

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, January 13, 2013

parish because we receive so much from our life here. Thirdly, since all parishes make an offering—a Diocesan Tithe, in fact—for the work of the Diocese and the OCA in general, our individual participation is far greater than we can imagine. The Diocesan Tithe of our parish is based on our membership count (next year this will be based more properly on our parish finances, as it is for anyone else). We therefore must count as parish members only those who regularly give. Otherwise—until next year when the calculations change—parish funds for charity, utilities, mortgage, salary and the OCA would be diverted to subsidize someone’s membership listing. I encourage you to establish and maintain your formal membership in the parish, the Body of Christ, and show your trust in God, your thanksgiving for the Church, of which you are a member, and to allow the Lord to work in your life. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL TALK IN SF:

His Eminence, Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware), author of *The Orthodox Church* and *The Orthodox Way* and countless articles and essays on the spiritual life, will be speaking in San Francisco on February 16 and 17. For more information on how to register for his talks, see the following link: www.sforthodoxinstitute.org/conferences/102-supplementary/194-feb2013-symposium-sf

• COMPOSURE AT LITURGY:

As we enter the Church on Sunday morning—preferably before the Liturgy begins, especially if we are planning to receive Holy Communion—we enter into a very great work: an offering of ourselves and each other to the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. The first act is to be attentive. We proclaim within ourselves: Order in the court! Chin up! Eyes down! Stand aright! Stand in fear! Let us attend! Wisdom! Let us hear and do! All our words are reserved for the Lord and to encourage one another in hymns, not for conversation! In so collecting yourself you strive to enter into the greatest work any human being can participate in: praising the Holy Trinity, opening our hearts and minds to be illumined by the scripture, the homily and the prayers, and opening our lips to receive the Flesh and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The more we engage in this work of composure, the more we will receive. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Seven:

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death; to the thief, Thou didst open Paradise. For the myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy, and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy.

• TROPARION OF THEOPHANY, Tone One:

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His Word. O Christ, our God, Who hast revealed Thyself, and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

• KONTAKION OF THEOPHANY, Tone Four:

On this day Thou hast appeared unto the whole world, and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, is signed on us who sing Thy praise: and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light Unapproachable.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Jan. 12: 3:30 PM, Catechism—*the Eucharist*
5 PM Great Vespers, Confessions
- Sunday, Jan. 13: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Church School, Agape Meal in Hall
- Sat., Jan. 19: 9:30 AM, Kazan Skete, Divine Liturgy for Theophany, Old Calendar
3:30 PM, Catechism
5 PM Great Vespers, Confessions

- HOUSE BLESSINGS:

Please email or call Fr. Lawrence or Fr. John to schedule a house blessing.

- TUESDAY EVENING ROHNERT PARK STUDY GROUP:

The Rohnert Park Study Group starts up on Tuesday Jan. 15th at 7 PM at 1354 Oak View Circle #327. Please contact Deacon Jeremiah or Deacon Nicholas for content. For directions please call Debi Shrimplin at 536-9112. Topics for the upcoming sessions will be focused on basic teachings of the Orthodox Church.

- TALK ON ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN:

Vincent Rossi will present a talk on the great 4th century Father of the Church, St. Gregory the Theologian, son of the Righteous Nonna, on Thursday, January 24 at 6:45 PM, after Vespers.

- CONCERT OF ANCIENT RUSSIAN CHANT:

On Saturday evening, January 26, Great Vespers will be chanted by our male choir. Immediately after Vespers, the men will sing five or six hymns in the ancient Znamenny chant of the Russian Church. These hymns have just been recorded to complete a CD of liturgical music that was begun five years ago and only needed these particular hymns to complete.

- PARISH ANNUAL MEETING—redux:

On Sunday, February 3, 2012, all our parishioners are invited to gather at 12:30 PM, following the Holy Liturgy, to attend the Annual Meeting. Finances and new business will be considered, and elections to the Parish Council will be conducted. For the sake of clarity (some of you have heard this already) and at the risk of being repetitious, once again one might ask, “what constitutes parish membership and who is a member?” But that poses another question first: “why call parishioners ‘members’ when the Church is NOT a club? We don’t pay dues, and don’t operate like a club.” These are valid considerations. Unfortunately, besides the Gospel and Holy Tradition, we also have Bylaws, mostly for the sake of the state of California. Yet frankly, there is a story about why we have bylaws and “members” and not just “parishioners.” That story has to do with the “bad old days” (prior to 1980) when a parish would hold an annual meeting, and all kinds of folks turned up to attend. Most of these folks rarely, if ever, went to Liturgy, rarely, if ever, confessed or communed, and rarely, if ever, made an offering, a tithe, or a gift to the Church in thanksgiving to God! Those were the days of “dues.” Such

folks—sometimes thinking they would protect the parish—would attend the annual meetings in order to agitate for this or that cause, priest, program, fee, faction or jurisdiction (Russian, ROCOR, Metropolia, Serbian free, Serbian whatever, etc.). In those days, without a clear membership list a parish would be at the mercy of the stronger faction, which often had little regard for the Church. Those were the days in which the Parish was pitted against the Church. It’s sad. Yes, we remember that St. Paul wrote that Christians strive to have oneness of mind. He even warns us about divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned (Rom. 16:17) and urges us to avoid people that cause divisions, saying that they serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:18). He also wrote that “there must be [as in ‘will be’] factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.” (1 Cor. 11:19, English Standard Version). So, there is truly some ancient history here about why we have bylaws. The rather mundane OCA and parish bylaws state that a parish member is one who: 1) is an Orthodox Christian who strives to live according to the moral, ethical, spiritual and dogmatic teachings of the Church; 2) is at least 18 years of age; 3) makes regular financial offerings; 4) makes Confession and receives Holy Communion regularly here at this parish.

The criteria regarding membership are quite simple, as you can see, and the focus, surely, must be on the Church as the Body of Jesus Christ. Regarding point #3 above, I did not use the phrase “financial support for the Church,” since the issue is not about what the Church needs (God will care for His Church), but what *we need* to do as Christians, rich and poor alike: “Let each person give, on the first day of the week, as God has proposed him,” to paraphrase St. Paul (1 Cor. 16:2). St. Paul’s command, seen in the light of Scripture and Tradition, asks us to make a thanksgiving offering, not according to dues, like a club, but according to what we have been given by Him, whether we have been given very little or very great. By doing this we show our trust in God’s promises made throughout Holy Scripture to take care of His children—not dollar for dollar, of course, but by His love, providence, mercy and grace. He is, after all, the *Father Almighty* as we say in the Creed, confessing that His Fatherhood for us lacks absolutely nothing. Secondly, it’s important to remember that we participate in the financial support of the