

# THE ORTHODOX MESSENGER

March 2019, Vol. 27, Issue 3

## THE BEGINNING OF LENT

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The word *Lent* originally referred to the lengthening of the days after winter, when “blossom by blossom the Spring begins” (A. C. Swinburne). As we look around, now that the heavy rains are over, we see that the trees and plants are beginning to bud. If we look within, we may also discern that with the arrival of the Great Fast of Lent, our souls are ready, as the Holy Forerunner and Baptist John said, to blossom forth “fruits of repentance.” Repentance is a new beginning, when sinners strive to be like Christ, to overcome the impulses and compulsions that drive our sins. The Greek term for repentance, *metanoia*, denotes a change of mind, a reorientation, a fundamental transformation of outlook, of man’s vision of the world and of himself, and a new way of loving others and God. We can understand why St. John Chrysostom said that “it is necessary to repent, not merely for one or two days, but throughout one’s whole life.” Lent is the most blessed time of the year—a tithe of our time—and a gift to the Lord that opens us up to the gifts of the Holy Spirit (joy, peace, love, long-suffering, mercy, etc.). Lent is also a journey: For the catechumens it is a journey of prayer, confession, fasting, alms and worship to Holy Baptism, when each one participates mystically in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For the rest of us it is fellowship with and support of the catechumens as they fast and pray, it is the renewal of Baptismal grace within us and it is the journey to Holy Friday, Holy Saturday and Pascha—the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ—which is the jewel of the Church year.

I would like to offer a few words about the first week of the journey.

On Sunday, March 10, we will enter into Great Lent during the Vespers of Forgiveness. At the conclusion of this unique service, the starting point for our journey to Holy Week and Pascha, we ask forgiveness of one another. We can begin in no other way. An Orthodox Christian must consider this Vespers as the primary and essential step in the journey. Forgiveness Sunday is gift to us, and unless we are ill, one that we are present to receive.

The first week of Lent, this year March 11–17, is known as Clean Week. Just as winter has prepared the ground for nature to blossom forth in Spring, we clean out our souls, our stomachs and our hearts: our diets change,

our schedules are altered, we avoid TV, radio, the internet, social media and things that will not help us spiritually. Each morning we will serve Matins at 8 AM. In the

evening we will sing the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete [sung in four parts on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and on Wednesday morning]. This long hymn of repentance is repeated in its entirety during the fifth week. It is what one priest calls a *doctoral level course* in the history and mystery of repentance.

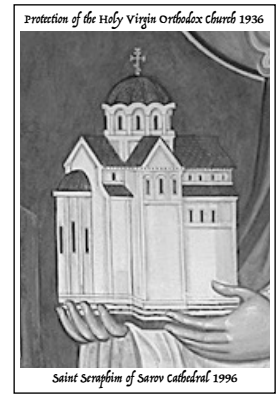
On Wednesday evenings, and selected Friday mornings, we will be able to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord at the *Liturgy of the Presanctified*. It has this name because the Holy Gifts (Communion) are sanctified at the Sunday Liturgy and then reserved for these days. We fast from noon on those days. Following the Wednesday evening Presanctified there will be a simple meal in the Parish Hall. During the meal we usually listen to a reading from the lives of the saints or on the spiritual life.

During Lent, whether at home or in Church, we frequently make prostrations. This physical act, when it is united with prayer, is a sign of our inward striving to humble ourselves before God and one another. Prostrations are very helpful in the struggle to heal the passions.

One of the most frequently prayed and significant prayers of Great Lent is the one composed by St. Ephraim the Syrian (4th century): “O Lord and Master of my life, give me not the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk. (*prostration*) But give rather a spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant. (*prostration*) Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother, for blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen. (*prostration*). ”

In general, during Lent we fast from meat, eggs, dairy, meat by-products, and also fish except (on Annunciation and Palm Sunday). Shellfish and shrimp are always permissible to eat. We fast from wine and olive oil on weekdays, but not on weekends. All vegetables, fruits, and soy products are fine. Traditionally, married couples also abstain from marital relations until after Pascha.

Fasting strengthens our spiritual life. It has the potential to give wings to our prayers. Fasting is not meant to be a strait-jacket but a means to an end, a tool to help us.



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St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral  
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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).

### Parish Contacts

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Fr. John Schettig	318-1559
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Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden	291-7452
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Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary	338-4962
Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator	480-6106
Debbie Buse, Hall Event Manager	696-4986

Fasting is central to Lent, but Lent isn't about fasting, anymore than building a house is about a hammer. Both are tools, to be used wisely. Pastoral advice is available and recommended. Children learn to fast, and to experience fasting as not very difficult when they see their family fast, including their parents, brothers and sisters. The Church prescribes fasting regularly throughout the year. It is considered a norm of Christian life, not an unusual ascetic practice for the few.

Works of mercy are central to Lent, as we learn in the Parable of the Sheep and Goats (Matt. 25). Look for opportunities to fulfill the Parable of the Last Judgment, "doing unto the least of the brethren" because when we do it in love, we do it unto Christ. Be a servant, as our Lord came to serve and not be served. Dedicate a little time to volunteer at Catholic Charities or one of the other charitable organizations in town.

On Friday of the First Week of Great Lent, we will have the Presanctified at 10:30 AM, during which we remember the Great Martyr Theodore, with joyful hymns of encouragement for having reached the end of the first week. On Saturday evening we will begin our celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy at Vespers.

**On Sunday, March 17**, we will welcome our Archbishop

Benjamin and Bishop Daniel, as well as His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America. What a blessing for our celebration. We will greet Metropolitan Tikhon at 10 AM, so please do not be late. At the conclusion of the Liturgy we will have a procession with the Holy Icons and offer some brief prayers asking God to make us strong in the Holy Orthodox faith. I encourage everyone to bring their icons for the procession. May the Lord bless and strengthen us all on our journey to Pascha.

—Fr. Lawrence

## TWO KINDS OF PRAYER LISTS

ALL OF US HAVE prayer lists at home. Intercessory prayer is an important aspect of our daily prayer rule. When we pray for others, we might do so in the context of an *Akathist* or *Supplicatory Canon* to the Lord, the Theotokos or one of the saints. During that prayer we will lift up many names to the Lord to ask Him to send help. Intercessory prayer at home is the first kind of prayer list. The second kind of list has to do with the Divine Liturgy. Many of us have prayer lists which are sent into the Holy Altar before the Liturgy begins. Our clergy pray for the names on those lists. These are not simple or ordinary prayer lists that we would keep at home. This prayer list is to be used specifically before, and therefore part of, the Divine Liturgy. This list contains the names of those in our spiritual family: Godparents, Godchildren, clergy, friends—living and departed. Strictly speaking (of course we make exceptions), these are people, living and departed, who share/shared in the Eucharist at the Divine Liturgy (perhaps there are names of those who are not Orthodox in our lists. The Lord loves each person, and knows what is best for each one). Since the lists are liturgical, we follow a set manner of listing names: for priests, we do not write: "Father John." We write: "Priest (or Archpriest) John." We write "Deacon Jeremiah" rather than "Fr. Jeremiah." For a monastic we write "Nun Mary" or "Abbess Susanna" as the case may be. If a priest or deacon is a monk, we write "Hieromonk *name*" or "Hierodeacon *name*." These titles are used out of respect for the hierarchical nature of the church and the ministry of each person.

### St. John Chrysostom ~ to the Catechumens:

LET US NOT, therefore, still remain gaping after the things of this life—neither the luxury of the table, nor the costliness of fine raiment. For you have the most excellent of raiment, and you have a spiritual table; you have the glory from above, and Christ has become all things for you—your table, your raiment, your home, your head, your root. "For as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Behold how He has become raiment for you!

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **SUNDAY, MARCH 3**, is the last day we eat meat until Pascha. This coming week is known as Cheesefare, during which we may eat dairy and eggs every day. Next Sunday, March 10, will be the final day to eat dairy until Pascha.
- **EACH WEDNESDAY** during Great Lent we have the Liturgy of the Presanctified, followed by a simple meal. There is now a sign up list in the Parish Hall for those who would like to prepare a meal.
- **ANGELS UNAWARES:** On the first Thursday of the month—March 7—our parish welcomes guests from the Redwood Gospel Mission, hosting about twenty or so needy folks for dinner and providing a place to sleep for the night. Guests will arrive about 6 PM. Michael and Rachel Dovey are the coordinators. Call them at (707) 799-4117 to volunteer, or just come to help. “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).
- **CONFESSIONS ON FRIDAYS:** Unless the Calendar indicates otherwise, I will be available on Fridays to hear confessions from 11:30 AM–1 PM. No appointment needed. —Fr. Lawrence
- **THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK** is held on the second Wednesday each month—March 13. Volunteers, please arrive around 5 PM to help set up. This Food Bank is an important way in which our parish does outreach to the community. Come and participate.
- **THE CHOIR IS LOOKING FOR SINGERS:** Those who would like to sing at the Divine Services are invited to speak with Fr. Lawrence or Nicolas Custer about joining the Choir. The Choir rehearses on Sunday mornings from 9:10–9:50 AM. The Choir sings the Divine Liturgy on Sundays, Great Vespers or Vigil on Saturday evenings and for the Great Feast Days, as well as Presanctified Liturgies on Wednesdays and the Services of Holy Week and Pascha. Are you eager to give of your time and talent to the Church? Would you like to learn more about the teaching of the Church? Those who practice and sing the Divine Services discover how much the hymns of the Church teach us about our Savior and ourselves.
- **ON SUNDAY, MARCH 17**, the Divine Liturgy (we begin as always at 10 AM) will be celebrated by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon—the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America—His Eminence, Vladyka Benjamin and His Grace, Bishop Daniel. Since we are the hosts, arrive no later than 9:45 AM, and be present to greet His Beatitude on this great Feast of the Sunday of Orthodoxy.
- **RETREATS HERE:** Fr. John Bethancourt from Santa Fe will present a retreat here on Saturday, March 23. See the flyer. His Grace, Bishop Daniel will be here to lead us in a retreat on Saturday, April 6. He will speak on the meaning of Holy Week. We will have the joy of his presence at the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, April 7.
- **PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CATECHUMENS:** Harriette, Karla, David, James, Aaron, Alejandra, Aaron, Xavier, Paloma, Belen, Celeste.

### A Psalm for Our Time

THE TV IS MY Shepherd, I shall want. It makes me lie down on the sofa. It leads me away from the Scriptures. It destroys my soul. It leads me in the path of sex and violence, for the sponsors' sake. Yea, though I walk in the shadow of my Christian responsibilities, there will be no interruption, for the TV is with me. Its cable and remote—they control me. It prepares a commercial before me in the presence of worldliness. It anoints my head with humanism; My coveting runneth over. Surely laziness and ignorance shall follow me all days of my life; And I shall dwell in the house watching TV unto length of days. —*author unknown*

### ATTENTION PARENTS!

Parents are responsible for the safety and supervision of their children before, during and after Services, while playing in the Hall, the playground or the property. Children under the age of 18 may not roam the property without *parental supervision*. In addition, children are not allowed to play in the vineyard, behind the Church School or Hall, or in the parking lots. —Fr. Lawrence and the Parish Council

St. Seraphim Orthodox Cathedral invites you to a Lenten retreat...

# St. Gregory Palamas: Inner Stillness and the Sanctification of the Imagination

## Guest Speaker: Fr. John Bethancourt

*Fr John will explore the three major faculties of the human being: the noetic, the incensive, and the appetitive, and see how they interact with a fourth: the imaginative faculty.*

*The imaginative faculty is described by St. Gregory Palamas as the place where memories, images, and experiences are stored and can be accessed. The fathers universally caution about the misuse of the imagination (fantasia) noting how easily it can be perverted and become the plaything of the evil one.*

*St. Gregory Palamas speaks of the proper use of the imaginative faculty and demonstrates how it can be rightly employed*

Suggested Donation \$15  
Registration at the door.

Contact the Parish Office  
with questions or to  
register early.

Protection of the Holy Virgin Parish  
St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Cathedral

90 Mountain View Ave.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

Saturday,  
March 23, 2019

Check-in: 9:30am-10am  
Presentation: 10am-3:30pm

*Lunch will be included.*



The V. Rev. Fr. John Bethancourt is the pastor of Holy Trinity (Antiochian) Orthodox Church in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He and his wife, Khouria Photina, led a small group of 25 souls into Orthodoxy at the end of 1995.

Together with the parishioners of Holy Trinity the Bethancourts recently celebrated their 20th anniversary as an Orthodox Church.

Fr. John and Kh. Photina have three grown children and two grandchildren. Their eldest son, Fr. Daniel, is also a priest in the Antiochian Archdiocese.

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## MARCH 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>MARCH 1</b> • 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions	<b>2 – Memorial Saturday</b> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy  • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>On Holy Chrismation</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
<b>3 – Last Judgment Sunday</b> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church Sch • Noon, <i>Blini Luncheon</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>  • 6 PM, Vespers, Potluck, Talk on <i>The Age of the World</i>	<b>7</b>  • 6 PM, <i>Angels Unawares</i> guests arrive for dinner	<b>8</b> • 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions	<b>9 – Departed Monastics</b> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>On the Eucharist</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
<b>10 – Forgiveness Sunday</b> • 8:30 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal • 1:15 PM, Forgiveness Sunday Vespers	<b>11</b> • 8 AM, Lenten Matins  • 7 PM, Great Compline and Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	<b>12</b> • 8 AM, Lenten Matins  • 7 PM, Great Compline and Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	<b>13</b> • 8 AM, Canon of St. Andrew of Crete • 5 PM, Food Bank • 6:15 PM, Presanctified, Meal and Spiritual reading	<b>14</b> • 8 AM, Lenten Matins  • 7 PM, Great Compline and Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	<b>15</b> • 10:30 AM, Presanctified Liturgy  • 6 PM, Small Compline and Akathist to the Theotokos	<b>16 – St. Theodore the Recruit</b>  • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>On Holy Confession, Part 1</i> • 5 PM, Great Vespers
<b>17 – Sunday of Orthodoxy</b> • 10 AM, Greeting of <b>Metropolitan Tikhon</b> , Divine Liturgy and Procession with the icons • Noon, Agape Meal	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> • 8 AM, Lenten Matins	<b>20</b> • 8 AM, Lenten Matins  • 6:15 PM, Presanctified, Meal and Spiritual reading	<b>21</b> • 8 AM, Lenten Matins  • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting	<b>22 – 40 Martyrs</b> • 10:30 AM, Presanctified Liturgy, Feast of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste • 6 PM, Akathist to the Theotokos	<b>23 – Parish Retreat</b>  • <b>9:30 AM, Retreat with Fr. John Bethancourt</b> • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>On Holy Priesthood</i> • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers
<b>24 – St. Gregory Palamas</b> • 8:40 AM, Matins • 10 AM, Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church Sch • Noon, Agape Meal • <b>1:15 PM, Vespers for Annunciation</b>	<b>25 – ANNUNCIATION DAY</b> <i>We fast before Liturgy</i>  • 5 PM, Vespersal Divine Liturgy for Annunciation	<b>26</b> • 8 AM, Lenten Matins	<b>27</b> • 8 AM, Lenten Matins  • 6:15 PM, Presanctified, Meal and Spiritual reading	<b>28</b> • 8 AM, Lenten Matins	<b>29</b> • 8 AM, Lenten Matins • 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions • 6 PM, Akathist to the Theotokos	<b>30</b>  • 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>On the Mystery of Marriage</i> • 5 PM, Matins: Veneration of the Cross • 8 PM, Choral Concert

31– SUNDAY

(Matins done on Saturday evening), 10 AM–Divine Liturgy; 11:45 AM–Church School; Noon–Agape Meal; 3 PM–Choral Concert (*Green Mountain Singers*)

# PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## APRIL 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>March 31 – Veneration of the Cross</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy (N.B. <i>Matins served on Sat.</i>)</li> <li>• 11:45 AM, Church School</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> <li>• 3 PM, <i>Concert: Green Mountain Singers</i></li> </ul>	1	<b>2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Matins</li> </ul>	<b>3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Matins</li> <li>• 6:15 PM, Presanctified, meal to follow</li> </ul>	<b>4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Matins</li> </ul>	<b>5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10:30 AM, Presanctified Liturgy</li> </ul>	<b>6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>10 AM, Retreat led by Bishop Daniel</b></li> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>On Holy Unction</i></li> <li>• 4 PM, Children's Choir</li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>7 – St. John Climacus / St. Tikhon</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 AM, Greeting of Bishop Daniel, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:45 AM, Church School</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> <li>• <b>Sisterhood Meeting</b></li> </ul>	8	<b>9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Matins</li> </ul>	<b>10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Matins</li> <li>• 5 PM, <i>Redwood Empire Food Bank</i></li> <li>• 6:15 PM, Presanctified, meal to follow</li> </ul>	<b>11</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Matins with the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete</li> </ul>	<b>12</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions</li> <li>• 6 PM, Matins of the Akathist Hymn</li> </ul>	<b>13 – Akathist Saturday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 3:30 PM, Catechism, <i>On Death and the Funeral</i></li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>
<b>14 – St. Mary of Egypt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8:40 AM, Matins</li> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:45 AM, Church School</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> </ul>	15	<b>16</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Matins</li> </ul>	<b>17</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Matins</li> <li>• 6:15 PM, Presanctified, meal to follow</li> </ul>	<b>18</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Matins</li> </ul>	<b>19 – End of Lent</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 AM, Matins</li> <li>• 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions</li> <li>• 6:15 PM, Matins of Lazarus Saturday</li> <li>• 7 PM, Baptismal Catechesis</li> </ul>	<b>20 – Lazarus Saturday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Baptisms</li> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Reception for baptized</li> <li>• <i>Afternoon: cleaning and decoration of Church</i></li> <li>• 5 PM, Vigil, blessing of palms</li> </ul>
<b>21 – Entrance into Jerusalem</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 AM, Divine Liturgy and Procession</li> <li>• 11:45 AM, Church School</li> <li>• Noon, Agape Meal</li> </ul>	<b>22 – Holy Monday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6:30 AM, Bridegroom Matins</li> <li>• 6:15 PM, Presanctified</li> </ul>	<b>23 – Holy Tuesday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6:30 AM, Bridegroom Matins</li> <li>• 6:15 PM, Presanctified</li> </ul>	<b>24 – Holy Wednesday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6:30 AM, Bridegroom Matins</li> <li>• 6:15 PM, Presanctified</li> </ul>	<b>25 – Holy Thursday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:30 AM, Vesperal Liturgy</li> <li>• 6:15 PM, Matins of Holy Friday</li> </ul>	<b>26 – Holy Friday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Royal Hours</li> <li>• 3 PM, Vespers with the bringing out of Holy Shroud</li> <li>• 6:15 PM, Matins of Holy Saturday</li> </ul>	<b>27 – Holy Saturday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 PM, Vesperal Liturgy</li> <li>• 11:30 PM, Nocturn</li> <li>• Midnight, Matins and Divine Liturgy</li> </ul>
<b>28 – PASCHA</b> <i>We begin at Midnight, Saturday</i>  11:30 AM, Church Cleaning 1 PM, Agape Vespers Potluck picnic to follow	<b>29 – Bright Monday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Paschal Matins and Divine Liturgy (Archbishop Benjamin serving)</li> </ul>	<b>30 – Bright Tuesday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Paschal Vespers</li> </ul>	<b>May 1</b>	<b>2 – Bright Thursday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Paschal Vespers</li> </ul>	<b>3 – Bright Friday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 PM, Paschal Vespers</li> </ul>	<b>4 – Bright Saturday</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 AM, Paschal Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• 5 PM, Great Vespers</li> </ul>