

time, maybe 70% with those we know, and 30% meeting our newer members, catechumens and inquirers? Or maybe it's 50%/50%. Whatever it might be, the strength of our parish fellowship will become stronger as we all make the effort to know one another, at least a little bit. It's only natural that as your priest, I enjoy spending a great deal of time with visitors, guests, inquirers, catechumens and the newer members. This is all wonderful, exciting and a joy for me. However, it is enormously helpful to me personally, and a gift of *agape* to others, when parish members reach out to our newer folks. —
Fr Lawrence

During Great Lent, it is the norm for each Orthodox Christian to confess at least once, and certainly again some time prior to Pascha. Confession is a restoration and renewal of the soul, the forgiveness of sins, and a preparation for receiving Holy Communion. Moreover, during Lent, Confession prepares a person for meeting the Lord's Pascha. Confession is a Holy Mystery, and an encounter with the Living God; it is self-knowledge, an incentive to please God, and a reminder that we, too, must be forgiving and merciful towards the faults of others. **PLEASE NOTE:** For those over the age of seven who will receive Holy Communion during Holy Week and Pascha, it is a holy obligation—please forgive the terminology, but it expresses the necessity—to make a confession at least once in the three weeks before Holy Week. But don't limit your spiritual life and confession to some legalistic time-table: confess when your conscience needs it. —*Fr Lawrence*

Looking ahead: Holy Trinity Cathedral in San Francisco will host the Annual Lenten Retreat on Saturday, March 21, 10 AM– 3:320 PM. This year the speaker will be Fr. Michael Nasser, who is the *Director of Spiritual Formation* at St. Vladimir's Seminary. The retreat is entitled *Redeeming the Time: Living a life of meaning*. [Register HERE](#).

Also on March 21 there is a 9 AM work party planned for the Home of Mercy, next door. See Peter Tennyson for more info.

St. Eugene's Summer Camp will be held June 21-27, 2026. Save the date, registration is coming soon. See [HERE](#) for more info.

ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



March 8, 2026

Second Sunday of Great Lent: St. Gregory Palamas



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Six:
The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hades, not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin granting life. O Lord who didst rise from the dead: Glory to Thee.
- TROPARION OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS, Tone Eight:
O light of Orthodoxy, pillar and teacher of the Church, glory of monks and invincible protection of theologians, O Gregory, thou wonderworker, boast of Thessalonika, and preacher of grace, ever pray that our souls be saved.
- KONTAKION OF ST GREGORY, Tone Eight:
With one accord, we praise thee as the sacred and divine vessel of wisdom and clear trumpet of theology, O our righteous [Father Gregory](#) of divine speech. As a mind that standeth now before the Original Mind, do thou ever guide aright and lead our mind to Him, that we all may cry: Rejoice, O herald of grace divine.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, March 6: 10:30 AM, Presanctified Liturgy
- Saturday, March 7: Noon, Sisterhood Meeting
3:30 PM, For Inquirers and Catechumens: *On the Sacrament of the Priesthood*
4:45 PM, Panikhida for Memorial Saturday
5 PM, Vigil / Confessions
- Sunday, March 8: 8 AM, Divine Liturgy, Protection Church
9 AM, Choir Rehearsal, *please be prompt*
10 AM, Divine Liturgy, Cathedral
11:30 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Meal
- Tues., March 10: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
- Wed., March 11: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
5 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified/Meal
- Thurs., March 12: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
6 PM, St. Seraphim Men's Fellowship Potluck
7 PM, Bible Study online with Fr James
- Friday, March 13: 10:30 AM, Presanctified Liturgy

We can honor to the skies all the saints in the world, we can put them on pedestals for our veneration, but if by doing that, we psychologically and spiritually distance them from us, and ourselves from them, they will not be able to give us what we need, they will not be of much help for us. If our attitude to St. Gregory Palamas [our saint this weekend] does not give us what we need—now during Lent—to know and understand, does not give us a vision or access to the Spirit that we need, merely honoring or remembering him will not do us much practical good. So why does the Holy Spirit as the Life of the Church present St. Gregory before us precisely now? ...in the person of St. Gregory, and for encouragement and hope in our ascetic efforts for Lent, we are led by Holy Tradition to focus on deifying grace. ... Grace, deifying grace, gives you everything—or rather, the one thing needful. And this is what St. Gregory came forth to defend. This is why it is so important for us to realize what the life of St. Gregory presents to us, what he gives us: the conviction, the certainty and the reality of direct and imme-

diately knowledge of God in this life, in the here and now, as a fundamental certainty and foretaste of eternal life in this life, capable of being experienced by you, by me, by everyone who is “born again,” born from above, rather, born of the Holy Spirit. ... The Holy Spirit is present in everything that exists, and present in us. We are living in an ocean of light, a corruscating, scintillating Ocean of Divine Light, and we are largely blind to it, we don't see it. We are living in it here and now. If God is everywhere present, and fills all things, we don't have any place to go to get to heaven, heaven is already present. It's already here. Because our spiritual senses are atrophied by the Fall, we are not seeing as we should this Ocean of God's light and life and love, and that blindness—which is not the Will of God for us—can make this life sometimes seem like a virtual hell. So to paraphrase St. Silouan, we must trust in God's uncreated deifying grace and His desire that all of us come to a saving knowledge of Him, and stand humbly before God in all the vicissitudes of this life, fearing not this illusion of hellish darkness and trusting in His presence as invisible, uncreated Light and warm all-embracing Love. —*Excerpts from a sermon given here by the late Monk Maximos (Rossi)*. [The entire sermon is available HERE](#).

Liturgical composure and piety may seem complicated to those who are new to the faith. Here are two points of the services to consider:

After the Eucharist is distributed to the faithful, the priest takes the Chalice back into the Altar, covers it with the small veil and then turns to the congregation and says “Blessed is our God, always now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.” The faithful are blessed at this moment—I suspect that many of our folks are not aware of this sacred moment and blessing, since what I see are many leaving the church (many have already), or have their backs turned to the altar as they are having their prosphora. How beautiful it is to offer our thanksgiving to God, as we are blessed with the Chalice. After receiving Holy Communion we await this blessing, and bow as it is given.

Wisdom, stand upright! A second word on liturgical etiquette: When the Deacon is censuring in the main part of the church—the Nave—we give him the space to cense the icons, and we stand up as well, in order to join with him as he offers honor to the icons and to you.

Dividing our time. Our Agape Meals are a time for fellowship, greeting one another and making new acquaintances. *A suggestion:* Let's all do our best to divide our time at our Agape Meals between reconnecting with dear friends and reaching out to those we have not yet met. Might I suggest that we give some of our