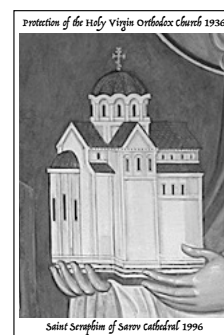


ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2022



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone One:

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ; glory to Thy kingdom; glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

- TROPARION OF THE ANCESTORS OF CHRIST, TONE TWO:

By faith, Thou hast justified the ancient forefathers; through them Thou hast betrothed to Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the Saints, therefore, exult in glory, for from their seed is the noble fruit: She who without seed gave birth to Thee. Through their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us.

- KONTAKION OF THE ANCESTORS OF CHRIST, TONE TWO:

A hand-wrought image ye would not worship, O thrice-blessed ones; but armed with the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire. Standing in the midst of the irresistible flame, ye called upon God: Speed Thou, O Compassionate One, and hasten, as Thou art merciful, to come unto our aid. For Thou art able to do what Thou wilt.

- KONTAKION OF THE FOREFEAST, Special Melody: *On this day the Virgin:*

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child, Who before the ages is God.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Dec. 10: **10 AM, Part 3/Sacred Arts:** *Fr Stephan Meholick, on the Divine Liturgy*
3:30 PM, Catechism: *On the Church*
5 PM, Great Vespers/Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 11: 9:35 AM, Hours (Reading of the "Morning Psalms")
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Lunch
- Monday, Dec. 12: 6 PM, Vigil for the Feast of St. Herman of Alaska, *first saint of our land*
- Tues., Dec. 13: 9:30, Divine Liturgy for the Feast of St. Herman and Litya for the Repose of
Fr. Alexander Schmemmann and Leonid Ouspensky
6 PM, Panikhida for John Hartman

- Wed., Dec. 14: 11 AM, Funeral for John Hartman, Internment at Oak Mound
6 PM, Vespers
- Thurs., Dec. 15: 6 PM, Supplicatory Canon for Advent
7 PM, Bible Study online with Fr. James
- Fri., Dec. 16: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions

- MEMORY ETERNAL:

Our beloved parishioner John Hartman reposed peacefully on Monday. For the last two years John was at a care facility, and unable to come to Church. He had no family in the area, except his Church family.—please make time to attend either the Panikhida or the Funeral. Times are posted above.

- OFFERINGS FOR FLOWER DECORATIONS

There will be an offering this Sunday for the flowers, wreaths and poinsettias to beautify our church during this festal season. Thank you all for your support.

- BACKPACKS FOR NIGHTINGALE:

The *Nightingale Shelter* at the new Catholic Charities Caritas Village in Santa Rosa provides beds for hospital-referred patients experiencing homelessness to heal and connect with permanent, affordable housing. With the leadership of Denise Pellizzer, our parish makes an offering each year of “Blessing

Backpacks” which contain various personal-care items (combs, water, poncho, wipes, gift card, protein bars, etc.). Denise is organizing assembly of the backpacks for **Saturday, December 17 at 11 AM**. Please call Denise—at (707) 364-6445—to let her know you intend to help out with this project.

Orthodox Sacred Arts Series

Part Three: *Praying Before Eating—A Recipe for the Divine Banquet*

Speaker: Archpriest Stephan Meholic



Saturday, December 10th, 2022 at 10 AM

Saint Seraphim Cathedral
90 Mountain View Ave
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

Email STS.Y2AM@gmail.com for any questions!

- CHRISTMAS PLAY:

Our annual Christmas Play, directed by Carmen Anderson this year, will take place on Sunday, December 18. We begin with the *Kontakion of St. Romanos* at 4:30 PM in St. Seraphim (the *Kontakion* tells the Christmas story in a 24 stanza poem/hymn, composed in the 5th century), followed by a pot-luck dinner at 5:15 PM, then the Christmas

Play, concluding with the singing of carols and a visit by St. Nicholas.

- THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER:

Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. So says the *Parable of the Great Supper* which we read this Sunday. What does Jesus mean when He uses the word “compel?” Isn’t compelling a bad thing? Doesn’t God give us freedom? Yes, we have free will, and God does not force

any person to believe. But let us think of this word “compel” not in a legal sense, but another way: Just as the rain makes our Sonoma County hills turn green; as a parent makes dinner for hungry children; as water flows downhill; as “wine maketh glad the heart of man” as the Psalm tells us—so it is that when the heart of a person begins to perceive God’s incredible love for us and His beauty, then that *love itself compels* a person to respond. Then we weep over the ugliness of human violence, sin, anger and injustice, knowing that Christ Himself—Who was hated, despised and endured all that horror—has not abandoned us to sin and death, but stands before us. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann wrote that “God Himself stands in front of us, not in greatness and glory, for then we would submit ourselves to Him [be compelled] as cowardly slaves; no, He stands before us in a crown of thorns and purple robe.” (*Symbol of Faith*, pg. 78). He Who was born in a lowly cave and laid in a manger is humble, and that humility and love *compels* our hearts to respond with love and devotion. Unless our hearts are hard and resolved to turn away, when we look upon God’s love we are filled with awe and follow Him.

Today, as we approach Christmas, the Church gives us this Parable from Luke 14 because She wants us to remember that God invites us, invites everyone, to His *Great Supper*. What is this *Supper* but the Incarnation of the Son of God—Nativity—and our participation in that union with God, fellowship with Him and the saints, joy, celebration, eternal blessedness, peace of heart, restoration of all creation. This all begins in the heart of a person in this life. —*Fr. Lawrence*

CONFESSION BEFORE CHRISTMAS

The Holy Mystery of Confession is a gift from God, and as essential to our lives, as is Holy Communion. Confession is not an obligation, but an encounter with the Living God, Who stands before us in that Holy Mystery. Let all of us—priests and people together—make a Confession in these two weeks preceding Nativity in order to be prepared to receive Holy Communion on the feast itself. In general, it is not appropriate for anyone over the age of seven to receive Holy Communion without a recent Confession (at least once a month is a good benchmark). We operate on the “honor system,” which means I trust you, and I will not ask you if you have confessed and are prepared for the Great Feast of Christmas. I will be available during the week before Christmas every afternoon, before Vespers, from 5–6 PM and following Vespers, and then on Friday from 3 PM until Vespers. See this edifying [*Encyclical on Confession and Communion*](#) from the Holy Synod. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• VESPERS—PROTECTED TIME:

We all know that Sunday is the Lord’s Day, and that in the Divine Liturgy we participate in the Blessed Day beyond the seventh day, beyond the days of this world: the Day without evening, in which the Lord Himself is the sun and light and is “all in all.” Sunday is the the “day of Resurrection” in which we know now, that we will gloriously reign with Him in His Kingdom and commune in His love and life. All that and more is given to us at the Liturgy, of course, according to our desire and as we are spiritually able and prepared to receive it. Yet how does one “jump” from the world of daily cares and responsibilities into such a magnificent reality breaking into our time and place? It’s not possible, usually, to make such a jump, and furthermore, there’s no need for it. Orthodoxy likes transition, as we know, and one can say that the [*Saturday evening Vespers*](#), which is unique among all other Vespers, **transitions us** into the celebration of the Lord’s

Day. Vespers spiritually takes us through God's plan of salvation—by means of hymns, psalms, the Gospel, dark and light: we hear about the creation, the Fall from Paradise, the prophecies and the preparation for the coming of the Messiah, His Incarnation, signs, teachings, warnings, His Passion, death and of course, His Resurrection from the dead and the glorious “robe of majesty,” the Ascension, the gift of Pentecost, the gift of Holy Baptism, and even the Second Coming, which we await, yet even now taste beforehand in the Church. All this is part of Saturday evening Vespers (The same holds for Matins on Sunday). All is all, Saturday evening Vespers is there to help us have an experience of the Resurrection of Christ and to look forward to our own. Since the day that the Apostles gathered in the Upper Room, on the First Day of the week, Resurrection Day, the Church has joyfully and solemnly kept vigil before the Divine Liturgy, and has zealously *protected and guarded* this time. All this is well and good, but, somehow external and even unknown for most of our congregation. We have a conflict in our current way of life, because for very many of us, Saturday afternoon and evening is “protected time” for various activities. After a long work week, a person genuinely has to recharge, and if not that, do housework, chores and errands, or perhaps meet with family and friends. These things are good activities, but let us also struggle to enter into the holy mystery of the Lord's Day. —Fr. Lawrence

- THE SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS OF CHRIST:

The *Sunday of the Holy Ancestors* occurs between the 11th and the 17th of December. This Sunday commemorates all the ancestors of Christ according to the flesh, who lived before the Law and under the Law, especially the Patriarch Abraham, to whom God said, “In thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3, 22:18). The Church also meditates in hymns on the *Three Youths in Babylon*, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were thrown into the raging furnace because they would not bow down to worship the golden image of King Nebuchadnezzar. The Church sees a prefigurement of the Nativity of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ in this event: “As the fire did not burn the Youths, so Christ was born without seed from a Virgin...without the fire of divinity consuming her” (hymn of Matins). Indeed, the furnace itself stands for the Holy Virgin: “You, O Theotokos, are the spiritual furnace. For as God saved the Three Youths, He recreated in your womb the entire human being” (another hymn). Secondly, the Church sees in the Angel who appeared in the furnace and saved the Youths an image of the Lord Himself, the Word of God, not *yet* incarnate. These hymns spell that out: “Having seen the exact and living image of God, the Youths despised the gold idol...Praise the Lord, who through divine power was seen to descend in the flame with the Youths.”



Image from the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome, circa 300 AD