

*This life has been given to you for repentance.  
Do not waste it on other things. —St. Isaac the Syrian*

**Metropolitan Kallistos** wrote that, “The repentant person is the one who accepts the miracle that God does indeed have power to forgive sins. And, once we accept this miracle, for us the past is no longer an intolerable burden, for we no longer see the past as irreversible. Divine forgiveness breaks the chain of cause and effect, and unties the knots in our hearts which by ourselves we are not able to unloose.” Here one begins to detect a very different understanding of repentance and forgiveness than the more legalistic varieties common to the religious ideas of American religion. One’s past is not erased. It does not “disappear” or “not count.” Our lives are not meaningless, even in our experience of sin and death. The past is not abolished but it is “no longer an intolerable burden.” Rather, it has become “reversible” —the facts remain the same, but the meaning is changed. The “acceptance” of divine forgiveness is not the acceptance of a “verdict.” There is no need for that. Everything is as it is. This acceptance is existential, and transformative. It “breaks the chain of cause and effect” and one begins to see the same things, differently. It is like turning on a light in a dark room. This is the illumination of the soul and the beginning of a life of repentance. —*Fr. Philip McCaffery*

**On Tuesday, March 17**, the feast of St. Patrick of Ireland—a VERY Orthodox saint—clergy of Pacific Central Deanery Bay area+) will gather here for the Presanctified Liturgy followed by a lunch meeting. Of course, all are invited to the Presanctified, and help would be welcome at the lunch.

**The fifth week of Lent** will be quite full: On Monday evening March 23, we chant the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete in its entirety with the reading of the Life of St. Mary of Egypt. On Tuesday evening we serve the Festal Matins for Annunciation, on Wednesday evening at 5 PM we celebrate the Vespertal Liturgy for the Feast. On Friday, we chant the joyous Akathist to the Theotokos in the once a year Matins-Akathist service.

**Holy Trinity Cathedral** in San Francisco will hold the annual Lenten retreat on Saturday, March 21. [Register HERE](#).

**There will be a work party** to clean up the grounds around the Home of Mercy (next door) on Saturday, March 21, at 9 AM.

# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

## PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



### March 15, 2026

#### Veneration of the Precious Cross



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Seven:  
By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death; to the thief, Thou didst open Paradise. For the Myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy, and Thou didst command Thy Disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy..
- TROPARION OF THE CROSS, TONE ONE:  
O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation.
- KONTAKION OF THE CROSS, TONE SEVEN:  
The fiery sword no longer guards the gate of Eden, for in a strange and glorious way the wood of the Cross has quenched its flames. The sting of death and the victory of hades are now destroyed, for Thou art come, my Savior, crying unto those in hades: “Return again to Paradise.”

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, March 13: 10:30 AM, Liturgy of the Presanctified
- Sat., March 14: 3:30 PM, Catechism for Inquirers and Catechumens:  
*On Marriage*  
5 PM, Vigil for the Veneration of the Precious Cross
- Sunday, March 15: 8 AM, Divine Liturgy, Protection Church  
9 AM, Choir Rehearsal  
9 AM, Baptism of Nina and Joseph (twins)  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy, St. Seraphim  
11:30 AM, Church School  
Noon, Agape Meal
- Tues., March 17: 8 AM, Matins  
10:30 AM, Presanctified and Deanery Clergy lunch
- Wed., March 18: 8 AM, Matins  
5 PM, Confessions  
6 PM, Presanctified Liturgy/Meal
- Thurs., March 19: 8 AM, Matins  
7 PM, Online Bible Study
- Friday, March 20: 10:30 AM, Liturgy of the Presanctified

**Congratulations** to Miranda and Stefan on the joyful occasion of the baptism of their twin infants, Joseph and Nina on Sunday at 9 AM. Many Years.

**We also offer** our congratulations to Natalie and Gregory Severs on the birth of their son on Tuesday, March 10! Many Years.

**We are now at mid-Lent**, and the physical and spiritual effort, if it is serious and consistent, begins to be felt, and as Fr. Alexander writes in the book *Great Lent*, our fatigue is more evident (see below for more on that). As we enter the fourth week, the emphasis will shift from repentance and effort, to the events which took place for our sake and for our salvation. The days we have left are a gift, something to cherish. —*Fr Lawrence*

**On the Third Sunday** of Great and Holy Lent, the Orthodox Church commemorates the *Precious and Life-Giving Cross* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Services include a special veneration of the Cross, which prepares the faithful for the commemoration of the Crucifixion during Holy Week.

...[This feast] also reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we have “crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24). The precious and life-giving Cross is now placed before us to refresh our souls and encourage us who may be filled with a sense of bitterness, resentment, or depression. The Cross reminds us of the Passion of our Lord, and by presenting to us His example, it encourages us to follow Him in struggle and sacrifice, being refreshed, assured, and comforted. ...As they who walk on a long and hard way and are bowed down by fatigue find great relief and strengthening under the cool shade of a leafy tree, so do we find comfort, refreshment, and rejuvenation under the Life-giving Cross, which our Fathers “planted” on this Sunday. Thus, we are fortified and enabled to continue our Lenten journey with a light step, rested and encouraged. ...as the Holy Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is placed in the middle of the Fast, as the ancient tree of life was placed in the middle of the garden of Eden. By this, our Holy Fathers wished to remind us of Adam’s gluttony as well as the fact that through this Tree has condemnation been abolished. Therefore, if we bind ourselves to the Holy Cross, we shall never encounter death but shall inherit life eternal. ...At the Vigil of that day, after the Great Doxology, the Cross is brought in a solemn procession to the center of the church and remains there for the entire week—with a special rite of veneration following each service. —*borrowed*

**The Feast of the Annunciation** is celebrated on March 25th each year, nine months before Christmas. The Festal Matins will be celebrated on Tuesday, March 24th at 6 PM, and the Vespers Divine Liturgy on Wednesday at 5 PM, followed by a fish dinner in the parish hall, hosted by the Men’s Fellowship (please let Fr. Lawrence know if you intend to come to the dinner after the Liturgy). The Feast of Annunciation is “ranked” fourth in importance, after that of Pascha, Christmas and Theophany. It comes as a joyful gift to us in the middle of Lent, just when we need that infusion of sacred joy! If you are prepared to receive Holy Communion at the Vespers Liturgy on Wednesday (keep a fast from Noon at the latest), do come forward to receive, even if you arrive late because of work or traffic.

**Please pray** for the seven catechumens who will be baptized/christened at 9 AM on Lazarus Saturday, April 4: Nicholas Morgan, Nikki Singh, Eileen Waggoner, Samuel Still, Matthew Morrison (who has been quite ill), Forrest Condit and Krissy Abshire.