

**There are always** things in a parish that we might improve. For example, the priest should work on how he serves, improve his sermons, interactions with others and be more loving, attentive, patient, humble and prayerful. The Parish Council can improve organization, communication and opportunities for fellowship; parishioners can be mindful of their support of parish life—pray for, listen to and visit others, give an offering of Time, Talent and Treasure; we work to keep the grounds clean and in good repair (lots to do on a seven acre property), etc. We should also consider our “liturgical composure,” that is, our piety and attitude during worship:

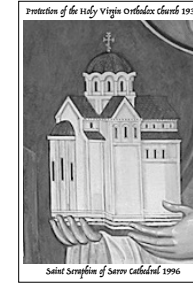
- Do we come on time for the Divine Services? How often it is that during the *Little Entrance* folks are right there in the path of the Entrance. Those with little kids get a pass—but, most of us should be more prompt. Let’s all be present for the great, wonderful, majestic and transformative exclamation of “Blessed is the Kingdom.”
- At Liturgy, do we participate? For example, when the Deacon says “Let us pray to the Lord” for this or that petition to God, do we cross ourselves and actually *pray to the Lord* and say or sing *Lord have mercy*? Let’s be mindful of the prayer, body and soul together.
- *Liturgical composure* also means that while we are in Church and *at* Church, wherever we are on these holy grounds, we do not have conversations during the Liturgy. To be “in Church” at Liturgy applies also to those in the Narthex and those who are standing at the front porch trying to pray. Keep your liturgical composure focused on the Lord.

**One of our Parish Ministries** will have an informational table in the Parish hall each Sunday after the Divine Liturgy. This week, December 1, Karen will be there to tell us something about what the parish ushers do—this is a critical ministry, since the usher/greeter is usually the first person that a guest meets.

**More than anything**, Christ Crucified is a revelation to humanity that God is love. However, it teaches us that love is not coercive. The philosopher’s God is expected to selectively coerce, controlling evil and rewarding the good. The scandal of the Cross is that it reveals the weakness of God who, in love, suffers Himself and His creation to endure evil, “overcoming evil by doing good” (in the words of St. Paul). It is not the God that many imagine themselves to want. It is, however, God as He has made Himself known. —*Fr Stephen Freeman*

# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

## PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



**December 1, 2024**

St. Philaret the Almsgiver and the Prophet Nahum



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Six:  
The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hades, not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin granting life. O Lord who didst rise from the dead: Glory to Thee.
- TROPARION OF ST. PHILARET, Tone Three:  
From the inner wealth of a divine faith, thou didst deal thy riches to the needy; and thy works of compassion have glorified Christ, the Bestower of mercy, O Philaret; for thy whole life was adorned with a love like His. Intercede for us, O Almsgiver, that He richly grant great mercy and compassion unto us, the poor.
- KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Six:  
When Christ God the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed Resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life and the God of all.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, Nov. 29: *No Confessions today*
- Saturday, Nov. 30: 3 PM, Play Rehearsal  
4:30 PM, Panikhida for Alla Keyes, Konstantin Sakovich and Dorothy Holmes  
5 PM, Great Vespers and Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 1: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Agape Meal to follow
- Monday, Dec. 2: 6 PM, Panikhida for Alla Keyes
- Tuesday, Dec. 3: 1 PM, Funeral and Burial for Alla Keyes,  
*Reception in Parish Hall to follow, all invited*
- • Wed., Dec. 4: 5:30 PM, Akathist for St. Barbara  
6 PM, Vespers (Protection Church)
- Thursday, Dec. 5: 7 PM, *Vigil for St. Nicholas in San Anselmo*  
8 PM, *Cantiamo Concert here*
- Friday, Dec. 6: 9:30 AM, *Liturgy for St. Nicholas in San Anselmo*  
8 PM, *Cantiamo Concert here*

**Our long-time** and devout parishioner Alla Keyes reposed in the Lord on Tuesday morning, November 26. Alla was a faithful member of our parish, served as parish secretary for about ten years, and helped out in ways too numerous to mention. It is a sorrow to have two of our parish pillars depart this life (Lew Vladimir Baer) two weeks in a row. There will be a Panikhida on Monday evening at 6 PM, and the Funeral and Burial at 1 PM on Tuesday. May her memory be eternal.

**If you struggle with parish life** because of hypocrites, think about it: using the same logic, you should leave your job, drop out school, cut off friends and family and isolate yourself completely. Instead, try to see the Church as it is, a hospital for the wounded. This is a place where we are all patients in need of healing and also doctors learning to help others. Sometimes some of us forget that we are wounded, and we act with hypocrisy, and our healing is delayed and others are scandalized—let’s be honest with ourselves and seek confession and repentance and therefore, healing. The Church was created for therapeutic purposes, for healing the split between us and God, ourselves and our neighbor, and the split within our own hearts and minds. The Church takes fallen, sick, and confused human beings, who

suffer from all sorts of destructive passions and sins, and with its very tangible therapeutic methods helps them attain real health —spiritual health. That’s the ultimate form of healing. The body sooner or later will die, decompose. Spiritual health is eternal and, therefore is the key for the “resurrection of life” meaning the raising of the body to life eternal, that Jesus mentions in John 5. The therapy that the Church offers to human beings is not for the future—as with good medicine, therapy must take place now, in this present physical life, not merely after death. Healing, provided we desire it and our hearts are open, is available through frequent Confession, Unction, frequent Holy Communion, prayer, fasting and forgiveness of others. However, certain attitudes prevent healing: shame, pride, blaming others, fear and anxiety over what a priest will “think.” St John the Apostle says, “God is love.” Since God is love, then as human beings, created in his image, we ought to reflect that love. Our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ gave us the spiritual prescriptions for healing our distance from Him, and then we begin to resemble His likeness. —*Borrowed*

**Angels Unawares** is a program run by the *Redwood Gospel Mission* (RGM), in which Sonoma County church communities provide a meal and a place to sleep every night of the month for those who are unhoused. Our parish partners with the RGM, and welcomes those in need usually on the first Thursday of each month. Come out to greet and serve our guests (usually less than 20) on Thursday, December 12 at 5 PM. Please speak with Sadik Bradbury to let him know you will assist him with prep and serving.

**Holy Trinity Cathedral** in San Francisco (Van Ness and Green Sts) will host the annual Pre-Nativity Retreat on Saturday, December 14. The speaker this year will be Peter Bouteneff, Professor of Dogmatics at St. Vladimir Orthodox Seminary. [See this LINK for details.](#)

**Mark your calendars** for the Feast Day of St. Nicholas (Vigil, Dec 5 at 7 PM, and Liturgy, Dec. 6 at 9:30 AM), joyously celebrated in San Anselmo at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church. This feast is a wonderful way to prayerfully and corporately enter the Christmas season.

**Many priests**, including yours truly, reserve Mondays for a day off (obviously, this is not the case on a feast day, etc.). Calls, texts and emails will generally wait until Tuesday, unless you have a pastoral emergency and need to contact me. In that case, please do call, and I will respond as soon as I am able. —*Fr Lawrence*