

## The Triumph of Jesus Christ in the Triumph of Orthodoxy

Gabe Martini

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT is celebrated as the **Triumph of Orthodoxy**. This is connected with the victory of the *iconodules* (those who supported the veneration of sacred images) over the *iconoclasts* (those who opposed their veneration).

The heart of the victory of Orthodoxy in the restoration of iconography—as well as our veneration of the same—is found in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Christology is the beginning and end of all true theology, and whenever we get Christ wrong, we get everything else wrong.

The decrees of the Ecumenical Councils were not as much positive pronouncements of ideas (as if God is a collection of our best notions), but rather opposition to wrong ideas about both the holy Trinity and the person of Jesus Christ. These wrong ideas (heresies) ultimately lead to other errors when taken to their logical conclusions. Erroneous forms of worship, piety, ecclesiology, and so forth.

During the second period of iconoclasm, led by Emperor Leo V (ca. A.D. 813–820), the Church was blessed by the courage of Theodore, a priest-monk at the Studious monastery in Constantinople. Like John of Damascus a century before him (during the first period of iconoclasm), Theodore opposed iconoclasm with writings and homilies, directly opposing the will of the emperor. However, I think Theodore's courage is best displayed by something he did, rather than something he said or wrote. On Palm Sunday in the year 815, Theodore led his fellow monks in a procession through their monastery garden. The garden was surrounded by a high wall, and they processed, singing hymns, with icons held high above their heads, so that only the icons were visible past the top of the wall. This peaceful protest was condemned by Leo, and they all risked punishment or even death by their actions.

When iconoclasm was defeated by the Empress Theodora (A.D. 843), a procession was made to the Great Church in Constantinople on the first Sunday of Lent. This procession marked the victory of Orthodoxy in the victory of icons, and the people held icons high above their heads as they marched into the church for liturgy. Imitating Theodore and his companions, this procession

marked a new festival for the Church—one that is still celebrated centuries later.

But again, the celebration is about more than just the restoration and veneration of holy icons; it is a celebration of the victory of the Orthodox Faith itself. That is to say, it is a victory of both right-belief in (and right-worship of) our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The victory of icons was a recognition of the beliefs of the fathers of the Ecumenical Councils and the Symbol of Faith. It was a victory, ultimately, of Christ, for he is the 'content' of Holy Tradition in his very being. Tradition is holy because it is the faith of Jesus Christ that lives and breathes in the Spirit-filled Church; it is Tradition because each generation hands it off to the next, which is the meaning of *paradosis*. A preservation of Tradition is not a preservation of rational truths alone, but is a continuation of the Lord Jesus Christ in and through his Body.

Because Christ humbly took on flesh—becoming one of us and redeeming us from death through his resurrection—we can be united to one another in him, intimately connected through unity in the Body of Christ. And icons are a witness to this unity. They are not only for reminding us of things in the past, but are also real and true connections between us and all the faithful departed; between us and the heavenly hosts; between us and the great cloud of witnesses; between this age and the age to come. They are apocalyptic windows into the reign or kingdom of God, which is present for us in the breaking of bread and the sharing as one loaf in Christ.

The fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council recognized the eternal significance of venerating icons, and their words have been repeated by us on every Sunday of Orthodoxy since that day in 843:

*As the prophets have seen, as the apostles have taught, as the Church has received, as the teachers have set forth in dogmas, as the whole world has understood, as Grace has shone forth, as the truth was demonstrated, as falsehood was banished, as wisdom was emboldened, as Christ has awarded; thus do we believe, thus we speak, thus we preach Christ our true God and His saints, honoring them in words, in writings, in thoughts, in sacrifices, in temples, and in icons, worshipping and respecting the One as God and Master, and honoring the others, and apportioning relative worship to them, because of*

## INFORMATION

Protection of the Holy Virgin & St. Seraphim of Sarov Church  
90 Mountain View Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95407  
Parish office phone: 707-584-9491  
website: [www.saintseraphim.com](http://www.saintseraphim.com)

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

Fr. Michael Margitich, Pastor Emeritus	473-0314
Fr. John Schettig, Second Priest	318-1559
Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden	291-7452
David Winterton, Treasurer	331-9085
Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary	338-4962
Kira Staykow, Sisterhood President	(415) 279-0353
Shenina, Scrip Manager	321-7417
Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator	480-6106
Debbie Buse, Hall Event Manager	696-4986

*our common Master for they are His genuine servants, This is the Faith of the apostles, this is the Faith of the fathers, this is the Faith of the Orthodox, this Faith hath established the whole world. this is the Faith of the Orthodox, this is the Faith that has established the universe. ☩*

## Annual Lenten Retreat Holy Trinity Cathedral San Francisco

**Saturday, March 7**

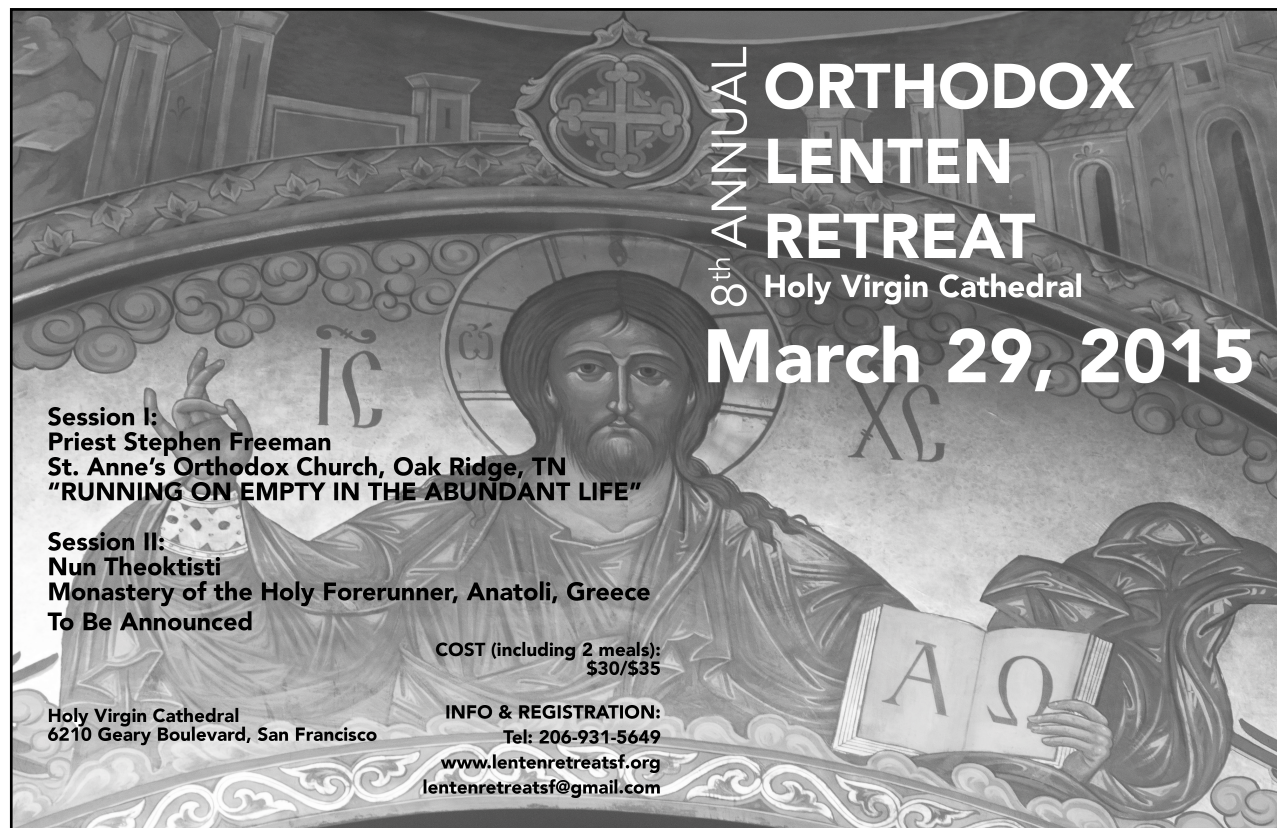
Fr. Innocent from the Monastery of Saint John in Manton will deliver a talk titled:

**Lent and Pascha:  
the Journey of the Heart to Joy**

The retreat begins at 9 AM with continental breakfast, and concludes at 3 PM.

To register, please send checks, along with your name, address, and telephone number to:

**Holy Trinity Cathedral  
1520 Green Street  
San Francisco, CA 94123**



**8<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL ORTHODOX LENTEN RETREAT**  
Holy Virgin Cathedral  
**March 29, 2015**

**Session I:**  
Priest Stephen Freeman  
St. Anne's Orthodox Church, Oak Ridge, TN  
"RUNNING ON EMPTY IN THE ABUNDANT LIFE"

**Session II:**  
Nun Theoktisti  
Monastery of the Holy Forerunner, Anatoli, Greece  
To Be Announced

**COST (including 2 meals):**  
\$30/\$35

**Holy Virgin Cathedral**  
6210 Geary Boulevard, San Francisco

**INFO & REGISTRATION:**  
Tel: 206-931-5649  
[www.lentenretreatsf.org](http://www.lentenretreatsf.org)  
[lenenretreatsf@gmail.com](mailto:lenenretreatsf@gmail.com)

The joyful feast of the Annunciation—the announcement of the Good News to the Virgin Mary—is celebrated each year during the Great Fast on March 25. We will serve **Festal Matins on Tuesday, March 24 at 6 PM**, and the **Vespertal Liturgy on Wednesday, March 25, at 5 PM**. A festal fish dinner will be served in the Parish Hall following the Liturgy. Why a Vespertal Liturgy? Lenten weekdays are fasting days—and fasting means you don’t eat, or eat only certainly things and very little of them. If we served a morning Divine Liturgy, then the fast would be ended early, and the great benefit of fasting through the day would be lost. So, the Church in Her wise ordering of divine services, offers us a late afternoon Vespertal Liturgy (first part vespers, second part Liturgy from “Holy God”). If anyone is not able to arrive precisely at 5 PM, which is probably not the most convenient time to begin a service, “let him have no misgivings; for he shall suffer no loss” to quote from the Paschal homily of St. John. In other words, arrive as soon as you able, and receive the Holy Mysteries if you are prepared.


## On the Incarnate Dispensation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and That We Should Celebrate Spiritually

by St. Theodore the Studite, reposed 826 AD (sermon given on the day of the Annunciation)

BRETHREN AND FATHERS, the Annunciation is here and it is the first of the Feasts of the Lord, and we should not simply celebrate as most do, but with understanding and with reverence for the mystery. What is the mystery? That the Son of God becomes son of man, using the holy Virgin as the means, dwelling in her and from her fashioning for Himself a temple and becoming perfect man. Why so? “That he might ransom those under the law,” as it is written, “and that we might receive sonship” [Gal. 4:5]; that we may no longer be slaves, but free; no longer subject to the passions, but free of passions; no longer friends of the world, but friends of God; no longer walking according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. “Those who walk according to the flesh, think the things of the flesh; those who walk according to the spirit, the things of the spirit; for the thought of the flesh is death; but the thought of the spirit, life and peace. And so the thought of

the flesh is hostile to God, for it is not subject to the law of God. Indeed it cannot be. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God” [Rom. 8:5-8]. In brief this is the power of the mystery, and this is why we should celebrate spiritually and behave spiritually, with holiness and justice, with love, with gentleness, with peace, “with forbearance, with goodness, with the Holy Spirit” [2 Cor. 6:6], so that as far as we ourselves are concerned we do not render the dispensation of our Lord Jesus Christ empty and ineffectual.

Not only that, but we should both pray and grieve for the world. Why so? Because the Son of God came to save the world, and the world rejects Him. Tribes and languages reject Him; the barbarian nations reject Him, those who have had his holy name invoked upon them reject Him, some through abandoning the faith, others through their evil lives. What should He have done and did not do? Being God He became man, “He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, the death of the cross” [Phil. 2,8.]; he gave us His body to eat and His blood to drink; He allowed us to call him Father, Brother, Head, Teacher, Bridegroom, Fellow-heir and all the other titles which there is no time to mention now. And still He is rejected, and still He bears it. “For,” He says, “I have not come to judge the world, but to save the world” [John 12:47]. ☩



**SATURDAY,  
MARCH 21ST  
LENTEN  
RETREAT**

**“Applying Monastic  
Principles to Everyday Life”**  
With Hieromonk Innocent,  
Superior of St. John of San Francisco  
Monastery, Manton, CA

**Saturday,  
March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015**

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**9am Session 1**

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**10:30am Session 2**

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**12:15pm Akathist**

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**1pm Lunch**

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**2pm Session 3**

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**3:30pm Closing**

**HOLY ASSUMPTION  
MONASTERY**  
1519 Washington Street  
Calistoga, CA 94515  
(707) 942-6244  
<http://www.holyassumptionmonastery.com>

No fee – Freewill offering  
RSVP now – space limited!

## THOUGHTS ON THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM

—Fr. Alexander Men

*O Lord and Master of my life! Give me not the spirit of sloth, despair [faintheartedness], lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother; for blessed at Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.*


**“Spirit of chastity.”** Further on the prayer says: “a spirit of chastity...patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant.” Chastity is purity of relations with the world and with people, wholeness of soul, without duality, and without the passions [inner addictions and impulses] gaining possession over you.

**“Humble-mindedness (Humility).”** This means the wisdom of the healthy person. Humility here, in the given context, means knowing where you stand against the backdrop of eternity. Do not inflate yourself like the frog in Krylov’s fable—it burst. There is no need to exaggerate, but one should know one’s worth. The wisdom of modesty is extraordinary and beautiful. The wisdom of modesty is not abasement beyond pride, but healthiness of soul. Here is an example for you. When someone begins to imagine himself as something that he is not, he is only a few steps from megalomania. Megalomania is a pathological state of pride. One person announces that he is the chairman of the Council of Ministers or Napoleon, and he is placed in a psychiatric hospital; another makes no such pronouncement, for which reason he is not in the hospital, but in his soul he thinks he is superior to everyone else.


**“Patience, and love.”** What is patience? I will put it briefly so that you will remember. Patience is not the state of cattle, which tolerate everything. It is not humiliation—not at all. It is not a compromise with evil—under no circumstances. Patience is the ability to maintain equanimity of spirit in circumstances that impede such equanimity. Patience is the ability to achieve one’s goals when encountering various obstacles along the way. Patience is the ability to maintain a joyful spirit even when there is an excess of grief. Patience is a victory and an overcoming; patience is a form of courage. This is what real patience is.

Finally, **“love.”** Love is the utmost happiness of man; it is the ability of our souls to be open, immanent (as the philosophers say), inwardly open to the other person. When you are riding the escalator in the subway, test yourself to see if you are able to love or not. When you look at the people riding on the other side and you find it repulsive to look at their faces, it means that all the pores of your soul are clogged and that your feeling of love is in an embryonic state. But the power of Christ’s grace is capable of rebuilding a person in such a way that he sees people in an entirely different manner; so that his first reaction will be benevolence; so that he will immediately see the beautiful in both women and men, in as inspired manner, even where no one else notices it; so that when seeing a suffering face he will feel compassion; so that he will be open. Such a person is always happy, because he is united with people and lives lovingly. The greatest cure from condemnation is the ability to criticize oneself.

...At the end of the prayer it says: “Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother.” You understand this. The greatest cure from condemnation is the ability to criticize oneself. —From the lecture “Great Lent,” delivered on April 1, 1989



**ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV  
ORTHODOX CHURCH**



PRESENTS THE

**YALE  
RUSSIAN  
CHORUS**

Mark Bailey • Artistic Director


**Sunday, March 8th**


**5:00 PM**


**St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Church**  
90 Mountain View Ave, Santa Rosa, CA. 95407


TICKETS AT THE DOOR, OR CALL: 707-584-9491

GENERAL: \$20    STUDENTS: \$15.00

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## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- WE REJOICE that our Archbishop Benjamin and Bishop Daniel will be with us today, March 1, the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. We will greet the bishops at 9:30 AM—and hopefully, each of you will be present when they arrive. In our parish we customarily have a procession—each person carrying an icon—at the end of the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. This year will be a change for us: the icon procession will take place in the evening, during the 6 PM Vespers. Information about the evening festivities are shown on the flyer, below. Many clergy and faithful from all over the Bay Area are expected to be with us for this festal Vespers, served in honor of the first Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 11, 843 AD, and so we are accordingly honored to be the host parish.
- SISTERHOOD MEETING: Tuesday, March 3, 5 PM at the home of Lisa Ann Moroz, 2335 Moonlight Way, (707) 360-5119.
- CATECHISM REVISITED SESSIONS will take place at 11 AM, on Wednesdays, March 4 and March 11, in the Parish Hall.
- THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK distribution (to low income and needy families) is set for Wednesday, March 11, from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM. Volunteers, please arrive just before 5 PM to set up. See Denise Pellizzer if you would like to volunteer to help with this outreach.
- OUR SENIOR LUNCH this month is scheduled for Thursday, March 26, at noon, feast day of St. Gabriel the Archangel.
- CONFESSIONS: The Parish priests commend those who come to the Holy Mystery of Confession with such seriousness, contrition, preparation and frequency, and thank God for this. We encourage all of our faithful to make frequent confession—at least once a month, if not more—not only as a required preparation for Holy Communion, but in order to seek God's help in overcoming and conquering our sinful inner compulsions, and acquiring purity of heart and God's peace. Confessions are heard as follows: SATURDAY, Before the Vigil/Vespers, from 4–5 PM. If there is a non-serving priest present, then he will hear Confessions during the Vigil (or Vespers) at various times, depending on the liturgical action (for example, not during the Six Psalms or the Gospel). Confessions will also be heard after Vigil/Vespers. SUNDAY from 9–10 AM. Once the Divine Liturgy begins priests are expected to be in the Holy Altar. We all understand that the Liturgy takes precedence over all other activities in the Church. TUESDAY–FRIDAY after Matins, or email/call Fr. John or Fr. Lawrence to set an appointment for after 12 noon or in the evening. WEDNESDAYS before Presanctified, starting at 5 PM, and then during the Service, provided there is a non-serving priest present.
- PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS: St. Seraphim church was power washed this week; a chainlink fence is being put up on the east side of the property to replace the crumbling wooden fence; Ray Basch is creating a jewel of a picket fence around the Protection Church; an idea was presented to the Parish Council to “stream” audio of church services over the internet (no video)—your feedback is appreciated.

### SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY VESPERS

Sunday, March 1, 2015

*with the blessing of*

Metropolitan Gerasimos, *Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco*  
Metropolitan Joseph, *Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*  
Archbishop Kyrill, *ROCOR San Francisco and Western America Diocese*  
Bishop Maxim, *Serbian Orthodox Western American Diocese*  
Archbishop Benjamin, *OCA Diocese of San Francisco and the West*



**5 PM:**

Theological and practical considerations regarding the Fresco Program of the Church, by Iconographer, Monk Patrick (Doolan)

**6 PM:**

Lenten Vespers with Reception to follow

Protection of the Holy Virgin / St. Seraphim Orthodox Church  
90 Mountain View Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95407

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## MARCH 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 - Sunday of Orthodoxy</b> • 10 AM, Liturgy with Archbishop Benjamin and Bishop Daniel • Noon: Agape Meal <b>• 5 PM, Sunday of Orthodoxy Celebration</b>	2	<b>3</b> • 8 AM, Matins <i>[Fr. L in SF at Diocesan Council]</i> • 5 PM, Sisterhood Mtg at Moroz home	<b>4 - St. Daniel of Moscow</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 11 AM, Catechism Revisited • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	<b>5</b> • 8 AM, Matins  <i>[Fr. L in Calistoga hearing confessions, all day]</i>	<b>6</b> • 8 AM, Matins  • 6 PM, Akathist ( <i>Protection Church</i> )	<b>7</b>  • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Vigil
<b>8 - St. Gregory Palamas</b> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal  <b>• 5 PM, Concert by the Yale Russian Chorus</b>	<b>9 - Forty Martyrs</b>	<b>10</b> • 8 AM, Matins	<b>11</b> • 8 AM, Matins • 11 AM, Catechism Revisited • 5 PM, <i>Redwood Empire Food Bank</i> • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	<b>12</b> • 8 AM, Matins	<b>13</b> • 10:30 AM, Liturgy of the Presanctified  • 6 PM, Akathist	<b>14</b>  • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Vigil
<b>15 - Veneration of the Cross</b> • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal • 1 PM, <i>Church School Mtg</i>	16	<b>17</b> • 8 AM, Matins	<b>18</b> • 8 AM, Matins  • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	<b>19</b> • 8 AM, Matins  • 6 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, <i>Parish Council</i>	<b>20</b> • 8 AM, Matins  • 6 PM, Akathist	<b>21</b>  • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Vigil
<b>22 - St. John Climacus</b> • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal • 1:30 PM, <i>Concert by Carmina Chromatica**</i>	<b>23</b> • 9 AM, Canon of St. Andrew of Crete for the Fifth Week	<b>24</b>  • 6 PM, Vigil for Annunciation	<b>25 - Annunciation</b>  • 5 PM, Vespersal Divine Liturgy and Meal	<b>26 - Archangel Gabriel</b> • 8 AM, Matins • Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship ( <i>Leave-taking of Annunciation</i> )	<b>27</b>  <b>• 6 PM, Matins and Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos</b>	<b>28</b>  <b>• 10:30 AM • Choir Rehearsal</b>  • 3:30 PM, Catechism • 5 PM, Great Vespers
<b>29 - St. Mary of Egypt</b> • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45, Church School • Noon: Agape Meal	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> • 8 AM, Festal Matins for St. Innocent of Alaska	<b>APRIL 1</b> • 8 AM, Matins  • 6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified	<b>2</b> • 8 AM, Matins	<b>3 - Last day of Lent</b> • 8 AM, Matins  • 6:15 PM, Matins for Lazarus Saturday	<b>4 - Lazarus Saturday</b> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy • 2 PM, Decoration of Church for Vigil • 5 PM, Vigil / Blessing of Palms

*\*\*Carmina Chromatica*, a choral ensemble conducted by Nicolas Custer, will present a concert in the Church on March 22 at 1:30 PM of renaissance motets and lamentations from the Lenten and Paschal seasons. No charge.