

## ASCENSION OF CHRIST

WHY DID CHRIST, the Miracle Worker Who had conquered death, not remain on earth to lead and rule over His people? The reply is found in the Gospel according to John, which records for us Christ's talk with His disciples before His Passion, and His High-priestly prayer to His Father. In speaking to His disciples about His coming departure from them, He had in mind not only His Passion and death on the Cross, but His Ascension to Heaven that was to follow. As long as Christ was still on earth, the work of the salvation of man and all creation had not been accomplished. For Christ came so that those who are on earth might be united to the heavens [by] His Ascension. In it our human existence, having gone through the crucible of suffering, and shown that it is more powerful than death, is brought into the fullness of divine life: In His Ascension, Christ did not become disembodied, disincarnate. He remains forever, perfect God and perfect Man. By His earthly path in obedience to that Truth He had revealed to us, we can unite our life with His perfect and eternal existence, and thereby enter into the Kingdom of Glory which He revealed to us. In His Ascension, Christ left the world different from what it was when the miracle of His entry into the world, His birth of the Most-pure Virgin Mary, took place. Most of the human race then remained in darkness, and only individual select prophets lived in hope and anticipation of the coming of the Savior and Messiah into the world. Now it was a different world, and a new people of God. That earth had witnessed the miracle of the birth in Bethlehem, had seen Christ's Transfiguration, and had been illumined by the light of His Resurrection from the dead. It was for that reason that Christ ascended, blessing that earth which He was leaving for a time, but from which He was henceforth to be eternally inseparable. Parting from Christ at His Ascension is at the same time a joyous anticipation of His victorious Second Coming. —*Fr. Victor Patapov*

**Ascension Day is always forty days after Pascha, which puts it on a Thursday. Plan ahead. The Vigil for Ascension will be on Wednesday, June 8 at 6:15 PM. The Divine Liturgy for this feast will be served at 9 AM, Thursday, June 9.**

## PENTECOST

The Feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Pentecost, is the spiritual culmination of the fifty days after Pascha. The importance of the day can only be compared to Pascha itself, and so the faithful eagerly await the day. We read in the Book of Acts of the trouble St. Paul went through for this Feast. He *had determined to sail past Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia, for he was in haste, that it might be possible for him to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost* (Acts 20:16). This feast is so extraordinary that the Church temple is bursting with abundant greenery, expressing the new life of the Spirit, and the harvest of spiritual gifts.

**Vigil will be celebrated on Saturday, June 18, at 5 PM. On Sunday, June 19 the Festal Liturgy will begin at 10 AM; Kneeling Vespers to follow immediately. Pentecost week is fast free.**

*Below is the Statement, created by Orthodox representatives at a Christian gathering in Oberlin, OH, in 1957. This document illustrates how crucial we consider unity in one faith—brought by Pentecost—to be.*

**Excerpt from the “Statement of the Representatives of the Orthodox Church in USA” at the North American Faith and Order Study Conference, Oberlin, OH  
September 3–10, 1957**

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH teaches that the unity of the Church has not been lost, because she is the Body of Christ, and, as such, can never be divided. It is Christ as her head and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that secure the unity of the Church throughout the ages. The presence of human imperfection among her members is powerless to obliterate the unity, for Christ Himself promised that the “gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church.” Satan has always sown tares [noxious weeds] in the field of the Lord and the forces of disunity have often threatened but have never actually succeeded in dividing the Church. No power can be mightier than the omnipotent will of Christ Who founded one Church only in order to bring men into unity with God. Oneness is an essential mark of the Church. If it be true that

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The Rector, 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

Bobbi Griovski, Parish Secretary	584-9491
Fr. Michael Margitich, Pastor Emeritus	473-0314
Fr. John Schettig, Second Priest	318-1559
Fr. Theodor Svane, Intern Priest	(914) 282-0867
Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden	291-7452
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Christ founded the Church as a means of unifying men divided by sin, then it must naturally follow that the unity of the Church was preserved by His divine omnipotence. Unity, therefore, is not just a promise, or a potentiality, but belongs to the very nature of the Church. It is not something which has been lost and which should be recovered, but rather it is a permanent character of the structure of the Church. Christian love impels us to speak candidly of our conviction that the Orthodox Church has not lost the unity of the Church intended by Christ, for she represents the oneness which in Western Christendom has only been a potentiality. The Orthodox Church teaches that she has no need to search for a “lost unity,” because her historic consciousness dictates that she is the *Una Sancta* and that all Christian groups outside the Orthodox Church can recover their unity only by entering into the bosom of that Church which preserved its identity with early Christianity.

These are claims that arise not from presumptuousness, but from an inner historical awareness of the Orthodox Church. Indeed, this is the special message of Eastern Orthodoxy to a divided Western Christendom. The Orthodox Church, true to her historical consciousness, declares that she has maintained an unbroken continuity with the Church of Pentecost by preserving the Apostolic faith and polity unadulterated. She has kept the “faith once delivered unto the saints” free from the distortions of human innovations. Man-made doctrines have never found their way into the Orthodox Church, since she has no necessary association in history with the

name of one single father or theologian. She owes the fullness and the guarantee of unity and infallibility to the operation of the Holy Spirit and not to the service of one individual. It is for this reason that she has never felt the need for what is known as “a return to the purity of the Apostolic faith.” She maintains the necessary balance between freedom and authority and thus avoids the extremes of absolutism and individualism both of which have done violence to Christian unity. ...

Unity from the Orthodox standpoint means a return of the separated bodies to the historical Orthodox, One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The unity which Orthodoxy represents rests on identity of faith, order, and worship. All three aspects of the life of the Church are outwardly safeguarded by the reality of the unbroken succession of bishops which is the assurance of the Church’s uninterrupted continuity with apostolic origins. This means that the uncompromised fullness of the Church requires the preservation of both its episcopal structure and sacramental life....

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## UNITY IN THE HOLY MYSTERIES

Man is regenerated in and through the mysteries of the Church in the timeless life of Christ, initiated through Baptism, Chrismation, and the Holy Eucharist into the one mystery of Christ, receiving grace upon grace, God giving the increase (1 Cor. 3:7; 2 Cor. 9:10). This is so because all the mysteries of the Church are but one mystery, the mystery of Salvation flowing from the mystery of the Church, the same Holy Spirit always present and working (Phil. 2:12-13). There is only “one Lord, one faith, one Baptism” (Eph. 4:5), one life in Christ. The unity of the mysteries flows from the unity of

the Head with His Body. There can be no participation in the Mystery of the Church outside this unity. That is because the Church is the locus of all Christian life and is known only from within, experientially, in the living out of a life of grace, in the entirety of the doctrine of the faith. One cannot enter into this life in a piecemeal way, partially, selectively. One can only be immersed within it, overwhelmed by it, receiving it entirely, unconditionally.

—from *The Ecclesiological Renovation of Vatican II: An Orthodox Examination*, by Fr. Peter Heers

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER MEETING:** Saturday, June 4, after Vespers/Matins (about 6:45 PM) in the Parish Library.
- **THE YOUNG ADULT GROUP** meets again on Saturday, June 4, following Vespers/Matins.
- **THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK** distribution will take place on Wednesday, June 8. Volunteers: please arrive by at 5 PM.
- **FR. THEODOR** and family are visiting parishes around Seattle, and will return to Santa Rosa on June 15.
- **THE SENIOR AND RETIRED** Lunch fellowship will have brunch after the Divine Liturgy on Ascension day, June 9.
- **SAINT BARTHOLOMEW DAY BBQ (and work party):** June 11. The Men's Group will sponsor a work party, beginning at 1 PM, to sort and clean the storage building. Vespers at 5 PM, followed by a BBQ for the workers and their families. Food and beverage provided. See the Flyer for more info.
- **SAINT SERAPHIM WEEK:** June 13–17. See Flyer for more info.
- **MASTER PLANNING:** Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 15 at 7 PM.
- **PENTECOST:** The agape meal on the feast, June 19, is a potluck.
- **SAINTS PETER AND PAUL FAST:** This Fast always begins on the day after All Saints (celebrated a week after Pentecost). The Fast ends on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29 on the New Calendar, July 12 on the Old Calendar. This year the fast is only two days on the New, so, do take the fast seriously for those days.
- **VACATION:** Fr. Lawrence will be on vacation from June 20–28.
- **FORT ROSS PILGRIMAGE:** Don't miss the annual trek up to Fort Ross on the coast for July 4th Divine Liturgy and picnic. It is well worth the drive and the time. The Liturgy begins at 10 AM. This annual event began in the early 1920s with the efforts of Fr. Vladimir Sakovich.
- **THE CHURCH CARPETS** are being professionally cleaned. Since there will be plaster dust from the fresco painting for the next few years it was decided to roll up the carpets every Sunday after the Divine Liturgy in order to keep them cleaner.
- **CANDLE DESK NEWS:** Paper is now being used to wrap up Prospora, instead of the plastic baggies.

## PARISH MINISTRIES

**Greeters:** Joseph and Judith Gumper serve as our Parish Greeters (Nicholas and Lydia Nicholson serve as backups). Anyone coming in the front door is cordially welcomed, given a bulletin, and offered assistance if needed. It would be good to have a couple other parishioners available to serve as backups.

**Ushers:** The Greeters hand off visitors to the Ushers, who direct them to a place to stand or sit, provide a chair if needed, and have the visitor fill out a "Welcome Form" to give to Fr. Lawrence. Ushers also ensure that visitors are escorted to the Parish Hall for the Agape Meal and introduced to our clergy there. We have four teams of Ushers: Thom Stewart and Alex Stameroff (first Sunday of the month), Anastasia Alphonse and Ryan Duval (second Sunday), George Barsi and Vladimir Baer (third Sunday), Tito Vincente and Ted Dechant (fourth Sunday). We are looking for two more people to serve as back ups, or to serve on the fifth Sunday of a month.

**Choir:** The Choir sings at all Divine Services. All singers are expected to sing at the Sunday Divine Liturgy and the important festal Vigils and Liturgies. There are often numerous Services during the week, at which singers are welcome, but not expected, to sing. Rehearsals take place on Sundays at 9:10 AM. Those interested in joining the choir should contact Nicolas Custer to arrange a private audition to hear which section (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) the voice belongs. There are a number of good singers in our parish, and it is hoped they will become choir members. The choir accepts singers from age 14–70. Orthodox singers understand themselves to be in obedience to the sacramental, moral, liturgical and spiritual teachings and expectations of the Orthodox Church. Singers keep a home prayer rule, and confess and commune on a regular basis. They are individually blessed by the Rector before singing in the Choir.

# Where the Church Today Fails the Youth

*By Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol, Cyprus*

It is not enough, brethren, to tell our children about the ideas of the Gospel, it is not enough to say that the Gospel and the Church is the best anyone can give them, and that love, joy, freedom, and justice are beautiful. Of course all these things are beautiful, but that which a young person needs today is to learn to love Christ. To learn how that which the Church gives is Christ, and this is something the world cannot give them. People can always learn to respect their fellow men, to love them, to be honest, sincere, fair, democratic, liberal, and all that. The Church is not needed to teach these things which nature itself teaches. Our human self and human existence teach us freedom, justice, democracy, respect and love for others. What the Church has to tell us about is the love of Christ. And here, allow me to tell you, is the point at which Christians today stumble, because we consider the Church to be an ideological system and that it is enough for us to be good people. That it is enough for us to observe our duties. That it is enough for our kids to have their boundaries....

...You don't need to be in church to be honorable, noble, honest, a good spouse, a good parent, a good student, and all the other good you have in you. This is why we often cannot understand why our children have another relationship with God. Why we who are older cannot understand.

You know, one could observe in older times the phenomenon in the Church when there were very many children. We remember, those of us who are older, that until a certain age almost all children went to Catechetical School, to Church, and they had a relationship with God. After a certain age they were lost. At fourteen, fifteen, or eighteen. Some went to the army, some went to get an education, and the efforts of the people were lost, such as the catechists and others. Why do you think this is the case? Where was the mistake made? Okay, of course there is human weakness, human challenges, and cares which proliferate as a person grows. But the "wrong of the Church," to say in quotation marks, is not the Church itself, but we people of the Church who, unfortunately, did not realize that what we had to give our children was the

love for Christ. We taught them the ideas of the Gospel: "Be a good child, an honorable child, have love for others, do charity work, be an upright person." But the love for Christ we did not speak about. This is because theology for us was idealistic, philosophical, and humanistic. We ignored the love of God, and what it means to love Christ. For this reason it was not very important for people to learn to fast, to do vigil, to confess, to commune, to read the lives of the Saints. No. It was enough to read other books. The lives of the Saints were set aside. The ascetic life of the Church was set aside. Man, who was invited to experience Christ in the mystery of the Church, was set aside. Other things got in the way. This is why we were losing people, one after another, when they reached puberty age. Of course, sin has its power and experience. This is something that attracts humans and makes them captive. On the other hand, what will draw people back? Ideas? Ideas are dead shadows of reality. An idea cannot keep you, no matter how much of an ideologue you are.

Fortunately those days are gone, and today it seems we have recovered, rediscovered, our roots and our traditions. And we see young people in the churches. We see young people loving God, entering the church with a new outlook, a new perspective. They may have their difficulties, their problems, their falls, and their weaknesses like all of us. But they listen for the love of God. And this is what we must tell our children, my brethren. To learn to love God. When they love God, then within the experience, the love of God is revealed to them. Then they learn and obtain a strong spiritual antibody within themselves, which is a counterweight to the weight of sin. And with this, if they are wounded by sin, they will have the presence of the love of Christ to comfort their hearts. They know they cannot be saved by their own power, they will not be saved by their own outlooks, but with the love of God, the compassion of God, the mercy of God, and the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross for all of us.

If we talk about education in the Church today, we are talking exactly about this initiation, this directive—  
Help people to love God. ☩

***Prayer is not something to get through:*** The meaning and purpose of dancing is the dance. Like music also, it is fulfilled in each moment of its course. You do not play a sonata in order to reach the final chord, and if the meaning of things were simply in ends, composers would write nothing but finales. —*Alan Watts*

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## JUNE 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 • 7 AM, Divine Liturgy, St. Justin Martyr  • 6 PM, Vespers	2	3	4 • 4 PM Children's Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers • 6 PM, Church School Teacher Meeting • 6 PM, Young Adult Group Meeting
5 - <b>Blind Man</b> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal	6	7  • 7 PM, Paschal Matins	8 - <b>Leave-taking of Pascha</b> • 9 AM, Paschal Liturgy • 5 PM, Food Bank • 6:15 PM, <b>Vigil for Ascension</b>	9 - <b>Ascension of Christ</b> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy  • 10:30 AM, Senior and Retired Brunch	10	11 - <b>St. Bartholemew Day</b> • 1 PM, Men's Group Work Party • 4 PM Children's Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers • 5:45 PM, BBQ
12 - <b>Holy Fathers</b> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal	13	14	15	16	17	18 - <b>Soul Saturday</b> • 9 AM, Memorial Liturgy • Decorating Church for Pentecost  • 5 PM, <b>Vigil for Pentecost</b>
St. Seraphim Week for Kids: 9 AM–Noon daily						
			• 6 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, Master Planning Meeting	• 7 PM, <b>Parish Council Meeting</b>		
19 - <b>Pentecost</b> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy and Kneeling Vespers • Festal Potluck	20 - <b>Holy Spirit Day</b> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy  [Fr. Lawrence vacation 6/20–6/28]	21	22  • 6 PM, Vespers	23  • 6:15 PM, Great Vespers for Nativity of St. John the Baptist	24 - <b>Nativity of St. John</b> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy	25  • 11:30 AM, <i>Dechant Birthday party on lawn</i> • 4 PM Children's Choir • 4:30 PM, Panikhida for Sakovich family • 5 PM, Great Vespers
26 - <b>All Saints</b> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	27  <i>Fast Day</i>	28  <i>Fast Day</i>  • 6:15 PM, Great Vespers	29 - <b>Sts. Peter and Paul</b> • 8:30 AM, Matins and Divine Liturgy	30	July 1	2  • 5 PM, Great Vespers (Bishop Daniel will be present)

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

JULY 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 • 5 PM, Great Vespers (Bishop Daniel to be here)
<b>3 - All Saints of America</b> • 9:30 AM, <i>Greeting of Bishop Daniel</i> • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	<b>4 - Pilgrimage to Fort Ross</b> • 10 AM, Liturgy/ picnic at Fort Ross	5	6 • 6 PM, Vespers	7	8	9 • <b>4 PM Children's Choir</b> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
<b>10 - St Anthony of Kiev</b> • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	11	12 • 9:30 AM, <i>Liturgy at Sts. Peter and Paul on Stony Point</i>	13 • 5 PM, <i>Food Bank</i> • 6 PM, Vespers	14 • 6 PM, Vespers for St. Vladimir	<b>15 - St. Vladimir</b> • 8:30 AM, Matins and Liturgy	16 • 5 PM, Great Vespers and Matins
<b>17 - Royal Passion Bearers</b> • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 12:45 PM, Sisterhood Mtg	18 • 6:15 PM, Vigil for St. Seraphim	<b>19 - St. Seraphim Day</b> • 9:30 AM, Greeting of Archbishop and Divine Liturgy	<b>20 - Prophet Elijah</b> • 6 PM, Akathist to Prophet Elijah	21 • 9:30 AM, <i>Divine Liturgy, Feast of Kazan Icon at Skeete</i> • 7 PM, parish Council Meeting	22 • 9 AM, Memorial Divin Liturgy (Sakovich family)	23 • <b>4 PM, Children's Choir</b> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
<b>24 - Martyr Christina</b> • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal	25	26	27 • 6 PM, Akathist to St. Panteleimon	28 • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, anniversary church consecration	29	30 • 5 PM, Great Vespers and Matins
<b>31 - St. Germanus</b> • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal <i>(Men's Group in SF: Liturgy at Holy Trinity and Giants game)</i>	<b>AUGUST 1</b>	2 • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon to the Theotokos and <i>Water Blessing</i>	3 • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon to the Theotokos	4 • 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon to the Theotokos	5 • 6:15 PM, Vigil for Transfiguration	<b>6 - Transfiguration of Christ</b> • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy, Children's Choir, blessing vineyard • 5 PM, Great Vespers