

THE ORTHODOX MESSENGER

January 2020, Vol. 28, Issue 1

DAILY PRAYER TO NOURISH THE SOUL

The following essay, by Hieromonk Herman of St. Tikhon's Monastery in Pennsylvania, is from the forward to the newly published St. Tikhon's "Orthodox Christian Prayers"

THE LORD'S PRAYER puts on our lips a petition for "daily bread." With these words, we ask God to grant us not only the food that sustains our body but, what is more essential, the nourishment that sustains our soul. "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me," declared the Lord, and, during His incarnate life on earth, His communion with the Father was constantly expressed through the activity of prayer. "And it came to pass, as He was alone praying..." (Lk. 9:18). "And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered..." (Lk. 9:29). "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not..." (Lk. 22:32). "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Lk. 22:44).

As disciples of Christ and His imitators, Orthodox Christians pray together at church, offering the services of Vespers, Matins, the Hours, and above all the Divine Liturgy. We may also pray in small groups outside of church, with our family or friends. But we also pray, each of us, in the secrecy of our room, in the presence of the God who "sees in secret" (Matt. 6:4). While corporate prayer might take place no more than two or three times a week, private prayer must be our *daily bread*: a daily response to the hunger not of our stomach but of our heart.

Such a daily commitment is made easier by aids appropriate to the task. Those who cook every day may often consult a cookbook: with its recipes at hand, they are not left to their own devices every time they enter the kitchen. Likewise, someone who prays every day will often use a prayer book. It lifts from our shoulders the weight of inventing our own prayers each time we come before our icons. And while this is a practical convenience, it is also a spring of grace welling up from deep within Holy Church. By using the prayers of holy and faithful Christians who have gone before us, we are entering into a living stream of tradition by which we sail to-

wards paradise.

...in prayer there is much freedom! But not to the neglect of discipline. The daily commitment of a stable rule of prayer is vital.

But the prayer rule—and any additional prayer beyond the rule, as strength allows and as God gives—is not dictated by printed prayer books, but by an Orthodox Christian's conscience and any due consultation with a father confessor or spiritual guide. "You fit the [rule of prayer] to the man," instructs the contemporary Moldovan elder, Fr. Selafile. "Let them read from the Psalter, from the Paraclesis to the Mother of God, the akathists, because there are many. Read the Canon of the Savior, read from the saints. In short, read whatever you can."

And the broad witness of the saints and fathers bears this out. Papa-Dimitri Gagastathis had one rule that he called "after the order of Melchizedek," while St. Justin (Popovich) followed a different rule, as did St. Ambrose of Optina. Athanasius of Gregoriou [on Mount Athos] was noted for his love of the Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos, while St. Callinicus of Cernica was known for reciting the Akathist to St. Nicholas daily. So while we seek inspiration from the saints and guidance from printed prayer books, there is no one rule to which we must aspire, unless that rule be St. Paul's: "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

Moreover, our daily prayer consists not just of the prayers of the prayer book, but the reading of Scripture,



January 2

The Feast of the Repose of Saint Seraphim of Sarov

January 1, 6 PM:

Great Vespers and the Akathist to St. Seraphim

January 2, 9:30 AM:

Greeting of Archbishop Benjamin and Bishop Daniel and the Divine Liturgy, followed by a Festal Luncheon

especially the Psalter and the Gospels: the practice of the Jesus Prayer and other short prayers; and prostrations—and all of this in proper measure. These elements are the foundation; the prayers and the canons [poetic hymns] and akathists...are building-blocks; and in all things, the Cross is the crane: let us sign ourselves with it always.

...far more important than which prayers we pray is how we pray. The inner disposition of the heart is both the means to effective prayer and its true goal. “A broken and humbled heart God will not despise,” says King David (Ps. 50:17), and St. Ignatius Brianchaninov writes that “the essence of the work of prayer consists not in the quantity of the prayers read but in reading such prayers

as are read with attention and with sympathy of heart.” For this reason, authentic Christian prayer is possible only if our life is marked by obedience to the Lord’s commandments and by repentance as soon as we fail to keep them. Or, as Archimandrite John Krestiankin wrote, “You must not forget that we are not saved by prayer rules, but by our willingness at every moment to fulfill God’s will instead of our own. Hence we can well make our own the prayer of Abba Palladius: “Cleanse me, O Lord, from my secret sins, that I be not disappointed in my prayer.”



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 combined the celebration of Christmas and Theophany to make one feast of the manifestation of God incarnate. Sometime in the 4th century the Feasts began to be celebrated separately. We find in many ancient sermons by the Holy Fathers that Theophany, which means the “revelation of God,” was considered the more prominent of the two feast days. Accordingly, our Church Calendar still reflects that with its many services:

Theophany, also called Epiphany (*manifestation*), begins with the Royal Hours (comprised of Psalms, hymns, Old Testament and New Testament readings) on Friday, January 3 at 6 PM. The Service takes about one hour.

We will have the usual Vespers on Saturday evening at 5 PM, added Prefeast hymnography; Matins on Sunday, January 5 at 8:30 AM, with many hymns devoted to the coming Feast. Divine Liturgy at 10 AM, followed by the first *Great Blessing of Water* (bring your own containers) and blessing of the grounds and buildings. This particular Sunday is a day of preparation, and so it will be a *Fast Day*, i.e., we eat no meat or dairy products.

On Sunday afternoon, at 5 PM, we will serve the Festal Matins. The Service will last about 1.5 hours.

On Monday, January 6 we will serve the Divine Liturgy at 9 AM. This year we will celebrate 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 (Ted Dechant owns the Inn and the property behind it). 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. ❖

HOUSE BLESSINGS

A LIST FOR House Blessings is posted in the Narthex. If your name does not appear on the List, it may be because it was inadvertently left off, or perhaps your home has never been blessed. Not to worry—please contact me to schedule a house blessing: **If you are unable to be home at the time indicated for the house blessing, please email/text me ASAP.**

The late Archpriest John Udics reminds us that “on the Feast of the Parish or the Feast of Theophany [January 6] we rededicate our home for its original purpose, just as we must periodically rededicate our life to Christ. We do it especially on this Feast of Theophany because this is the day on which we remember in the Church Year the coming of Christ who began His Ministry when He descended into Jordan to be baptized by Saint John the Forerunner and Baptist. He enters again into our lives reminding us that we must ‘repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.’ An Orthodox Christian must dedicate not only himself and his house to the Lord, but his daily work and all his efforts as well. All things are to be done to the glory of God. That is why in the Christian Orthodox Church, not only religious objects, such as icons, crosses, churches and vestments, are blessed, but also homes, fields, animals, clothing and all objects which are used in our daily lives for the good of man. In this the Church expresses its faith that the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying action extends over the whole Creation.” ❖

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **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
- **SUNDAY, January 5,** is a Fast Day, in preparation for the Feast of Theophany. We abstain from all meat, dairy and eggs.
- **ANGELS UNAWARES:** Our guests from the Redwood Gospel Mission will arrive about 6 PM on Thursday, January 2, and depart about 6:30 AM on Friday morning. Dinner will be served on Thursday as they arrive, and then the Hall will be cleared for them to set up places to sleep. Usually we have about 20–25 guests. Volunteers are needed from 4–8 PM. Any questions call Michael or Rachel Dovey at (707) 799-4117. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them who suffer adversity..." (Hebrews 13).
- **PLEASE JOIN US** for the wedding of Carmen Zlata Baudi and John Landis Sims on Sunday, January 19 at 3 PM.
- **WALK FOR LIFE:** Please see the flyers at the Candle Desk. Some may have the mistaken belief that the [Walk for Life](#) in SF is a politically driven, conservative-Evangelical-Christian event. That opinion would be incorrect. Of course, there are many Evangelical Christians who come to the Walk. There are also many non-Christians (one thinks of the incredibly eloquent speaker with "Agnostics against Abortion" who gave a talk a few years back). However, by and large, most of the approximately 50,000 people who gather for the Walk are Roman Catholics. Thankfully, Orthodox Christians have a greater presence each year—and a very obvious one too with the beautiful icon banner and the singing of our hymns. In my experience, the Walk participants are universally prayerful, peaceful and joyful. One also senses the great sorrow concerning how many children in the womb have been aborted. I encourage you to join me on Saturday, January 25, in San Francisco. I am working on arranging transport for a group. Please let me know that you are interested in coming. —Fr. Lawrence
- **THE SENIOR LUNCH** fellowship will meet on Thursday, January 16 at noon.
- **PARISH ANNUAL MEETING:** Sunday, February 2, immediately after the Divine Liturgy. Bring a sack lunch.
- **COMMEMORATION BOOKLETS:** Please update your books for 2020 at the Candle-stand.
- **QUESTIONS** for the Rector? Please call, email or see me. Hearing things second-hand is not always reliable. —Fr L

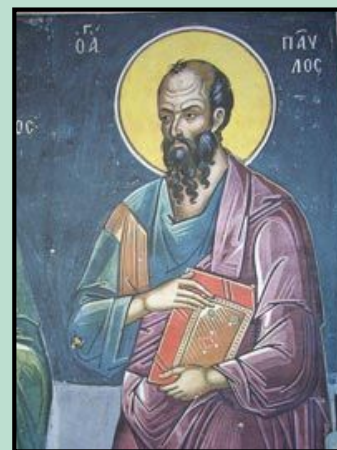
Parish of the Protection of the Holy Virgin
St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral
90 Mountain View Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95407
Parish office phone: 707-584-9491
website: www.saintseraphim.com

The Rector, Fr. Lawrence Margitich, may be reached at the Parish office phone, or at Lmargitich@sbcglobal.net.

Parish Contacts

Bobbi Griovski, Parish Secretary	584-9491
Fr. John Schettig	318-1559
Fr. Nicholas Carr	318-5391
Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden	291-7452
Martin Thong, Treasurer	888-7888
Karen Werder, Recording Secretary	338-4962
Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator	480-6106
Debbie Buse, Hall Event Manager	696-4986

Scripture Study of the Epistle to the Romans



FOLLOWING DAILY VESPERS
WEDNESDAY EVENINGS, AT 6:30-7:30 PM
JANUARY 8, 15, 22
LED BY FR. LAWRENCE

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

JANUARY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal 	December 30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning: set-up feast day lunch 	December 31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Great Vespers for the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ and St. Basil 	1 - St. Basil/New Year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy • 6 PM, Vespers and Akathist for the Feast of St. Seraphim 	2- St. Seraphim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, Greeting of Hierarchs, Divine Liturgy for the Feast, Agape Meal • 6 PM, Angels Unawares 	3 - Theophany Prefeast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Royal Hours for Theophany 	4 - Theophany Prefeast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Great Vespers for the Prefeast
5 - Pre-feast / Fast Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy/ Great Blessing of Water • Agape Meal • 5 PM, Theophany Matins 	6 - Theophany <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy • <i>1:30 PM, Blessing of Water at Bodega Bay 1588 Eastshore Rd</i> 	7 - St. John the Baptist	8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Food Bank • 6 PM, Vespers, Pot- luck, Study of Romans 	9	10	11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
12 - Martyr Tatiana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Sun School • Noon, Agape Meal 	13	14	15 [Fr Lawrence in SF for meeting] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers, Pot- luck, Study of Romans 	16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship 	17	18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
19 - St. Mark of Ephesus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Sun School • Noon, Agape Meal • 3 PM, Wedding 	20	21	22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers, Pot- luck, Study of Romans 	23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting 	24	25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Noon, Walk for Life in SF</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
26 - Russian New Martyrs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:30 AM, Sun School • Noon, Agape Meal 	27	28	29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers 	30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs 	31	February 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Great Vespers for the Feast of the Meeting

• The Parish Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, Feb. 2, following the Divine Liturgy