

TO LOVE SUNDAY AND LIVE WITH ITS BLESSINGS

THE PASCHAL NIGHT allows us to see the Resurrection of Christ. Not with our eyes, of course, but with our hearts. You remember what the Lord told Apostle Thomas: “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29). Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdv) thinks that those words were addressed not to the faithful people who did not see Christ but still believe, but to Saint John the Theologian, who was heading to Christ’s tomb together with Apostle Peter. He came there first and believed as soon as he approached the tomb without even entering. Peter came second, entered the tomb, saw that it was empty, and then came out being filled with confusion. The thing is, John the Theologian was the first one who believed although he did not see. Thus, to believe we have to do so like Saint John the Theologian did: to see the empty tomb and still believe.

On the Paschal night, we all have an opportunity to live through the sacrament of Christ’s Resurrection. However, to live the night through, you have to go through Great Friday; you have to stand near the cross for long enough, to cry for long enough, to listen to the readings of the Holy Gospel. Then, on Great Saturday, you have to take part in the burial of Christ and so on. You have go the entire way, to live through the entire Great and Holy Week. ...The Resurrection is given to us as an experience for our hearts, as overcoming death, as a doubtless fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This is what Pascha provides us with....we have an opportunity to experience this every Sunday at the Divine Service. How many times a year does the Church celebrate the Resurrection of Christ? Fifty-two times. As many times as there are Sundays in the year. This is why we should approach this question in the following way: on Sunday, I will not sleep in, I will get up and go to the church. Why? Because it is Pascha. And why is it Pascha? Because the Paschal excerpts from the Gospel are read at the morning service, because we sing: “Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus.” I saw that with my heart, and I should not forget about that. I only live with what I have seen.

We take the Body and Blood of Christ. When the Royal Doors open and a priest or a bishop come out with the Chalice—what is this then? It is the Resurrection of Christ. Christ comes out of His tomb. The Doors and the veil open, and Christ in the Chalice, taken by a priest,

comes out of His tomb, just like the bridegroom comes out of the palace. He comes out of the tomb to let the faithful people partake of the Holy Communion: “With the fear of God, faith, and love, draw near.” And we come closer and just like the Myrrh-bearers did, we fall at His feet.

The Liturgy is a Holy Mystery of Communion with the Resurrected Christ. This is why the Sunday service and everything connected with the Sunday prayer is a straight way to the union with the Church. It allows us to make everything that there is in the Church to be ours, to understand and feel everything and to live with it. To do this we need to love Sunday and live with its blessings.

—Father Andrew Lemeshonok, April 23, 2017,
St. Elisabeth Convent, Minsk

MYRRH-BEARERS

THE SECOND SUNDAY after our Lord’s Pascha is always remembered as the “Sunday of the Myrrhbearers,” when the Church remembers the women and men who cared for our Lord’s body after His death on the Cross. Joseph and Nicodemus are the two men remembered. Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleophas, Salome, Susanna and Joanna (and in some accounts Mary, the Mother of God) are those numbered as Myrrhbearers. Some of them are among the first witnesses to the Resurrection of Christ. They are certainly the most fearless in their love and devotion to Christ when everyone else was hiding. Theirs is also an excellent example of how the Church “reads” Holy Scripture. There are the bare facts listed in Scripture, from which we may glean names and deeds attempted or accomplished. What we do not find there is theological commentary (at least not on this particular action) or more than the bare facts. But the Church does not gather to rehearse bare facts: it gathers to worship. In its worship it affirms as much of the fullness of the faith as has been given to us – in Scripture – in doctrine – in the whole of Tradition. The Church does not stop with the facts for the facts point beyond themselves to eternal truth – and it is this eternal Truth that the Church proclaims. Thus in Orthodox worship, Christ is almost always mentioned together with His Father and the Holy Spirit,

Parish of the 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

The Rector, Fr. Lawrence Margitich, may be reached at the Parish office phone, or at 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 |
| Martin Thong, Treasurer | 888-7888 |
| Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary | 338-4962 |
| Kira Staykow, Sisterhood President | (415) 279-0353 |
| Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator | 480-6106 |
| Debbie Buse, Hall Event Manager | 696-4986 |

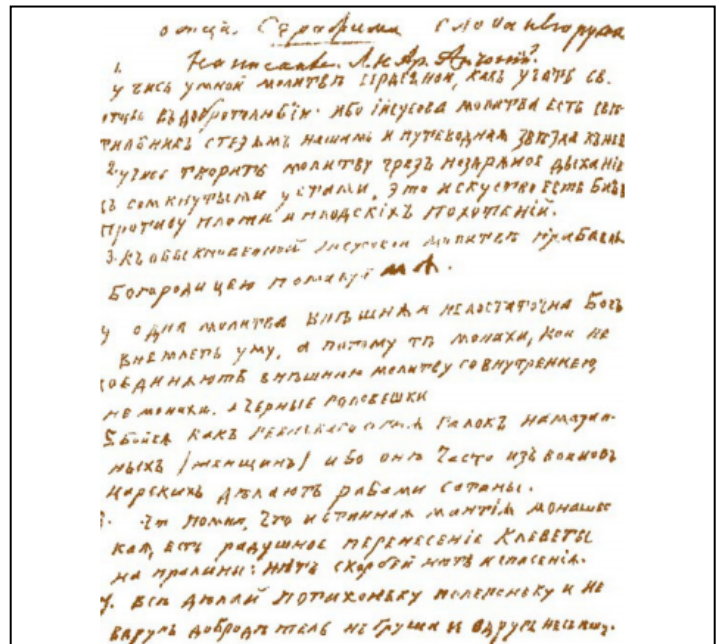
for now the Church proclaims the fullness of the Trinitarian faith. We can do no less. We cannot speak of the Cross without at the same time saying all that the Cross has accomplished. And thus it is, when hymns honoring the Myrrhbearers are sung, they reach into the depths of theology and sing what was true that day, though the Myrrhbearers would not yet have known it. It is the Church singing the fullness. For as the “Fullness of Him that filleth all in all,” how can the Church sing less? —Fr. Stephen Freeman

A HANDWRITTEN LETTER OF ST. SERAPHIM

In 2006, a photographic copy of a manuscript was published containing spiritual counsels written by the hand of St. Seraphim of Sarov (†1833) to the then young Hieromonk Anthony (1792-1877), who regularly visited and sought advice from the Saint. In 1831, St. Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, chose Father Anthony as his spiritual Father and appointed him Rector of the Holy Trinity Lavra near Moscow (the Metropolitan was then Abbot of the Monastery). Father Anthony, as Archimandrite, worthily served the renowned Lavra, and Russian monasticism more generally, for more than forty years, until his saintly repose. It seems that the original text was found among the personal archives of Father Anthony at the Lavra. We do not have further information regarding either the original or the photographic copy; nevertheless, the Grace-filled spiritual admonitions of the

text are wholly consistent with the well-known “Brief Teachings” of St. Seraphim. A copy of the original handwritten letter (appears above). The English translation of the text is below.

1. Learn noetic prayer of the heart as the Holy Fathers teach it in the *Philokalia*; for the Jesus Prayer is a light on our path and a star leading us to Heaven.
2. Learn to practice the Jesus Prayer while breathing in through your nose, with your lips shut; this technique is a scourge against the flesh and carnal desires.
3. Add “through the Theotokos have mercy on me” to the usual Jesus Prayer.
4. Outer prayer alone does not suffice, for God is attentive to the mind. Thus, monks who do not unite outer prayer with inner prayer are not monks, but little black heads.
5. Fear like the fire of Gehenna those painted ravens [women]; for they often transform soldiers of the King into servants of Satan.
6. Keep in mind that the true *maniya* (large flowing garment) of a monk is patient endurance of slander and disparagement with joy; where there are no sorrows, neither is there salvation.
7. Do everything gradually, calmly, and not at once. Virtue is not a pear; it is not devoured in one bite.



EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- FRS. THEODOR and LAWRENCE will be attended a clergy retreat in Alhambra, Tuesday May 2–4. If there are pastoral emergencies, call Father John Schettig at 318-1559.
- REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK: Wednesday, May 10, 5 PM. Help is needed in setting up and distributing the food. See Tom or Denise Pellizzer to volunteer.
- FEAST DAYS THIS MONTH: Water Blessing for the Feast of Mid-Pentecost, May 10 at 6 PM; mid-week Divine Liturgy on May 17 at 9 AM (Leave-taking of Mid-Pentecost); Paschal Matins for Leave-taking of Pascha on Tuesday, May 23 at 7 PM; Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with Vigil on Wednesday, May 24 at 6:15 PM, and Divine Liturgy on Thursday, May 25 at 9 AM.
- A SERVICE OF SUPPLICATION FOR THE SICK will be served on Thursdays (May 11, 18, June 1) at 6 PM. This is not an Unction Service, but a short (half hour or so) Molieben. We pray for those who are ill—present among us or sick at home—so please provide a list to me so I can include their names in the litanies and prayers. —Fr. Lawrence
- MANY YEARS: Dustin Thomas Pellizzer will be joined in holy matrimony to Bryanna Tablar on Sunday, May 7 at 4 PM, all are invited. Franchesca and Ryan Panteliemon's baby, Caspian David, will be baptized at 9 AM, on Sunday, May 21, on Sts. Constantine and Helen Day.
- THE SISTERHOOD HAS SCHEDULED a Kitchen Clean up Work Party, for Saturday, May 20 starting at 9 AM.
- OUR SENIOR LUNCH FELLOWSHIP will meet for an Ascension Day Meal, 11 AM, May 25.
- A PANIKHIDA WILL BE served on Memorial Day, May 29, at Santa Rosa Memorial Cemetery, at Noon. I invite all of you to join me in praying for those who laid down their life for their country, and as a public witness of our Orthodox Faith in prayerful action.
- THE MEN'S GROUP is organizing a Sunday trip (May 28) to Holy Trinity Cathedral for Liturgy and then to see the SF Giants play. See Tom Pellizzer for more information.
- MOTHER MELANIA, from Calistoga, will give a talk here on Wednesday, May 31 on Love, Marriage and Sexuality.
- SAINT SERAPHIM WEEK for KIDS: Monday–Friday, 9 AM–Noon, June 19–23. Prayer, singing, crafts, games, snacks. For more information, contact Gloria Collins at 849-6135 or gypsybootsie@sonic.net.
- LIFE School, June 11–17: A unique summer discipleship week long program will be offered at the monastery of St John of San Francisco in Manton, California. The program is called "Orthodox LIFE School" for young men and women from 18-30 years. This event is being planned by Fr. Theodor, working with Fr. Innocent from Manton, Katy Golitsyn and others. LIFE stands for Liturgy-Inspiration-Faithfulness-Experience). See the flyer for the event at dowoca.org/files/events/2017/Flyer-2017-2.0.pdf
- THE ST. EUGENE'S SUMMER CAMP, at St. Nicholas Ranch in Dunlap, CA (near Fresno) for kids has been scheduled for July 2–8. Please see Father Lawrence for more details.
- IN JULY, Fr. Lawrence will lead a discussion on the new book "Theology of the Body" by Jean-Claude Larchet. Larchet presents an wholistic understanding of the meaning and purpose of our bodies now, and in the life of the age to come. A quote from the book appears on page 4 of this document. Three sessions will be scheduled for Wednesdays at 7 PM (dates to be confirmed). We will approach the book not as scholars, but as ordinary Orthodox Christians trying to understand how Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension, have sanctified our souls and bodies—by the power of the Holy Mysteries, and in prayer— and we now share now in the life of the age to come. There will be no need to purchase the book (unless you want to), as photocopies of relevant sections will be provided.

SPIRITUALLY AWAKENED

When one begins to perceive the love of God in all its richness, he begins also to love his neighbor with spiritual perception. This is the love of which all the scriptures speak. Friendship after the flesh is very easily destroyed on some slight pretext, since it is not held firm by spiritual perception. But when a person is spiritually awakened, even if something irritates him, the bond of love is not dissolved; he rekindles himself with the warmth of the love of God, he quickly recovers himself and with great joy seeks his neighbor's love, even though he has been gravely wronged or insulted by him. For the sweetness of God completely consumes the bitterness of the quarrel. —*St Diadochos of Photiki*

THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

THE VERY INTERIOR of an Orthodox Church introduces [a person's physical body] into a space that is different from the ordinary; it is a space transfigured and sacred, whose profound symbolism is superbly analyzed by St. Maximos the Confessor in his *Mystagogia*. He stresses in particular that the Church's spatial structure symbolizes the human being: the altar representing the spirit, the sanctuary the soul, and the nave the body. Conversely, the human being symbolizes the church: his spirit is, as it were, an altar; his soul, a sanctuary; and his body, a nave. And this not simply by their nature but by their own specific functions in spiritual life: the body represents in particular the practical or ethical dimensions; the soul stands for the contemplative dimension; and the spirit its pinnacle, *theologia*, in which the believer receives from the Holy Spirit supernatural knowledge of the divine Mysteries.

As for liturgical time, by its cyclical character, by the intentionally repetitive nature of certain forms of prayer and by the expansive nature of certain chants, the souls and bodies of the faithful are admitted into another mode of time, close to eternity (and in any case symbolic of it), in which they neither grow weary nor become bored but

rather have a feeling of well-being, experiencing what Peter was experiencing, when he said to Christ: "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matt. 17:4).

Every aspect of the ecclesial environment contributes to the spiritual activation, elevation, and transfiguration of the sense: the frescoes, the icons, the flames of the hanging oil lamps, and the light of the candles all transfigure the sight; the chants, the hearing; the incense, the sense of smell; the oil (with which, during the *Litya* in Vigils on feast days, the faithful are anointed), the sense of touch. By means of these images and symbols, the believers perceive, in proportion to the quality of their spiritual state, the first fruits of God's beauty, His light, His good fragrance (cf. 2 Cor. 2:15), and his gentleness and sweetness, which will be revealed in their fullness in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Everything in the Church is done so that the faithful may contribute, not only with their souls but also their bodies, to the glorification of God and so that, in exchange, their whole being may be transformed by His grace, for their salvation and deification. —Jean Claude Larchet, from the book *Theology of the Body*, SVS Press

THE WORLD AS SACRAMENT

ON THE SIXTH DAY of creation, God created man and woman in His divine image and likeness. Yet, what most people overlook is that the sixth day is not dedicated to the formation of Adam alone. That sixth day was shared with "living creatures of every kind; cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth." (Gen. 1.24) This close connection between humanity and the rest of creation is a powerful reminder of our intimate relationship with the environment. While there is undoubtedly something unique about our creation in God's image, there is more that unites us than separates us, not only as human beings but also with creation. It is a lesson we have learned the hard way in recent decades.

The saints of our Church understood this well. They knew that a person with a pure heart was able to sense the connection with the rest of creation, including the animal world. The connection is not merely emotional; it is profoundly spiritual, providing a sense of continuity and community as well as an expression of identity and compassion with all of creation. One may recall St. Seraphim of Sarov feeding the bear in the forests of the north. As Abba Isaac of Nineveh observed: A merciful heart burns with love for all creation: for human beings, birds, beasts, even demons – for all God's creatures. When it recalls these creatures, it is filled with tears. An overwhelming compassion makes the heart grow small and weak, and it cannot endure to hear or see any suffering, even the slightest pain, inflicted upon any creature.

If the earth is sacred, then our relationship with the natural environment is sacramental. The "sin of Adam" is precisely his refusal to receive the world as a gift of communion with God and with the rest of creation. St. Paul clearly emphasizes the consequences of the Fall, claiming that "from the beginning till now, the entire creation, which as we know has been groaning in pain" (Rom. 8.22), also "awaits with eager longing this revelation by the children of God." (Rom. 8.19)

— Patriarch Bartholomew

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

MAY 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|--|--|--------|--|
| April 30 - Myrrh-Bearing Women • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy <i>Sisterhood Feast Day</i> • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 12:30 PM, Presentation by Catholic Charities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| | | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <i>Frs. Lawrence and Theodor at Diocesan Clergy Retreat in L.A.</i> </div> | | | | • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers |
| | | | • 6 PM, Vespers | | | |
| 7 - Paralytic • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 4 PM, Wedding (Tablar/Pellizzer) | 8 | 9 | 10 - Mid-Pentecost • 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank • 6 PM, Blessing of Water | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| | | • 6 PM, Vespers | | • 6 PM, Prayers for the Sick | | • 5 PM, Vespers and Matins |
| 14 - Samaritan Woman • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal <i>Mother's Day</i> | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| | | • 7 PM, Parish Council | • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Leave-taking of Mid-Pentecost | • 6 PM, Prayers for the Sick • 7 PM, Master Planning Meeting | | • 9 AM, Kitchen Clean up Work Party • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Vespers and Matins |
| 21 - Blind Man • 9 AM, Baptism (Duval) • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 - ASCENSION DAY • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Ascension • 11 AM, Senior Lunch | 26 | 27 |
| | | • 7 PM, Paschal Matins for Leavetaking | • 6:15 PM, Vigil for Ascension | | | • 5 PM, Vespers and Matins |
| 28 - Fathers of the 1st Council <i>(Men's Group Trip to SF)</i> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal | 29 - Memorial Day • Noon, Panikida at Santa Rosa Memorial Cemetery • 1 PM, Potluck BBQ here | 30 | 31 | June 1 • 6 PM, Prayers for the Sick | 2 | 3 |
| | | | • 6 PM, Vespers, followed by a talk by Mother Melania: "Love, Marriage, Sexuality" | | | • 9 AM, Memorial Liturgy • Afternoon decorating church for Pentecost • 5 PM, Vigil for Pentecost |

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

JUNE 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---------|--|---|--|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 - Memorial Saturday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy • Afternoon decorating • 5 PM, Vigil for Pentecost |
| 4 - PENTECOST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Baptisms • 10 AM, Liturgy/Kneeling Vespers to follow • 12:30 PM, Agape Meal | 5 - Holy Spirit Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy | 6 | 7 <i>(Fr Lawrence in SF at Diocesan Council all day)</i> | 8 | 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, <i>Molieben for Lydia and Jordan</i> <i>(Reception by invitation)</i> | 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 4:30 PM, Panikhida • 5 PM, Vespers |
| 11 - All Saints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Liturgy <i>(Children's Choir to sing responses)</i> • Noon, Agape Meal | 12 <i>Beginning of the Sts. Peter and Paul Fast</i> | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, Children's Choir • 5 PM, Vespers |
| <i>Frs. Lawrence and Theodor at LIFE Retreat in Manton</i> | | | | | | |
| | | | • 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank • 6 PM, Vespers | | | |
| 18 - All Saints of Russia/Amer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Father's Day</i></p> | 19 <i>St. Seraphim Week For Kids, 9 AM-Noon each day</i> | 20 | 21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 PM, Vespers | 22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noon, Senior Lunch • 6 PM, Prayers for the Sick • 7 PM, Parish Council | 23 | 24 - Nativity of St. John <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy (Children's Choir) • 5 PM, Great Vespers |
| 25 - Martyr Febronia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Liturgy • Noon, Agape Meal | 26 | 27 | 28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6:15 PM, Great Vespers for Sts. Peter and Paul | 29 - Sts. Peter and Paul <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM, Matins and Divine Liturgy, end of the Fast | 30 | JULY 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Great Vespers |

• THIS CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE: Check the parish website for any alterations: www.saintseraphim.com