PRE-FEAST, Tone Four:

The River Jordan once turned back before the mantle of Elisha, after Elijah had been taken up into heaven, and the waters were divided on this side and on that: the stream became a dry path before him, forming a true image in which we are baptized whereby we pass over the changeful course of life. Christ has appeared in the Jordan to sanctify the waters.

• KONTAKION OF THE PREFEAST, Tone Four:

In the running waters of the Jordan River, on this day the Lord of all crieth to John: Be not afraid and hesitate not to baptize me, for I am come to save Adam, the first-formed man.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, January 3: 6 PM, Royal Hours for Theophany
- Saturday, January 4: Great Vespers, Pre-feast of Theophany
- Sunday, January 5: **No Matins**
10 AM, Liturgy/Great Blessing of Water, Blessing of Parish Buildings
Noon, Agape Meal
❖ 5 PM, Matins for Theophany ❖
- Monday, January 6: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Theophany
1:30 PM, *Blessing at Bodega Bay Inn*
House blessings all week (please consult list)
- Wednesday, January 8: 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank
6 PM, Vespers, Potluck, Study of the *Epistle to the Romans*
- Saturday, January 11: 5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, January 12: 8:30 AM, Matins
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal

• TO OUR GUESTS:

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we welcome you and hope your experience at the Divine Liturgy will be edifying and spiritually nourishing. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join the parish, or would like to speak with Fr Lawrence, we invite you to fill out a *visitor information card* and leave it at the candle desk, and to join us for lunch following the Divine Liturgy. Please be aware that Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by fasting, prayer and a recent Confession.

• HOUSE BLESSINGS:

The LIST for house blessings is posted in the Narthex. If your name does not appear on the list, it could be a mistake, or some other reason. Either way, please contact the church office (707-584-9491) to schedule a house blessing. Orthodox Christians dedicate their homes to God in many ways: prayer, an

icon corner, harmony between family members; the singing of hymns and the bringing of Holy Water by the priest to sanctify the home and banish the presence of any intrusive and evil spirits. It's a joyous and victorious act of faith in God. —*Fr Lawrence*

• HERE'S HOW TO PREPARE FOR A HOUSE BLESSING:

1. The entire family should be present.
2. Have the following items at your Icon Corner or on a table: icon, oil lamp or candle, small bowl (cereal size is fine) for the Holy Water (I will bring some Water with me if you do not have any), list of names of your family, living and departed, clearly marked.
3. Turn off TV, video games and cell phones.
4. Teach your children the way to receive the blessing of the priest.

• CHURCH SCHOOL:

Classes begin again on Sunday, January 12. Parents, please consider: classes are only twenty to thirty minutes long—even if every student came each and every week, the time spent in class is only enough to reinforce what the child should already be learning and practicing at home, taught by the parents. Kevin Allen from *Ancient Faith Radio* wrote that “It is the parents who practice their faith sincerely, pray consistently, that are the major influencers related to adolescents keeping their faith into their 20s... Just 1%—one percent—of teens aged 15–20 who were raised by parents who attached little importance to their religion were highly religious in their mid to late 20s. But by contrast—and this is important—82% of children raised by parents who prayed regularly, spoke about their faith at home, attached great importance to their beliefs, and were active in their congregations or parishes were themselves religiously active as young adults.”

• WORD OF ADMONITION:

Getting to church on time is important. One doesn't need to list the reasons. Having had young children, I know “stuff happens” before Liturgy. Having lived one hour away from Church, I am aware of the problems that come up. However, let us try, as a parish, to gather together BEFORE the Liturgy begins. We show our respect for God and one another; we can more easily gather our attention as well; we can end the conversations with each other once we enter the Church—and continue our wonderful corporate prayer with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. —*Fr Lawrence*