

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2015

Beginning of the Nativity Fast

- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Seven:

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death; to the thief, Thou didst open Paradise. For the myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy, and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy.

- KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Seven:

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. Hades is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry: the Savior has come to them that have faith. Enter, ye faithful, into the Resurrection.

- KONTAKION OF THE PROTECTION, Tone Three:

Today the Virgin stands forth in the Church and invisibly with the choirs of Saints prays to God for us; the Hierarchs bow down with the angels, the Apostles and the Prophets rejoice, for the Theotokos prays to the Eternal God for us.



ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Nov. 14:
 - 10 AM, Baptism (Rossi baby)
 - 3:30 PM, Catechism, in the Library
 - 3:30 PM, Play Practice
 - 4 PM, Reader Course
 - 5 PM, Great Vespers & Confessions
 - 6 PM, Potluck and a talk on St. Paisius**
- Sunday, Nov. 15:
 - 8:45 AM, Matins
 - 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
 - 11:45 AM, Church School
 - Noon, Potluck Agape (Fasting foods only)
 - 12:45 PM, Glendi Bakery Wrap-up
- Tuesday, Nov. 17:
 - 7 PM, Study of Hebrews, McPherson home
- Wednesday, Nov. 18:
 - 7 AM, Divine Liturgy
 - 6 PM, Vespers
- Thursday, Nov. 19:
 - 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting
- Friday, Nov. 20:
 - 6:15 PM, Great Vespers & Lity for the Feast of the *Entrance of the Theotokos*
- Saturday, Nov. 21:
 - 8:30 AM, Matins and Divine Liturgy for the Feast
 - 3:30 PM, Catechism, in the Library
 - 3:30 PM, Play Practice
 - 5 PM, Great Vespers & Confessions

- PRAYER FOR THOSE KILLED IN PARIS:

O Most Holy and Eternal Godhead, give rest unto the souls of thy departed servants which have perished this day in Beirut and Paris. May they rest in heavenly paradise until the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come. O Prince of Peace, grant peace in this hour of grief unto the friends, family, and loved ones of those who were killed. Grant speedy healing and comfort to those who were wounded. May thy most holy Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in them. Amen.

- NATIVITY FAST:

Archimandrite Irenei (Steenberg) wrote that "...we fast in order to reclaim creation, to offer this world which we have disfigured through our sin back to God, ...our fathers teach us that we must begin this project in our own heart. For if our own heart is weighed down, we can no more lift another up than we can ourselves. And yet, the project of working on our heart is a pastoral project, a missionary project. For when our heart is restored to communion, when we are lifted up ourselves to God, we are able to do the same to the cosmos, to the world around us. So fasting, though it focuses inward on the heart, is nonetheless an act of charity, of love, of giving to the other in this world. And this is constantly reminded to us by the fathers. It is one of the reasons that almsgiving is tied into fasting, and when we fast, we deliberately engage in acts of charity, reclaiming not only our body, but our time and our activities back from our selfish preoccupations into an orientation aimed at the other, at all of creation." The Gospel for this Sunday—the famous "Good Samaritan" parable—is a powerful statement about that which Fr. Irenei wrote: the Good Samaritan is Jesus, the Word of God, Who became man to find each one of us—wounded by sin (like the man in the parable)—to gather us together, to save us, to restore us to true life, which is communion with God. The Nativity Fast begins on November 15, as a time of preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ. How are we to fast? Simply, and effectively, each person struggling to his or her true potential, to keep the divinely-inspired guidelines of the fast (i.e., no meat, dairy, etc), to increase prayer, worship and the giving of alms. I encourage each of you to take this fast seriously. Unlike Great Lent, the Nativity Fast does not have a clear ascetical structure (e.g., no Presanctified). It isn't that the rules for fasting are too demanding to fulfill; no, the difficulty lies in what goes on *around us* in the world and society. Recognize that, plan ahead, and you'll have a good fast. I pray that during the Nativity Fast the Lord grant you to *increase the capacity of your heart*, to expand your soul, that is, to acquire "greatness of soul," and so become a healing presence in these days of sorrow and grief.

—Fr. Lawrence

ALMS AND CHARITIES—PARISHIONERS IN ACTION

*Many of our parishioners are actively involved in some kind of charitable outreach to those who are less fortunate.
The projects listed below offer opportunities and choices for participation.*

- SO MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR! A BEAUTIFUL TIME TO GIVE!

We are so happy to ask for your help with this year's Christmas Shoebox Project (actually, we have packs, not shoeboxes). This year, 100% of the project is for local needs. The Sisterhood is putting together Thanksgiving gifts and Christmas gifts to give to those coming for the Nomadic Shelter on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Eve (see below for more info on the Nomadic Shelter). Daphne Russell contacted the *Redwood Gospel Mission* about what should go in to the Christmas Shoeboxes, and they advised us to pack them with socks, toothbrushes, and other toiletries. Please consider volunteering some time to help make this happen—donations in any amount are very welcome. The Sisterhood has purchased all the items for the project. The work of filling the packs will take place at 6 PM, Monday, November 23 at Daphne Russell's home in Santa Rosa (directions will be provided on a handout). Food and drinks will be served. Also going into the packs will be homemade cookies, so we are asking those of you that bake to bring homemade cookies to the Church Sunday, November 22. Any questions call Kira Staykow at (415) 279-0353 or Daphne Russell at 523-1332.

- DIRECT RELIEF PROJECT:

The following email was sent by Carmen Anderson, and is posted here with the blessing of Father Lawrence: I am part of a Women's study club at my school, and we are raising money for midwife kits. These kits will be sent to third world countries. Over 800 women die each day from complications during pregnancy and childbirth—90% of these deaths are preventable. That's 289,000 women who die each year. **Direct Relief**, in collaboration with the *International Confederation of Midwives* (ICM), designed a midwife kit, which ICM formally endorsed as the standard. Each midwife kit contains the 59 items that a midwife needs to provide fifty safe births. Each kit costs \$1,250: that's roughly \$25 per safe birth. If anybody would like to donate, I will be accepting donations on Sunday. And if anyone has questions, feel free to contact me at gingersnapanderson@gmail.com or contact my teacher, Annamaria Hogue at ahoague@svhs-pet.org. Thank you so much for your consideration.

—Gratefully yours, Carmen Anderson.

- THIRD ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER PROJECT:

Help provide Thanksgiving dinner for 50 Sonoma County Families living in poverty. \$100.00 provides for a full Thanksgiving Dinner Food Box. If you, or your family, are not able to sponsor a full box, please consider sharing a box with other church members! In an effort to make this charity effort efficient we will be accepting monetary donations only (checks can be made out to St. Seraphim Church/charity). This effort is extremely appreciated and impactful. If you have any questions you can contact Amy Ramirez Margitich at fosasquatch@gmail.com or Serge Anderson at s.anderson4990@sbcglobal.net.

- NOMADIC SHELTER: THANKSGIVING DAY:

Come one, come all! Thanksgiving day, 6 PM in the Parish Hall. What better way to spend the evening of Thanksgiving than with our guests and others from the parish? We'll be expecting anywhere between twenty-five to forty men and women from the Redwood Gospel Mission shelter to join us in celebration of this holiday—you are certainly welcome to join us. A hearty meal and a word of encouragement will be given to our guests. Come to visit and help. "Glory to Him Who has shown us the Light." —*Ryan Ambrose Inlow*.

- BRINGING PEACE:

You cannot cure the souls of others or "help people," without having changed yourself. You cannot put in order the spiritual economy of others, so long as there is chaos in your own soul. You cannot bring peace to others if you do not have it yourself. Often, we help other people, not by a series of conscious acts directed upon their soul, but rather by influencing them through our spiritual gifts, without ourselves seeing or knowing how we do so. Once St. Anthony the Great asked a visitor who said nothing at all, "Why do you not ask me anything?" and the other answered, "It is enough for me to look at you, holy father." —Fr. Alexander Elchaninov (reposed 1953) from *The Diary of a Russian Priest*

- SAVE THE DATES:

Greek Dancing for Exercise in the Parish Hall, Tuesdays January 19–February 23 from 7–9 PM, hosted by the Sisterhood. Come support this Sisterhood project, while working on your New Year's resolution to get some exercise. Beginners and children over 12 years of age welcome. Flyers coming soon.

- RECYCLING MAY BE HARDER THAN FASTING:

Our parish is committed to recycling, but obviously cannot keep that commitment without your cooperation. We have a tendency to put garbage into the recycle bins. You can help. Here are some details: **Blue Barrels** are for recycle only. Sonoma County has new rules about what goes into the recycle bins. Bottles, cans and plastic cups (no liquids) are okay. Plastic wrap, bags, plastic utensils, dixie cups, and paper napkins are NOT allowed. Each blue barrel in the hall has a garbage barrel next to it. Please take a minute to consider before you toss. If you are tossing into the blue bin in the kitchen or the recycle dumpster out back, there is a list of what is considered recyclable posted next to each bin.

- NOVEMBER 21 ~ FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE.

As the righteous parents of the Holy three-year old Virgin Mary prepared to take Her to the temple, they first dressed Her in royal garments, adorned Her, and provided Her with an escort of maidens carrying lighted candles. So should we, in order to enter the Heavenly Realm, first clothe our souls in the garment of obedience to the Lord's commandments, adorn our souls with virtues, and accompany them with the lighted candles of prayer and charity. **Vespers on Friday 6:15 PM on November 20; Matins/Divine Liturgy 8:30 AM, November 21.**

As we celebrate the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, we offer a hymn of praise to her who became a living temple of God. But this feast is also a prelude to the Feast of the Nativity, since the hymns direct our attention also towards the Nativity season. During Matins we first hear the joyous words of the Nativity Canon: "Christ is born, glorify Him. Christ is come from heaven, receive ye him. Christ is on earth, be ye exalted." In the words of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann: "With these words something changes in our life, in the very air we breathe, in the entire mood of the Church's life. It is as if we perceive far, far away, the first light of the greatest possible joy—the coming of God into His world! Thus the Church announces the coming of Christ, the Incarnation of God, His entrance into the world for its salvation." Thus we continue our time of fasting and preparation in joyous knowledge of what awaits: the uncontainable God, born in the cave of the Virgin for the salvation of mankind. *Zachariah cried in gladness, I open to thee the gate of the Temple, O gate of the Lord. Abide therein rejoicing; for I have known and do believe that the salvation of Israel shall come now openly, and from thee shall be born the Word of God Who granteth the world the Great Mercy.* —from the Aposticha, Vespers of the Feast

- CONCERT HERE DECEMBER 3 AND 4:

Cantiamo Sonoma, one of the area's most renowned choral ensembles, directed by Carol Menke, will sing a Christmas concert on Thursday, December 3 and 4, from 8–10 PM, here in St. Seraphim Church. The Cantiamo Christmas features a wonderful variety of seasonal pieces—both familiar and rarely heard. The music of Peter Philips, Franz Biebl, Morten Lauridsen, William Walton, Kenneth Leighton, John Tavener and more! An evening of candlelight and music sure to delight and inspire. Come and let us help kick off your Christmas season! Tickets available from Cantiamo Sonoma members (see Nicolas Custer), Corricks in downtown Santa Rosa, request by email at info@cantiamosonoma.org or by calling (707) 539-5377. *Ticket prices:* Preferred Seating \$25, General \$20 (advance purchase \$15), Seniors \$15 (advanced purchase \$10). Limited seating for both Thursday and Friday night, so please get your tickets soon.

- HOLY COMMUNION:

We welcome our visitors and our guests this morning, and would remind them, as well as all Parish and Church members, that the reception of Holy Communion is reserved for Baptized and Chrismated Orthodox Christians, only. Indeed, no Orthodox Christian should approach the Chalice to receive Holy Communion unless he or she has prepared by fasting, prayer (especially the "Pre-Communion Prayers") and a **recent** participation in the Holy Sacrament of Confession. We confess our sins when our conscience dictates, but certainly, no less than once per month for those that receive Communion weekly. St. John of San Francisco exhorts us to keep a regular participation in Holy Communion, and not to let sin, poor attendance or laziness come between ourselves and the Holy Chalice: "Until a man's earthly life finishes its course, up to the very departure of the soul from the body, the struggle between sin and righteousness continues within him. However high a spiritual and moral state one might achieve, a gradual or even headlong and deep fall into the abyss of sin is always possible. Therefore, communion of the holy Body and Blood of Christ, which strengthens our contact with Him and refreshes us with the living streams of the grace of the Holy Spirit flowing through the Body of the Church, is necessary for everyone. —from the book *Man of God: Saint John of Shanghai & San Francisco*