

ANNOUNCEMENTS ~ January 2, 2022

- 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 hell, and has granted the world great mercy.

- TROPARION OF THE FOREFEAST, Tone Four:

Make ready, O Zebulon, and prepare thyself, O Nephthalim. O River Jordan, stand and leap for joy at receiving the Lord who cometh to be baptized.

Rejoice, O Adam, with our first mother, hide not yourselves as in paradise of old. For, seeing us naked, He hath appeared, that He may clothe us with our first garment. Christ hath appeared, wishing to renew the whole of creation.

- ST. SERAPHIM, TROPARION, Tone Four:

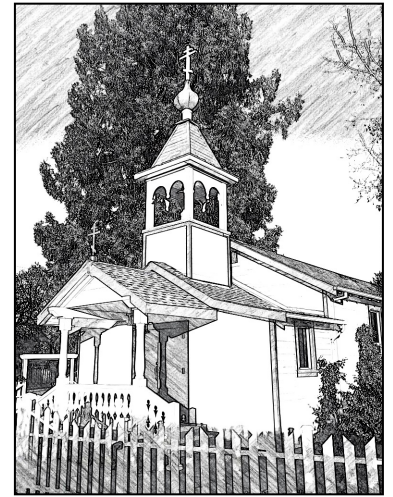
From thy youth thou didst love Christ, O blessed one, and ardently desiring to work for Him alone, thou didst struggle in the wilderness with constant prayer and labor, and having acquired love for Christ with compunction of heart, thou didst prove to be the beloved favorite of the Mother of God. Wherefore we chant to thee: Save us by thy prayers, O Seraphim, our righteous father.

- ST. SERAPHIM, KONTAKION, Tone Two:

Having left the beauty of the world and what is corrupt in it, O Saint, thou didst settle in Sarov Monastery, and having lived there an angelic life, thou wast for many the way to salvation. Therefore Christ hath glorified thee, Father Sera-phem, and enriched thee with the gift of healing and miracles. And so we cry to thee: Rejoice, O Seraphim, our righteous Father.

- KONTAKION OF THE FOREFEAST, Tone Four:

When the Lord descended today into the waters of the Jordan, He cried aloud to John: 'Do not be afraid to baptize me, For I am come to save Adam the first-formed man.'



ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Jan. 1: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy—*Feast of the Circumcision of Christ and St. Basil the Great*
5 PM, Great Vespers for the Resurrection and *Feast of St. Seraphim*, Akathist to follow
- Sunday, Jan. 2: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Archbishop Benjamin presiding
11:45 AM, Festal Agape Meal
- Tues., Jan. 4: 6 PM, Royal Hours for Theophany
- Wednesday, Jan. 5: 11:30 AM, Vespereal Liturgy and Great Blessing of Water
6:15 PM, Festal Matins for Theophany
- Thursday, Jan. 6: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of Water (*possible blessing of water at Spring Lake, TBD*)

- FEAST OF THE SAINT SERAPHIM DAY, January 2:

We celebrate the second of our Annual Parish Feast Days on January 2, the repose of St. Seraphim. Services: Vespers and Akathist, Saturday, January 1 at 5 PM; Liturgy with His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin and His Grace, Sunday, Jan. 2, at 10 AM followed by a festal meal.

- HOUSE BLESSINGS THIS YEAR:

Beginning Thursday, January 6, the Feast of Theophany, and through February, I will begin to bless homes of our parishioners. As is my custom for a number of years, I create a master list of names and times when I will come, and post that list in the Narthex. I will often call or email ahead of time. I apologize for being arbitrary about when, where and who's home is getting blessed, but this is the method that works for us. Accordingly, please make note of the List. I will assume that you will be expecting me, and if not, please cross your name off the list. We can rechedule. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- JANUARY 9: OUR CHILDREN'S MUSICAL OFFERING:

Come One, Come All to a Yuletide gathering of music and good cheer hosted by our singing youth. The program will include many delightful surprises as well as traditional carols. Fabulous homemade goodies to follow. Festivities are scheduled for January 9 at 5 PM, in the Parish hall.

- WALK FOR LIFE IN SF:

There are two particular days in American history that many Americans will identify as days that will live in infamy: Dec 7, 1941, and Sept. 11, 2001. But there is another infamous day, a day in which another war was launched, with an astonishing number of casualties, not nation against nation, but the strong against the weak and very small, the often fearful and confused against the unborn: a full blown war began on January 22, 1973, and since that date there have been an estimated 62,000,000 nameless unborn children who have been casualties, along with women, and men too, who have suffered in so many ways by being participants. Alas, also very many mercenary doctors who somehow think they are helping have contributed to this assault on the unborn. Too often, many Christians, even Orthodox Christians waffle on the issue, trying to be sensitive. There's just no way around the fact that a human life—just beginning to take shape and with extraordinary potential, is killed. What to do? Let me encourage you to participate in something positive. The **Annual 2022 Walk for Life West Coast** will take place Saturday, January 22 in San Francisco. It is the second largest gathering of its kind after the *March for Life* in Washington, DC, and usually attracts over 50,000 peaceful and mostly prayerful participants. I hope to organize transport to the event. The gathering begins at Civic Center Plaza in front of City Hall. The rally will be at the main stage from 12:30 to 1:30 PM. After the rally, the walk proceeds approximately 1.5 miles, from Civic Center Plaza down Market Street, to end at Justin Herman Plaza at the Embarcadero. For more information and a schedule of related pro-life events in the San Francisco Bay Area, visit www.walkforlifewc.com.

- THEOPHANY AND THE BLESSING OF WATER, a few thoughts:

At 11:30 AM, Wednesday morning, after a short day of strict fasting, we will gather to serve the Vespertal Divine Liturgy for the *Great Feast of Theophany*. And again on Thursday, at 9 AM we gather for the Divine Liturgy. While it may seem that this particular feast day does not really impact upon our personal calendars as does Christmas day—and many, many of our parishioners have never experienced this wonderful feast day, strange to say—liturgical history, the hymns and the ancient celebration of this feast teach us that, in fact, Theophany was pre-

eminent and prior to Christmas Day in the consciousness of the Church. Consider that in Bethlehem, the angels, the star, the magi and the birth revealed God incarnate in a little Child born of the Ever-Virgin Mary. This is all certainly astounding and wonderful. But, we see a greater wonder in Theophany: in the Jordan River, God was made manifest in Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the only saving knowledge which is our illumination. The worship and the knowledge of the Holy Trinity is in truth the only true worship and the only true knowledge, given to us in Baptism and Chrismation so that we can live the only true Life; at Theophany, we see the waters and all creation sanctified; the Messiah, the Savior of the world, is revealed and already at work saving His creation. At Christmas, the Redeemer is born in the flesh. At Theophany, WE are reborn through “water and the Spirit” in His image and are given His uncreated life. Theophany and Epiphany mean “the revelation of God,” and so we come to these Divine Services because in them this revelation is given to us sinners, and we are elevated from the worldly to the heavenly, we experience the saving reality of what the Lord did, here and now. And, after all, Theophany is the final day of the Twelve Days of Christmas, and deserves the honor due it. Below are some words of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann about this feast. I quote these words, with the knowledge that we as believers are losing, and many have already lost, any connection whatsoever to the deep and profound reality that Fr. Alexander is trying to express, a reality that defines what it means to be an Orthodox Christian. It’s just a fact that Christian consciousness of the Church as “Feast” and celebration is being lost by many of our people, and with it, repentance, a wealth of joy, thanksgiving, virtue and the presence of God in our daily lives. Yet still, thanks to God, only one brief experience of the joy of the feast—one moment during a festal service—can change the heart of a person—adult or child—in an instant, and this feeling might sustain one for a lifetime, and inspire and move that person to love God and others. Such is the experience of Liturgical worship at the feasts of the saints and the Lord.

“Great art Thou, O Lord, and marvellous are Thy works, and there is no word which suffices to hymn Thy wonders. Who said that Christianity is depressing and grim, morbid and sad, and pulls human beings away from life? Look at the faces of worshippers that night [Theophany], and see the light and joy that shines as they listen to the psalm thundering its exaltation ‘The voice of the Lord is upon the waters’ (Ps. 29:3), as they watch the priest sprinkling volleys of blessed water throughout the church, and those glittering drops fly as if throughout the whole world, making that world once again a possibility and a promise, the raw material for a mysterious miracle of transformation and transfiguration. God himself entered this water in the form of a man; He united himself not only with humanity, but with all matter, and made all of it a radiant, light-bearing stream flowing toward life and joy. But none of this can be experienced or sensed without repentance, without a deep change of consciousness, without the conversion of mind and heart, without the ability to see everything in a new light. This was precisely the repentance John the Baptist preached and which made it possible to see Jesus approaching the river Jordan, and lovingly accept Him as God himself, who from the beginning of time loved the human race and created the whole world for us as an image of his love, eternity and joy.” (*Celebration of Faith*, pg. 65). “O Lord Jesus Christ our God, help each one of us in this, Thy holy Church—Thy Body—the parish of the Protection of the Holy Virgin, to be united with a common vision as a worshipping parish, with its members living a life which centered on the Church, on fellowship, love, Godly virtues, forgiveness and evangelization. For unto Thee are due all glory, honor and worship, together with Thy Father, Who has no beginning, and Thine All-Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.” Let the parish give its Amen!