

The weekly Saturday (3:30 PM) Catechism commences on February 15, in the Parish Hall. We begin our second semester. The first semester, from October to mid-December, consisted of eight lectures: The True God, The Human Being, Sin, Jesus the Son of God, Jesus the Savior of the World, Faith and Repentance, the Holy Spirit, the Church and the Virgin Mary. The second semester focuses on the Holy Mysteries: Baptism, Chrismation, the Eucharist, Priesthood, Confession, Marriage and the Death and the Funeral. Each class builds on the previous class. In addition to these lectures, we have brief talks—20 min—by our parish catechists on Sundays when the Catechumens are asked to “Depart.” They gather in the Protection Church to hear about, this semester, the first week of Lent, Lenten services, preparing for Holy Communion and for Confession, Holy Week and Pascha, and to hear St. John Chrysostom’s sermon on Baptism. All are welcome to attend the 3:30 class.

The book *Great Lent*, by Fr Alexander Schmemmann is an excellent guide, year after year, for the pre-Lenten and Lenten period. Get a copy.

God does not dispense justice, but gifts and charisms upon His servants. The publican’s prayer was filled with the spirit of humility, and therefore he found contact with Him Who placed Himself lower than every creature in order to raise all creation to its primordial glory. This prayer had love as well, because anyone who humbles himself, blames himself and justifies the other, and the first Other is God. By contrast, the man who justifies himself like the Pharisee, mutilates his being, because pride makes man incapable of loving. —*Elder Zacharias of Essex*

Blini Brunch

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

Church Hall
Sunday, February 23, 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 9, 2025

Parable of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee



- 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 MEETING OF THE LORD, Tone One:
Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos, for from thee hath risen the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those in darkness. Rejoice, also thou righteous Elder, as thou receivest in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, who also granteth unto us the Resurrection
- KONTAKION OF THE TAX-COLLECTOR AND PHARISEE, Tone Four:
Let us flee the Pharisee’s conceited vaunting; let us learn the Publican’s humility, and cry with groans unto the Savior: Thou Who alone art swiftly reconciled, be gracious unto us.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, Feb. 7: *No Confessions today, Fr Lawrence out of town*
- Saturday, Feb. 8: 9 AM, Trimming Roses, see Matushka Ann
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, Feb. 9: 8 AM, Divine Liturgy in the Protection Church
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
- Wed., Feb. 12: 5:30 PM, Akathist to Matushka Olga
6 PM, Vespers
6:30 PM, Planning meeting for “Glendi/June 13”
- Thurs., Feb. 13: 5:30 PM, Akathist to St. Seraphim
6 PM, St. Seraphim Men’s Fellowship Dinner here
7 PM, Bible Study online with Fr James
- Friday, Feb. 14: *No Confessions today*
7–10 PM, Valentines Party in San Anselmo/St. Nicholas

The Orthodox Church uses many different books and collections of hymns in the Divine Services. On the *Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee*—this Sunday—we begin to use the Lenten hymn book called the *Lenten Triodion* (it contains many three-ode hymns). This magnificent collection of hymns was composed by saintly hymnographers from the 3rd–18th centuries, among those whom we can identify are St. Romanos the Melodist (6th century), St. Kosmas the Melodist, Bishop of Maiouma, St. John of Damascus and St. Andrew of Crete (all three from the 8th century), and the 9th century Leo the Emperor and nun St. Kassiani. The earliest hymn in the book, *Beneath thy compassion, we take refuge, O Theotokos...* can be traced to a Coptic manuscript dating from about 250 AD. Much of the material contained in the *Triodion* was compiled and arranged by St. Theodore the Studite in Constantinople during the course of the 8th–9th centuries. There is a pious tradition from the Greek island of Zakynthos regarding the “opening” of the *Triodion* at the Vespers of the *Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee*. In that tradition, the *Triodion* book is placed on a table under the icon of Christ, to the right of the Royal Gate on the iconostasis. Following the Resurrection hymns at

“Lord, I Have Cried,” the head chanter comes before the Icon of Christ and receives from the priest the book of the *Triodion*. He then begins chanting the appropriate hymns, thus inaugurating the “Season of Repentance.”

This coming week is fast free. [See this LINK](#) as to why we do not fast.

This weekend Deacon Justin and I are in Colorado Springs to attend a meeting and participate in the consecration of the new St. John Orthodox Church on the east side of Colorado Springs. The church was planned, financed and built by Holy Theophany Orthodox Church in the Springs. For the last few years Sunday attendance at Holy Theophany (a bit smaller in size than our temple) has been about 350. So instead of starting a mission across town, the parish decided to purchase property and build a church.

The Saint Seraphim Men’s Fellowship will gather for a dinner on Thursday, Feb. 13 at 6 PM. The Akathist to St. Seraphim will be prayed at 5:30 PM. Please let Dan DeCarlo (716-861-4046) or Joe Zeni (707-326-2383) know that you plan to come.

Forgiveness Sunday Vespers—March 1 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 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 aware of. 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