

will be changed to the Lenten purple—a royal and rich color, yet darker and more mournful too. From that point on we are in Great Lent, and the choir will be singing the Lenten melodies for the litanies. At the end of this unique Service we will ask forgiveness of each other, each person approaching the priests, then each other. Those who can, do a prostration before one another; those who cannot, simply ask forgiveness. We say: “forgive me;” and answer back, “forgive me. God forgives.” The important thing is to ask for forgiveness and then give it. In a Parish—and the longer you are in it the more this is true—there are things to forgive which we might not even know about. Please understand that I am urging you, in the strongest, most emphatic and pastoral way I can, to attend this Vespers and participate in it, since Lent cannot really begin without it. Here is a [brief reflection](#) on this day by Fr Alexander Schmemmann. —*Fr. Lawrence*

PRE-LENTEN RETREAT ~ SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18:

*Topic:* “Preparing for Great Lent: Embracing the Impossible, A Retreat with Fr. Seraphim (Aldea).” As we prepare to enter Great Lent, we might ponder on the impossible height to which we are being called—to be perfect with the Father’s perfection—an impossibility which becomes possible in Christ, as we open up to His presence. This paradox and the tension it creates in us keeps our spiritual life safe from being reduced to empty piety and religiosity. Registration: \$20, at 9:30 AM. See the flier in the narthex.

## Blini Brunch

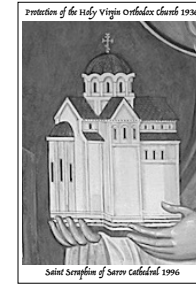
*Complete with sour cream, lox, herring,  
and caviar...and of course, butter, syrup, fruit and bacon!!*

**Church Hall**  
**Sunday, February 19, Noon**

*Please come enjoy Blini with us as we prepare to enter that  
wonderful time of Lent.*

# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

## PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



**February 12, 2023**

**Sunday of the Parable of the Prodigal Son**



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Two:  
When Thou didst descend to death, O Life-Immortal, Thou didst slay hades with the splendor of Thy Godhead; and when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to Thee.
- KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Two:  
Hades became afraid, O Almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb. The dead arose, creation with Adam beheld this and rejoiced with Thee; and the world, O my Savior, praises Thee forever.
- KONTAKION OF THE PRODIGAL SON, Tone Three:  
Foolishly I sprang away from Thy great fatherly glory and dispersed in wicked deeds the riches that Thou didst give me. With the Prodigal I therefore cry unto Thee now: I have sinned against Thee, O compassionate Father. But receive me in repentance; and make me as one of Thy hired servants, O Lord.

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## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Feb. 11: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *On Holy Baptism*  
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Feb. 12: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
11:45 AM, Church School  
Noon, Agape Meal  
7 PM, Trisagion for the Repose of Presvytera Kantiama (Kay) Efstathiou at Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Church, Novato
- Wed., Feb. 15: 6 PM, Vespers  
7 PM, Book Group (CS Lewis, *Space Trilogy*)
- Thurs., Feb. 16: **9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy** for the Feast of St. Nicholas of Japan ~ *Protection Church*  
7 PM, Bible Study with Fr James via *Zoom*
- Fri., Feb. 17: 11:30 AM–1:30 PM, Confessions
- Saturday, Feb. 18: Pre-Lenten Retreat ~ See flier in Narthex  
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions

### • CATECHISM:

All are welcome to participate in the Catechumen Class in the Library at 3:30 PM on Saturdays. Topics for the next eight Saturdays will be: Holy Baptism, Chrismation, the Eucharist, Confession, Priesthood, Marriage, Holy Unction, and Death and the Funeral.

### • MONTHLY BOOK GROUP:

This week we have the Book Group, meeting at 7 PM on Wednesday, February 15 after Vespers. We are reading the *Space Trilogy* by CS Lewis. Please join in whether you've read the book or not.

### • FUNERAL FOR BISHOP TIKHON:

I will be in Los Angeles Monday and Tuesday to attend the funeral of Bishop Tikhon. —*Fr Lawrence*

### • PARISH ANNUAL MEETING:

Our Annual Meeting was held last Sunday after the Divine Liturgy. Our Parish Council Members are the newly-elected Serge Anderson, Debbie Buse, Peter Tennyson, Kathleen Rhodes and Matushka Patricia Jorgenson

(one of these will serve as an alternate), who join those who have another year on their term: Preston Booker, Michael Dovey, Brian Justin Rademacher, Karen Werder, Timothy Danford.

### • BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON:

On the three Sundays prior to Great Lent (starts this weekend) we sing *Psalm 136*, which begins with the phrase: “By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion.” A soloist intones the verses of this ancient lament, and the people led by the choir respond by singing “Alleluia.” This was a psalm sung by the Jewish people who had been taken as captives to Babylon (597 BC the Temple in Jerusalem destroyed), with no hope of returning to the Land of Promise. It was a time of bitter repentance and sorrow. In the Scriptures the city of Babylon is seen as the antithesis of Jerusalem, as the broken and rebellious world opposed to God’s Kingdom, the condition of sin, of confusion, of idolatry, of [sexual immorality](#), of exile from God. The tower of Babel in Babylon was built on the presumption of those who felt they could control God, get Him to do their bidding. Finally, Babylon can be identified with the pig pen in the [Parable of the Prodigal Son](#), who went to live in a “far country” i.e., a land of sin and exile from God. The Prodigal son was weeping in the pigpen only when he remembered the house of the Father. As we meditate on this in the light of Jesus Christ, we can’t help but admit that we are often far away from Jesus in our deeds, yet we remember His glory, and the honor He confers on us, His grace and love. We come to the last, outrageous and violent verse of the psalm, and wonder, what could it mean? *Happy shall he be, that shall take and dash thine infants against the rock. Alleluia.* In our spiritual warfare, we are constantly confronted by intrusive thoughts—[logismi](#)—and passions that would lead us into sin. When they are just thoughts—infants, so to say, small and as yet harmless—we call upon the Name of Christ, who is the [Rock](#) (according to many scriptural verses), and the sins are crushed by Christ. —*Fr Lawrence*

### • SET THE DATE—FORGIVENESS SUNDAY VESPERS:

*Forgiveness Sunday Vespers*—February 26 at 1 PM—is the service that ushers us into Great Lent. Vespers begins as usual, with the reading of Psalm 103, the Great Litany, and the various hymns of the day. After “O Joyous Light” we will sing the Lenten hymn “Turn not Thy countenance from Thy servant, for I am afflicted, hearken to me speedily, attend to my soul, and deliver it.” During that slow and contrite melody, the gold covers on all the icon stands