

**The weekly Saturday** (3:30 PM) Catechism for catechumens and inquirers (all are welcome) commences on February 7, in the Parish Hall. We begin our second semester and focus on the Holy Mysteries: Baptism, Chrismation, the Eucharist, Priesthood, Confession, Marriage and the last class, on Death and the Funeral. Each session builds on the previous class. In addition to these lectures, we have brief talks—20 min or so—by our parish catechists on Sundays when the Catechumens are asked to “Depart.”

**Next Saturday**, February 8, we have the joy of receiving twelve new catechumens at 9:40 AM before the Divine Liturgy.

**“He lives in us and in the Sacraments of the Church**, and leads us where we shall behold His glory. But this glory shall each man behold according to the measure of his love” (*St. Silouan the Athonite*). It is probably not a very good idea to be thinking about oneself all the time—especially constant *meditation* upon one’s failings. At the deepest level of our personal existence there is absolutely nothing we can do to heal ourselves of those failings. God can, and will, if He is sought, but moaning and groaning about our various soul sickness will only make it worse. Probably the greatest mistake we can make in this regard is to try and solve our problem *privately*—just between me and Jesus. Invariably, a person will fall into the pit of self-absorption. Somehow, somehow, it is absolutely necessary that we turn to others for help. The Church is a hospital, but a hospital does not cure anyone. It’s the doctors, the nurses, the aids, the janitors and administrators that, working together, do that. So also with the Church. All the pastoral care, teaching, counsel and support are also “sacramentals.” It is in the Church that we learn to love God and neighbor—through worship and building Christian relationships with our pastors and fellow parishioners. This is the Orthodox Way. We are not glorified alone. —*Fr. Philip McCaffery*

**The movie** *Where Are You, Adam* will be shown in the Parish Hall on Wednesday, 6:45 PM. One of the creators of the film, Deacon Alexander Plyska, will bring the movie to us, along with a large screen and a high quality projector. There’s no charge to see the film, but donations are gratefully accepted.

# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

## PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



### February 1, 2026

Sunday of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee  
Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple



• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone One:

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: “Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!”

• 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.

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- KONTAKION OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD, Tone One:  
By Thy Nativity Thou didst sanctify the Virgin's womb and didst bless Simeon's hands, O Christ God. Now Thou hast come and saved us through love. Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of Man!

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, Jan. 30: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions
- Saturday, Jan. 31: 9 AM, Parish Sisterhood Retreat in Calistoga  
11 AM, Baptism  
5 PM, Great Vespers with Litya / Confessions
- Sunday, Feb. 1: 8 AM, Divine Liturgy in the Protection Church  
9:30 AM, Chrismation of Amanda, Madilynn and Mathias Hewko from Fort Bragg  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy (*Feast moved from Feb. 2*)  
12:15 PM, Parish Annual Meeting
- Wed., Feb. 4: 5:30 PM, Akathist to Matushka Olga  
6 PM, Vespers  
6:45 PM, Movie: *Adam, Where Are You*, parish hall
- Thurs., Feb. 5: 5 PM, Welcome *Angels Unawares*  
7 PM, Bible Study online with Fr James
- Friday, Feb. 6: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions

**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 man-

uscript 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. Each year I mention the 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** 2/2/26–2/6/26 is fast free. [See this LINK](#) as to why we do not fast.

**The Saint Seraphim Men's Fellowship** will gather for a dinner on Thursday, Feb. 12 at 6 PM. Gentlemen, please remember that this is a potluck, so let each of us bring a dish to share.

**Forgiveness Sunday Vespers**—February 22 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 of which one might not be aware. I encourage you, in the *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