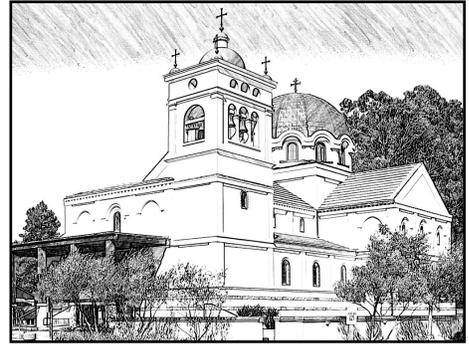


ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday of the Raising of the Paralytic

May 23, 2021



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Three:
Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; for the Lord has shown strength with His arm; He has trampled down death by death; He has become the first-born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hades, and hath granted the world great mercy.
- KONTAKION OF THE PARALYTIC, Melody *On This Day*:
As of old Thou didst raise up the paralytic, O Lord God, by Thy God-like care and might, raise up my soul which is palsied by diverse sins and transgressions and by unseemly deeds and acts, that, being saved, I may also cry out: O Compassionate Redeemer, O Christ God, glory to Thy dominion and might.
- KONTAKION OF PASCHA, Tone Eight:
Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades. And didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the Myrrh-bearing women: Rejoice; and giving peace unto Thine apostles, O Thou who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Sat., May 22: 5 PM, Resurrectional Vigil / Confessions
- Sunday, May 23: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
3 PM, Wedding
- Tuesday, May 25 5 PM, Vespers for Mid-Pentecost (Protection Church)
- Wed., May 26: 9 AM, Blessing of Water for the Feast of Mid-Pentecost (Protection Church)
4 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank
7 PM, Online Bible Study: *Appearances of the Risen Christ*
- Friday, May 28: 11:30 AM–1:30 PM, Confessions in Protection Church
- Sat., May 15: 5 PM, Vigil / Confessions

- WELCOME AND CONGRATULATIONS:

On Sunday afternoon our parish will host the wedding of Angela Koults and Joseph Porter. We welcome Angela's parents, Father Damian and Matushka Joanne Koults from Bend, OR., and our dear friend, Father Matthew Tate, from Holy Annunciation in Milwaukie, OR. Many Years.

- MID-FEAST:

Just as the *Veneration of the Cross* on the third Sunday of Lent marked the halfway point of Great Lent, so this Feast of Mid-Pentecost, a.k.a. Mid-Feast, marks the halfway mark to Pentecost (fifty days from Pascha to Pentecost). [Click here](#) for a short explanation of this feast. We will have a Blessing of Water—in the Protection Church—at 9 AM on Wednesday to mark the Feast.

- REDWOOD EMPIRE FOOD BANK:

Our parish hosts the Food Bank on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. Come and help distribute food to the needy. See Lydia Nicholson for more information.

- BIBLE STUDY:

Father James has wrapped up the study of Proverbs, and will move on this week to the examination of the appearances of the Risen Lord Jesus. Please join in on Wednesdays at 7 PM, via Zoom.

- AGAPE MEALS:

Our Sunday meals will resume, God willing and with sufficient volunteers, after the June 15 opening of CA. That first Sunday after that date will be Pentecost, June 20. Check out the sign up list in the Narthex.

- FRESCO:

Fathers Patrick and Moses are preparing to paint the fresco (north side, last arch) of the *Healing of the Blind Man*, the account is found in [John 9, see here](#).

- FRIDAY CONFESSIONS RESUME NEXT WEEK:

Since Sunday mornings do not provide time for Confession before the Liturgy, please consider coming on Fridays at 11:30–1:30 (resuming May 28), or on Saturday evening at the Vigil. Of course, confessions can be heard anytime during the week, Tuesday–Friday.

- ST. SERAPHIM WEEK FOR KIDS:

The annual *Saint Seraphim Week for Kids* will take place here June 14–18, 10 AM–2 PM each day. *St. Seraphim Week* is our version of annual “Vacation Bible School.” The daily schedule, more or less, will be to greet the kids at 10 AM, then go to the Church for brief morning prayers at 10:15 AM sharp, with a spiritual lesson by one of the priests. Various activities will follow: crafts, games, snacks, music and a prayer to end the day. This year our focus will be on some of the frequently heard Psalms. Registration and Volunteer forms are available at the candle desk after Liturgy, please see Niki Myles or Anastasia Brodeur.

- TODAY'S CELEBRATION:

The Sundays before and during Great Fast of Lent provided us with spiritual guidance, each lesson building upon the previous lessons. What we call “lessons” here are not primarily ethical and moralistic principles for living a good life. Such lessons are indeed necessary, but that’s not what Lent and Pascha are all about. Those Lenten and Paschal events lead us by participation into (if we are willing) the mystery of the Savior’s Cross, the grave and the resurrection. How is this participation achieved? By prayer and learning how to pray; by fasting and discovering how much we don’t want to fast; by confession, which is honesty about ourselves and our relationship with God and others; by Holy Communion and learning how to nurture the Gift of the Lord’s presence within us once we leave the Liturgy; by withdrawal—from the heart and soul—of the noise of the world and our own thoughts, desires, impulses and temptations.

The first week of Lent invites us to discover that our *true self*—not our ideas or feelings (those are important too, no doubt) or those of our culture—is found in our union with Jesus, Who Is the Image of the Invisible Father. We discover—and it’s painful to learn—that the image of God within us is faded, caked over with all kinds of “stuff” and even disfigured. The pain comes from realizing how much God loves us! Yet, this is also liberating: “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free,” said the Savior, Who Is Himself the Truth. Fr Stephen Freeman wrote that “this is not a promise that He will provide ‘actionable information.’ Rather, as we continue in His word [keep His commandments], the truth that abides in His commandments works within us to form and shape true knowledge. That knowledge is *transformative*, imparting to us a divine liberty which is the very life of God.” The remainder of Lent, with the Sunday of St Gregory Palamas, the Cross, St John of the Ladder and St Mary of Egypt, the Presanctifieds, the Canon of St Andrew, the Akathist, are all there to energize us, through worship, to become like Christ.

The Sundays of Pascha, building upon Lent, invite us to enter more deeply into the mystery of our salvation, the mystery of the Life in Christ. Pascha, Thomas Sunday and the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearers focus our attention on the Good News, the Gospel, of Christ’s death and resurrection which led directly to our freedom from the power of death and sin in baptism. Jesus is the Lord and Savior, because He defeated the wicked powers of evil to enslave us by His death and rising.

This Sunday, the Gospel will give us the account from [of the healing of the Paralytic, John 5](#) (we have a fresco of this miracle, so we can *see* the story). Ponder these words by Metropolitan Nikolaos, Metropolitan of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki, from his book *When God Is Not There* (2018):

God manifests Himself in our life in secret and spiritual ways ... The world we live in is the world of the fall, and death is inherent to it. If we do not die today, we shall tomorrow. Even if today Christ raises us up as he did Lazarus, in a short while we shall depart from this world. If we do not depart as a result of illness or a terrible accident, we shall depart in some other way. God’s presence is meant to give us an awareness of salvation—not of health, power or endless life in this world, but the longing for immortality, the expectation of eternity. It is meant to give us the awareness that even if we are in pain, even if we are sorely tried, even if we are being unjustly treated, even if we are perhaps deprived of the immediacy of the divine presence in the way our reason demands or our physical needs require it, we are able to experience the warmth, the sense and the experience of His spiritual presence in our life. What do our difficulties and ordeals count for when we experience Christ within us, when we have Christ near us, when we feel that we are in His embrace! The supreme moment of the divine presence was when the Lord experienced utter abandonment on the Cross—it was impossible for God to be absent at the moment when the divine economy was being accomplished. So it is the same with us: God’s presence is absolute and perfect in our trials and tribulations, just at the moment when the sense of abandonment by Him is most intense. It is impossible for God to be absent from our salvation. Ultimately, the world is not the one that we see but another world that exists and that we have to discern. Then we shall glorify God for the rich blessings He gives us: for the possibility not so much of gaining our health (we shall lose that at some point), nor of escaping some threat to our life (that too will come to an end), but above all of enjoying our salvation—the possibility for us too to become partakers and members of the Kingdom of God eternally, and to see our God and Savior “face to face.”

- LOVE AS THE PREREQUISITE:

In the Divine Liturgy, the Nicene Creed is introduced by the Deacon with these words: “Wisdom! Let us attend! Let us love one another that with one mind we may confess: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence, and undivided!” I believe it to be the case that the Creed is not rightly confessed (or believed) except it is done with love for one another. Indeed, how can we confess the mystery of God (Who is love) if we do not have love? —*Fr. Stephen Freeman*

- GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY.:

For Christians, the body is a sacred temple, created in God’s image and meant to be his dwelling place. For the inventors of the “new normal,” the human body is an amusement park of infinite novelty. And so more and more Christians are seen as madmen, as misfits in a society and a legal system that is intolerant of any dissent on these matters. “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up again in three days.” (Jn. 2:19). The resurrection gives us the courage we need to remain true to Christ’s teachings as handed down to us by the Apostles. All the words of this life [[Acts 5:20](#)]—not just the words carefully chosen as least likely to give offense. —*Hieromonk Herman (Majkrzak), St. Tikhon’s Monastery*

- LETTER FROM HIS EMINENCE, ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN:

Archbishop Benjamin sent a letter out last week regarding covid guidelines in our parishes. The letter was distributed to you via our GROUPS forum. [That letter appears here.](#) His Eminence mentions the difference between the CDC and CA/Sonoma County regulations as they pertain to the wearing of face masks, yet also blesses parishes to follow the CDC guidelines. His final two paragraphs are worth quoting. —Fr Lawrence

“I bless our parishes to implement the new CDC guidelines as outlined above, noting that these guidelines clearly recommend that those who have not been vaccinated continue to wear masks indoors. However, I also note that there are some grey areas within the CDC guidelines that raise concern. One of these is that there is no realistic way to monitor this new provision, i.e. to determine who has or hasn’t yet been vaccinated. Indeed, this is a matter of personal concern which many would not want to share. In the parish context, this puts our clergy in the unenviable and unfeasible position of monitoring something which is impossible to monitor. Because of this, I ask that individual parishioners and families, whether wearing masks or not, monitor themselves in this regard, always in a manner that is respectful of others in the parish community. As we begin to see an end to the pandemic and a return to a more normal way of life, I ask that all our clergy, monastics, and faithful continue to live in the spirit of mutual love, support, and cooperation and with the fidelity to Christ that you have all exhibited throughout these many months.” —*Yours in the Risen Lord, +BENJAMIN, Archbishop of San Francisco and the West*

- MEMORIAL DAY PRAYERS

It is my custom to go to Santa Rosa Memorial Cemetery on Memorial Day (this year on May 31) at Noon to offer prayers for the repose of the souls of those who served in the Armed Forces. I usually set up an icon table at the east end of the cemetery, under a tree. Look for the priest in the white cassock.

—*Fr Lawrence*