

A fundamental characteristic of Christian marriage is the equality of each spouse. In the marriage service the couple is called to realize and acknowledge the equality of honor and dignity of both the woman and the man. While the Orthodox rite of Matrimony acknowledges the Scriptural teaching that the man is called to be the head of the wife [Eph. 5:23], this headship is founded in the example and teachings of Christ. Indeed, ultimately, marriage is viewed as a living icon of the relationship between Christ and His Bride, the Church. Thus, what ever may be said about the nature of the relationship between Christ and the Church may also be said about the relationship of husband and wife. Therefore, like Christ Who came not to be served but to serve, he who is the head in the relationship holds a primacy of servitude. The husband is seen as the first servant, the first martyr, the first to give up his “self” and reach out in love to his wife. Likewise, a wife’s “honoring”/”obeying” of her husband is seen as a loving response to his love for her. Fr. Thomas Hopko writes, “The husband must love his wife to the point of death, as Christ loves the Church. And the wife must be totally given to her husband in everything as the Church is given to Christ. The union in love must be perfect, total, complete, enduring and lasting forever.” Always, the foundation of marriage must be selfless love, which by its nature is affirming, life-giving, and never exploitative or abusive. Orthodoxy would see the use of Scripture to support the husband oppressing his wife and family as a corruption of the Apostles’ Doctrine regarding marriage. Consequently, marriage is a path of self-denial, a path of asceticism, rather than of “self realization.” Marriage is a path for salvation for the husband and wife as they receive and bear the crowns of joy and martyrdom given to them in the marriage service. This is not intended to be a morbid prediction of suffering in marriage, but instead a call to lay down one’s life in order to participate with Christ in His victorious death and resurrection. —*borrowed*

Mark your calendars for Sunday, June 29, 5 PM for the Retirement Banquet in honor of Archbishop Benjamin, to be held here at our Parish Hall. This will be a catered dinner, with limited attendance (somewhere around 150 max). Get your tickets [HERE](#).

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



May 11, 2025 ~ Sunday of the Paralytic



- 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 hades, and hath granted the world great mercy.
- KONTAKION OF THE PARALYTIC, Melody *On This Day*:
As of old Thou didst raise up the paralytic, O Lord God, by Thy God-like care and might, raise up my soul which is palsied by diverse sins and transgressions and by unseemly deeds and acts, that, being saved, I may also cry out: O Compassionate Redeemer, O Christ God, glory to Thy dominion and might.
- KONTAKION OF PASCHA, Tone Eight:
Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades. And didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the Myrrh-bearing women: Rejoice; and giving peace unto Thine apostles, O Thou who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, May 10: 3:30 PM, Q&A for Inquirers and Catechumens
5 PM, Resurrectional Matins/Confession
- Sunday, May 11: 8 AM, Divine Liturgy In Protection Church
9:40 AM, Reception of Catechumens
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:30 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
- Tues., May 13: 6 PM, Vespers for the Feast of Mid-Pentecost
- Wed., May 14: *No Liturgy today*
- Thur., May 15: 7 PM, Online Bible Study with Fr. James

We offer our congratulations to Lucas Schick and Christopher Lemos on becoming Catechumens on Sunday morning prior to the Liturgy. Please keep all the catechumens in your prayers: Lucas, Christopher, James, Amanda, Cinthia. The following catechumens will be baptized on Sunday, June 1 at 9 AM: Jessie, Lily, Kathleen, Dominic and his mother Elaine.

A reminder: Deacon Justin and I will be on a pilgrimage to Mt Athos, departing Sunday evening, May 11, returning late Monday, May 19.

The paralyzed man, who had been at the *sometimes*-miraculous pool for thirty-nine years, was asked a question by Jesus: “Do you want to be healed?” (See [John 5](#)). The hearer of the gospel must be one who wants to be changed. Unfortunately, I’m not sure that is always the case. More often than not people hear what they want to hear and make the gospel fit whatever their preconceived ideologies are, both on the right and the left. If you seek human things, that’s what you will find and you won’t find God, you won’t see Him. The more we open our hearts to God and lay aside “all earthly” agendas, the more we will receive Christ. Jesus asked that perceptive question about “wanting to be healed” — after which He did not say to the paralyzed man, “You are healed, and I know it’s been a long time and you must be exhausted by your ordeal, so just sit back and rest for a while before you begin to walk about.” Surprisingly He said, “rise, pick up your bed and walk.” Jesus called this man to begin acting on his faith, immediately. Take up your bed and walk—act, be a disciple in deed. This Gospel is read now, after Pascha and the baptisms of the catechumens, to remind all of us of the transformative power of the Holy

Spirit in us, and the continuing, on-going grace of that experience, healing, the Lord’s power to raise us up from sin and our need to respond.

Fifty days after Pascha—June 8 this year—we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the “mind of the Church” this feast is just as important as the Paschal celebration itself. Why? When the Holy Spirit is given to each one of us, we became able to pray: *Our Father* (see Romans 8), since we were united by the Spirit to the Father and the Son. We become little *christs*, meaning “anointed with the Spirit.” St Paul writes: If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, Who dwells in you.” We might say that Pentecost enables, equips and prepares us to live what is given at Pascha. Fr Steven Kostoff writes that “Pentecost is not that rare Sunday on which anyone should make some ‘alternative plans’ and thus miss the celebration. That would only reveal a lack of awareness as to the nature and significance of the Feast. For, in my humble estimation, Pentecost is not so much neglected—it is on a Sunday after all—as it is *misunderstood*. Many of the faithful have less than a full realization as to how profoundly connected Pentecost is to Pascha. It is not simply “one more Sunday” like all the rest. Although it is an over-used word, Pentecost is the *fulfillment* of Pascha. ... Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead and glorified at the right hand of the Father in His ascension, so that He could send the Holy Spirit into the world. The Holy Spirit is the life of the Church, for the Spirit is the “Giver of life.” The descent of the Holy Spirit “on all flesh” is the completion of the Paschal mystery.” I encourage everyone to make the effort and keep the Feast as fully as possible with Great Vespers on Saturday evening at 5 PM (Or join me and many other area clergy and faithful at Holy Trinity in SF for the Feast of our Diocesan Cathedral). The Liturgy, of course, begins on Sunday morning, June 8 at 10 AM, and is followed immediately by the Vespers of Pentecost with those unique, magnificent and long Kneeling Prayers (during those prayers we kneel for the first time since Holy Week.—*Fr L*

It is our parish custom to go to Santa Rosa Memorial Cemetery on Memorial Day, May 26, at **Noon** to offer prayers for the repose of the souls of those who served in the Armed Forces. Look for the priest in the white cassock.