

Looking ahead, in addition to the usual Sunday 10 AM Divine Liturgy, we will ALSO have an 8 AM Divine Liturgy on the second Sunday of each month in the Protection Church beginning on October 13.

Ministry Sunday: Our various parish ministries are asked to present the work of their ministry (each have a table at the Agape Meal) on Sunday, October 6th. We have had a *Ministry Sunday* at least twice before in recent memory, but it's been a while, and it's time once again to let our folks know about the wonderful and dedicated work that gets accomplished here by the parish members. Natasha Tennyson has graciously offered to help make arrangements with each of you that coordinate a ministry. She will be in touch, to help out with the initial organization. —Fr. L

The Feast of the Protection of the Virgin Mary is the main feast of our parish, celebrated with Vigil on September 30 and Divine Liturgy on October 1. Mark your calendars for this holy day. See [THIS LINK](#) for information about the Feast, and [THIS LINK](#) for a sermon on it by Fr Thomas Hopko.

Our parish has been described as friendly and welcoming. I thank those that reach out to new people and welcome them. I would ask all of you, each and everyone, young and old, please continue to welcome and greet those whom you do not know and those who are guests. Last Sunday I noticed four guests (two were families) at the Agape Meal sitting alone and wondered why no one from our parish was with them. Let us all be responsible to look around, notice who might be a guest or alone, and then sit with that person(s). I saw a poster about this recently that had three points:

- 1) A person sitting alone at the Agape Meal is an emergency
- 2) Friends can wait (we don't always need to sit with the same group)
- 3) Introduce a new-comer to someone else

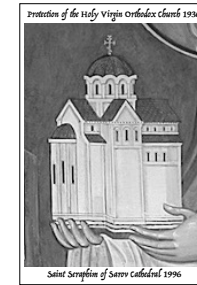


Weekly offerings, special gifts and charity can be given online at the Parish website using the QR code.



ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



September 15, 2024

Post-Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross



- 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.
- TROPARION OF THE CROSS, Tone One:
O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation.
- KONTAKION OF THE CROSS, Tone Four:
As Thou wast voluntarily raised upon the Cross for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by Thy Name, O Christ God; make all Orthodox Christians glad by Thy power, granting them victories over their adversaries by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace!

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, Sept. 13: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions
5:30 PM, One Year Panikhida for Tom Pellizzer
6 PM, Vigil for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross
- Saturday, Sept. 14: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy (Fast Day)
5 PM, Vespers and Confessions
- Sunday, Sept. 15: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School
Noon, *Potluck Agape Meal*
- Wednesday, Sept. 18: 5:30 PM, Akathist to Matushka Olga
6 PM, Vespers

Many thanks to those who set up and brought food for pot-luck last Sunday. A special thanks to Joseph Zeni for grilling all the meat.

This week there will be no Bible Study on Thursday, Sept. 19 and no Confessions on Friday, Sept. 20.

Many Orthodox Christians may look with dismay or consternation and feel helpless as they survey the social and political situation of this land and the world, especially during the election season. So that we don't fall into either despair, or apathy or an acceptance of it all, we must remember that we are, before all else, citizens of the Kingdom of God—the God Who *“so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him”* (Jn 3.16–17). Of course we must love this land and its people, but we should also discern that the habits and manner of life we Christians consider important, normal, good, wholesome, chaste, modest, lovely and so forth, are often opposed by society. But, we also know that Christian virtues and its worldview are not brought about or cultivated by politics. Such attempts have failed in the past for the simple reason that a change of heart and mind—literally *repentance, metania*—does not happen by legislation. So yes, in a way we are “helpless” to change anything. But we are not apathetic or without care. Christians witness to the good that God has done for them. They speak about the salvation they experience now. We neither shut ourselves off from the world—as if we can protect ourselves from the trials, challenges and sufferings other people—nor do we compromise our faith by bringing the world into the Church. To do that would be to abandon

the teachings and path that has produced saints, and repentance, and the core of being disciples would be done away with. The invitation of Christ to deny oneself, pick up the cross and follow Him, would be quietly ignored as being too difficult and not in alignment with “the world.” There would be nothing to witness to. Let's have some courage and accept that to be a disciple of Him that was crucified, is non-conformist, and is in opposition to the world and its hunger for power and for our affirmation. Our way is radically weak, strange to say. “It seems to me, and I am personally convinced,” said the late Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of London, “that the Church must never speak from a position of strength. It ought not to be one of the forces influencing this or that state. The Church ought to be, if you will, just as powerless as God himself, which does not coerce but which calls and unveils the beauty and the truth of things without imposing them. As soon as the Church begins to exercise power, it loses its most profound characteristic which is divine love [i.e.] the understanding of those it is called to save and not to smash...” The Church is given for the life of the world and its salvation. The cross which we venerate, which we wear, which we hold up, which we proclaim as the “invincible trophy and weapon of peace” is bound to the humility of the God-Man Jesus Christ. So, we do not despair. The famous Roman Catholic bishop, Fulton Sheen, who regularly appeared on national TV shows in the mid-1950s, remarked even then that “these are great and wonderful days in which to be alive...It is not a gloomy picture—it is a picture of the Church in the midst of increasing opposition from the world. And therefore, live your lives in the full consciousness of this hour of testing, and rally close to the heart of Christ.” What a great honor and responsibility it is to be an Orthodox Christian. —*Fr Lawrence*

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. The Kingdom of Heaven is “Now,” today. This is the Good News. Believe it! This is Orthodoxy, not as a “religion,” like all other religions, but as the ongoing and ever-unfolding experience of “God-with-us,” even as we await the *Parousia*, the summing-up of all things in the “glorious appearing” of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the paradoxical “now and not yet” of Christ's Incarnation. As one of our teachers—Timothy Patitsas—has put it, “Christians don't repent in order to get to heaven; we repent because heaven has come upon us.” —*Fr. Philip McCaffery*

From September 15–28, Matushka Ann, Denise Pellizzer, Francisco and Vickie Guzman and I will be on a pilgrimage with Fr Ilya from *Orthodox Tours* to the ancient Christian sites of Turkey. —*Fr Lawrence*