

The intrusive “little infant thoughts” — seemingly so harmless—that promise us freedom, but instead lead us to distraction, despair, confusion and sin, are thereby overcome. The soul is empowered by prayer to the Almighty God to put the stranglehold on our unruly desires, self-pity, and self-justification. By God’s grace then, the soul alone controls who can operate in the neighborhood of our heart, and infuses our life with grace. (*borrowed from a forgotten source*).

• THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE HEART:

In spirituality, Orthodoxy is not knowledge only, because God is not an acquisition of our intellect. You explore the universe, you go in the outer space and all the knowledge is outside... Orthodoxy is the reverse... To discover the inner universe which is infinite like an atom and in this depth into ourselves is God... because God is not outside of yourself... God is not spatial or material to place Him in a corner there... If you don’t discover God in yourself you will not see God anywhere... But if you have God in you yourself, you see God everywhere... You see God in the eyes of a child, in a flower, in the blade of grass, in animals, everywhere... if you have God in yourself... —*from an interview with the late Fr. Roman Braga*

Blini Brunch

Complete with sour cream, lox, herring, and caviar...
and of course, butter, syrup, fruit and bacon!!

Church Hall
Sunday, March 3, Noon

Please come enjoy Blini with us as we prepare to enter that wonderful time of Lent. Prices for the Blini Brunch will be a la carte. Wine, juice, coffee and tea will be available for a small additional charge.

Child-plates are available.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



February 24, 2019

Sunday of the Parable of the Prodigal Son



• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Six:

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hades, not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin granting life. O Lord who didst rise from the dead: Glory to Thee.

• KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Six:

When Christ God the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed Resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life and the God of all.

• KONTAKION OF THE PRODIGAL SON, Tone Three:

Foolishly I sprang away from Thy great fatherly glory and dispersed in wicked deeds the riches that Thou didst give me. With the Prodigal I therefore cry unto Thee now: I have sinned against Thee, O compassionate Father. But receive me in repentance; and make me as one of Thy hired servants, O Lord.

Protection of the Holy Virgin Orthodox Church • 90 Mountain View Ave • Santa Rosa
707-584-9491 • LMargitich@sbcglobal.net • saintseraphim.com

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Feb. 23: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *On Holy Baptism* (lecture in Parish Hall)
4 PM, Children's Choir Rehearsal
5 PM, Great Vespers, *Sung by the Konevets Choir*
7 PM, Concert by the Konevets Choir
- Sunday, Feb. 24: 8:30 AM, Resurrectional Matins
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
1 PM, Church School Teacher Meeting
- Tues., Feb. 26: 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting
- Wed., Feb. 27: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Feast of St. Raphael of Brooklyn
6 PM, Vespers, Potluck and a talk on *The Age of the World*, by Fr. John
- Fri., March 1: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions, in Protection Church

• KONEVETS QUARTET:

The acclaimed vocal ensemble, the **Konevets Quartet**, will sing Vespers at 5 PM, and a concert at 7 PM. The first half of the concert will consist of Russian Orthodox liturgical hymns. After the intermission (please enjoy the complimentary refreshments) the Quartet will sing selections of folk music in the Parish Hall. Tickets are \$15 per person, children enter free of charge.

• WELCOME:

We welcome our guests and visitors at our Services. Please join us for lunch in the Parish Hall following the Divine Liturgy.

• CATECHISM:

All are welcome to participate in the Catechumen Class in the Parish Hall at 3:30 PM on Saturdays. Topics for the next eight Saturdays will be: Holy Baptism, Chrismation, the Eucharist, Confession, Priesthood, Marriage, Holy Unction, and Death and the Funeral.

• STEPS TOWARD GREAT LENT:

Sunday, March 3 is the last day to consume meat products (including chicken and lamb!) until Pascha. The weekend after, March 10, is known as *Cheese-fare*, as well as the *Sunday of Forgiveness*. It will be the final day to eat dairy and eggs. However, more importantly, keep in mind that on Sunday we will serve the Vespers with the *Rite of Forgiveness* at 1:15 PM. The Church teaches us that participation in “Forgiveness Vespers” is *essential* for each one of us as members of a parish, members of one another. Let's all make the effort to come to the Service. —Fr. Lawrence

• BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON (reprint from 2015):

On the three Sundays prior to Great Lent we sing Psalm 136, which begins with the phrase: “By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.” This was a psalm sung by the Jewish people who had been taken as captives to pagan Babylon (597–538 BC) after the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. Psalm 136 is a lament of exile, enslavement and bitterness. In scripture, pagan Babylon stands for defeat, loss, sin, humiliation and alienation from God. These themes link us to the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), who is in wretched exile in a “far country” rather than Paradise, a long way from his father's house. What the Prodigal hoped, planned on and blindly assumed was that he would have freedom upon leaving his father's house. Instead, he found that he was enslaved to his own passions and sinful acts. The ancient Jews in Babylon and the Parable of the Prodigal remind us that there are many things which exile and estrange us from our Loving Father, from the “normal life” of the Kingdom. In response we sing this Psalm from the depths of our sorrow. In its final verse, we hear words which express the utter frustration and devastation of having lost home, family and God, words of violence and outrageous revenge by a people who have been egregiously wronged: *Happy shall he be, that shall take and dash thine infants against the rock. Alleluia.* Of course we recoil in horror at such words. One of the maxim's of understanding the Scriptures is that we are to look deeper than the historical reality of those people wanting revenge on the Babylonians. We are to look at the underlying spiritual need there—and within ourselves—to overcome sin. In that light, we understand the Rock to be Christ (see 1 Cor. 10:4), and the infants, our intrusive and sinful thoughts. The Great Fast of Lent offers an invitation and the tools for us to change, to reorient our lives, thoughts, words, deeds and goals toward the Kingdom and Christ's life.