

- EXAMINING OUR HEARTS:

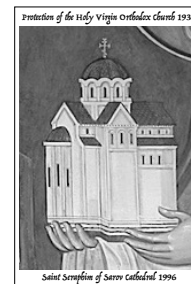
If our love for the Lord was pure and fervent, our hearts would be utterly unable to be touched by distress or dismay at the crumbling of that which, after all, has always been earthly and fleeting. But our iniquities have bound us to this world, and have made our hearts cold toward the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. For as our Lord said: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other” (Matthew 6:24). And so to whatever extent the signs of the times provoke fear or anger in our hearts, to that same extent we must realize that we have fallen under the sway of our passions and have given our love to this world rather than the Kingdom of God...We must look for the spirit of the times not simply in world events, **but above all in our own hearts.** This is our true spiritual battleground, the one on which our eternal fate will ultimately be decided. — *Hieromonk Gabriel*, [Ancient Faith blogs](#)

- THE EUCHARIST AND OUR SALVATION:

The Sacrament of the Eucharist — “the Mystery of Mysteries,” instituted by Christ Himself at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:17-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-25) — unites us to Christ not just spiritually but bodily as well, as Christ saved not just human soul but the whole man. Christ Himself said: “Truly, truly, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:53-54). The early Church understood the presence of Christ in the Eucharist in a literal way, preached it and wrote about it. East, West, North and South—the testimony of early Christian writers is always the same: the Eucharist is literally the body and blood of Christ. Not one dissenting opinion! Here is one sample text from the 2nd century: “For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh” (St. Justin the Martyr, First Apology). — [On Salvation](#)

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



February 6, 2022

St. Photius the Great



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Eight:

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One; Thou didst accept the three-day burial to free us from our sufferings. O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee.

- TROPARION OF THE FEAST, Tone One:

Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos, for from thee hath risen the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those in darkness. Rejoice, also thou righteous Elder, as thou receivest in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, who also granteth unto us the Resurrection

- TROPARION OF THE ST. PHOTIUS, Tone Five:

As a radiant beacon of wisdom hid in God, and a defender of Orthodoxy revealed from on high, [O great Photius](#), blest adornment of the patriarchs, thou didst refute the innovations of boastful heresy, O light of the holy churches, which do thou keep from all error, O luminary of the Dayspring on high.

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- KONTAKION OF THE ST. PHOTIUS, Tone Eight:

Let that resplendent and far-shining star of Christ God's Church, let that divinely given guide of all the Orthodox, be now crowned with comely garlands of songs and praises; the Good Comforter's divinely sounding harp of truth and the steadfast adversary of all heresy: Let us cry to him: Rejoice, O Photius most venerable.

- KONTAKION OF THE FEAST, Tone One:

By Thy Nativity Thou didst sanctify the Virgin's womb and didst bless Simeon's hands, O Christ God. Now Thou hast come and saved us through love. Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of Man!

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Feb. 5: 9 AM, Church Cleaning
9 AM, *Welcoming Home* distribution here
5 PM, Vigil / Confessions
- Sunday, Feb. 6: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School (outside)
Coffee hour outside
- Wednesday, Feb. 9: 5 PM, Vespers
- Thursday, Feb. 10: 7 PM, Bible Study with Fr. James via Zoom
- Friday, Feb. 11: 11:30 AM–1:30 PM, Confessions
- Saturday, Feb. 12: 9 AM, Gardening Work Party
5 PM, Vigil / Confessions

- CHURCH CLEANING:

Dear Friends: Due to our shrinking *Church Cleaning Team*, we need some help. This Saturday, February 5, we are having a work party to clean the floors. Our expected crew consists of four women. We could surely use some additional hands. If you can help, please come.

—Bonnie Alexander, 707-338-4962

- GARDENS:

In the next couple of months there are numerous tasks to get done in the parish gardens. I am usually in the gardens on Saturday mornings working into the early afternoon. I would love some help and always enjoy some

company. **On Saturday, Feb 12** we will have another work party to continue where we left off on Feb. 5. I would also like to start weeding the beds. Please let me know if you can help. —*Matushka Ann*, 707-477-0808

- DESIRE:

The very first announcement of Lent is made the Sunday on which the Gospel lesson about Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1-10) is read. It is the story of a man who was too short to see Jesus but who desired so much to see Him that he climbed up a tree. Jesus responded to his desire and went to his house. Thus the theme of this first announcement is desire. Man follows his desire. One can even say that man is desire, and this fundamental psychological truth about human nature is acknowledged by the Gospel: "Where your treasure is," says Christ, "there shall your heart be." A strong desire overcomes the natural limitations of man; when he passionately desires something he does things of which 'normally' he is incapable. Being "short," he overcomes and transcends himself. The only question, therefore, is whether we desire the right things, whether the power of desire in us is aimed at the right goal, or whether—in the words of the existentialist atheist, Jean Paul Sartre—man is a "useless passion." Zacchaeus desired the "right thing;" he wanted to see and approach Christ. He is the first symbol of repentance, for repentance begins as the rediscovery of the deep nature of all desire: the desire for God and His righteousness, for the true life. Zacchaeus is "short" — petty, sinful and limited—yet his desire overcomes all this. It "forces" Christ's attention; it brings Christ to his home. Such, then, is the first announcement, the first invitation: ours is to desire that which is deepest and truest in ourselves, to acknowledge the thirst and hunger for the Absolute which is in us whether we know it or not, and which, when we deviate from it and turn our desires away, makes us indeed a "useless passion." And if we desire deeply enough, strongly enough, Christ will respond. —*Great Lent, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann*

- PARISH ANNUAL MEETING:

Our Annual Meeting is scheduled to convene on **Sunday, February 27, at 12:30 PM**. Besides elections for five new Council Members, we will also review our finances and seek approval for the 2022 operating budget and vote on new Parish Bylaws. As usual, the Annual Meeting Report Booklet will be distributed before the meeting—this booklet will contain financial reports for 2021, reports about the Church School, fresco work, prosphora, upcoming projects and a list of our parish ministries. We did not have a meeting last year, so the Parish Council hopes to see all our members present this year. —*Fr Lawrence*