

There are several times during the Divine Liturgy when no one should be moving around and lighting candles, etc. Wisdom! Stand aright! Let us focus our attention on the prayer and the hymns during the entire Liturgy, of course—but let us be very still especially during the following acts:

- ❖ The Entrance with the Gospel during the Beatitudes
- ❖ The reading of the Epistle and the Gospel
- ❖ During the sermon
- ❖ During the Cherubic Hymn (“Let us who mystically represent...”) and the procession with the Chalice and Diskos
- ❖ During the Creed, the Anaphora (“Let us lift up our hearts” / “Holy, Holy Holy” / the Consecration of the bread and wine, and until after the “It is Truly Meet” hymn to the Theotokos
- ❖ Additionally, during the time of distribution of Holy Communion, let us keep our liturgical composure by refraining from talking as well as hugs and greetings (they can wait to the end).

There are numerous times on the calendar for all of us, anyone over the age of 7, to make a confession before Christmas as part of our feast day preparations. Confession is not an obligation, any more than Holy Communion or the other Holy Mysteries are “obligations.” It is an opportunity to stand before our Lord and Savior and ask for guidance, forgiveness and grace. It’s a chance to become more aware of our words, thoughts and acts as servants of God.

Before covid (BC), but not since, I would send out a Christmas letter to our entire mailing list inviting the recipients to do two things. First, come to any, some, or all of the Church Services before, during and after Christmas—come to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, God made man; God is with us. Lift up your hearts to the Lord in praise and joy; Rejoice, for we have been saved from darkness, sin and death and are called to enjoy enlightenment from Heaven because we have become, by baptism, children of the Most High God. Secondly, in that letter there was an offering envelope with an invitation to make a gift to the Church, a thank-offering sacrifice to God. There’s no need for me to send a Christmas letter! —*Fr L*



ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



December 15, 2024

Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of Christ



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Eight:
Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One; Thou didst accept the three-day burial to free us from our sufferings. O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee.
- TROPARION OF THE ANCESTORS, Tone Two:
By faith, Thou hast justified the ancient forefathers; through them Thou hast betrothed to Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the Saints, therefore, exult in glory, for from their seed is the noble fruit: she who without seed gave birth to Thee. Through their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us.
- KONTAKION OF THE ANCESTORS, Tone Two
A hand-wrought image ye would not worship, O thrice-blessed ones; but armed with the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire. Standing in the midst of the irresistible flame, ye called upon God: Speed Thou, O Compassionate One, and hasten, as Thou art merciful, to come unto our aid. For Thou art able to do what Thou wilt.

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- KONTAKION OF THE PRE-FEAST, Tone Three:

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the angels and the shepherds now glorify Him, Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child, Who before the ages is God.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, Dec. 13: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Feast of St. Herman of Alaska
- Saturday, Dec. 14: 10 AM, Retreat at Holy Trinity in SF
3 PM, Play practice
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
6 PM, *Project Mexico Benefactor Dinner, invitation only*
- Sunday, Dec. 15: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
5:30 PM, *Christmas Kontakion, Dinner and Children's Christmas Play*
- Wednesday, Dec. 18: 5:30 PM, Akathist to Matushka Olga
6 PM, Vespers
- Thursday, Dec. 19: 5 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Vespers of the Prefeast of Christmas
7 PM, Bible Study with Fr. James via Zoom
- Friday, Dec. 20: 11:30 AM–1:30 PM, Confessions
5 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Vespers of the Prefeast of Christmas

We offer a heartfelt welcome to Father Nicholas Andruchow, who runs [Project Mexico](#). Fr. Nicholas will offer us a brief presentation about the work of this wonderful organization at the Sunday Agape Meal after the Divine Liturgy. Please give him your full attention. —*Fr Lawrence*

The Annual Children's Play will be presented on Sunday evening. We gather at 5:30 PM in the Protection Church to pray the sixth century “Kontakion of St. Romanos” followed by a dinner in the Hall and then the

play, with Christmas Carols. Please bring your favorite *fasting* dessert to share.

The Sunday that falls between December 11–17 is known as the *Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of Christ*—ancestors who lived before the Law and under the Law, especially the Patriarch Abraham, to whom God said, “In thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3, 22:18). On this Sunday the Epistle reading comes from St. Paul’s letter to the [Colossians \(3:4–11\)](#) which begins with the incredible sentence: *When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* We look toward the Glorious Appearing of the Lord with all our heart!. St. Paul told the Colossians to prepare to encounter Christ by putting their sins to death, for they are all forms of idolatry that exclude us, distract us, and redirect us away, from the holy joy of the presence of Christ. The Gospel reading for this Sunday is always from [Luke 14:16–24](#), the Parable of the “Great Supper” which has the same message: it speaks of those who are invited, yet are actively refusing to come, *so the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled...’* All are invited, but many are distracted, if not by duties (in the Parable there are the excuses of marriage, oxen and property) then by the things that St Paul lists in Colossians. Christmas, of course, is a banquet, a great feast; a celebration of our salvation in the God-Man Jesus Christ, Who in Himself united humanity with divinity, Who brings us from mortality to immortality. Here is a wake-up call for faith—a warning to not let anything come between us and the invitation to be with Christ. —*Fr Lawrence*

Denise Pellizzer is requesting help from all able-bodied parishioners: Please come to assist with decorating the church for Christmas on the Sunday before Nativity (Dec. 22) immediately after Divine Liturgy. There’s lots to do: putting ribbon and lights on mini trees, putting poinsettias in brass containers with moss, hanging wreaths on columns and chandeliers. Many hands will make it go quickly! Thank you for all your efforts.

Christmas is a precious beacon of light entering into a world of darkness, the real world that we inhabit... It is not just a matter of us letting go of our pinched spirits and ungenerous hearts, and throwing our hats up in the air in joy... It is God’s invasion of our often sad, and diminished, world. He is performing an intervention. —*Wilfred M. McClay*