

• DUNBAR'S NUMBER and CHURCH ATTENDANCE:

Most of the congregation is aware that I strongly believe our parish should start to research the establishment of a mission parish, whether it be Petaluma, Napa or someplace north. The more Orthodox Churches there are, the more opportunities for people to go to the Divine Liturgy. In any case, Orthodoxy has evangelism at its heart. How do we know when we are ready to start a mission? Consider the following sociological information, which comes from the research of Alex Krinditch (see <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/research/EightFactsAboutChurchAttendance.pdf>). *When the total parish population reaches around 150, the Sunday attendance drops significantly. This may be explained by something known as “Dunbar’s number,” which is a theoretical cognitive limit of the number of people with whom one can maintain stable and close social relationships. These are the type of relationships in which an individual knows who each person is, and how each person relates to every other person. When Dunbar’s number is reached, the parish may transform in the perception of the laity from a small family-like community to a more amorphous group of not really well known people.* Sunday attendance here varies from 175 to 250. One wonders about this sizable variation. Have we become hostages of “Dunbar’s Number” or have people other priorities on a Sunday morning? We have yet to have 200 people in Church on a Sunday since Pascha—one sees about 180 at most. How might we become more diligent in our Saturday and Sunday attendance? Sunday is the *Lord’s Day*—not *our day*—and therefore we should never miss except for illness. The day is sacred and is a time to **dedicate** to the Savior for worship, Holy Communion, rest, prayer and fellowship, and rejoicing. I must also encourage you to attend Saturday Great Vespers, at which we praise the Savior’s resurrection from the dead. About 60 people attend each Saturday evening. This is shockingly low for a parish that has well over 100 communicants on a Sunday. It is a well-established Tradition of the Church, and not a new “rule,” that those who commune on Sunday are to be present at Great Vespers on Saturday evening. Let us “commend ourselves and each other, and all our life” — yes, especially Sunday — “to Christ our God.”

—Fr. Lawrence

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



May 6, 2018

Sunday of the Samaritan Woman



• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Four:

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse, and elatedly told the Apostles: death is over-thrown, Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

• TROPARION OF MID-FEAST, Tone Eight:

At Mid-feast give Thou my thirsty soul to drink of the waters of piety; for Thou, O Savior didst cry out to all: whosoever is thirsty let him come to Me and drink. Wherefore, O Well-spring of Life, Christ our God, glory be to Thee.

• KONTAKION OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN, Tone Eight:

The Samaritan woman came to the well in faith; she saw Thee, the Water of Wisdom and drank abundantly; she inherited the Kingdom on high and is ever glorified.

• KONTAKION OF MID-FEAST, Tone Four:

O Sovereign Master and Creator of all things, O Christ our God, Thou

Protection of the Virgin Orthodox Church • 90 Mountain View Ave, Santa Rosa, CA.
707-584-9491 • Lmargitich@sbcglobal.net

didst cry unto those present at the Judaic Mid-Feast: come and draw the water of immortality freely; wherefore, we fall down before Thee and faithfully cry aloud: grant Thy compassions unto us, O Lord, for Thou art truly the Well-spring of life for all.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, May 5: 4 PM, Children's Choir Rehearsal
5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, May 6: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
12:45 PM, Sisterhood Mtg
3:30 PM, Crowning Service for Lydia and Jordan
- Wednesday, May 9: 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank
6 PM, Reader Vespers

• SISTERHOOD MEETING / GIFT BASKETS:

Matushka Esther will be making five baskets to give to single mothers with young children (and who may not have a lot of family support nearby) on May 6 at the Sisterhood Meeting. She is asking for some assistance in this project. The meeting will begin after the Agape Meal. She needs help assembling the baskets, donations of items to put in the baskets, and Mother's Day greeting cards made by our parish children (?) to include with the baskets. If you know of a single mother who could use this thoughtful gift please let Matushka Esther know. Contact her at (707) 318-5381 or by email at esthercarr9@gmail.com

• SENIOR LUNCH FELLOWSHIP:

Our lunch will be held on Ascension Day, May 17, at 11:30 AM, directly after the Divine Liturgy (we will begin Liturgy at 9:30 AM that day). All retired and senior parishioners are welcome.

• BAPTISM:

Please keep Jeanie Carl in your prayers as she prepares for Holy Baptism on Pentecost, May 27, 9 AM.

• MEDITATION ON THE SAMARITAN WOMAN:

One wise teacher wrote that "purification is the systematic pruning away of all sources of distraction." Jesus helps the Woman at the Well prune away the things in her life that distract her from an intimate relationship with God based on "spirit and truth." This is what the sacrament of Confession is all about; Not just the listing of sins, but the uprooting of the causes of sin. As we progress in the spiritual life what we confess becomes more and more subtle, as we begin to work with the thoughts, emotions and conditioning that give rise to our sin. Denied the living water of God, we search for other sources of water we hope will quench our thirst, but they produce only more thirst. The soul's search for alternative gods turns into craving and addiction to things that satisfy only for a moment and then the moment is gone and with it, happiness. We must wake and be honest with ourselves and start to whittle away these distractions, to leave behind all our earthly cares and the half-baked solutions we concoct that do not, and never will, work...If our spiritual lives are non-existent or barren, then be sure that at the root of the problem is that our hearts and minds are filled with distractions from the remembrance of God. It is a struggle. Have no doubt, but a struggle which produces fruit an hundred-fold. When there is nothing to hinder the cooperation between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit, the living water begins to flow... —Fr. Anthony Hughes. stmaryorthodoxchurch.org

• MEMORIAL DAY AT THE CEMETERY:

A Panikhida will be served on Memorial Day (also, for the Orthodox Church, *Holy Spirit Day*), May 28, at Noon, at Santa Rosa Memorial Cemetery. I invite all of you to join me in praying for those who laid down their lives for their country, and as a public witness of our Orthodox Faith in prayerful action.