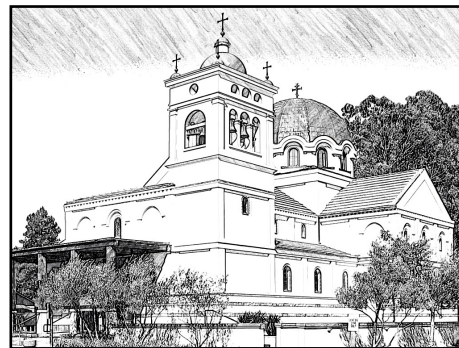


ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, May 9, 2021

Thomas Sunday - Renewal Sunday



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Five:

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

- TROPARION OF THOMAS SUNDAY, Tone Seven:

Whilst the tomb was sealed, Thou, O Life, didst shine forth from the grave, O Christ God; and whilst the doors were shut, Thou didst come unto Thy disciples, O Resurrection of all, renewing through them an upright Spirit in us according to Thy great mercy.

- KONTAKION OF THOMAS SUNDAY, Tone Eight:

With his searching right hand, Thomas did probe Thy life-bestowing side, O Christ God; for when Thou didst enter whilst the doors were shut, he cried out unto Thee with the rest of the Apostles: Thou art my Lord and my God.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Sat., May 8: 9 AM, Paschal Divine Liturgy
11 AM, Baptism (Child of Monica and Tim Flood)
5 PM, Great Vespers
- Sunday, May 9: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, breaking and distribution of the *Artos* (also, Mother's Day)
- Tuesday, May 11 10 AM, blessing graves for the "Day of Rejoicing" (see below for specifics)
- Wed., May 12: 5 PM, Vespers
7 PM, Online study of the Book of Proverbs
- Sat., May 15: 5 PM, Vigil and Confessions
- Sun., May 16: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Feast of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

- TODAY'S CELEBRATION:

The Sunday after Pascha is called St. Thomas Sunday. Accordingly, we hear the Gospel from John 20:19. We hear Jesus say: *"Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."* Faith is not discovered by investigation (although it paves the way) or even by seeing. Keep in mind that the Apostles, the Pharisees and Judas all saw the incredible miracles. Not all believed (St. Matthew records that *"they worshipped Him, but some doubted."*) Faith is given, revealed, received, learned and lived. God loves us long before we love Him. Remember the Lord's words to Peter: *"flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in Heaven."* We come to faith because the Father reveals it to us. *Seeing is believing* we say. However, from the beginning the evil one, that liar, along with hypocrites, charlatans,

thieves, philosophers, politicians, those guessing and those deceiving, and you name it, have used the approach that *seeing is believing* only to dupe the mind and heart; and this has led to all kinds of falsehoods, fictions and disasters, sorrows, disappointments, heresies and sins. Only God, the Risen Lord, to be exact, can cut through fiction, lies and deception; and He only can gently present Himself to the human heart (and then the mind), and bring a person who is willing to illumination. And that person will call Jesus, Lord. Only God can get us there, and only if we offer Him a little way in to ourselves. Jesus, says Luke, “*opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,*” particularly that “*the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.*” And so he does for us as well. Let us not forget that we are in a battle for our spiritual lives; we exercise and feed the soul. Otherwise doubts arise and cannot be answered. I will suggest two activities to keep Pascha real: Read scripture in light of how you came to believe in Jesus Christ. Read the Scriptures right after praying, so they will be read in a prayerful frame of mind. Secondly, never remove yourself from the Holy Mystery of the Eucharist: it is union with Christ, with the Holy Orthodox Church, and union with one another—we are not individuals, but human beings called together to be one in Christ.

• DAY OF REJOICING:

During Holy Week and Bright Week, other than funerals, the Church forbids us to sing memorial hymns and *Panikhidas*, since we are to focus the Passion and Resurrection of Christ—His death having destroyed the power of the devil and death. Pascha is the perfect and all-encompassing memorial; what more could be desired. However, on the Tuesday after Bright Week we once again begin to sing hymns for those who have departed this life. I will be visiting the following cemeteries to bless graves:

10 AMPleasant Hill in Sebastopol
 11 AMForestville Cemetery
 NoonHealdsburg Oak Mound Cemetery
 1:45 PMWindsor Cemetery
 2:30 PMSanta Rosa Memorial Cemetery



• ARTOS:

Our thanks to Carmen Anderson for making the lovely Paschal Artos (bread). It was blessed on Pascha, and has remained out for all the Bright Week. It will be broken and pieces set out (bagged) for you to take on Sunday after the Divine Liturgy

• THANKS:

Christ is risen. We all give thanks for the tremendous blessings of Holy Week and Pascha. We give thanks for those who organized all the various ingredients that make for a successful and bright feast. Christ is risen.

• ON THE GREAT MARTYR GEORGE, by Fr. George Calciu, a modern confessor of the Church:

God gives His martyrs special spiritual strength, and I have seen this in prison. That is, completely weak people, sick people who are barely breathing—like Valerian Gafencu—did not feel any suffering and continued to confess God, blessing their tormentors. Such was Gafencu, who died like a saint. So it was with all the martyrs. God gives them strength, and sometimes they do not even

experience any physical suffering. Their flesh was torn with iron claws, nails were pounded into the hands and feet, they were burned with fire, and they felt no pain. God gave them this strength to pass through sufferings. And the fact that they did not deny God, and that after they were burned they went forth to people unharmed, led many of those present at the tortures to repent and join the ranks of Christians. This was an enormous service the Christians did.

Therefore our Church says that the *blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity*. The more Christians there were tortured and killed, the more Christians came out of their blood. They saw their steadfastness, the power of God, the miracles, and they repented. Right then and there, during the tortures, they came forward and confessed their faith before the emperor, declaring that they too are Christians. And often scores of them were thrown into the arena, where the beasts ripped them to shreds and the soldiers put them to death. There was a close connection between St. George and me. When I was in prison I always called upon him, and he helped me in many circumstances.



From that time on and to this day I never cease to pray to him every day. I am convinced that between a saint and those who pray to him a close connection is formed, and often many of the saint's qualities, if you have a close spiritual connection with him, appear in you also. In my case, for example, just as St. George went through prison, so did I; as St. George was strengthened by God in difficult circumstances, so was I strengthened in the most difficult moments, when I might have perished not only physically but also spiritually. But the saint's presence strengthened me, because he gives to those who bear his name firmness in faith and spiritual protection, which God gives us through him. Pray to the saint whose name you bear, and he [or she] will help you. Turn to him in times of sorrow and sickness; in difficult circumstances and in moments of joy: "St. John (or, St. George), my protector, pray to God for me, a sinner!" Pray to him and he will hear your prayer! He is your advocate before God, the advocate of all those who bear his name. He brings our prayer before God and intercedes for us. At the end of life, when we depart for the other world, our patron saint will be standing next to us.

If we venerated him and prayed to him, he will stand next to our guardian angel to protect us from satan's accusations. This is because at the personal judgment the devil pulls out all our sins, even those we don't remember, exhibits them for everyone to see, and throws them on the scales. And we must have an advocate to defend us, who will make all our good deeds known.

After all, we will be so humiliated that we may not even remember our good deeds, just as we forgot our sins. But our guardian angel and patron saint will come and place all our good deeds on the scales. And often one tear surpasses all the evil deeds we did throughout our whole lives. Therefore I ask you to remember the saints whose names you bear, and pray that they would protect you, protect your families, your nation, and all people. —*Fr. George Calciu*

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

MAY 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 25 – Palm Sunday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy/ Procession • 6 PM, Bridegroom Matins 	26 – Holy Monday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Presanctified • 4 PM, Confessions • 6 PM, Bridegroom Matins 	27– Holy Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Presanctified • 4 PM, Confessions • 6 PM, Bridegroom Matins 	28 – Holy Wednesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 PM, Confessions • 6 PM, Presanctified 	29 – Holy Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11:30 AM, Vesperal Liturgy • 6 PM, Matins of Holy Friday (12 Gospels) 	30 – Holy Friday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Royal Hours • 3 PM, Vespers of Holy Friday • 6 PM, Matins with Lamentations 	May 1 – Holy Saturday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 PM, Vesperal Liturgy of Holy Saturday • 11:30 PM, Nocturn, Matins and Liturgy
2 – PASCHA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 AM: Matins and Liturgy, blessing of Paschal Baskets • 1 PM, Paschal Vespers 	3 – Bright Monday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Paschal Hours and Divine Liturgy 	4 – Bright Tuesday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Paschal Vespers 	5 – Bright Wednesday	6 – Great Martyr George <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Paschal Liturgy and Feast of St. George the Great Martyr 	7 - Bright Friday <i>St. Alexis Toth</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Paschal Vespers 	8 – Bright Saturday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Paschal Liturgy • 11 AM, Baptism • 5 PM, Great Vespers
9 – Thomas Sunday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy 	10	11 – Radonitsa Blessing of Graves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Sebastopol • 11 AM, Forestville • Noon-ish: Healdsburg • 1:45 PM, Windsor • 2:30 PM, Santa Rosa 	12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, Study of <i>Proverbs</i> with Fr James 	13	14	15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vigil/Confessions
16 – Holy Myrrhbearers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy 	17	18	19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, Study of <i>Proverbs</i> with Fr James 	20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 PM, Parish Council 	21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Sts. Constantine and Helen 	22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vigil/Confessions
23 – Paralytic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy • 2 PM, Wedding (<i>out of town couple</i>) 	24	25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vespers 	26 – Mid-Feast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 AM, Water Blessing • 7 PM, Study of <i>Proverbs</i> with Fr James 	27	28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions 	29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vigil/Confessions
30 – Samaritan Woman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 AM, Divine Liturgy 	31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noon, Memorial Day Panikhida at Santa Rosa Cemetery 	JUNE 1	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vespers • 7 PM, Study of <i>Proverbs</i> with Fr James 	3	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions 	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 PM, Vigil/Confessions