

THE ORTHODOX MESSENGER

May 2018, Vol. 27, Issue 5

DAYS LEADING TO PENTECOST

THIS MONTH THE CHURCH will celebrate the feasts of Mid-Pentecost on Wednesday, May 2, Ascension Day on Thursday, May 17, Memorial Saturday on May 26, and the pinnacle of the Paschal season, Pentecost, on Sunday, May 27. These are days dear to each believer and not just random celebrations. They are connected to, and part of, the Paschal celebration. Hopefully each of us will find deep personal and brotherly meaning in these days.

MID-PENTECOST

May 2, 6 PM, Blessing of Water

Mid-Pentecost, also known as Mid-Feast, will be celebrated on Wednesday, May 2 at 6 PM with the Blessing of Water. This day, twenty-five days after Pascha, marks the midpoint between Pascha and Pentecost. Mid-points are important in any journey. During Great Lent we commemorated the feast of the Veneration of the Precious Cross, teaching us that the way to Pascha is the way of the Cross. We daily commit ourselves to picking up our cross and following the Savior to Golgotha, to death and to resurrection. The feast of Mid-Pentecost, with its blessing of water, unites within the faithful both Pascha and Pentecost—we are grafted on to Christ's glorified and risen Body, which is the Church, at Baptism, during which we receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

ASCENSION OF CHRIST

May 16, 6:15 PM, Vigil

May 17, 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy

Forty Days after Pascha—which is a Thursday—we celebrate the Feast of Ascension. The celebration begins with a Vigil on Wednesday evening at 6:15 PM and culminates with the Divine Liturgy on Thursday morning at 9:30 AM. Alas, being a Thursday, many faithful Orthodox people are unable to attend that Liturgy. I urge you therefore to come to the Vigil on Wednesday. Read the account of the Lord's ascension in the Book of Acts, chapter 1. Why is all this important? On Ascension we celebrate the Lord's glorious enthronement at the Right Hand of the Father in the Kingdom of Heaven. It's the most joyful of days for our Savior, in that everything He

did, His conception, incarnation, birth, teaching, miracles, suffering, death and resurrection are vindicated and given ultimate meaning when He sits on the Throne on High. We reaffirm the importance of this feast for ourselves each time we recite the Creed: *He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the Right Hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, and of His Kingdom there is no end...* St. Leo of Rome relates to us the profound significance of Ascension Day. He says that in the God-Man Jesus Christ "...the nature of humankind ascended above the dignity of all the creatures of heaven, to pass above the ranks of angels and to be raised beyond the height of the archangels, and to have no upward limit set to its ascent until it was received to sit enthroned with the Eternal Father, to share the glory of Him, to whose nature it was united in the Son. Since then Christ's Ascension is our elevation, and the body's hope is summoned to where the glory of the head has already gone, let us exult, best beloved, with fitting celebration and rejoice to offer dutiful thanks. For today not only are we confirmed as possessors of paradise, but in Christ we have even penetrated heaven's height, and by Christ's ineffable grace have gained abundantly, far beyond what we lost through the devil's envy. ...the Son of God has incorporated us in Himself and placed us at the right hand of the Father, with Whom He lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen." Being united with Christ, we are united with the Father, and share in the Lord's victory, at the Father's Right Hand, over death and sin. Do we try to live this reality, or is the Ascension of the Savior some esoteric, interesting, but irrelevant footnote to our Christian faith?



MEMORIAL SATURDAY

May 26, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

On the Saturday before Pentecost we commemorate all departed pious Orthodox Christians. Saturday, the Sabbath, means "rest." Since those who have departed this life *rest in God*, having left all worldly cares behind, we commemorate them and pray for them at the Divine

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

Parish Contacts

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Bobbi Griovski, Parish Secretary | 584-9491 |
| Fr. John Schettig, Assigned Priest | 318-1559 |
| Serge Anderson, Parish Council Warden | 291-7452 |
| Martin Thong, Treasurer | 888-7888 |
| Bonnie Alexander, Recording Secretary | 338-4962 |
| Eleni Rose, Agape Meal Coordinator | 480-6106 |
| Debbie Buse, Hall Event Manager | 696-4986 |

Liturgy on Saturdays, and especially on “Soul Saturdays” during and after Lent. The Holy Church appeals to us in the hymns, “Let all of us pray to Christ, today as we remember the dead of all ages.” Those who have departed this life also participate in salvation because of the Savior’s resurrection from the dead, and the coming of the Spirit. So we gratefully gather together on this special day to offer up prayers for the departed, that they dwell with Him awaiting the resurrection of all the dead and the judgement before the Throne of glory. May it be that as we sing “all souls are enlivened through the Holy Spirit.”

PENTECOST

May 26, 5 PM, Vigil

May 27, 9 AM, Baptism of Jeanie Carl

10 AM, Divine Liturgy and the Kneeling Vespers

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all

filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2: 1–4). The climax of the Paschal season is the Feast of Pentecost, Sunday, the fiftieth day after Pascha. While each and every Sunday Divine Liturgy is distinct and important, the twin Sundays of Pascha and Pentecost are exceptional and unique—not to be missed.

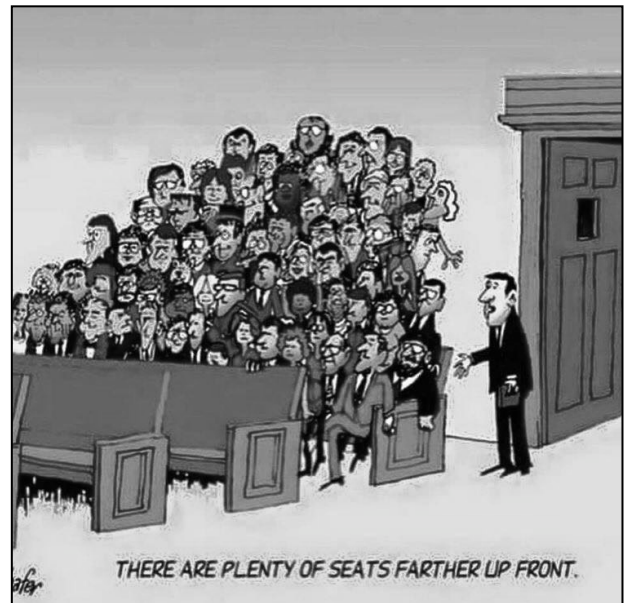
Let us briefly summarize the day: When the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles they became bright reflections of God’s image and likeness, they were empowered to live the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This life is available for every person. The Holy Spirit gave them, and the Church, the grace, power and courage to announce—in every language—that the Risen Jesus is Lord. Caesar isn’t Lord (although Caesar claimed he was a son of god and enforced that claim); the ego isn’t Lord, politics isn’t Lord, our belly isn’t Lord, and our intellect isn’t Lord. Those who hear the announcement that Jesus is Lord, and who confess, repent and are baptized, also receive the Holy Spirit and they too are made children of the Most High God. His children are called together into the unity of love, life and uncreated Grace of the Holy Trinity, a unity from above, not man-made or man directed. Those living this unity, called to worship in His name are called the Church, where God’s sanctifying Grace (the Holy Mysteries) are given not just for them only, but for the “life of the world.” Jesus Christ said: *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive)* (John 7:37–38). These are not empty words, but should be true in the lives of the followers of Jesus.

It’s been said that Pentecost is the *final fulfillment* of the mission of Jesus Christ and the *beginning* of the messianic age of the “Kingdom of God mystically present in this world in the Church of the Messiah. For this reason the fiftieth day stands as the beginning of the era which is beyond the limitations of this world, fifty being that number which stands for eternal and heavenly fulfillment in Jewish and Christian mystical piety: seven times seven, plus one...the feast of Pentecost is not simply the celebration of an event which took place centuries ago. It is the celebration of what must happen and does happen to us in the Church today. We all have died and risen with the Messiah-King, and we all have received his Most Holy Spirit. We are the ‘temples of the Holy Spirit.’ God’s Spirit dwells in us (Rom 8; 1 Cor 2–3, 12; 2 Cor 3; Gal 5; Eph 2–3). We, by our own membership in the Church, have received ‘the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit’ in the sacrament of Chrismation. Pentecost has happened to us.” (Fr. Thomas Hopko)

This year Pentecost falls during Memorial Day Weekend, which means that some parishioners might consider taking the weekend off to camp or visit family and friends. After what has been written above, after observing Great Lent, Holy Week, and celebrating Pascha (and yes, Bright Week too) and all the Sundays following—is it not clear that **Pentecost is not just another Sunday**. It’s the beginning of the “life of the age to come” and not to be missed. —Fr. Lawrence

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **MANY YEARS and CONGRATULATIONS** to Hannah Prudhomme and Alexander Stameroff, being united in the Holy Mystery of Marriage, Sunday, April 29 at 3 PM. All are invited. Those who plan to attend the reception in the Parish Hall should have sent in the RSVP by last weekend.
- **WATER BLESSING:** The midpoint between Pascha and Pentecost is Wednesday, May 2. So that we keep this notable day, called Mid-feast or Mid-Pentecost by the Church, there will be a Service for the Blessing of Water at 6 PM that day. The Service will take place in the Protection Church. This ceremony takes about one half hour.
- **WITH YOUR HELP MATUSHKA ESTHER** will be making five baskets to give to single mothers with young children (and who may not have a lot of family support nearby) on May 6 at the Sisterhood Meeting. The meeting will begin after the Agape Meal. She needs help assembling the baskets, donations of items to put in the baskets, and Mother's Day greeting cards made by our parish children (?) to include with the baskets. If you know of a single mother who could use this thoughtful gift please let Matushka Esther know. Contact her at (707) 318-5381 or by email at esthercarr9@gmail.com
- **THE REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK** distribution will take place on Wednesday, May 9. Volunteers are asked to arrive no later than 5 PM.
- **THE SENIOR LUNCH FELLOWSHIP** will be held on Ascension Day, May 17, at 11:30 AM, directly after the Divine Liturgy (we will begin Liturgy at 9:30 AM that day). All retired and senior parishioners are welcome.
- **BAPTISM:** Please keep Jeanie Carl in your prayers as she prepares for Holy Baptism on Pentecost, May 27, 9 AM.
- **PENTECOST POTLUCK:** Each Pentecost we customarily have a potluck Agape Meal after the Divine Liturgy and Kneeling Vespers.
- **ON MEMORIAL DAY (May 28)** we remember those who died while serving in our country's armed forces. I invite all of you to join me in the singing of a Panikhida, Noon, at Santa Rosa Memorial Cemetery. This being a rather public service (many people are at the cemetery that day), it would be important that we have as many Choir Members as possible. We will meet on the north side. Look for a priest in a white cassock. —Fr. Lawrence
- **ANOTHER FAREWELL:** Lisa Wespiser will be moving to Idaho in June. So that we might show our love and thanks to her, there will be a farewell gathering at Barb Owens' home on June 1 at 6 PM. See Barb for more details. Lisa has been a devoted member of this Parish since her baptism in April of 2004, serving as Sisterhood President, Parish Council Member, and the head of the Coffee Booth at Glendi, among many other activities. We are very sad to see her leave, but ask God's blessing upon this new endeavor.
- **A REMINDER, ONCE AGAIN:** Just as we welcome guests to our homes, greeting them and offering them hospitality, so we do the same at the Church, especially at the Agape Meal after the Divine Liturgy. Who does the welcoming? I encourage you to look around on Sunday when you come to the Parish Hall. Most of us keep our habitual pattern of lunching with our friends, and that is important, but doing so means that we might walk by a stranger that no one has yet welcomed. As I enter the Parish Hall for the meal, I take a moment to see who is standing or sitting alone, and each week I see someone, and wonder, why has no one in our congregation engaged this person? Ask yourself: Is there a face you don't recognize, a person standing alone? Put yourself in their place. Greet them, welcome them, offer to sit with them. Now and then vary your Sunday lunch habits and extend yourself to someone new to you, and possibly to the Parish. —Fr. Lawrence
- **OUR PARISH COUNCIL** expressed its support to host Alexander Norton, from St. Tikhon's Seminary, to come to Santa Rosa for a short internship during part of June–August 8. Alex is single, so his needs are simple. We will need to provide accommodations for him, expecting his arrival after June 18 or so. Please contact Fr. Lawrence as soon as possible if you have any possible leads for a place for him.



ON RE-INCARNATION

THE RESURRECTION is the hope that Christ brought to the world that lived under the dominion of death. It is an event that shows the value of the human body, because what we expect as a result of the Resurrection of Christ is the resurrection of the bodies that were dissolved after their separation from their souls. The proclamation, therefore, of the Resurrection of Christ, and the consequences it has on the whole human race, is the answer of Christianity to all those who talk about reincarnation, whether they have been influenced by ancient Greek philosophers or by Oriental religions. Reincarnation undervalues the body. It considers it a prison of the soul or a garment cast off in order for the individual soul to be lost in the fantastic universal soul. It believes that man is his soul. Orthodox teaching says that man is a combination of soul and body, created in the “image of God.” ...Due to the relationship of the saints with Christ their resurrected bodies will radiate with the glory of divinity. Proof of this fact are their myrrh-streaming and wondrous relics. —*Fr. Thomas Vamvinis*

ABOUT DYING AND FUNERALS

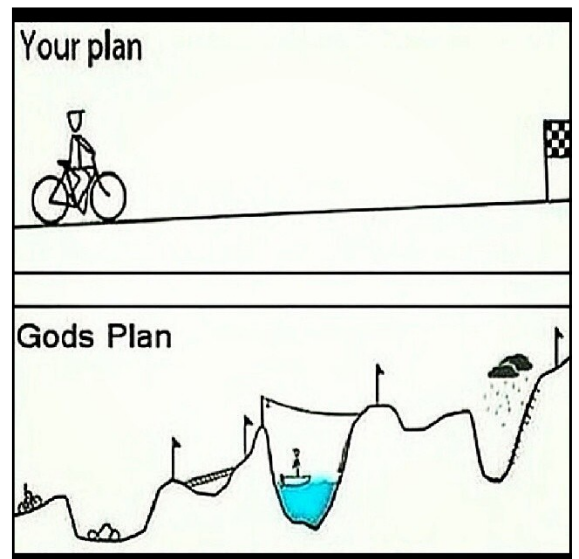
WHEN AN ORTHODOX Christian is dying, the priest is called to come to hear the last confession and give the last Holy Communion. The “Prayers of the Departure of the Soul from the Body” are also done at the bedside (hopefully, before the person becomes unconscious). Upon death, a short memorial is sung by the priest and a chanter and the family at the bedside. Psalms are then read. The coroner is called to verify the death. Church members may be called to wash, anoint and clothe the person (note the similarity to baptism). The departed will be placed in a coffin (with dry ice) and brought to the church. Funeral homes are not always necessary. However, when a funeral home is called to take care of the reposed, our Parish Myrrh-bearers go to the funeral home to wash, anoint and clothe the re-posed. Please note: embalming is not necessary, nor is it recommended for Orthodox Christians. If burial is to take place within three or at most four days of death, 99% of the time it is not necessary to embalm the body (embalming is a rather demeaning invasion of the integrity of the body). It must be emphatically stated as well, that the Tradition of the Church—and the love, care, honor, anointing, dressing, prayers and Divine Service which are done over the body of a departed Orthodox Christian—completely preclude cremation. Nevertheless, some folks have chosen cremation over burial, for various reasons, most often having to do with expense. Funerals and burials will never be cheap, but they need not be high-priced either—we have choices. Our deep reverence for the human body—living or dead—should make us stop and think that we must not to be prodded by the economics of the funeral industry, but instead, be governed by our theology and Holy Tradition.

ON LIVING NOW

OUR CONTINUAL mistake is that we do not concentrate on the present day, the actual hour, of our life; we live in the past or in the future; we are continually expecting the coming of some special moment when our life will unfold itself in its full significance. And we do not notice that life is flowing like water through our fingers, sifting like precious sand from a loosely fastened bag. —*Fr. Alexander Elchaninov, reposed 1934*

IMAGINE YOURSELF in a situation of life and work in which you have no access to the internet. Nor do you have any newspapers or magazines. All you see or know is what you actually encounter. Strangely, all you could actually do would be to “live.” This, in the best of situations, is the culture of a monastery. They are not “cut off” from the world. They are on this planet. But they are absent from the “matrix” of modern concern and anxiety, the illusion of managing history’s outcomes. To serve God in this world, we need to accept Him as God. We cannot manage Him, nor even manage our relationship with Him. We simply need to do what is given to us. Pray the prayers. Give thanks. Share your stuff.

—*Fr. Stephen Freeman*



PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

MAY 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| April 29 • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Coffee on porch • 3 PM, Wedding | 30 | 1 • 6 PM, Vespers for Mid-Pentecost | 2 - Mid-Pentecost • 6 PM, Water Blessing for Mid-Pentecost | 3 | 4 | 5 • 4 PM, Children’s Choir • 5 PM, Great Vespers • 6 PM, Teacher Mtg |
| 6 – Samaritan Woman • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal • 3:30 PM, <i>Crowning Service for Lydia and Jordan</i> | 7 | 8 | 9 • 5 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank • 6 PM, Reader Vespers | 10 | 11 | 12 • 5 PM, Vespers |
| 13 – Blind Man • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Coffee on porch <i>(Hall rented for reception)</i> | 14 | 15 | 16 – Leavetaking of Pascha • 6:15 PM, Vigil for Ascension | 17 – ASCENSION DAY • 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for Ascension • 11:30 AM, Senior Luncheon | 18 | 19 • 4 PM, Children’s Choir • 5 PM, Vespers |
| 20 – Fathers of the 1st Council • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 11:45 AM, Church School • Noon, Agape Meal | 21 <i>Liturgy for Sts. Constantine and Helen in Vallejo</i> | 22 | 23 • 6 PM, Vespers | 24 • 7 PM, Parish Council Meeting | 25 | 26 • 9 AM, Memorial Divine Liturgy • Decoration of Church for Pentecost • 5 PM, Vigil |
| 27 – PENTECOST • 9 AM, Baptism of Jeanie Carl • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Kneeling Vespers • Noon, Potluck Meal | 28 – Memorial Day • Noon, Panikhida at Santa Rosa Memorial Cemetery | 29 | 30 - No Fast • 6 PM, Vespers | 31 | JUNE 1 - No Fast • 6 PM, Farewell for Lisa Wespiser at B. Owens’ home | 2 • 4 PM, Children’s Choir • 5 PM, Vespers |



The journey continues...

Join us this summer at the Orthodox LIFE School.

June 17-23- 2018

The Monastery of
St. John of San Francisco

Ages: 18 – 30 (men & women)

Cost: \$ 195

Application due by: May 15th

www.monasteryofstjohn.org/retreats/

How do we follow Jesus Christ today? Saints and martyrs beyond numbers have followed Christ before us. Are you ready to join them?

- Be inspired to live for Christ and follow Him
- Grow as a Christian and get a deeper sense of purpose
- Discuss and reflect on the big questions in life
- Get help to establish a personal prayer life
- Establish new and lasting relationships with people who desire to go deeper

Speakers:

- Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa (OCA)
- Mother Melania of Holy Assumption Monastery (OCA)
- Archpriest Philip Tolbert, Director, Bulgarian Orthodox Youth Apostolate (Bulgarian Patriarchate)
- Igumen James Corazza, deputy rector of the Old Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Mary (ROCOR)

Inquiries can be directed to
Fr. Theodor Svane
t.svane@icloud.com

ORTHODOX
Liturgy
Inspiration
Faithfulness
Experience
SCHOOL



Visit us on Facebook
«Orthodox LIFE school»