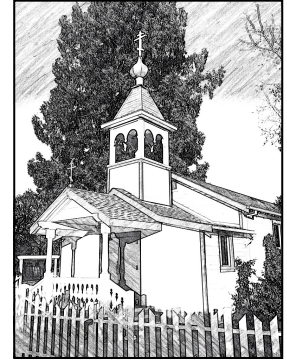


# ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, March 5, 2017



- TROPARION OF THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY, Tone Two:

We venerate Thy most pure icon, O Loving Lord, asking Thee, O Christ our God, to pardon our transgressions. For of Thine own will wast Thou well-pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, to deliver from the bondage of the enemy those whom Thou hast fashioned. Therefore, in thanksgiving, we cry aloud to Thee: Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior, when Thou camest to save the world.

- KONTAKION OF THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY, Tone Eight:

The uncircumscribed Word of the Father became circumscribed, taking flesh from thee, O Theotokos, and He has restored the sullied image to its ancient glory, filling it with divine beauty. This our salvation we confess in deed and word, and we depict it in the holy icons.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, March 4: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *On the Holy Mystery of Confession*  
5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, March 5: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, **Cross and Icon Procession** at end of the Service  
Noon, *Agape Lunch*
- Tues., March 7: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
- Wed., March 8: 8 AM, Lenten Matins  
5 PM, Confessions  
6:15 PM, Presanctified Liturgy, meal
- Thurs., March 9: 8 AM, Lenten Matins, Feast of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste
- Friday, March 10: 9 AM, Talk on the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, with Fr Theodor/Parish Hall  
6 PM, Small Compline and Akathist to the Theotokos

- WELCOME:

On this first Sunday of the Great Fast, I warmly welcome each and every one of you, and pray that our Lord Jesus Christ bless you. I enthusiastically welcome our guests, some here for the first time, others, dear friends for many years. I am grateful to God that we have a full Church for the Sunday Liturgy, and a growing attendance at Saturday evening Vespers, at which we sing the praise of the Risen Lord.

Our Divine Liturgy, which is our Sunday morning service, is more than a “worship service” or a “communion service.” We call it “divine” because it is a service of thanksgiving to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Trinity (the word “Eucharist” means “thanksgiving”). In the Liturgy we are lifted up to the Father’s divine banquet table in His Kingdom, and partake of the “food of immortality.” The term “liturgy” is used, because our worship is an offering, “a mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise” — we do it as a community, and therefore it is more than a time for personal introspection, personal needs. We say, “let us love one another that with one accord we may confess: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, one in essence, and undivided.” This sentence expresses the prayer for unity from *above*, given by the Holy Trinity. We offer bread and wine, and

ourselves, to God, without reservation. In our thanksgiving we supplicate the Father to send the Spirit to change the bread and wine into the deifying Body and Blood of Christ, to unite us to Himself and each other, to constitute us into His Body, which is the Church. All this is done by God for our salvation, and for the salvation and “the life of the world.” I encourage you, as you recall the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension, and the Second and glorious coming again, to prepare yourself well before coming to Church. Preparation for Liturgy gives us capacity to receive the wonderful free-flowing gift of God’s grace. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- PARKING:

Many of you have experienced some difficulty finding a parking space. This is because the All Saints Mission, using our Protection Church for a Sunday 9 AM Liturgy, is growing. We are happy for them. Their growth means that they are now in a position to find their own place to worship, somewhere in Santa Rosa. Archbishop Benjamin asked the mission to start looking for a place, since he knows we need our Protection Church now. With that encouragement, the All Saints parish council members have identified a couple of suitable properties. Parking may be a problem until the move, so I ask for your patience as they prepare to transition. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- LENTEN MEALS AFTER PRESANCTIFIED:

One of our Parish traditions during Lent is to have a simple meal (soup, salad, bread and fruit) with a spiritual reading in the church hall following the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesday evenings. What’s needed? Sign up to make a meal, stick around to help clean up. The Sign-Up Sheet is in the Parish Hall.

- ATTENTION PARENTS!

Parents or adult guardians are responsible for the safety and supervision of their children before, during and after Services, while playing in the Hall, the playground or the property. Young children may not roam the property without parental supervision. In addition, children are not allowed to play in the vineyard, behind the Church School or Hall, or in the parking lots. —*Fr. Lawrence and the Parish Council*

- HIERARCHICAL VISIT AND THE VENERATION OF THE CROSS

His Grace, Bishop Daniel, will visit us for the 5 PM Vigil of the Veneration of the Precious Cross (3rd week of Lent) on March 18 and the 10 AM Divine Liturgy the next day, March 19. I very much look forward to that profoundly beautiful moment, at the end of the Saturday Vigil, when the Precious Cross will be brought forth from the Altar by our bishop and placed in the middle of the Church. I ask that all of us make an effort to be present at the Vigil, and if you cannot attend all of it, at least come by 6 PM. *Before Thy Cross, we bow down, O Master, and Thy holy resurrection, we glorify.*

- SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY:

Over the past few centuries the view has grown within Christianity that the significance and character of the icon is not decisive for the teaching of the faith. But the history of the Church and her teachings demonstrate the opposite: it is not for nothing that the bloody struggle against iconoclasm lasted for over 100 years. The Orthodox liturgical calendar is full of the names of martyrs and confessors for icons. And they didn't go to martyrdom, tortures and deaths for a work of art (the icon was never viewed that way), nor for a painted board, but for the confession of the faith through the icon, just as in the first century and later people went to martyrdom for confessing the name of Christ (a strange situation for the mind of contemporary man). The Church recognizes the dogma of the veneration of icons, not the veneration of works of art. Within Christianity the dogma of venerating icons is rejected by some (Protestants), among others it dissolves in the cloudy concept of “a disciplinary measure” but in fact, is replaced by the veneration of works of art, that is, practically speaking, it is rejected (in Roman Catholicism), and among a third group it is forgotten (by the Orthodox). Forgetting the dogma of the veneration of icons is a phenomenon that is characteristic of our troubled time. And estrangement from this dogma is not only a matter of forgetting, it is an estrangement from the living Tradition of the Church, a disregard for the Holy Fathers and for the decisions of one’s own local and of ecumenical councils. The dogma of

the veneration of icons is a victory over the Christological and, at the same time, Trinitarian heresies... This dogma was the culmination of an entire era of struggle for the Orthodox faith in the Incarnation and, it follows, for the true confession of the image of the building of the House of God in the world. It is an open truth, revealed by the collective consciousness of the Church. In it the Church reveals the genuine essence of the Christian icon as the visible and immutable witness of the Incarnation (and not only as one in a series of Old Testament and New Testament theophanies). This dogma is the result of the acceptance by Christianity of the fullness of Christ's nature as both God and human. And one can say that if during the period of iconoclasm the Church struggle for the icon, then in our time it is the icon that is doing battle for the Church. It is called upon to play a role that it has not played heretofore within Christianity. And if the word has lost its value and has ceased to express the meaning that it carries within it then its place is taken by the icon: it is called upon to bear witness of the Church, to be the visible demonstration of her indestructible unity... Without exaggerating, we are living in a terrifying and dangerous era. It is terrifying above all because of the rising rebellion against God and His Kingdom. Again, it is not God, but man that has become the measure of all things. It is not faith, but ideology, utopia that defines the spiritual condition of the world. At a certain point Western Christianity seems to have accepted this perspective: all at once the "theology of liberation" arose, and questions of economics, politics, and psychology replace the Christian view of the world, service to God. All over the world nuns, theologians, hierarchs are demanding—from God?—some kind of right, defending abortions and misinterpretations, and all of this is in the name of peace, agreements, the unity of everyone. Everyone is striving toward unity, but with differing conceptions of what unity is. The Church has always considered itself united because it is the image and likeness of God. It "knows unity and therefore does not know union." And this unity, insofar as it is a unity of God and man, cannot be destroyed. It is possible to fall away from it, to fall out of it, which has happened and which continues to happen. But that has never destroyed the unity of God and man that is embodied in the Church. In the Christian world there has never been unity throughout its entire history from the Apostolic times to our own time.

—Leonid Ouspensky, *On the Way to Unity?* 1987, Paris.

- THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT—FRIDAYS AT 9 AM:

During Great Lent we will offer four classes on the book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* by St John Climacus, led by Fr. Theodor. Dates: Fridays at 9 AM: March 10th, March 17th March 31st and April 7th. The first session will be an introduction to St John Climacus, himself and his work as a monastic. We we will also spend some time on the first steps of *The Ladder*. The remaining classes we will work on selected steps, passions, and virtues. It is not expected that you read the text ahead of time, however for those are interested, I suggest you read ten pages daily during Lent, Monday through Friday. —Fr. Theodor

- HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE CANON OF ST. ANDREW:

We participated in the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete this week. How marvelously and reverently it was sung by the choir. We will have another opportunity to enter into that great poem of repentance on Thursday of the fifth week of the Fast. Below is a short essay about the Great Canon, written by Andrew Boyd, director of youth activities for the OCA.

*"I'm not a bad guy, I work hard, and I love my kids...so why should I spend half my Sunday hearing about how I'm going to hell?"*

This infamous question asked by Homer Simpson so beautifully displays much of our contemporary approach to religion in general and the Gospel in particular. This has been a particular frustration of mine during this *Triodion* period. So often it seems that the *Triodion* material is beating us up, that it is harsh and does not cohere well with the Gospel message, with that Paschal joy we are building up to. We spent hours in Church on Thursday crying "Have mercy on me, O God" to a God who already sent His Son to us to be crucified and break the bonds of death. I recall Father Thomas Hopko commenting on this concern once. What are we really saying and doing

when repeat these phrases over and over? He argues, and I agree, that we are saying to God, “Be to us how you already are.” God is already all-merciful, when we repeat that prayer to him we are simply asking him to be to us as he already is, was, and will be. It’s a dogmatic statement as much as it is a prayer; God is merciful and will be merciful to us. What it is not is beating ourselves up, although when we say this prayer we do acknowledge our utter dependence on God’s mercy.

What I realized more and more, perhaps because it was my first time hearing the entire canon at once, was that it represents not so much Saint Andrew’s personal repentance, personal battle, and personal story, but rather it intricately weaves me and my repentance into the whole of salvation history. What God has worked for us, His relationship with his creation culminating in Christ’s dispensation is recounted in the context of my personal repentance. That deeply personal prayer, “Have mercy on me, O God” is juxtaposed with Saint Andrew’s long exposition of God’s work in our history.

The eloquence with which Saint Andrew weaves these two themes, our salvation history and personal repentance, together is quite impressive. “Instead of a visible Eve, I have the Eve of the mind; the passionate thought in my flesh” (Ode One). Again, and again throughout this canon he stitches these two themes together. “By my own free choice I have incurred the guilt of Cain’s murder, I have killed my conscience” (Ode One). Some might think this an odd juxtaposition, or yet that it is not even an important one, but it is the one point that the entirety of the text makes over and over again. My personal repentance, my personal cry for God’s mercy is directly related to his great economy, his divine plan for me and for all of creation. His mercy is present with me now, as it was present for Adam, Cain, Noah, David, and ultimately through Christ’s Cross. Saint Andrew is not really putting two different themes together; rather this canon speaks only of God’s ever present and powerful mercy, manifest personally to me in my sinful state and throughout history to all of humanity.

I used to get very frustrated hearing the text of this canon. “Where’s Christ in all this?” I would ask myself. It is a common sentiment I have heard from parishioners as well as people in the seminary community. It turns out, however, that I must not have been paying attention too well in the past. A quick glance at Ode One of the Canon reveals over twelve references to Christ, just in that small part of Andrew’s work. Christ is present here. This Canon is not just an exercise in Old Testament knowledge, nor is it a monk’s personal self-flagellation. When we celebrate this Canon liturgically, we simultaneously enter into a remembrance of what God has done for us in the history of our salvation, and we implore God to continue that mercy now for us personally. This work, and our liturgical commitment to it, is a great witness to a belief in a God who is actively engaged with and concerned for his creation, even when it falls away from him. —*Andrew Boyd*

#### • LENTEN RETREATS

The Monastery in Calistoga will host a Lenten Retreat—Saturday, March 11, 2017 at 9 AM, on reading the Bible as an Orthodox Christian. The V. Rev. Father Philip Tolbert, priest at Holy Dormition, will present three talks (9 AM, 10:30 AM and 2 PM). Call 707-942-6244 for more information. I very much recommend this talk.

Our Parish Sisterhood will host a retreat—open to all—Saturday, March 18, from 9 AM–4:30 PM: “All About Icons—spirituality, history, symbolism, technique” with presentations by Fr. Patrick (now Archimandrite Abbot Patrick), Matushka Ann Margitich and Catherine Ostling. \$25 suggested donation. Contact Barbara Owens at 707-5445-1948, and see the flyers for more info.

Holy Virgin Cathedral on Geary Street in SF, will host a retreat on the theme “Love Your Neighbor” led by Archpriests David Moses and Moses Berry. April 2. Call 916-225-4023 for more information. visit [www.lentenretreatsf.org](http://www.lentenretreatsf.org)