

The Saint Andrew Bugle

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4700 Canyon Crest Drive, Riverside, California 92507

Dear Parishioners, Precious to Christ and to me,

The Lord's blessing be upon each of you and a very Happy New Church Year! On September 1st we commemorated the beginning of another church year, and following the Divine Liturgy prayed that the Lord God would forgive us the sins of this past year and crown this coming year with spiritual progress and peace.

We begin NOW another "round" of the ecclesiastical calendar! We will commemorate our Lord Jesus' most wonderful and saving acts, and remember again how glorious He is, how much He has done for us, and what we mean to Him. While there are some new persons at St. Andrew for whom this liturgical year will be the first and filled with wonder, the rest of us will "re-evangelize" ourselves over the course of the year.

On September 1st we also commemorated the sacred life of St. Symeon the Stylite (A.D. 390-459). This Christ loving Syrian was the first of the great pillar saints, spending many decades perched in constant prayer upon a pillar that reached 58 feet in the air. He braved all weather and trials, and continued to stand in prayer even with gangrenous feet. He directed all men and women heavenward, bearing witness by his very way of life that the earth is not our home and that we are merely sojourners and pilgrims here. The fact that we remember St. Symeon on the first day of the ecclesiastical year calls us to spiritual striving. As our Savior says, "Strive to enter by the narrow gate" (St. Luke).

As I pen this pastoral letter, I remember it is September 2nd, the day we commemorate the repose of one of the great spiritual strivers of California and American Orthodoxy, Fr. Seraphim Rose, who lies at rest in Christ at St. Herman Monastery in Platina, CA, a monastery he founded.

And thus, we are given a double commemoration on Sept. 1st and 2nd of two great God-lovers, who call all of us by their examples to spiritual effort and striving after the Kingdom of God.

May this year find you and your loved ones more spiritually fit, with a greater yearning to see the face of Him Who loves you all with a love that cannot be measured.

God give you all Paradise.

Be assured of my love and prayers,

Fr Josiah



V. Rev. Josiah Trenham, Pastor

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For information and schedule of services, go to www.Saintandrew.net

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NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS

By Father Thomas Hopko

In addition to the celebration of the Annunciation, there are three major feasts in the Church honoring Mary, the Theotokos. The first of these is the feast of her nativity which is kept on **September 8**.

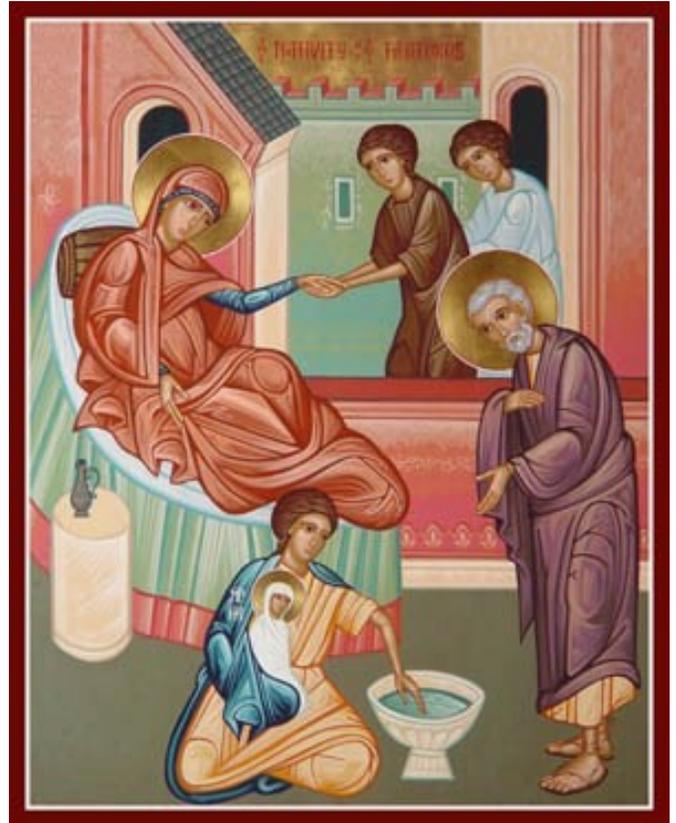
The record of the birth of Mary is not found in the Bible. The traditional account of the event is taken from the apocryphal writings which are not part of the New Testament scriptures. The traditional teaching which is celebrated in the hymns and verses of the festal liturgy is that Joachim and Anna were a pious Jewish couple who were among the small and faithful remnant-"the poor and the needy"-who were awaiting the promised messiah. The couple was old and childless. They prayed earnestly to the Lord for a child, since among the Jews barrenness was a sign of God's disfavor. In answer to their prayers, and as the reward of their unwavering fidelity to God, the elderly couple was blessed with the child who was destined, because of her own personal goodness and holiness, to become the Mother of the Messiah-Christ.

Your nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe. The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shone from you, O Theotokos. By annulling the curse he bestowed a blessing. By destroying death he has granted us eternal life.
(Troparion)

By your nativity, O most pure virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the Nourisher of our Life.
(Kontakion)

The fact that there is no Biblical verification of the facts of Mary's birth is incidental to the meaning of the feast. Even if the actual background of the event as celebrated in the Church is questionable from an historical point of view, the divine meaning of it "for us men and for our salvation" is obvious. There had to be one born of human flesh and blood who would be spiritually capable of being the Mother of Christ, and she herself had to be born into the world of persons who were spiritually capable of being her parents.

The feast of the **Nativity of the Theotokos**, therefore, is a glorification of Mary's birth, of Mary herself and of



her righteous parents. It is a celebration as well of the very first preparation of the salvation of the world. For the *Vessel of Light*, "the *Book of the Word of Life*," the *Door to the Orient*, "the *Throne of Wisdom*" is being prepared on earth by God himself in the birth of the holy girl-child Mary.

The verses of the feast are filled with titles for Mary such as those in the quotations above. They are inspired by the message of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. The specific Biblical readings of the feast give indications of this.

At the **Vespers** the three Old Testament readings are *thariological*" in their New Testamental interpretation. Thus, Jacob's Ladder which unites heaven and earth and the place which is named "the house of God" and the "gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:10-17) are taken, to indicate the union of God with men which is realized most fully and perfectly-both spiritually and physically-in Mary the Theotokos, Bearer of God. So also the vision of the temple with the "door 'to the East'" perpetually closed and filled with the "glory of the Lord" symbolizes Mary,

called in the hymns of the feast "the living temple of God filled with the divine Glory." (Ezekiel 43:27-44:4) Mary is also identified with the "house" which the Divine Wisdom has built for himself according to the reading from Proverbs 9:1-11.

The Gospel reading of Matins is the one read at all feasts of the Theotokos, the famous **Magnificat** from St. Luke in which Mary says: *My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.* (Luke 1:47)

The epistle reading of the **Divine Liturgy** is the famous passage about the coming of the Son of God in "the

form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man" (Philippians 2:5-11) and the gospel reading is that which is always read for feasts of the Theotokos- The woman in the crowd glorifies the Mother of Jesus, and the Lord himself responds that the same blessedness which his mother receives is for all "who hear the word of God and keep it." (Luke 11:27-28)

Thus, on the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, as on all liturgical celebrations of Christ's Mother, we proclaim and celebrate that through God's graciousness to mankind **every Christian** receives what the Theotokos receives, the "great mercy" which is given to human persons because of Christ's birth from the Virgin.

Metropolitan Ephrem (Kyriakos) on the Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy: The Sacrament of Thanksgiving

The most important prayer that we give to God is prayer of thanksgiving. The Divine Liturgy is the prayer of thanksgiving par excellence. Why? Because the best thing we can thank God for is His divine sacrifice on the cross for the salvation of our souls. "It is meet and right to praise Thee, to bless Thee and to worship Thee in every place of Thy dominion... Thou brought us out of nothing into being... For all of these things we give thanks to Thee... for all things of which we know and of which we know not, whether manifest or unseen..."

We do not give thanks to God only for money. We do not thank Him only for health. Health is not always useful and it does not always bring us closer to God. We also say in Liturgy, "We thank Thee for this divine sacrifice which Thou hast found worthy to accept at our hands..." The most important thing that happened in history was the divine sacrifice on the cross.

The divine liturgy is a wedding, wherein we are united to Christ by means of the Gospel and of partaking. It is a spiritual wedding where we pray that we may feel that we are poor before God. This is the most important grace that God gives us.

In Greek we call it the Eucharist, that is the giver of every grace.

The reason for coming to the liturgy is faith, thanksgiving, and giving praise and glory. We might not understand everything that is said and everything that happens at the liturgy. The encounter with the Lord

amidst the assembly of the faithful, this is what is most important. There we share in the Lord's table.

We do not remain isolated in our homes. In Greek we also call partaking "koinonia", which means "society" or "communion". There is no private liturgy for a particular family. We are always together.

When someone says that "the liturgy is private", this does not mean anything in the Church's understanding. The sacrament of baptism, the sacrament of marriage, all the sacraments were performed with the community at the divine liturgy, as was priestly ordination. The priest does not perform the divine sacrifice alone. The priest stands as a representative in the presence of God, bearing with him the community and the world because the liturgy is the lifting up of the entire universe. Here is the entrance into the eternal kingdom of the Trinity.

"Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages, amen..." This is how we would like our days to be, filled with God's presence. The believer is always reaching upwards, from earth to heaven, from bodily things to spiritual things. This is his ongoing struggle. It is the constant motion as long as we are in the body, estranged from God, until God reigns over our hearts in the kingdom of His love. When the believers taste the Gospel and the body of the Lord, they place themselves between the first coming and the second coming.

In sum, beloved, let all come to the divine liturgy and taste how good the Lord is!

ST. ANDREW COMMUNITY NEWS...

Moved away, we will miss you....

BreeAnna Krammes moved up to Northern California to pursue a master's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders at CSU Chico. It is a two-year program after which she will be qualified to work in a school or hospital as a Speech and Language Pathologist.

Vincent Stoyas has moved to Walla Walla, Washington to work with Fr. Luke Hartung in his Uncut Mountain Supply Icon business. Vincent will be back later this month for his wedding to Megan Green on September 21, after which she too will be moving to Walla Walla



BreeAnna Krammes and Vincent Stoyas receiving a blessing from Fr. Josiah on August 17 before leaving for their respective destinations.

St. Andrew Blood Drive...

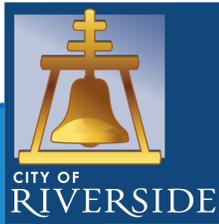
Many thanks to everyone who supported the blood drive last month (August 24). Thirty one donors were registered and 24 units of blood were collected which will assist as many as 72 patients according to a thank you letter received from LifeStream.



Top left: donors preparing to give blood by drinking water (or coffee in Father's case),.

Left: next step, waiting inside the blood drive truck.

Right: final step, blood is drawn.



2014 RIVERSIDE GREEK FEST

OCTOBER 3, 4, 5

Fri 3 3pm-10pm • Sat 4 11am-10pm • Sun 5 noon-10pm



Calling Everyone to Work

Please signup as soon as possible

Baking

The bakers have been phenomenal, but sometimes we need more workers than have been able to come. If **you** come on the scheduled days we can finish. See below for the remaining work schedule.

Sept 6 and Sept 13, Saturday- St. Luke at Garden Grove – SUPER IMPORTANT! Okay..., all of these things are important but this really is. St. Luke is lending us their 4 oven kitchen on these two Saturdays. If enough people (*aged Teens through 100 years, men, women, the firm and infirm...*) come we can bake all 4,000 needed cookies over the course of two days! There is something for everyone to do. We will meet at the church and carpool. Get here by 8am. Bring a sack lunch. Let's make it a party!

Sept 7, Sunday – Cookies – Ramping up towards 4,000!

Sept 12, Friday-Baklava 10:00 – Making our way to the end.

Sept 13, Saturday - St. Luke at Garden Grove-cookies – see above.

Sept 14, Sunday – Cookies – Scheduled just in case we need the day to reach 4,000.

Sept 19, Friday – Baklava – Last day to bake – **Wow are you needed on this day!!! Gotta finish.**

Contact the leads and let them know when you will be helping: Irene Bannowsky – Spanakopita at iefb@att.net; Shelley Shea – Tiropeta and cookies at KSKJShea@hotmail.com; Sophia Griffin – Baklava at Griobhtha@yahoo.com.

Setup – Booths – Kitchen – Runners – Tear Down

Please come to the Greek Fest Information and Signup table in the Fellowship Hall after Liturgy and signup to help at the Greek Fest. Important days where you are **NEEDED** include:

Setup – Oct. 1, 2 & 3

Greek Fest – Oct. 4, 5 & 6

Tear Down and Cleanup – Oct. 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11

The Greek Fest is a fun place. We will get to know people that we see only at worship. Our sense of family will grow. We will be serving our God by helping each other and sharing His church with our community. People will discover God's Church by being exposed to our temple, loving service and Culture and Art Exhibit. What a wonderful opportunity.

Marriage: The Great Sacrament

A Sermon delivered in the Church of St. Nicholas, Trikala, Greece, 17 January, 1971

By Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonopetra, Mount Athos

Nobody would dispute that the most important day in a person's life, after his birth and baptism, is that of his marriage. It is no surprise, then, that the aim of contemporary worldly and institutional upheavals is precisely to crush the most honorable and sacred mystery of marriage. For many people, marriage is an opportunity for pleasures "I amusements. Life, however, is a serious affair. It is a spiritual struggle, a progression toward a goal—heaven. The most crucial juncture, and the most important means, of this progression is marriage. It is not permissible for anyone to avoid the bonds of marriage, whether he concludes a mystical marriage by devoting himself to God, or whether he concludes a sacramental one with a spouse.

Today we will concern ourselves primarily with sacramental marriage. We will consider how marriage can contribute to our spiritual life, in order to continue the theme of previous talk [1]. We know that marriage is an institution established by God. It is "honorable" (Heb 13.4). It is a "great mystery" (Eph 5.32). An unmarried person passes through life and leaves it; but a married person lives and experiences life to the full.

One wonders what people today think about the sacred institution of marriage, this "great mystery", blessed by our Church. They marry, and it's as if two checking accounts or two business interests were being merged. Two people are united without ideals, two zeros, you could say. Because people without ideals, without quests, are nothing more than zeros. "I married in order to live my life", you hear people say, "and not to be shut inside four walls". "I married to enjoy my life", they say, and then they hand over their children—if they have children—to some strange woman so they can run off to the theater, the movies, or to some other worldly gathering. And so their houses become hotels to which they return in the evening, or, rather, after midnight, after they've had their fun and need to rest. Such people are empty inside, and so in their homes they feel a real void. They find no gratification there, and thus they rush and slide from here to there, in order to find their happiness.

They marry without knowledge, without a sense of responsibility, or simply because they wish to get married, or because they think they must in order to be good members of society. But what is the result? We see it every day. The shipwrecks of marriage are familiar to all of us. A worldly marriage, as it is understood today, can only have one characteristic—the murder of a person's spiritual life. Thus we must feel that, if we fail in our marriage, we have more or less failed in our spiritual life. If we succeed in our mar-

riage, we have also succeeded in our spiritual life. Success or failure, progress or ruin, in our spiritual life, begins with our marriage. Because this is such a serious matter, let us consider some of the conditions necessary for a happy, truly Christian marriage.

In order to have a successful marriage, one must have the appropriate upbringing from an early age. Just as a child must study, just as he learns to think, and take an interest in his parents or his health, so too must he be prepared in order to be able to have a successful marriage. But in the age in which we live, no one is interested in preparing their children for this great mystery, a mystery which will play the foremost role in their lives. Parents are not interested, except in the dowry, or in other such financial matters, in which they are deeply interested.

The child, from an early age, must learn to love, to give, to suffer deprivation, to obey. He must learn to feel that the purity of his soul and body is a valuable treasure to be cherished as the apple of his eye. The character of the child must be shaped properly, so that he becomes an honest, brave, decisive, sincere, cheerful person, and not a half, self-pitying creature, who constantly bemoans his fate, a weak-willed thing without any power of thought or strength. From an early age, the child should learn to take an interest in a particular subject or occupation, so that tomorrow he will be in a position to support his family, or, in the case of a girl, also to help, if this is necessary. A woman must learn to be a housewife, even if she has an education. She should learn to cook, to sew, to embroider. But, my good Father, you may say, this is all self-evident. Ask married couples, however, and you'll see how many women who are about to marry know nothing about running a household.

Once we reach a certain age, moreover, the choice of one's life partner is a matter which should not be put off. Neither should one be in a hurry, because, as the saying goes, "quick to marry, quick to despair". But one should not delay, because delay is a mortal danger to the soul. As a rule, the normal rhythm of the spiritual life begins with marriage. An unmarried person is like someone trying to live permanently in a hallway: he doesn't seem to know what the rooms are for. Parents should take an interest in the child's social life, but also in his prayer life, so that the blessed hour will come as a gift sent by God.

Naturally, when he comes to choose a partner, he will take to account his parents' opinion. How often have parents felt knives piercing their hearts when their children don't ask them about the person who will be their companion in life?

A mother's heart is sensitive, and can't endure such a blow. The child should discuss matters with his parents, because they have a special intuition enabling them to be aware of the things which concern them. But this doesn't mean that the father and mother should pressure the child. Ultimately he should be free to make his own decision. If you pressure your child to marry, he will consider you responsible if things don't go well. Nothing good comes from pressure. You must help him, but you must also allow him to choose the person he prefers or loves—but not someone he pities or feels sorry for. If your child, after getting to know someone, tells you, "I feel sorry for the poor soul, I'll marry him", then you know that you're on the threshold of a failed marriage. Only a person whom he or she prefers or loves can stand by the side of your child. Both the man and the woman should be attracted to each other, and they should truly want to live together, in an inward way, unhurriedly. On this matter, however, it is not possible to pressure our children. Sometimes, out of our love, we feel that they are our possessions, that they are our property, and that we can do what we want with them. And thus our child becomes a creature incapable of living life either married or unmarried.

Of course, the process of getting acquainted, which is such a delicate issue—but of which we are often heedless—should take place before marriage. We should never be complacent about getting to know each other, especially if we're not sure of our feelings. Love shouldn't blind us. It should open our eyes, to see the other person as he is, with his faults. "Better to take a shoe from your own house, even if it's cobbled", says the folk proverb. That is, it's better to take someone you've gotten to know. And acquaintance-ship must always be linked with engagement, which is an equally difficult matter.

When I suggested to a young woman that she should think seriously about whether she should continue her engagement she replied: "If I break it off, my mother will kill me". But what sort of engagement is it, if there's no possibility off? To get engaged doesn't mean that I'll necessarily get married. It means that I'm testing to see whether I should marry the person I'm engaged to. If a woman isn't in a position to break off her engagement, she shouldn't get engaged, or, rather, she shouldn't go ahead with the marriage. During the engagement, we must be especially careful. If we are, we will have fewer problems and fewer disappointments after the wedding. Someone once said that, during the period of getting to know me another, you should hold on to your heart firmly with both hands, as if it were a wild animal. You know how dangerous the heart is: instead of leading you to marriage, it can lead you into sin. There is the possibility that the person you've chosen sees you as a mere toy, or a toothbrush to be tried out. Afterwards you'll be depressed and shed many tears. But then t will be too

late, because your angel will have turned out to be made of clay.

Don't choose a person who wastes his time at clubs, having good time, and throwing away his money on traveling and luxuries. Neither should you choose someone who, as you'll find out, conceals his self-centeredness beneath words of love. Don't choose a woman as your wife who is like gun powder, so that as soon as you say something to her, she bursts to flames. She's no good as a wife.

Moreover, if you want to have a truly successful marriage, don't approach that young woman or man who is unable to leave his or her parents. The commandment of Christ is clear: man leaves his father and mother, and is united to his wife" (Mk 10.7). But when you see the other person tied to his mother or father, when you see that he obeys them with his mouth hanging open, and is prepared to do whatever they tell him, keep well away. He is emotionally sick, a psychologically immature person, and you won't be able to create a family with him. The man you will make your husband should be spirited. But how can he be spirited when he hasn't realized, hasn't understood, hasn't digested the fact that his parents' house is simply a flower-pot in which he was put, to be taken out later, and transplanted somewhere else?

Also, when you're going to choose a husband, make sure that he's not an uncommunicative type—in which case he'll have no friends. And if today he has no friends, tomorrow he'll find it difficult to have you as a friend and partner. Be on your guard against grumblers, moaners, and gloomy people who are like dejected birds. Be on your guard against those who complain all the time: "You don't love me, you don't understand me", and all that sort of thing. Something about these creatures of God isn't right. Also be on your guard against religious fanatics and the overly pious. Those, that is, who get upset over trivial things, who are critical of everything and hypersensitive. How are you going to live with such a person? It will be like sitting on thorns. Also look out for those who regard marriage as something bad, as a form of imprisonment. Those who say: But I've never in my whole life thought about getting married.

Watch out for certain pseudo-Christians, who see marriage as something sordid, as a sin, who immediately cast their eyes down when they hear anything said about it [2]. If you marry someone like this, he will be a thorn in your flesh, and a burden for his monastery if he becomes a monk. Watch out for those who think that they're perfect, and find no defect in themselves, while constantly finding faults in others. Watch out for those who think they've been chosen by God to correct everyone else.

To be continued next month



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