

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, December 15, 2019

Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of Christ

• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone One:

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ; glory to Thy kingdom; glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

• TROPARION OF THE ANCESTORS, TONE TWO:

By faith, Thou hast justified the ancient forefathers; through them Thou hast betrothed to Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the Saints, therefore, exult in glory, for from their seed is the noble fruit: she who without seed gave birth to Thee. Through their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us.

• KONTAKION, TONE TWO

A hand-wrought image ye would not worship, O thrice-blessed ones; but armed with the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire. Standing in the midst of the irresistible flame, ye called upon God: Speed Thou, O Compassionate One, and hasten, as Thou art merciful, to come unto our aid. For Thou art able to do what Thou wilt.

• KONTAKION OF THE FOREFEAST, Tone Three:

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the angels and the shepherds now glorify Him, Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child, Who before the ages is God.



ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Dec. 14: 3:30 PM, Catechism in the Library, *On Repentance*
3:30 PM, Play Rehearsal
3:30 PM, Homeless Back-pack assembly
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 15: 8:30 AM, Matins / 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
4:30 PM, *Nativity Kontakion* (Protection Church), Dinner and Christmas Play
- Tuesday, Dec. 17: 6:30 PM, Master Plan review (all welcome)
- Wednesday, Dec. 18: 6 PM, Vespers, Potluck, *Study of the Epistle to the Romans*
- Thursday, Dec. 19: Noon, Senior Lunch
6 PM, Vespers for the Pre-Feast of Nativity
- Friday, Dec. 20: 7:30 AM, Matins for the Pre-Feast of Nativity
11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Pre-Feast Vespers

- Saturday, Dec. 21: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *On the Church and the Virgin*
5 PM, Great Vespers/Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 22: 8:30 AM, Matins
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
1:15 PM, Pre-Feast Vespers
2:30 PM, Baptism (*child of Adina and Emmanuel*)
- Monday, Dec. 23: 7:30 AM, Matins for the Pre-Feast of Nativity
11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Royal Hours
- Tuesday, Dec. 24: 11:30 AM, Vespereal Liturgy
6 PM, Festal Matins for Nativity (Confessions during the Matins)
- Wednesday, Dec. 25: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for Christmas
- Wednesday, Dec. 26: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Synaxis of the Theotokos

• TIME FOR SPIRITUAL PREPARATION:

Please prepare yourself for the Feast of the Birth of Christ. It is appropriate and proper for us—priests and people together—to make a Confession prior to receiving Holy Communion on all feast days, but especially before Christmas. *It is not appropriate for anyone over seven years of age to receive Holy Communion without a recent Confession.* Our bishops teach that if we receive Holy Communion frequently, **and we should each week**, we should be confessing no less than once a month. Let us all make our Confession prior to Christmas Day, so that we may receive Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Eve and Day united in Christ. Consult the list above for the frequent times when Confessions are heard. —Fr. Lawrence

You are invited to a Christmas Play

Mary, Did You Know

presented by the St. Seraphim Youth

Written by Matushka Esther Carr
Directed by Sophia Basch and Natasha Collins

Sunday, December 15

4:30 PM—Church Service (Kontakion of St. Romanos for Nativity)
5 PM—Dinner
5:45 PM—Play Begins

• PRE-CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

The demands of work, family, holiday preparations along with morning and evening routines the week before Christmas present many challenges. Nevertheless, I invite you to set aside some time to join me at the Pre-Feast Services this week and next (see schedule). Gathering as the Church, let us enjoy the profound hymnography. May God grant us the experience of calming and cleansing silence found in the approach to the spiritual Cave in Bethlehem during this **Winter Holy Week**. —Fr. Lawrence

• ABSENCE THIS WEEKEND:

Fr. Michael's brother George Margitich reposed on Tuesday after a long illness. I will be attending the funeral services at his parish, Sts. Peter and Paul in Passaic, NJ, Friday and Saturday. It's important for my extended family and for me personally that I participate. Sadly, I will miss being with you for the Divine Services and the children's play on the weekend. However, while I am in the Northeast, I will make the short trip to St. Tikhon's Seminary to visit the Hamners and the Inlows on Sunday and give them your love and greetings. I will return home on Monday evening. Asking for your holy prayers —*Fr. Lawrence*

• PRAYERS:

Fr John underwent cataract surgery on Wednesday—please keep him in your prayers as he recovers. Ellen Aylward's mother Margaret reposed on Wednesday—may the Lord grant Margaret forgiveness and the heavenly Kingdom and consolation to Ellen and her family, as well as to Eugenia Dada, who took care of Margaret for some time. Please keep in your prayers: Yemani, George, Carol, Sarah, the child Walter (grandson of Esther Schau), Carl and...all others who are suffering.

• A WORD FROM ABBESS MELANIA:

And the word (Logos) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). A few years ago at a retreat here at the monastery, a conversation came up about the meaning of *Logos*, which (as above) is normally translated as “word.” A friend with a PhD in the classics said that the most fundamental meaning of *Logos* would be closer to...*Meaning!* So, Christmas is the celebration of the *One Who IS Meaning* coming into this world and taking on flesh, for our sake. Yet, there seems to be little agreement on the meaning of life in our day. Is it in the purposeless purpose of evolution? Expressing oneself? Fighting social injustice? Is there any meaning at all? Christmas reminds us where we find meaning—in the One Who humbled Himself to dwell with us. In icons of Christ's Nativity, He is wrapped not in swaddling clothes, but in winding sheets because He was born to die for us, to offer His whole life for love of us. So, our meaning lies in following Him in His life of humble and courageous love, of taking up our crosses and following Him. And who knows? If we start living lives of real meaning, our culture may just follow suit!

• PROPHECIES OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES:

The prophets revealed many particulars regarding the coming of the Messiah, specifically: that He will be descended from Abraham (*Gen. 22:18*), from the tribe of Judah (*Gen. 49:9*), from the line of king David (*2 Samuel 7:13; 1 Chron. 17:12-13*), will be born of a Virgin (*Is. 7:14*) in the city of Bethlehem (*Mic. 5:2*), will spread spiritual light (*Is. 9:1-2*), will heal the infirm (*Is. 35:5-6*), will suffer, be pierced, die, be buried in a new grave, then will rise from the dead (*Gen. 49:9-11; Ps. 41:7-10; Is. 50:5-7 and the 53rd chapter; Zach. 12:10; Ps. 16:9-11*), will lead souls from Hades (*Zach. 9:11*); they even predicted that not everyone will recognize Him as the Messiah (*Is. 6:9*), but that some would even feud with Him, though unsuccessfully (*Num. 24:17; Deut. 18:18; Ps. 2; Ps. 95:6-8; Ps. 110:1-4; Is. 50:8-9 and 65:1-3*).

A HYMN OF THE PREFEAST OF CHRISTMAS

Let us celebrate, O ye people,
the fore-feast of the nativity of Christ,
let us lift up our minds and hearts to Bethlehem,
and let us see the great mystery in the cave;
for Eden hath been opened and God hath come forth
from the pure Virgin,
being perfect in both humanity and divinity.
Therefore, let us cry aloud:
Holy God, the Father who hath no beginning!
Holy Mighty, the Son made flesh!
Holy Immortal, the Comforting Spirit!
O Holy Trinity, glory to Thee!

- FEAST OF ST. SERAPHIM

On January 2 we commemorate the repose of our parish patron, Saint Seraphim of Sarov. On New Year's Day, January 1 we have Great Vespers with the Akathist at 5 PM. On January 2, we will greet Archbishop Benjamin and Bishop Daniel at 9:30 and begin the Divine Liturgy. All are invited to a festive lunch following the Liturgy.

- THEOPHANY:

The Feast of the Baptism of the Savior is celebrated on January 6. It is the Twelfth Day of Christmas, and the day in which the Church in ancient times celebrated Christmas and Theophany together as one feast of the manifestation of God incarnate. Theophany, also called Epiphany, begins with the Royal Hours (comprised of Psalms, hymns, Old Testament and New Testament readings) on Friday, January 3 at 6 PM. Vespers on Saturday evening at 5 PM with the Canon of the Prefeast; Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, Jan. 5 at 10 AM, followed by the first Great Blessing of Water and blessing of the grounds and buildings; Matins of the Feast on Sunday evening at 5 PM; Liturgy on Monday, January 6 at 9 AM. This year I plan to do the second Great Blessing of Water outdoors—weather permitting. There is a lovely freshwater stream and waterfall (that flows into Bodega Bay) behind the Bodega Bay Inn, which is owned by Ted Dechant. He has invited us to do our water blessing there. So, Lord willing, after Liturgy here on Jan. 6th, I will drive to the Inn, and set up for a blessing. Please join me there at 1:30 PM. A list of proposed times and dates for house blessings will be distributed very soon.

- CHURCH CLEANING:

After Pascha I posted a weekly sign-up sheet on the post by the front door for those who wanted to clean the church. Overall, from then until now, blank slots outnumbered sign-ups. It seems clear that the sign-up list is not effective for us—perhaps there is a better way (especially as we approach the holidays and then Lent). So, let's try something besides a sign-up list, and see if we can get the job done. Maybe someone in the parish can take on the task—we might even call it a *ministry*—for scheduling Church clean ups. I'm open to suggestions.—*Fr Lawrence*

- BACKPACKS FOR NIGHTINGALE CLINIC—SATURDAY 3:30 PM UNTIL VESPERS:

Please join me in preparing backpacks for the homeless. The packs are given to those who are recovering, after being discharged from hospital, but are not well enough to live on the streets again. I will be shopping for items today and tomorrow. Karen Werder has offered to help set up for the assembly, but we need additional help. Please call or text me at 707-364-6445 if you are available, or would like to make a donation towards the backpacks (they are filled with personal-care items, beanies, gloves and rain ponchos). We'd like to include cookies as well, so those who can bake, please bring your finest. Let's make an offering for these who are "the least of these my brethren." Assembly of the packs will take place, God willing, this Saturday afternoon from 3:30–5 PM in back of the parish hall. —*Denise Anna Pellizzer*

- REGARDING THE REPOSE OF ELDER EPHRAIM:

We, American bishops and priests [in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America], for seventy years have wanted to attract people to the Church through festivals. That is, we arranged holidays and festivities, treated people with drinks, food and entertainment. We forgot about prayer, confession, fasting, prayer rope—about everything that makes up the Tradition of our Church. We even prevented the establishment of monasteries, as we thought that they were not necessary, and they could not give anything to our Church. And then a tiny man came, without worldly education and theological diplomas, without innovative and bold ideas (which we had in abundance) and reminded us of the most important thing—our Orthodox Tradition. He did not call for dancing and entertainment but called for fasting and participation in hours-long vigils. And people responded to his call, came to the old man and supported him. The number who came to Father Ephraim is beyond description. America, which sought to break the deadlock in the culture of consumption and slavery of material values through various social movements...and eastern religions, discovered the True undistorted Christianity—the Orthodox Church. —*Priest Anthony Moskhonas*