

The Annual Fort Ross Pilgrimage is scheduled for July 4th. The Liturgy will be celebrated at 10:30 AM, followed by a procession to the cemetery and a brief memorial there, and a BYO picnic.

The Diaconal Vocations Practicum will be held here at our parish, July 16–19. We expect to host about 35 or so readers, subdeacons and deacons from across the US. The week will culminate with the Vigil for the Feast of St. Seraphim on Thursday, July 18 and the Hierarchical Liturgy on Friday, July 19—with the wonderful blessing of hosting the ordination to the Holy Priesthood of Deacon Josef Candelario. Dn. Josef has another semester to complete at seminary, and then will be assigned to serve a parish in our diocese. Please speak with Debbie Buse on how you can participate with hospitality during the *Practicum*.

What is a “healthy parish?” Is our parish “healthy?” How do we know...how does one measure such a thing? How can we find out? Should we find out? As part of the *Thriving Parish Project* grant that our Diocese received, His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin has asked our parish to be the first, out of twenty others, to address the questions above. On Friday evening, August 2, come learn more about this important area of parish life and ministry during an evening presentation on *Orthodox Natural Church Development*, or ONCD with Father Jonathan Ivanoff. We have been asked by our Archbishop, to undertake, over the next two years, a journey of parish self-discovery using ONCD and learn what makes our parish “healthy” as well as “unhealthy” — more importantly, we'll learn what we can do to ascertain the steps we can take to address that. More info to follow.

Sister Ilaria from the Monastery of St. Elisabeth in Minsk will be visiting us on Wednesday, June 12, prior to the Vigil for Ascension. She will bring with her church good and crafts for sale, from the Monastery workshops. This is an opportunity to purchase some lovely items for birthdays and name days, as well as something for the parish.

The Feast of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco will be celebrated at the *Joy of All Who Sorrow Cathedral* in SF, with the Vigil on Friday, June 28 and the Divine Liturgy on Saturday, June 29. Since this is our local saint (and since I will be returning from Church Camp) there will be no services here for Sts. Peter and Paul. For that, we can join the Parish of Sts. Peter and Paul on Stony Pt on July 12.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



June 9, 2024

Sunday of the Blind Man / St. Kirill of Alexandria



• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Five:

Let us the faithful praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death and to raise the dead, by His glorious Resurrection.

• KONTAKION OF THE BLIND MAN, Tone Four:

Being blinded in the eyes of my soul, O Savior, I come unto Thee, O Christ, as did the man who was born blind. And in repentance I cry to Thee: of those in darkness art Thou the most radiant Light.

• KONTAKION OF PASCHA, Tone Eight:

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades. And didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women: Rejoice; And giving peace unto Thine apostles, O Thou who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, June 7: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions
7 PM, First talk of the Retreat
- Saturday, June 8: 10 AM, Retreat with Prof. Mary and David Ford
5 PM, Resurrectional Matins / Confessions
- Sunday, June 9: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
Noon, Agape Meal
- Tues., June 11: 6 PM, Matins for Leave-taking of Pascha
- Wed., June 12: 6 PM, Vigil for the Ascension of our Lord
- Thurs., June 13: 9 AM, Ascension Day Divine Liturgy
7 PM, Bible Study
- Friday, June 14: *No Confessions this day*

The nature of Adam, which had descended to the nethermost parts of the earth, Thou didst renew in Thyself, O God, and today Thou didst take it up above every Principality and Power, for loving it, Thou didst seat it with Thyself; and having compassion on it, Thou didst unite it with Thyself; and united with it, Thou didst suffer with it; and Thou Who art passionless hast glorified it with Thyself. But the Bodiless Powers were asking: “Who is this Man of beauty? Not man only, but both God and man, the two natures together made manifest.” And so exultant Angels, flying about the Disciples in shining robes, cried out: “O Men of Galilee, He Who is gone from you, this Jesus, both Man and God, will come again as God and Man, the Judge of the living and the dead, granting the faithful forgiveness of sins and His great mercy!” — *Vespers Hymn*

On Wednesday evening, we begin to celebrate the *Feast of the Ascension of the Lord*. The rising from the dead and ascension to the Right Hand of the Father vindicates and affirms the Lordship of Jesus Christ; it is about the initiation, the *Inauguration* of His reign over all creation, as the hymn above so beautiful tells us. Just before His Ascension Jesus says three key things to the Apostles. **First**, Jesus assures us — “Lo, I am with you, even

unto the end of the age.” He is ascended, now our human nature, glorified and healed is there, ruling with His Father. Since we are united to Christ the God-Man through holy Baptism and are members of His Body, His ascension is simultaneously *our ascension and our glorification*. Therefore, St. Paul can further write: “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:3) **Secondly**, He says “all power has been given unto Me in Heaven and on earth.” All power: regardless of who claims to be lord, whether it’s Nebuchadnezzar, Caesar, some dictator or demon— whoever claims to be lord—is not. The only thing the fake lords can do is kill and destroy. The One who is truly Lord is Jesus Christ. He has all dominion and authority on earth, and He is active in us through the Holy Spirit, Holy Mysteries, prayer, works of mercy and love. **And finally**, He asks us to teach “all things He has commanded” and to baptize, so that His power of transformation, love, truth and mercy will be made present in us and throughout His creation. The Feast of the Ascension is not a decline from the glory of Pascha. It is, rather, the increase of Pascha, and the joyful revelation of *our* destiny in Christ. However, we also wait for the Day of Pentecost and the renewal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit, without which all this, and Pascha itself, remains external. Let us prepare for both Ascension and for Pentecost, and consider these feasts no less celebrations, no less *incredible* gifts—truly new and unprecedented, no less new beginnings than Pascha. — *Fr Lawrence*

Bridges Pregnancy, Clinic and Care Center of Santa Rosa is having its annual *Baby Bottle Drive Fundraiser*. I have asked Nicholas Alva to coordinate this fundraiser with our parish. In response, he has set up a table in the Hall by the porch doors with relevant materials. Please take a look at the information flyer there, and if you are interested and would like to support the effort, please take a bottle with you. The fundraiser runs from Mother’s Day to Father’s Day. Any questions: see Nicholas Alva, or email him, his contact information is on the *Bridges Table*. Thank you! — *Fr Lawrence*

St. Seraphim Men’s Fellowship Dinner: Thursday, June 20 at 6 PM. Please send Daniel DeCarlo a message if you plan to come. Bring your own beverage please.