

## THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

...*And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the prophets.* —Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in AD 381

IN THE WORDS OF St. Seraphim, “when the Spirit of God descends on man and overshadows him with the fullness of His outpouring, then the human soul overflows with unspeakable joy because the Spirit of God turns to joy all that He may touch.”

All this means that we know the Holy Spirit only by His presence in us, the presence manifested above all by ineffable joy, peace and fullness. . . Thus one can say that the presence of the Holy Spirit in us is the fulfillment of true happiness. And since this happiness does not come from an identifiable and external “cause,” as does our poor and fragile worldly happiness, which disappears with the disappearance of the cause that produced it, and since it does not come from anything in this world, yet results in a joy about everything, that happiness must be the fruit in us of the coming, the presence, the abiding of Someone Who Himself is Life, Joy, Peace, Beauty, Fullness, Bliss.

This Someone is the Holy Spirit. There is no icon, no representation of Him, for He was not made flesh, neither has He become man. Yet when He comes and is present in us, everything becomes His icon and revelation, communion with Him, knowledge of Him. For it is He Who makes life into life, joy into joy, love into love and beauty into beauty, and Who therefore is the Life of life, the Joy of joy, the Love of love, and the Beauty of beauty, Who being above and beyond everything makes the entire creation the symbol, the sacrament, the experience of His presence: man’s encounter with God and communion with Him. — *Father Alexander Schmemmann, from the book **Of Water and the Spirit***

PENTECOST, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, is not a mere establishment of an institution endowed with specific powers and authorities. It is the inauguration of the new age, the beginning of life eternal, the revelation of the kingdom which is “joy and peace in the Holy Spirit.” The Church is the continuing presence of Pentecost as power of sanctification and transfiguration of all life, as grace which is knowledge of God, communion with Him and, in Him, with all that exists. The Church is creation as renewed by Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

But, on the other hand, the kingdom which Christ inaugurates and the Holy Spirit fulfills is not of this world. “This world,” by rejecting and condemning Christ, has condemned itself; no one, therefore, can enter the Kingdom without in a real sense dying to the world, i.e. rejecting it in its self-sufficiency, without putting all faith, hope, and love in the “age to come,” in the “day without evening” which will dawn at the end of time. “You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:3) This means that although the Church abides in the world, her real life is a constant expectation and anticipation of the world to come, a preparation for it, a passage into reality which in this world can be experienced only as future, as promise and token of things yet to come. The fruits of the Spirit (joy, peace, holiness, vision, knowledge) are real, but their reality is that of the joy which a traveler has when at the end of a long journey he finally sees the beautiful city where he is going—into which, however, he must yet enter. The Church reveals and truly bestows now the Kingdom which is to come, and creation becomes new when it dies to itself as “this world” and becomes thirst and hunger for the consummation for all things in God.

—*Father Alexander Schmemmann, “St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly,” Vol. 11, No. 1, 1967*

## Why the Apostles’ Fast?

A FEW YEARS AGO, I had the opportunity to hear Dr. Scott McKnight, a respected Evangelical theologian, speak on the topic of a book he was about to publish. He had done an extensive survey of the Old Testament in order to find out what fasting looked like in the historical Jewish context, and how that might affect the practice of fasting today. The conclusion he came to was that in the Old Testament, fasting was: “the natural, inevitable response of a person to a grievous sacred moment in life,” and that this did not involve simply abstaining from certain foods, but just not eating at all, for a specific amount of time.

Parish of the Protection of the Holy Virgin  
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Our Parish Secretary—Bobbi Griovski—may be reached at the Church office Mon., Tues. and Wed., 9 AM to Noon, at 584-9491. Fr. Lawrence Margitich may be reached at the Parish office phone, or at [Lmargitich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Lmargitich@sbcglobal.net). He is available Tuesday–Saturday, from noon onwards each day.

### Parish Contacts

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Dr. McKnight listed the things that would count as “grievous sacred moments” that he found in the Old Testament:

- sin
- death
- impending disaster or disaster itself
- the lack of holiness and love and compassion
- the impoverishment of others
- the sacred presence of God
- the absence of justice, peace and love

He writes, “Fasting is the whole person responding to each of these...” That is, our response is not simply that we feel terrible and suffer psychologically and emotionally, but that the situation is so grave that our body must respond as well. He continues: “A particularly notable feature of many religious traditions, beginning with the Hebrew Bible and flowing into the earliest Christian movement, and then centuries later into Islam, is to set aside specific dates in the year to remember sacred moments like these and to embody the natural response annually in a fast.”

My journey into the Church was a theological road all the way, but I would say that the thing that “made the coin drop” for me was all the threads I was finding that connected Orthodox worship and “the Orthodox way of doing things” all the way back to Judaism. If Christianity arose out of first century Judaism, and if the Orthodox Church now is the same church, then one would expect to find those threads and echoes. This understanding of fasting is one of the things that made that connection for me.

Even though for most Orthodox Christians fasting does involve abstinence—not eating specific foods—more than forgoing food altogether, there are certain days such as the beheading of St. John the Forerunner, the first days of Lent and the days of Holy Week, and others, when the Church asks us simply not to eat until after Vespers. These are the days labeled “strict fast” days on the calendar. And look: Those days and seasons correspond to one or more of those “grievous sacred moments” in Dr. McKnight’s list.

For Advent, and even more for Lent, we fast because unless the Lord comes and saves us, we are stuck in death and sin, with the impending disaster of losing existence itself. We experience the lack of holiness, love, compassion, justice, peace and love, and are involved in the impoverishment of others—and we are anticipating in the coming Feasts the sacred presence of God. Before the Dormition of the Theotokos and on the Beheading of St. John, we are responding to the death of the best and holiest humans who ever lived, and again encounter in the Feasts the sacred presence of God. We fast on Wednesdays and Fridays in remembrance of the sacrifice of our Lord, a most grievous moment indeed. Of course, the fast before receiving the Holy Mysteries in Communion is very strongly anticipating the sacred presence of God. So what about the Apostles’ Fast?

Remember how on Holy Saturday, between the end of the Vespers service and the beginning of the Paschal Nocturns, the book of Acts is read? This is in anticipation of “the next thing that will happen” as a result of the Lord’s Resurrection. It doesn’t actually happen until after Pentecost; the *Book of Acts* is sometimes referred to as “the acts of the Holy Spirit.” So now, as we reach this point on the Church calendar, we have participated in the Feast when “the Holy Spirit was made manifest, the Spirit of truth, the grace of sonship, the pledge of the inheritance to come, the first-fruits of the eternal good things, the life-giving power, the source of sanctification,” as we hear in the *Liturgy of St. Basil*. What is this but an encounter with the sacred presence of God the Holy Spirit? Not only that, but, as happened to the Apostles in the book of Acts, the implication for us is that we will also witness to Christ’s Incarnation, Life, Death, Resurrection and, as the Ascension has revealed, Rule over all. When the Apostles did that, what happened? All of the Twelve, except St. John the Evangelist, were killed for their witness—they suffered martyrdom. And so we also respond to their anticipated future death as they

witnessed, and we prepare for our own death for our witness, should that be required of us. If it is not required of us, we will at least have moments of suffering for our witness, and in those we surely encounter the sacred presence of God.

The Apostles' Fast is a time when we remember the ones who witnessed so that we today could come to a knowledge of God. It reminds us of the cost of that witness. It helps us, as many holy people have urged us, to remember our own death. It anticipates the Feast of the Apostles on June 29, when we encounter the sacred presence of God as we rejoice in God's gift of the Apostles to us, and we "give glory to the One who gave glory to them." —*Dana Ames*

*The Apostles' Fast—which is one of the most ancient and venerable of our fasts—begins on the Monday after All Saints, in other words, a week after Pentecost. It continues until the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29.*

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **JEANIE CARL AND NOEL WOOD** will be received as Catechumens at 9:30 AM, Pentecost. We welcome and ask the Lord to guide them. They join Cristine Legoretto, who is currently on a trip to Peru. Please keep them all in your prayers.
- **MEMORY ETERNAL:** Our dear Kathie Franotovich reposed in the Lord early Friday morning. She spent her last very difficult days in Creekside Convalescent, surrounded by her dear friends who spent many hours each day praying at her bedside to help prepare her for her last journey. Funeral plans are being set now—we are only waiting on the (slow acting) Sonoma County Coroner's office to file the death certificate.
- **DIVINE SERVICES AT KAZAN SKETE:** God willing, the Divine Liturgy is planned to be served at the Skete on the following four dates: Thursday, June 4, 8 am; Thursday, June 11, 9:30 AM; Thursday, June 18, 9:30 AM.
- **FATHER MICHAEL** will be having knee surgery on Monday, June 1, and will be recovering at home for some time. Please keep him and Matushka Eleanor in your prayers.
- **WE CONGRATULATE** Ashley Pellizzer and her husband Chris Austin on the upcoming baptism of their daughter Francesca, 9 AM, Sun., June 7.
- **THE CHURCH SCHOOL** teachers and students will celebrate the end of the school year with a party on June 7, following the Divine Liturgy.
- **CONGRATULATIONS** to Gabriel Nicholson and Mewael Tesfai on the graduation from High School.
- **SAINT SERAPHIM WEEK:** Our annual "Vacation Bible School" will be held from June 8–12. Daily schedule: arrivals by 9 AM, a morning prayer at 9:15 AM sharp, followed by a brief spiritual lesson with one of the priests, then crafts, games, snacks, folk dancing, music, and a wrap-up prayer at noon. Registration and Volunteer forms are available at the candle desk after Liturgy. We hope to have our core teen volunteers with us, and any other volunteers, age eleven and older. Parents, godparents and grandparents: it is very important that we have your involvement. Please contact Gloria Collins at (707) 849-6135.
- **FATHER LAWRENCE** and Matushka Ann will be away on vacation from June 15–30.
- **CONFESSIONS DURING JUNE:** With Fr. Michael recovering from knee surgery and Fr. Lawrence on vacation, this means that Fr. John Schettig will be serving the Divine Liturgy on Sundays without other priests, and thus will not have time to hear confessions prior to the Divine Liturgy. Please make plans to confess by appointment during the week days, or on Saturdays, before and following Great Vespers.
- **PREPARATION FOR FREQUENT RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION:** What is the norm? Abstain from meat and dairy on Wednesdays and Fridays (truly, it is not difficult!); keep a total fast from midnight Saturday until Communion on Sunday; pray the "Prayers before Communion" in the prayer book during the week, and confess at least once a month. Naturally, we will also want to be praying daily to give thanks to God, to ask for His divine mercy and help; to read the Holy Scriptures regularly, so we may be familiar with His divine acts and laws, and to forgive everyone.
- **THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL Meeting** is scheduled for Thursday, June 11, at 7 PM.
- **AS WE STAND AND PRAY** before an icon, we customarily make the sign of the cross and kiss the icon. A strange, foreign and odd unOrthodox practice has started here: I've noticed that many people—dozens?—are "air kissing" icons, sometimes placing their fingers or hands on the icon instead of kissing it (If you cannot reach an icon, bowing before it is sufficient). This is comparable to waving or shaking hands—which is simply not appropriate. Let's return to what's Traditional. I would hope no one is offended by these comments. —Fr. Lawrence

## July 4th at Fort Ross

THE ANNUAL JULY 4TH PILGRIMAGE to Fort Ross is set: Divine Liturgy at 10 AM, served by His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin and area clergy and sung by the Sisters from Calistoga. Following the Liturgy there is a BYO picnic lunch.

Certainly, the ride to Fort Ross is long (about 1.5 hour), although it is incredibly scenic. Upon getting to the historic Fort, one expects it to be cold and foggy—yet in the last fifteen years I remember it being only beautifully sunny and pleasant. Being the nearest Parish to the Fort (I like to think of the historic Holy Trinity/St. Nicholas Chapel as belonging to our parish), we have responsibility for two things: First, I feel that it is our responsibility to fill the chapel with faithful Orthodox Christians—we will make the effort to drive up there and give thanks to God on Independence Day for the blessings He has given us. There's no better way to give thanks than the Divine Liturgy, and in fact, it has been celebrated at the chapel since the early 1920s. At the first pilgrimage, Fr. Vladimir Sakovich, father of the late Konstantin Sakovich, managed to cajole a San Francisco taxi driver to take a car full of Russians on the ferry to Marin, and then keep driving “just a little further up the road...” Since that time, there has always been a service on July 4th at the Fort—where St. Innocent of Alaska once walked and prayed. These days attendance is no more than seventy-five or so. Yet in the “old days” there would sometimes be hundreds of faithful coming to Liturgy and the picnic. The first time I visited Fort Ross was July 4, 1985, there were at least a couple of hundred Orthodox people from Holy Trinity in SF and our parish there enjoying the incomparable beauty of the coast. It would be a tragic loss for our participation in the pilgrimage to end. I encourage all of you to take part this year. One of our parishioners remarked that “Fort Ross should be a major part of our Parish experience, as it was the starting point of Orthodoxy in the lower 48, and it is the *raison d'être* for our Parish as it and the Russian River are why the Russians migrated here from San Francisco. It is also an historic notch in our state's history.” I mentioned above that our parish has two responsibilities regarding Fort Ross on July 4th. The second task we have is to pack and transport all the items needed for the Liturgy (icons, banners, chalice, diskos, bread, wine, etc.) and then to set up for the Service. I will need help in getting all this done, and ask for volunteers to help me load my car and another on Friday, July 3, and leave here by 7:30 AM on July 4. Call or email me if you're available to help. —*Fr. Lawrence*

## SUPPORTING OUR MONASTIC SISTERS AND BROTHERS

WE ARE EXTRAORDINARILY blessed to have close to our parish Kazan Skete and Holy Assumption Monastery, and within some driving hours, the Monasteries of St. John of San Francisco in Manton, St. Herman in Platina and St. Xenia Skete in Wildwood (all three not too far from Redding). Near Fresno, in the foothills, is the magnificent women's monastery of the Life Giving Spring, with its holy abbess, Gerondissa (eldress) Mother Markella. There is also a new monastery in the foothills of Sonora, future home of Vincent Rossi (St. Silouan the Athonite Russian Orthodox Monastery, 21285 Old Sonora Columbia Rd, Sonora CA 95370). There is the Monastery of St. Gregory of Sinai, dear to us because of our icon painters, Monk Patrick and Hierodeacon Moses (unfortunately a break with the Old Calendar church of Greece, too complicated to explain here, prevents us from being in communion with them at the moment).

Many of our parishioners send financial support to our monasteries, and offer “sweat-support” as well, in thanksgiving to God for giving us these places of spiritual refreshment, where we can witness, first hand, the noble spiritual struggle in the lives of the monastics. It is important that we do support these monasteries, not only because the monks and nuns pray for us, and for the whole world constantly, or because we may go to them to experience a different intensity to the Christian life, but because our monastics typically stay very faithful to the fulness of the Orthodox Christian faith, and challenge us to live more it fully as well.

**Practical support:** Work parties are scheduled at both Kazan Skete and Holy Assumption on Saturday June 6, from 9 AM–Noon, or so. Help is much needed. The *Monastery of the Life Giving Spring* in Dunlap, CA is building guest quarters and new cells, and the older building needs a new roof—donations are much appreciated. Send them to Abbess: Gerontissa Markella, 38526 Dunlap Road, P.O. Box 549 Dunlap, CA 93621-0400. While this monastery is in the Greek Archdiocese, that doesn't mean that they do not need our support.

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## JUNE 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>May 31 – HOLY PENTECOST</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Reception of Catechumens</li> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, followed by Kneeling Vespers</li> <li>• Noon, Potluck Agape</li> </ul>	<b>1 – Day of the Holy Spirit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Holy Spirit day and St. Justin Martyr</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>	<b>3 - Fast Free</b> <i>[Fr. Lawrence in SF all day for Diocesan Council Meeting]</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>5 - Fast Free</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Poetry and Music Evening</li> </ul>	<b>6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Work Party at Kazan Skete &amp; Calistoga</li> <li>• 4:30 PM, Panikhida for Sakovich family</li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>7 – All Saints</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Baptism</li> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:45 AM, Church School</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal and Church School Party (end of classes)</li> </ul>	<b>8 - Apostles' Fast Begins</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM–Noon, St. Seraphim Week Activities</li> </ul>	<b>9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM–Noon, St. Seraphim Week Activities</li> </ul>	<b>10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM–Noon, St. Seraphim Week Activities</li> <li>• 5 PM, Food Bank</li> <li>• 6 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	<b>11</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM–Noon, St. Seraphim Week Activities</li> <li>• Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship</li> <li>• 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting</li> </ul>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>14 – All Saints of Russia/America</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> </ul>	<b>15</b> <i>[Fr. Lawrence &amp; Matushka Ann on vacation until 6/30]</i>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>21 - Martyrs under Turkish Yoke</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:30 AM, Akathist “Nurturer of Children”</li> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> </ul>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Great Vespers for St. John the Baptist</li> </ul>	<b>24 - St. John the Baptist</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Nativity of St. John the Baptist</li> </ul>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>28 – Sts. Sergius and Herman</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal (Potluck)</li> <li>• 1:30 PM, Great Vespers for Sts. Peter and Paul</li> </ul>	<b>29 - Sts. Peter and Paul</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Sts. Peter and Paul, end of the Fast</li> </ul>	<b>30</b> <i>[Fr. Lawrence returns from vacation]</i>	<b>JULY 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Vespers</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4 - Fort Ross Pilgrimage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy and picnic at Fort Ross</li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>

**MUSIC & POETRY, JUNE 5:** Share your performing talents on this Fast Free Friday evening at the ST. SERAPHIM SALON.

Sing – Play – Read – Celebrate! Potluck meal with spaghetti and salad provided begins at 6:00 PM. Sign up to perform and to dine: Vladimir, 707 479-9437, ursusmjr@sonic.net.

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## JULY 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1  • 6 PM, Vespers	2	3	4 - Fort Ross Pilgrimage  • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy and Picnic at Fort Ross  • 5 PM, Great Vespers
5 - St. Sergius  • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	6	7	8  • 11 AM, Catechism Revisited • 5 PM, Food Bank • 6 PM, Vespers	9	10	11  • 4:30 PM, Panikhida • 5 PM, Great Vespers
12 - St. Veronica  • 9:30 AM, Akathist "Nurturer of Children" • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	13	14	15  • 11 AM, Catechism Revisited  • 6 PM, Vespers	16  • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting	17	18  • 5 PM, Vigil for St. Seraphim of Sarov
19 - St. Seraphim of Sarov  • 9 AM, Water Blessing • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy and Procession • Noon, Festal Meal	20	21  • 9:30 AM, Feast Day of Kazan Skete, Divine Liturgy	22  • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, St. Mary Magdalene (and Sakovich Memorial) • 6 PM, Vespers	23	24	25  • 5 PM, Great Vespers
[Fr. Lawrence leaves for Atlanta on Sunday evening to attend the All American Council, returning late Friday]						
26 - St. Jacob of Alaska  • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	27	28	29  • 6 PM, Vespers	30  • 7 PM, Master Planning Meeting in Hall	31  • 6:15 PM, Great Vespers for Procession of the Cross	August 1  • 5 PM, Great Vespers