

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church

January 19 2025

30th Sunday after Pentecost

Ven. Macarius the Great of Egypt (390-391)

Activities and Events this Week

- Wednesday Jan 22 Adult Education 6:00pm
 Spring Session Week #3

- Saturday Jan 25 Choir Rehearsal 10:30am
 Great Vespers Cancelled
 Walk for Life – San Francisco
 (all day event) Divine Liturgy @ Cathedral 8:30am
 (Small group of us will participate)

Announcements

Thriving Parish Project

Sunday February 2nd – we will meet to discuss options based on our research as to possible interfacing with an outside charity and how we might get involved at a very modest level at first.

Parish Survey – Will be coming soon – we will need everyone who receives the link to please fill it out!

39th Annual Mission Assembly “Charting a New Course”

Will be held on Sunday January 19th following the fellowship. We will be electing a representative to the 21st All-American Council in Phoenix, AZ July 14-18 as well as three financial auditors, two for a two year term and one for a one year term as so each year we will be electing one or two new auditors (more details later- but feel free to inquire). We will also install a new parish council member to replace our brother in Christ, David Aubertin.

The Road We Travel

As I think about the spiritual life, I sometimes liken it to a road that we are walking down. The road has many good things as well as many temptations. I would like to offer this reflection in light of our 39th annual assembly.

Some of the great things about walking down the road are the many feast days and fasting periods we have along the way. The feasts and fasts give us little glimpses into the kingdom of heaven – if even just for a moment. The feast days allow us to participate directly with Christ in his life. Fasting offers us purification and self-reflection which is necessary in order fully experience the mystery of Christ's life, thus we always have a fasting period before Pascha, the Nativity of Christ, the Dormition of the Mother of God, and prior to the feast of S.S. Peter and Paul. All designed to prepare us to enter into a mystery.

Also along the road are many temptations as well. The devil knows us very well and he is desirous of us not living in the mystery of Christ – but in our own mess of the passions that we so greatly crave. To that end he never eats, sleeps or rest. Our adversary always prowls like a hungry lion. Always searching for an opportunity to exploit our weakness be it pride, arrogance, narcissism (may not be healed in this world), lust, fornication, adultery, gluttony (the prince of passions), greed, jealousy, hostile intentions, stupidly, unbelief, lack of forgiveness, and the list goes on. There are times we feel like we cannot escape these passions and we can feel trapped.

We are not trapped! Any mess we make, God can make right. The path to making something right is that road I mentioned – it must be traversed with great care and holiness. As we walk the road we must be able to walk quietly and at the same time learn to run away from things that can harm us. At any point on the road we have a respite – and that is our Church. Because it is impossible to walk that path without the Church. This is why God gave it to us all along the road.

Another nice feature of the road is that God constantly calls us and directs us to stay on the road, where it is safe – that is if we want to listen. God calls us like he called Lazarus from the tomb after being four days dead. The road is an image of our life, full of great events and very difficult times.

As with all journeys, we must be well equipped. We must bring along humility, repentance, patience and holiness. We can get all of these supplies from the Church. This is what we are building up today, defending and strengthening. We are not doing this just for ourselves but also for those who wish to walk the journey of life in God's grace verses in perdition. The road is not very long, we need to be well-equipped and travel in the knowledge that we have a guide who cares so very much for us. He gives us the Sacraments – they Mysteries – so we may be blessed and strengthened along the way.