

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Publican & Pharisee, February 21, 2016

- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Five:

Let us the faithful praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death and to raise the dead, by His glorious Resurrection.

- KONTAKION OF THE PUBLICAN & PHARISEE, Tone Four:

Let us flee the Pharisee's conceited vaunting; let us learn the Publican's humility, and cry with groans unto the Savior: Thou Who alone art swiftly reconciled, be gracious unto us.



ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Sat., Feb. 20: 3:30 PM, Catechism, on the *Mystery of Chrismation*
 5 PM, Great Vespers & Confessions
- Sun., Feb. 21: 8:45 AM, Matins (Confessions at 9 AM)
 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
 11:30 AM, Church School
 12:45 PM, Playground Meeting at Hall porch
- Tues., Feb. 23: 6:30 PM, Greek Dancing
- Wed., Feb. 24: *No Vespers* (no fast)
- Thurs., Feb. 25: 6 PM, Nomadic Shelter
 7 PM, Scripture Study at McPherson home
- Fri., Feb. 26: 6 PM, Greek Dinner Dance and Silent Auction (no fast)

- ALTAR SERVERS THIS WEEKEND:

“Team Seraphim” ~ Gabriel, Noula, Simon, Thomas

- MARINA STANT / AMERICORPS:

One of our newest parishioners, Marina Stant, recently moving here from Indianapolis. She would like to tell us about her work with Americorps. I've offered to introduce her at the Agape Meal, after which those who are interested can join her at a table to hear about her work. Please extend to her our normal St. Seraphim welcome.

- BEGINNING OF THE LENTEN TRIODION:

The Orthodox Church uses many different books and collections of hymns in the Divine Services. On the “Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee” we begin to use the Lenten hymn book, called the *Lenten Triodion* (referring to the many three-ode hymns found in it). This book contains the magnificent collection of hymns, composed by many saintly hymnographers from the 3rd–18th centuries, among those whom we can identify we count St. Romanos the Melodist (6th century), St. Kosmas the Melodist, Bishop of Maiouma, St. John of Damascus and St.

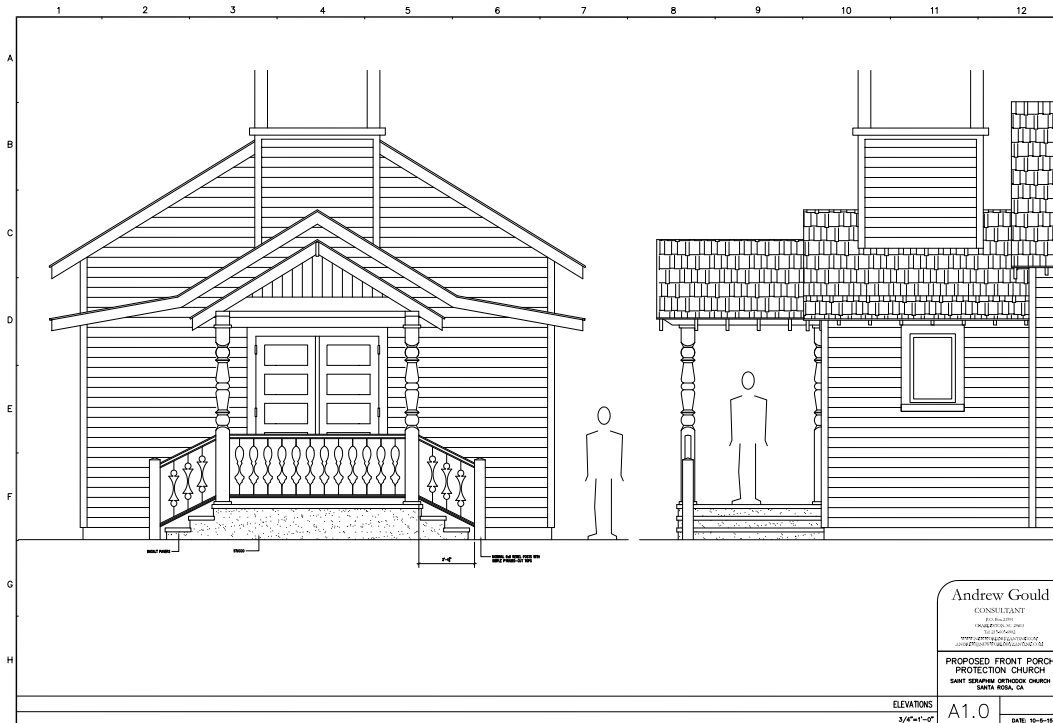
Andrew of Crete (all three from the 8th century), and the 9th century Leo the Emperor and nun St. Kassiani. The earliest hymn in the book, “Beneath thy compassion, we take refuge, O Theotokos...” can be traced to a Coptic manuscript dating about 250 AD. Much of the material contained in the *Triodion* was compiled and arranged by the monks of the Monastery of Studios in Constantinople during the course of the 8th–9th centuries. There is a wonderful tradition from the Greek island of Zakynthos regarding the “opening” of the *Triodion* at the Vespers of the Publican and Pharisee. The *Triodion* book is placed on a table under the icon of Christ, to the right of the Royal Gate on the iconostasis. Following the Resurrection hymns of Lord, I Have Cried, and before the hymns from the *Triodion* are to be chanted, a member of the clergy takes the *Triodion* from its place and gives it to the bishop, who is standing at his episcopal throne. From there it is handed over to the lead chanter, who after venerating the book opens it and begins chanting the appropriate hymns, thus inaugurating the season of repentance.

- MISSION PARISH RETREAT IN PORTLAND:

Fr. Lawrence and Fr. Theodor will be in Portland Tuesday–Thursday attending the Diocesan Mission Retreat.

- PROTECTION CHURCH RENOVATION:

Our beloved Protection of the Virgin church was constructed in 1936. Since that time it has been repaired, painted, moved fifteen feet west, raised up four feet to pour a foundation, inside floors refinished and the roof shingles replaced a number of times. Tom Pellizzer has spent many hours replacing old and dangerous electrical wires. It was even extended twice to add on the choir area (cleros) and the narthex. In the past few years the fence around it was replaced, and a gate added in the front for safety (before 1995, when the church was fifteen feet closer to the Rectory, there was a willow tree and little lawn in front of the Protection. In fact, there was a large palm tree in the parking lot, near the church). In any case, for a number of years now the front wall of the church has needed some care, particularly the replacing of rotting siding, and the addition of a cover over the porch (not just canvas). Funds were given in 2015 by some very generous parishioners for this work to be done, and Ray Basch began the work. From this point, Brendan Schettig, who is a licensed contractor, will manage the rather extensive project, which involves replacing the concrete steps (now sinking) and the sidewalk (which doesn’t drain properly in rain) and building the overhang. A drawing of the porch is shown below.



- PRELENTEN SUNDAYS:

Today is the second of the pre-Lenten Sundays, and our attention is focused, via the Holy Gospel parable, on the *Publican and Pharisee*. Many are the lessons to be learned. The Pharisee felt himself deeply religious and pious and justified before God, because he trusted in himself. Justification comes from Christ alone. We see from Church life that those who indeed have true faith think about themselves and about their faith in a very humble manner, and always think and have a sense about themselves as having little faith...He who indeed believes does not have confidence in his [personal] faith, but sees himself as having little faith. Righteous men see themselves as sinners, while sinners see themselves as righteous. Of course, the clueless sinner does not imagine himself a saint, but nevertheless he supposes that he is OK by men and God. During Great Lent, we pray to the Lord to grant us to see our transgressions—our own transgressions, and not those of other people. In the upcoming preLenten Sundays, the attentive church-goer will receive lessons on how to acquire humility, prayer and abstinence; to remember that the Lord is merciful and loving—yet we will experience the Last Judgment; to repent of our sins and to forgive the sins of others. Don't miss out by skipping a Sunday.

- MATINS HYMN OF THE PRELENTEN AND LENTEN SEASON:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Open to me the Doors of Repentance, O Giver of Life: for my spirit rises early unto Thy holy Temple, bearing the temple of my body all-defiled. But in Thy compassion cleanse me by Thy compassionate mercy.

Both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lead me on the paths of salvation, O Theotokos: for I have defiled my soul with shameful sins, and have wasted all my life in slothfulness. By thine intercessions deliver me from all impurity.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgressions. As I ponder in my wretchedness the many evil things that I have done, I tremble for the fearful day of judgement. But trusting in the mercy of Thy compassion, like David I cry to Thee:

Have mercy on me, O God; Have mercy on me, O God; Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.

- FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS – March 13, 1:15 PM:

On Sunday, March 13 we will serve the *Vespers of Forgiveness*, following the usual Sunday Agape Meal. This Vespers, which ushers in the Great Fast, begins at 1:15 PM. After the hymn, “O Joyous Light” we will sing: “Turn not Thy countenance from Thy servant, for I am afflicted, hearken to me speedily, attend to my soul, and deliver it.” During that slow and compunctionate melody, the gold covers on all the icon stands will be changed to the Lenten purple—a royal and rich color, yet darker and more mournful too. From that point on we are in Great Lent, and the choir will be singing the Lenten melodies for the litanies. At the end of this unique Service we will ask forgiveness of each other, each person approaching the priests, then each other. Those who can, do a prostration before one another; those who cannot, simply ask forgiveness. We say: “forgive me” and answer back, “forgive me. God forgives.” The important thing is to ask for forgiveness and then give it. In a Parish—and the longer you are in it the more this is true—there are things to forgive which we might not even know about, as well as things for which we must ask forgiveness (being equally blind to those things). The act of forgiveness is **not** one in which we expect all interpersonal difficulties will be erased or resolved, it does, however, have the potential to remove the poison of sin and resentments from our “spiritual blood stream.” It’s a beginning to our Fast. I hope you understand that I am urging you, in the strongest, most emphatic and pastoral way I can, to attend this Vespers—crucial to a good beginning of Lent—and participate in the act of mutual forgiveness at the end. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- HOUSE BLESSINGS:

It was with great joy that I had the opportunity to visit more than seventy homes with the Holy Theophany water, to bless them, and to pray with so many of our families. I was welcomed warmly into every house I entered and thoroughly enjoyed the time with everyone I met. In my opinion, the importance of these visits cannot be overstated. Not only are our homes blessed anew with the grace of prayer and holy water at the beginning of the

New Year, but we also have the opportunity to get to know each other better on a more personal level which, I believe, strengthens the bonds of our spiritual family. Our Heavenly Patron, the Apostle Paul, speaks of the domestic church (1 Cor.) in his writings. It is important that all of us recognize the importance of the establishment of this domestic church in our family homes, considering the fact that even the most pious members of our parish are in church a couple of times a week, and then, only for a few hours. The majority of our time is spent at home with our families. It is here, more than anywhere else, that we should exercise ourselves in family prayer, in the reading of Scripture and other spiritually profitable literature, in the observance of fasts, and in all of the Christian virtues given to us by Our Lord. We should do so not only for our eternal salvation, but for our spiritual well-being in this life. As we enter into the holiest time of the year—Great and Holy Lent—let us take advantage of this magnificent opportunity to strengthen the family bonds of our domestic churches so as to improve our spiritual condition and bring ourselves closer to God. —*Fr. Alexander Krassovsky, Sts. Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church, Stony Point Rd.*

I rejoiced in reading Fr. Alexander's words and was edified by his teaching. I marveled at the number of house blessings he reported, and wondered why it is that although we have double the number of parishioners compared to Saints Peter and Paul, I blessed only twenty-five homes, give or take (out of our 138 formal members). No, this isn't about who has done more blessings! Consider Fr. Alexander's words about how the Theophany holy water re-dedicating our homes to God. There is still time before Great Lent for me (or Fr. John or Fr. Theodor) to come and bless your home. Please consider it. —Fr. Lawrence

- ON PRIDE & HUMILITY

...after grievous [spiritual] wounds I have come to know that the signs of pride are disparaging or disdainful of one's neighbors and carelessness over confession. But in and of itself, pride is not noticeable to a man, being the subtlest passion, which deceived a light-bearing angel and caused the Fall in Heaven. Upon this passion the others are supported, like a building upon a foundation that is hidden beneath the earth. —*by St. Ignatius Brianchaninov*

Remember the one who has ridiculed you, who has grieved you, who has wronged you, who has done evil to you, as your physician, your healer. Christ sent him to heal you; don't remember him with anger. (*Abba Zossima*)

Even if a person's sin is not only obvious, but very grievous and comes from a hardened and unrepentant heart, do not condemn him, but raise your eyes to the wondrous and incomprehensible judgments of God; then you will see that many people, formerly full of iniquity, later repented and reached a high degree of sanctity, and that, on the other hand, others, who were on a high level of perfection, fell into a deep abyss. Take care, lest you also suffer this calamity through judging others. —*Bishop Theophan the Recluse, Unseen Warfare*

Do not listen gleefully to gossip at your neighbors expense or chatter to a person who likes finding fault. —*St. Maximos the Confessor (First Century on Love no. 58)*

If there is a moral quality almost completely disregarded and even denied today, it is indeed humility. The culture in which we live constantly instills in us the sense of pride, of self-glorification, and of self-righteousness. It is built on the assumption that man can achieve anything by himself and it even pictures God as the One who all the time 'gives credit' for man's achievements and good deeds. Humility—be it individual or corporate, ethnic or national—is viewed as a sign of weakness, as something unbecoming of real man. Even our churches—are they not imbued with that same spirit of the Pharisee? Do we not want our every contribution, every 'good deed,' all that we do 'for the Church' to be acknowledged, praised, publicized? But what is humility? The answer to this question may seem a paradoxical one for it is rooted in a strange affirmation: God Himself is humble! Yet to anyone who knows God, who contemplates Him in His creation and in His saving acts, it is evident that humility is truly a divine quality, the very content and the radiance of that glory which, as we sing during the Divine Liturgy, fills heaven and earth. —*Father Alexander Schmemmann, from the book **Great Lent***

- RETREAT IN CALISTOGA AT THE MONASTERY:

Archimandrite Irenei will be giving a Retreat at Holy Assumption Monastery, Saturday, March 5, beginning at 9 AM. The talks are entitled *Bearing Witness: Martyrdom in Everyday Life in the 21st century.*