



Quarterly Bulletin of Saint John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Church

Diocese of the West - Orthodox Church in America

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His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West

Paschal Epistle

To the Reverend Clergy, Monastics and Faithful of the Diocese of the West:

“Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You...” (John 16:32-17:1)

Dearly Beloved: Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

These words of our Lord were spoken to His disciples at the end of a long discourse preparing them for the coming events of His Trial, Death and Resurrection. He then begins the High Priestly Prayer that points to His glorification. We hear His words at the end of a very long first Passion Gospel on Holy Thursday evening. As we gather throughout Holy Week and then

Pascha itself, we need to be girded up the way our Lord knew His disciples needed to be girded up. Our world is full of suffering and tribulation. We deal with weakness of faith, laziness, sickness, poverty, passions, disappointments, and temptations. Our Lenten efforts have barely moved the needle of repentance in our lives. And now we grieve as we watch Orthodox brothers and sisters killing each other as pawns in some geopolitical game. Tribulations indeed. But our Lord strengthens His disciples (and us) in the midst of these tribulations, and prepares all of us for the coming Victory with two truths: first, we are comforted in the reality that our Lord has overcome the world, despite there always being tribulations. How? By the inauguration of His Kingdom, here and now, in the life of the Church. We flee to the consolation and loving embrace of the Church as a refuge from the harsh sufferings outside the doors of our parishes. All these things the Lord spoke so “that in Me you may have peace.” The peace which surpasses all understanding is the gift of Christ’s Resurrection experienced in the life of the Church. No tribulation can overwhelm this gift.

Secondly, Jesus lifted up His eyes to His Father and announced that the hour had come. For what? For His glorification. The Son is glorified by freely giving Himself over to humiliation, spittings, scourging, and finally death hanging broken and bloody on the Cross. The fulfillment and completion of His glorification is in the empty tomb. The Lord promised us that He has overcome the world. But that promise did not say that we did not have to still live in the world, still deal with this world, and still encounter and overcome the tribulations in this world. Our glory must be the same glory as His — faithfully walking through the trials and tribulations of all that the world throws at us, keeping our eyes on Him and not the storms swirling around us.

It seems antithetical to believe that the tribulation is overcome and the glorification is fulfilled in all the sufferings that surround the Lord during His Passion. But it is only antithetical if we look with the eyes of the world instead of the eyes of faith. The eyes of the world see a bloody defeat. The eyes of faith see the ultimate Victory in a faithful endurance and obedience even unto death. Each of us has our own Golgotha to endure in faith and hope. But when we do, we receive the same gift — a passover from death to life.

Brothers and Sisters, be of good cheer, for the Lord Jesus Christ has overcome the world. Be of good cheer, for the hour has come for Him to be glorified. We live in Him and walk with Him so that we, too, might be glorified. May the joy, peace, and light of the Resurrection fill each of your hearts and souls!

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Yours in the risen Christ,

†Benjamin

Archbishop of San Francisco

Namesdays, Birthdays, and Anniversaries

May 6- Namesday of George Shkurkin and Alexandra Dunsky

May 13- Namesday of Santiago Drexler

May 14- Namesday of Tamara Mikhailovsky

May 15- Namesday of Boris Gerlovin

June 3- Namesday of Konstantin Timokhin and Helen Pouschine

July 13- Birthday of Santiago Drexler

July 17- Namesday of Anastasia Klimko

July 24- Namesday of Olga Hughes and Olga Tinina

If you would like your namesday, birthday, and/or anniversary included in the future, please contact Fr. Edward at revedwardhenderson@gmail.com.

Saint Eugene's Orthodox Summer Camp

June 26-July 2

located at:

Archbishop Varche Hovsepian Camp

45000 Kings Canyon Road

Dunlap, CA 93621

www.steugenecamp.org

For several decades, Orthodox youth (ages 7-17) have come together for a week to play and pray at our diocesan summer camp. Offering all the activities of a summer camp, in addition, attendees have the opportunity to meet other Orthodox kids, be encouraged in their faith in a solid Christian environment, and grow spiritually. Moreover, our parish has offered to sponsor two youths, covering the entire camp tuition (please contact Fr. Edward for sponsorship).

For more information, contact the Camp Director, Fr. Andrew Smith at director@steugenecamp.org

Special Announcement

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the repose of our beloved rector, Archpriest Nikolajs Vieglajs, who served our parish for over forty years! Please join us on Saturday, May 28 at 11:00am at the parish for a Memorial Service followed by a luncheon in the parish hall.

Schedule of Services

Sundays: Divine Liturgy at 10:00am

Saturdays: Vigil *or* Great Vespers at 5:00pm

May, June, July services

Wednesday, June 1	Leave-taking of Pascha	Vigil	7:00pm
Thursday, June 2	Ascension	Liturgy	7:00am
Monday, June 13	Day of the Holy Spirit	Liturgy	7:00am
Monday, July 11		Vespers	7:00pm
Tuesday, July 12	Saints Peter and Paul	Liturgy	7:00am

More detailed service schedules are available on the parish website and at the candle desk.

Upcoming Events

June 20-July 12: Apostles' Fast

July 18-22: All-American Council, Baltimore, MD

“By His Incarnation, voluntary suffering, and death upon the Cross, the Son of God, our Savior, returned Paradise lost to us, and by His Most Glorious Resurrection, the Savior made Paradise accessible to all. The doors of Paradise now open not from the inside, but from the outside, and every man has received a key he can and should use to open Paradise. The key that opens the gates of holy Paradise is repentance. By repentance, the Wise Thief opened the doors of Paradise for himself and heard the joyous words of Christ the Savior: *Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise* (Lk. 23:43).”

- His Beatitude, Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All-Ukraine

