

# • THE CATECHUMENS AND US:

Since the time of the early Church, Great Lent (*lent*, as in days *lengthen* in Spring) have been the period focused on preparing catechumens for their entrance into the Church. In the weeks before their baptismal initiation, the candidates undergo a period of intensive training, with frequent instruction, special services and fasting. Bishop Kallistos (Ware) wrote that “the existing members of the church community [are] encouraged to share with the catechumens in this prayer and abstinence, thus renewing year by year their baptismal dedication to Christ. So the forty-day fast came to involve the whole body of the faithful, and not just those preparing for Baptism.” The Great Fast of Lent is the time to struggle to acquire the Godly virtues of love, peace, joy, patience, long-suffering, mercy, kindness, and so forth. We support the catechumens in our ascetic endeavors, since each of us needs to pass through a time of preparation so that we all may also experience the full power of the Paschal joy. Metropolitan Kallistos continues: “Lent is a...time to realize afresh that, by virtue of our baptismal initiation, we are crucified, buried and risen with Christ; it is a time to reapply to ourselves the words of St. Paul, ‘I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me’” (Gal. 2:20).

# • NOTEWORTHY •

Congratulations to Monica and Timothy Flood on the birth of their son, Nicholas Ignatius, on Monday February 13. May the Lord bless them.

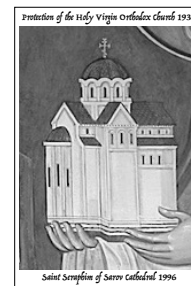
A heart-felt *Thank You* to those who helping out at the Retreat: those who organized the event, those who set up the Hall and the Church, those who prepared the refreshments and lunch, those who cleaned up. And especially, we thank the Lord for the presence of Fr. Seraphim with us.

Last Sunday’s appeal for humanitarian relief for Turkey and Syria brought in \$3200. A check was sent to IOCC. See [THIS link](#) for more info on the work of IOCC.

The rectory backyard fence was falling down after the recent rains. Many thanks to the benefactor who arranged and covered the cost for the beautiful new redwood fence and gate.

# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

## PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



**February 19, 2023**

**Parable of the Last Judgment**



### • 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.

### • KONTAKION OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT, TONE ONE:

When Thou comest, O God, upon the earth in glory, the whole world will tremble. The river of fire will bring men before Thy Judgement Seat, the Books will be opened and the secrets disclosed. Then deliver me from the unquenchable fire, and count me worthy to stand on Thy right hand, O Judge most righteous.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Feb. 18: Pre-Lenten Retreat with Fr. Seraphim (Aldea)\*  
5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions

---

Protection of the Holy Virgin Orthodox Church • 90 Mountain View Ave • Santa Rosa  
707-584-9491 • [LMargitich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:LMargitich@sbcglobal.net) • [saintseraphim.com](http://saintseraphim.com)

- Sunday, Feb. 19: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
11:30 AM, Church School  
Noon, Blini Luncheon
- Monday, Feb. 20: **Begin to fast from all meat products**
- Wed., Feb. 22: 6 PM, Vespers—*Lenten style*
- Thurs., Feb. 23: 6 PM, Vespers—*Lenten style*  
7 PM, Parish Council Meeting  
7 PM, Online Bible Study
- Fri., Feb. 24: 11:30 AM–1:30 PM, Confessions
- Sat., Feb. 25: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for Departed Monastics  
3:30 PM, Catechism, *on the Holy Eucharist*  
5 PM, Vespers and Confessions
- Sunday, Feb. 26: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Forgiveness Sunday  
Noon, Agape Meal  
1 PM, *Vespers of Forgiveness*

- \*PRE-LENTEN RETREAT\*

Registration will take place at 9:30 AM, in the Parish Hall, where there will be coffee, juice and some snacks. Fr. Seraphim will be speaking in the Cathedral, beginning at 10:15 AM.

- SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT:

“I ponder the fearful day and lament my evil deeds. How shall I answer the immortal King? And with what boldness shall I the Prodigal gaze upon the Judge? O compassionate Father, only-begotten Son and Holy Spirit, have mercy upon me.” —*a hymn from Matins of the Sunday of the Last Judgment*

Brethren, we understand that our sins literally separate us from God, but which sins? Most of us know that breaking the Ten Commandments will separate us from God; Denying our faith, murder, stealing, lying, etc. But today’s parable wants to remind us that one of the standards of judgment is how we treat other people, how we consider other people, especially the poor and the needy. Let me share with you some verses of Scripture:

“He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.” —*Proverbs 14:21*

“He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.” —*Proverbs 14:31*

“He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.” —*Proverbs 19:17*

The Great Fast wants us to repent. Repentance, *metanoia*, means to change our minds, change our thinking, change our attitude about who we are, what we do, and how we relate to others. God, through Isaiah tells us what a true fast must include, saying: “loose every burden of iniquity, untie the knots of hard dealings, set the bruised free, and cancel every unjust account. Break thy bread with the hungry, and lead the unsheltered poor to thy house: if thou seest one naked, clothe him, and thou shalt not disregard thine own relatives. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall speedily spring forth: and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of God shall compass thee” (Isaiah 58: 6-8). Our actions are far more important than our words...The Lord Jesus said, “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46). And what, exactly, is He telling us to do today? Our Lord is telling us to be the kind of people who feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, show hospitality to foreigners, (which is what the Greek says), clothe those who have no clothing, to visit and comfort the sick and the imprisoned. In other words, the Lord expects us to be kind, compassionate, and merciful towards others, to truly reflect not only the image, but also the likeness of God. —*Archpriest Basil Rhodes*

- FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS—MARCH 6:

The [Vespers of Forgiveness](#) will be served on Sunday Feb. 26 at 1 PM. I encourage, exhort, implore, beseech and beg all of you to attend this blessed Vespers. This day is also called “Forgiveness Sunday” (based on the Gospel, [Matthew 6:14ff](#)) or [Cheesefare Sunday](#) — since after this day we abstain from all dairy and eggs until Pascha. Remembering that we do not currently live in paradise, but experience ourselves and the world in a fallen and sinful condition, we must follow the Lord’s command, and forgive one another. This Vespers “formalizes” forgiveness in a sober, serious and simple way with the *Mutual Rite of Forgiveness* at the end of the service. —*Fr L*