

# December 2018

## Church of St. Joseph of Arimathea

stjoseph.ws ♦ Phone: 905-626-6616

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2/19 8AM Matins & Liturgy	3/20 ● 7:30PM Vigil & Liturgy	4/21 ● Entry of Theotokos into the Temple	5/22	6/23	7/24 7PM Vespers & Lity	8/25 Great Martyr Katherine 6PM Vespers
9/26 8AM Matins & Liturgy <i>1<sup>st</sup> Tsourekia order deadline. For Dec 16 pickup.</i>	10/27	11/28	12/29	13/30	14/1	15/2 6PM Vespers
16/3 8AM Matins & Liturgy 7PM Vespers	17/4 Great Martyr Barbara	18/5 7:30PM Vigil & Liturgy	19/6 St. Nicholas the Wonderworker	20/7	21/8	22/9 6PM Vespers
23/10 8AM Matins & Liturgy <i>2nd Tsourekia order deadline for Nativity. Pickup Dec 30.</i>	24/11 7PM Vespers	25/12 St. Spyridon. St. Herman of Alaska	26/13	27/14	28/15	29/16 6PM Vespers
30/17 8AM Matins & Liturgy <i>Last day for confession with Fr. Sergius before Nativity</i>	31/18	Jan 1/19	2/20 7PM Holy Unction	3/21	4/22 9AM Great Hours	5/23 6PM Vespers

Date format above is Civil /Liturgical.

- We will not bless cakes or kolyva on feast days of the Master or Theotokos. ●

## At the start of the Nativity Fast -- Pearls on Preparation

Brethren! prepare yourselves for union with God. Give up earthly vanity. Apply yourselves to the great work of self-purification and self-improvement. Love to progress in faith and virtue, and not to progress in the things of this world. St. John of Kronstadt

Eternity is more important than our brief existence on earth, and it is precisely for it that we must prepare ourselves. Abp. Averky

Prepare yourselves while you have intercessors to pray to God for your salvation, that He may pour into your hearts that fire which Jesus came to send upon the earth (Luke 12:49), that you may be able to exercise your heart and senses, to know how to discern the good from the bad, the right from the left, reality from unreality. Jesus knew that the devil derives his power from the material things of the world, and He called His disciples and said to them, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth', and 'Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow will take thought for itself.' (Matt. 6:19. 34.) Truly, my beloved, you know that when there is a fair wind, the captain of the ship boasts; but it is in the time of violent adverse winds that every skilled captain is revealed. Know now of what kind is this time to which we have come. St. Anthony the Great "Letters"

The task of man's earthly life is preparing himself for eternal salvation and beatitude. To attain this, a man must live in a holy and pure manner - that is, according to God's will. St. Philaret of New York "On The Law of God"

This life is neither a joke nor a plaything, although men may turn it into either. They fritter away the time given to us to prepare for eternity, disporting themselves with empty words. They go about visiting, sitting and gossiping, playing this or that game. They get together in the theatres and amuse themselves there. Life is, for them, amusement. But woe to those who do nothing but amuse themselves! St. John of Kronstadt.

Everything must be directed towards acquiring the Kingdom of God and fulfilling Christ's Gospel. True Christianity does not consist in intellectual abstract deliberations and teachings; rather, it is incarnate in life itself. Christ descended to earth not to instruct people in new forms of knowledge, but to call them to a new life. During our earthly life we prepare ourselves for eternity. The various circumstances and events of temporal life act to influence a man's spiritual life. Those with strong characters are able to surmount the influence of their surroundings, while the weak give in to it. The strong in spirit are tempered by persecutions, while the weak fall. It is therefore necessary, insofar as possible, to create conditions in which as many people as possible can be spiritually formed. St. John Maximovitch

Grace comes immediately to meet some of those who strive, giving them assurance of the earnest of their inheritance, (Eph. 1:14), letting them taste the promised prizes, as if stretching out a loving hand to welcome them and anointing them for further struggles. With others, however, grace waits for the end of the struggle, and prepares for them the crown of patience as well. As one of the God-bearing Fathers says, "some receive holy rewards before their labors, some during their labors, and some when they depart." St. Gregory Palamas

Those who desire to be saved do not pay attention to the faults of their neighbor, but always to their own and thus progress. Such was the man who saw his brother sinning and groaned, saying, "Alas, he sinned today, for sure it will be me tomorrow. Do you see with what certainty he sought his salvation? Do you see how he was preparing his soul?" He immediately managed to avoid judging his brother, since when he said, "for sure it will be me tomorrow" he aroused his fear of sinning and made himself careful to avoid those sins which he was likely to commit. Abba Dorotheos

Why do we not voluntarily abandon what must be destroyed when this life comes to an end, so that we might gain the kingdom of Heaven? Let Christians care for nothing that they cannot take away with them. We ought rather to seek after that which will lead us to Heaven; namely wisdom, chastity, justice, virtue, an ever watchful mind, care for the poor, firm faith in Christ, a mind that can control anger, hospitality. Striving after these things, we shall prepare for ourselves a dwelling in the land of the peaceful, as it says in the Gospel. Abba Anthony. Athanasius, Life of St. Anthony,

Do not grow despondent and enfeebled in spirit, seeing the constant struggle within you of evil against good, but like a good and valiant soldier of Jesus Christ, our great Founder, struggle courageously against evil, looking at the crown, prepared by the Lord for all who conquer evil in this world and in their flesh. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne" (Rev. 3:21)." St. John of Kronstadt

What is meant by 'prepare ye the way of the Lord' is further expounded by the Prophet Isaiah in these words: 'Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low' (Is. 40:4). This means: all that you think to be lowly and feeble shall be raised up on high, and all that you think to be high and mighty shall be brought low. Or, in other words: you thought of God as a low valley, although He is the greatest height: and you thought of the material world as the greatest height, while it is lowly, a footstool to God's feet. Sin has turned the whole world upside-down. Cast sin away, and the world will once more stand the right way up. So, repent and confess your sins, and the baptized with the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. St. Nikolai Velimirovic

Whenever you wish to make a beginning in some good work, first prepare yourself for the temptations that will come. St. Isaac

Let us put away from us our spiritual short-sightedness, and let us cease concentrating all our attention upon temporal, earthly things; let us foresee with our mental vision the future, everlasting life, and rise in our hearts to our heavenly country. Indeed, it is incredible short-sightedness for the immortal soul only to look upon the present, visible things, generally relating to the senses, and flattering our carnal nature, and not contemplate the life of the world to come - the blessings which 'eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man,' but which the Most Merciful and Most Wise 'God has prepared for those who love Him' (I Cor. 2:9). Of what do we not deprive ourselves through this voluntary short-sightedness?! St. John of Kronstadt

May the Lord Jesus, Who said: 'Ask, and ye shall receive' (John 16:24), grant all your requests. Only prepare your house, and sweep it thoroughly to receive the Divine gifts. They remain secure only in a house swept clean, and exude their sweet scent only where there is no impurity. St. Barsanuphius and St. John