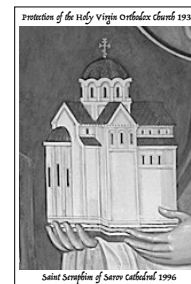


• A CHRISTIAN APPROACH:

How does a Christian respond to injustice in society? The answer is nuanced, and requires us to step out of the raging currents that surround us in order to reflect more deeply. The Scriptures make clear that Christians are to maintain a delicate balance between this world and the world to come. We are commanded to pursue justice in this age, even while acknowledging that utopia is not found this side of the judgment. The same God who offers us eternal life also says, “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause” (Isaiah 1:17). So how do we maintain this tension between pursuing justice and seeking the kingdom? The answer is unique to each person depending on their circumstances and calling. For the leaders of Israel whom the prophets condemned, their response was to institute justice through their rule. For the persecuted Christians of the early Church, their response was to personally take care of the disenfranchised: the poor, the sick, and the infants left to die [an example of this is St. John in Shanghai]. Looking at our own situation—Christians living in a secular democracy—there is no easy answer. Our system allows for, even encourages, political action. And yet politics is so often tainted by progressive or conservative ideology that is contrary to a Christian ethic. For a believer, the world is not comprised of parties or factions; rather, each human being is a unique person made in the image of God. Ultimately, we must carefully discern how to act. For some, it will be through seeking a more just system. For others, it will be through personal generosity and ministry to those in need. In either case, our actions must imitate the selfless love of Jesus Christ. We must always keep in mind that we (and all of humanity) are selfish, and thus sin will prevent perfection in society (we do what we can). We also must never allow ourselves to seek justice through unjust means, which would nullify the good we seek. And most importantly, we must never cease working on our own repentance and inner transformation, lest we contaminate everything we touch. As our Lord warns us, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:36). Enacting justice is not an option for Christians; but each must carefully choose his or her own path. As St Paul writes, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:14-16). —*Fr. Joseph Lucas, Christ the Savior Cathedral, OCA Diocese of the South*

# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

## PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



**July 5, 2020**

**St. Sergius of Radonezh and St. Athanasius of Athos**



• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Three:

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; for the Lord hath shown strength with His arm; He hath trampled down death by death; He hath become the first-born of the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of hell, and hath granted the world great mercy.

TROPARION FOR ST. SERGIUS, Tone Eight:

From thy youth thou didst receive Christ into thy soul, O venerable one, and above all didst desire to leave behind the turmoil of the world. With courage thou didst settle in the wilderness, where thou didst raise children in obedience, the fruits of humility. Thus, as an abode of the Trinity, thou didst enlighten all who approached in faith, granting healing to all. O our Father Sergius, pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved!

• KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Three:

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the

prophets and patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

### ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, July 4: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy in the Protection Church  
3:30 PM, Catechism  
5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, July 5: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy
- Monday, July 6: 7 PM, Men's Group Fellowship (at the fire pit)
- Wednesday, July 8: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Feast of the Great Martyr Procopius  
4 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank  
5 PM, Vespers  
7 PM, Online — Epistle to the Romans
- Friday, July 10: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions

#### • ATTENDANCE INFORMATION:

The July bulletin, posted last weekend, explains what we are doing in regards to attendance at Divine Services. Here again is that information:

We are not yet open for attendance at the Sunday morning Divine Liturgy. Due to the recent infection spike the Parish Council would like to wait a few more weeks until we open. A Sunday Liturgy Sign-Up will be instituted at that time to accommodate the limited number who might attend. PLEASE NOTE: Since attendance at daily services is usually low, **we will allow a small number (up to 25) of attendees inside the Cathedral for the weekday Vespers and Liturgy**—with so few people there is no problem with social distancing, provided we all follow the various expectations, including the required wearing of masks while at the Church.

—*Your Parish Council Members*

#### • MONDAY EVENING MEN'S FELLOWSHIP:

The Men's Group will meet, in person, on Monday at 7 PM, around the parish fire pit. Bring a refreshment for yourself.

#### • WEDNESDAY EVENING SCRIPTURE — ROMANS:

The study of the miraculous *Epistle to the Romans* by St. Paul continues on

Wednesday evening at 7 PM, via Zoom. Fr. James will be leading the discussions.

#### • CONSOLATION DURING PRAYER:

If we do not feel consolation during prayer, then something is wrong. It means we have to repent and correct ourselves in something. Some wrongly say that this happens because of the envy and wiles of the devil. In fact it is the Lord is saying to us, "I don't understand the way you are addressing Me." Prayer, just like Holy Communion—is a Sacrament. One has to prepare for it and have a clean conscience. —*St. Paisius of Athos, July 12*

#### • ON ABSOLUTION

The spiritual father lifts his *Epitrachelion* [stole], covers the head of the penitent with it, and keeping it in his hand, pronounces the absolution of sins, making the sign of the cross on the head. What occurs at this moment in the soul is well-known to everyone who sincerely repents. Streams of grace pour from the head into the heart and fill it with joy. This is not from human beings, not from the penitent, not from the absolver—this is the mystery of the Lord, Healer and Comforter of souls. Sometimes it happens at this time that some hear clearly in the hearts a divine word to strengthen and inspire them for future works. This is a sort of spiritual weapon entrusted by Christ the Savior to the man who now enters the ranks of those warring in His name. Whoever has heard such a word, let him treasure it later, to comfort and inspire him, comfort, because it is clear that the confession has been received when it has pleased the Lord to enter into a sort of discussion with the penitent...

—*St. Theophan the Recluse, Path to Salvation, pg. 181*

#### • SUNDAY SERMONS:

Those of you that follow the Divine Liturgy live-stream, or make the effort to listen to the Sunday homily/sermon on the parish website, know that my constant theme for the last two months is that we are created in the image and likeness of God, and that we are transformed—if we cooperate with the grace of God and live the *Life in Christ*—to be sharers of the love of God to those around us. There are many better preachers out there, but I am your priest, and it is my bounden duty each week to offer you exhortations, corrections, inspiration, questions and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Please—take the time to listen to these sermons. —*Fr. Lawrence*