

Next Saturday, April 12, about Noon, the church will be decorated in preparation for the Palm Sunday Vigil, Holy Week and Pascha—see Denise Pellizzer to help.

During Holy Week attend as many services as you can. Set aside Holy Week to be holy. We have two services each day (except Wednesday). Plan ahead. If you cannot attend a service, then read the scriptures and the main hymns of that day, posted **HERE**. It is in the liturgical worship that we become participants—rather than spectators—in events of the Lord’s Passion and Resurrection. The services of Holy Week are neither dramatizations of sacred history nor spiritual entertainment. Holy Week is a single unbroken sacred Service that carries us through ten days of the saving acts of Jesus Christ—it’s all about Him and our participation in His life, our taking the same path. In the words of Fr Stephen Freeman, our liturgical worship is “according to Tradition and focuses its attention on God. It is not there for you to ‘get something out of it.’” It’s only when we approach worship in that way do actually we receive more than we could hope for. Does it seem unreasonable to attend Church so much in a single week, twice a day? It is absolutely extravagant and outrageous! But Christ’s love for us is sacrificial and without measure. And so we return that love during Holy Week in a way that is beyond reason! Let us all submit ourselves to the spiritual therapy of Holy Week. —Fr Lawrence

An important—essential—part of our preparation for entering into Holy Week is the *Sacrament of Confession*. Please come before or on Holy Wednesday, after which no Confessions will be heard. *Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of repentance* (2 Cor. 6:2). —Fr. Lawrence

Regarding liturgical composure, last week’s announcements commented on not “following” the deacon as he incenses the church, but to remain facing east in prayer. This week, let’s turn our attention to the time before and after Holy Communion. When the priest brings the chalice out of the Altar, we should all make a reverence by bowing low. While people are receiving, we don’t have conversations or greet others with hugs (there’s time for that later). We strive to be quiet and nurture gratitude. After communion, when the priest blesses us with the chalice, saying, “Blessed is our God, always, now and ever...” we should not have our backs turned away, but once again, we bow low with reverence and gratitude.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



April 6, 2025

The Fifth Week of Lent: St. Mary of Egypt



- 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 ST. MARY OF EGYPT, Tone Eight:
In thee the image was preserved with exactness, O Mother; for taking up the Cross, thou didst follow Christ, and by thy deeds thou didst teach us to overlook the flesh, for it passeth away, but to attend to the soul, since it is immortal. Wherefore, O righteous Mother Mary, thy spirit rejoiceth with the Angels.
- KONTAKION OF ST. MARY, Tone Three:
Thou who once of old wast filled with all manner of fornication, art now seen today to be a bride of Christ by thy repentance. Thou didst live and emulate the life of the Angels. By the Cross, thou didst annihilate the hordes of demons; for this cause art thou a bride now in the Kingdom of the Heavens, O Mary, thou all-modest one.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, April 4: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Matins with the Akathist to the Theotokos
- Sat., April 5: 9 AM, Gardening Work Party
3:30 PM, Catechism: *On Marriage*
5 PM, Great Vespers/Confession
- Sunday, April 6: 8 AM, Divine Liturgy in the Protection
10 AM, Divine Liturgy / Spiritual Lesson for teens
11:30 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
- Tues., April 8: 8 AM, Matins
- Wed., April 9: 8 AM, Matins
5 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Presanctified Liturgy, Meal
- Thurs., April 10: 8 AM, Matins
7 PM, On-line Bible Study with Fr. James
- Friday, April 11: 8 AM, Matins ~ *Last day of Lent*
11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Lazarus Sat. Matins and Baptismal Prep
- Sat., April 12: 9 AM, Baptisms
10 AM, Divine Liturgy for Lazarus Saturday
Agape Meal Reception for newly-baptized to follow
Noon, Church decoration and clean up
5 PM, Vigil for Palm Sunday

From Denise Pellizzer and the Alms Committee: Please join us this Sunday for a Lenten almsgiving tradition during the Agape meal. We will assemble 200 blessing bags for the needy. Every family is encouraged to participate by taking and distributing them in the weeks leading up to Pascha and beyond. This year's bags will be eco-friendly and include printed cards with essential homeless service providers. Left over bags will be donated to the Redwood Gospel Mission. The giving of these bags is not only edifying for the giver

but it also makes the recipients feel seen and valued. It's a wonderful opportunity to engage our children in demonstrating both generosity and compassion. We look forward to seeing you. ...*whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him. How does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in tongue, but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:17-18*

Matushka Ann will be leading a garden work party on Saturday, April 5, starting at 9 AM. All are welcome.

Christ—the Joy, the Truth and the Light of all the Life of the World and the Resurrection—has appeared in His love to those on earth. He has become the Image of our Resurrection, Granting divine forgiveness to all. (Lazarus Saturday hymn). Christ comes to raise His friend, dead four days already. This important day in the history of salvation reveals the enemy—death—and announces the victory to come. The day is very appropriate for the baptism of catechumens. Fr Alexander Schmemmann wrote: “The power of Resurrection is not a Divine ‘power in itself,’ but power of love, or rather *love as power*. God is Love and Love is Life, Love creates Life... It is Love that weeps at the grave and it is Love that restores life. This is the meaning of the Divine tears of Jesus. In them love is at work again—recreating, redeeming, restoring the darkened life of man: ‘Lazarus, come forth...’”

This Lazarus Saturday, April 12, twenty-five of our catechumens—nine of them children—will be baptized, glory to God! In preparation for their baptism, the adults have done the required reading, attended the sixteen catechetical lectures, attended church services, taken care of the candle-stands and oil lamps after church services, given their life confession, picked out robes, secured Godparents and done the final walk-thru on the eve. Of course, they have also struggled to overcome their passions, to fast, pray, give alms and to allow our Savior Jesus Christ to guide them. The baptisms will take place at 9 AM, followed the Divine Liturgy for the celebration of the Raising of Lazarus (a traditional baptismal day for the church) at which our newly-illuminated members of the Church will receive Holy Communion. Those who were received last year will be preparing, as is our custom, the Agape Meal reception for our new members. Please offer your congratulations, prayers and fellowship to all of them. —*Fr Lawrence*

Our Holy Week and Pascha activity SIGN-UP SHEETS in the narthex await your names.