

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:

On Sunday, February 3, 2012, all our parishioners are invited, nay encouraged, 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. Please bring a sack lunch, since no meal will be prepared in the kitchen.

• MARCH FOR LIFE:

His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, invites all parishes to participate in the *West Coast March for Life* on January 26, beginning at the Civic Center plaza in San Francisco at 12:30 PM. At 12:30 there will be a rally and then the actual march will begin at 1:30. In the past a large number of Orthodox clergy and faithful have participated. His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos of the Greek Archdiocese has also encouraged his clergy and faithful to attend.

• MEMORY ETERNAL:

Abbess Barbara (Johnson) who has been ill for some time, and was once the abbess of the Community of the Holy Cross at Point Reyes, CA. reposed Monday evening. She was a member of the Sisterhood of Kazan Skete. Mother Barbara suffered for many years, and incorporated her illness as part of her monastic struggle. We offer the Kazan Skete our profound condolences, and assurance of prayers for the repose of Mother Barbara. We are also grieving, having learned on Wednesday evening of the sudden death of Father Jacob Meyers, rector of Saint John Maximovitch Orthodox Church in Atlanta. Father Jacob was an outstanding pastor, an energetic evangelist, a lover of the poor and needy, and a dear friend and mentor to quite a few of our parishioners. May his memory be eternal. Each January we pray for the repose of the soul of Semere, grandson of Hadish Tesfu, who was tragically killed in Santa Rosa in 2005. News has also come that Karen Katherine Burch's mother Lucy reposed on Thursday, at age 91. And, as many of you already know, Gretchen Johanna's father-in-law Walt reposed last week. We will serve the *Trisagion of the Repose* at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and ask the Lord to have mercy on all those departed this life.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday ~ January 20, 2013

St. Euthymius the Great

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Jan. 19: 9:30 AM, *Theophany at Kazan Skete*
3:30 PM, Catechism, on the Holy Liturgy
5 PM, Great Vespers, Confessions
 - Sunday, Jan. 20: 9 AM—Confessions; 10 AM—Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
12:45 PM, Bell Ringer Meeting
 - Tues., Jan. 22: 7 PM, Rohnert Park Study Group (on the
Teachings of Orthodoxy)
 - Wed., Jan. 23: 6 PM, Daily Vespers
 - Thurs., Jan. 24: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for St. Xenia
6 PM, Vespers and a talk on St. Gregory the Theologian
- CLARIFYING OUR GOALS:
“...be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (*Romans 12:32*). These words of St. Paul tell us that if we conform to the moral, ethical, spiritual and philosophical norms of “this world” and how it understands things, we will lose the way in our struggle to reach our goal. What is that goal? Our Savior prayed these words: “...that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made

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perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (*John 17:21–23*) The Lord prays that His glory may be given to us, that we may be united in Him with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Everything in the Church is appointed so that may happen: Baptism, Chrismation, the Liturgy, priesthood, Confession, the scriptures, prayer, fasting, prostrations, monasticism and marriage—are all both means of the cleansing of the heart as well as direct experiences of Kingdom, and an entrance into the glory. The liturgical, spiritual and moral path of the Orthodox Church is not based on theory or ideas. It’s a well-marked path, producing Apostles, saints, the holy bishops, monks and nuns and holy laypeople. If we conform ourselves and the Church to *this world* we will replace the tried and true methods of experiencing God’s Kingdom, and the result would not be the making of saints, but a tragic loss: the Holy Mysteries would become empty gestures, the Church would become a social institution based on moralistic, humanistic and situational ethics open to all kinds of currents, and we will have **nothing at all** to say to the world about the Kingdom of God and it’s ultimate destiny. Society, and in fact most Christian denominations, long ago forgot that although God created all things good, we live in a fallen world warred upon by demonic powers, broken with evil, sin, death, anarchy, pride, human will, suffering, the rebellion of nature, and man’s ignorance of God’s loving presence.

However, “we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ...” (*1 John 1*) We can only witness that in the fallen world we have come to know the love, healing, power and holiness of God’s Kingdom by the Cross of Christ. We are not defensive, nor do go on the offensive; we do not deprive others of their civil rights; we are not here to judge, condemn or change anyone, but to love everyone, including enemies.

What we do is simply witness to what we have seen and heard and are becoming, and often, there is nothing we have to say. For example, while the world talks about re-defining marriage, we ought to **re-discover** what marriage is, and how it may become a witness to the Kingdom: being “from the beginning” when God created “male and female” (*Gen. 1:27*) the Mystery of Marriage may rise to the glory of being an image of Christ the Bridegroom and the Church, His bride. Joining and blessing the complementary nature of the man and the woman, husband and wife,

together into one—physically and spiritually—marriage may lead to the begetting and bearing children, which cooperates with the creative energy of God Himself. One could go on concerning other issues. Here is the crux of the matter as I see it: the goal of the fallen world—especially as it is seen in politics, TV shows and universities—is the “transvaluation of all values,” (Nietzsche) in which the old sins become virtues, and the old virtues, sins, the meaning of one thing into another, especially when it comes to gender, personhood and sexuality. In western protestant churches where the moralistic/ethical modernists take power, the Holy Trinity is replaced by a trio of bogeymen: racism, sexism, and homophobia, as one writer put it. We do not fear any of this. For we know that the Church is a spiritual hospital, and the therapies are effective, if “taken as prescribed,” which heals us to be witnesses of God Kingdom of love and transformative power in the fallen world. So we treasure what we have been given because it is effective. Finally, let us affirm at least something in our culture, for everything has its source in God. Let us at least affirm that all desires and need for love, acceptance and union—no matter how worldly, carnal, strange or passionate, are at root the desire for the love of God, a desire gone astray. And so we do not lose heart.

—*Fr. Lawrence*

- BELL RINGERS:

Current and prospective bell ringers, please come to a short meeting with Father Lawrence, Sunday, 12:45 PM or so. We will meet in the Parish Hall.

- 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