

**HOLY TRINITY
SERBIAN
ORTHODOX
CHURCH**

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**Stewardship Committee
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**Church Hall Manager—
Zoran Kurtuma**

The News of the Holy Trinity is sent out monthly. Please contact Father Ljubomir or the Church office with any suggestions for future articles. All ideas are certainly welcome

Пут Крста - Вести Цркве Свете Тројице

The Way of the Cross— Holy Trinity News

www.serbianchurchstlouis.org

M A Y 2 0 1 7

Ministry of Church Singers

There are few ministries of the Church that require the devotion and the dedication that church singing does. You who lead the singing as well as you who follow the leader are precious gifts to your parishes. You are as important to the parish as is the holy table itself. As there can be no liturgy without the holy table, there can be no liturgy without you. This is not to compliment you or increase your pride, but rather to put a little fear and awe in you, so you know what your responsibilities are.

Church singing is not a hobby. Being a choir director is not something one does for personal fulfillment. It is first and foremost a duty, a duty of those to whom God has given musical talents. It is sinful, in my opinion, for someone not to sing who has been given the gift to sing. Sinful! You join the angels, and do that which the angels do perpetually. That's not an interest, avocation, or a hobby; it is a duty. Angels were created to serve and to praise, and you have been given voices for that same purpose.

I love to remind our church singers of the fact that we physically jump into something that goes on perpetually. We jump in and join with the angels for a couple of hours, and then we jump back out. The liturgy does not begin with "Blessed is the Kingdom" and your "Amen," and it doesn't end with "Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers" and your "Amen." Those phrases only define the time that we participate in the liturgy which goes on perpetually before the throne of God.

We've been told that singers should listen to each other for a good blend. The tenors should listen to each other, and then the tenors should listen to the sopranos. The sopranos ought to listen to the altos, etc., etc. That's fine for the street. For the church singer it is not the tenor, alto, or soprano who stands next to you we need to listen to, but the angels who lead us in our singing. Those are the voices we need to hear and with which we blend our voices. What can sound beautiful to us can sound like cacophony at the throne of God, if we are not singing with the angels.

St. John Chrysostom tells us that while the priesthood is something that takes place here on earth, and is an ordinance established here on earth, yet it is something that is super-heaven, because the priest and the deacon do that which angels dare not do. The angels stand in awe, not at the priest or bishop or deacon, but at what they've been permitted to do by God's grace. *Continued on p. 2*

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If John Chrysostom wrote a book on choirs, as he did on the priesthood, I'm sure he would say that while being a choir member, cantor, or reader is something earthly, it is also something heavenly. That the angels stand there, perhaps not in awe, but at least with a little bit of jealousy, because you who are flesh and blood have been called upon to serve in the same ministry that they have been created for.

It's a holiness. It's not your ministry. It's a ministry that belongs to the Church, and you respond to the call as well as recognize the gift which you specifically fulfill in the church was, traditionally, and in some sense still is, an ordained ministry. The choir was not some club that existed in Church for those with some particular musical talent. To be a church singer was an ordained office within the Church. Canon 15, from the Council of Nicea, the Council of the 4th century, makes its point clear that only canonical singers should be appointed for that kind of ministry in the Church. That means "one set apart" for that particular ministry. Today we might call them Readers. While I'm not saying that every choir member must be a tonsured Reader, I do say that if we fulfill at least the spirit, if not the law of the Canon, that each choir member ought to see his/her participation in the choir as seriously as the ordained clergy take their ministry. I don't know any priest who thinks that he can say on some Sunday, "I don't want to serve because I want to sit with my wife," or, "I don't feel like serving today," or, "I'm angry, one of the altar boys offended me, so I don't want to serve this morning."

As seriously as the ordained clergy need to take their ordination, so you ought to as church singers. Canonically, they are an order of the Church, to begin with. I'm not proposing that we fulfill the letter of the law by having you all ordained, but I think we ought to at least incarnate the spirit of the law, which implies a great responsibility, a great sense of duty and a privilege that is given to him or her as a church singer. This, then, should create in all of us, whether or not we are ordained clergy, a real sense of humility. We should give thanks that God has been pleased to call us who were created from the dust of this earth to participate in the heavenly liturgy and to offer up praises with His angels to join the perpetual hymn of "Holy, holy, holy."

We jump in and we jump out. Some of us jump in on time and some of us jump in a little bit late. In my opinion, being in church for that first "Amen" is a sign, an indication of one's humility. And where humility is, indeed, a virtue, its opposite is a sin. The sin is not disturbing other people. The other people in the church are not the object of our worship. It is rude, but not necessarily sinful, to disturb other people. But it is sinful to be presumptuous and prideful that one can jump in and sing with thousands of archangels and ten-thousands of angels at one's own whim. "This Sunday I feel like singing, and next Sunday I won't sing. I want to sit with my wife." Leave that Hallmark—card kind of sentimentality for restaurants, concerts, and cinemas. You sing with angels, that's secondary to sitting with any husband or wife or children. We stand before the throne of God, and when we realize that, every other consideration, all of our own personal likes and dislikes, become secondary. I'm giving my opinion now, and hopefully it humbles all of us. It's a humiliation, that in its end, should be something that elevates us, that exalts us, something that gives us wing.

Now, I would like to share with you some of the writings of the Fathers of the Church, and some homilies on the canons about chanting in Church.

The choir leads the congregation in prayer. The invitation to prayer is put out by the deacon or archdeacon. The deacon invites prayer, but the choir leads the congregation in the prayer itself. First I will share the words of St. Meletios the Confessor. He says:

"Prayer with musical chants and melodies, loudly voiced tumult and shouting is heard by men; but before God our Maker, the prayer which proceeds from a man's conscience and God-imbued intellect stands before God as a welcome guest, while the former is cast out.'

There are choirs which make "loudly voiced tumult and shouting." Yet I do not wish to imply, and I know that St. Meletios does not imply, that aesthetic beauty is the only criterion for chanting. Here is a little story. Once upon a time there was a Monastery of St. George, and the Abbott was blessed with monks that did not have such wonderful voices. The annual pilgrimage on the Feast Day of St. George was not all that impressive with the rather awful sounds coming from the choir.

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So the Abbott called together all the monks and said, "Look this year I am going to invite the famous choir from the cathedral for the Feast." Word went out and thousands of people came to St. George Monastery for the feast day and it was a glorious day. The famous choir from the cathedral was in great form and used its best voices. The Abbott was thrilled and even the humble monks who were not allowed to sing that day were thrilled. Following the day's festivities the monks went off to sleep, and the Abbott was sound asleep after all the excitement of the day. St. George came to him in his sleep and said, "Father, I think you missed my feast day! Today is my feast day and here you are, you didn't do anything. Have I not blessed you this past year?" And the Abbott said, "Oh, Saint George, I do not know where you were, but we had a glorious feast today. How could you not be here?" St. George said, "I was in the church and I saw a great multitude of people, but I heard nothing."

You and your choir need be as aesthetically perfect as you are able. God not only expects, but He accepts only our best. If your best sounds like "a loudly voiced tumult and shouting." but it is indeed your best, then God hears you, and St. George does too.

Again, he who prays "must be in a state of humility of contrition." According to Saint Nikodemos, a sign of humility and contrition is that one does not chant or pray with an "unduly loud voice" interpreting the text. He says, "Chanters should psalmodize in a reverent and orderly manner, with fear of God and piety and contrition."

Pray gently and calmly. Sing with understanding and rhythm. Then you will soar like a young eagle, high in the heavens, Wrote St. Evagrius.

"He, the church singer, should chant without hurrying and without dragging, and he should pronounce the words clearly and distinctly. He should chant simply and reverently in a monotone, without expressing his feelings by modulations and changes of voice. Let us leave the holy prayers to act on the listeners by their own spiritual power. The desire to convey to the bystanders one's own feelings is a sign of vanity and pride.

If indeed we are singing with the angels, listening to their voices and melodizing with them, then we know that the responsibility for conveying the import of the text does not rest upon our shoulders at all. That is not to say that we can mumble. The Fathers that we have heard say that we should chant with understanding, distinctly and clearly. But we do that because we wish to show respect to the text, not because we are trying to tell the congregation what the hymn is about. We are not there in positions of teachers, the Church says. We show respect to the text, not to the hearer. Our first concern is the text, the holiness of the words themselves. And if we do that the hearers will hear. They will be given all the tools necessary to understand the mysteries which are encompassed in the holiness of the text. And yes, the words are holy. And the sheets of paper that have music on them are holy, just as holy as a paper icon. Words have power. And "The Word" is the title given to the Son of God Himself. The words and the music both have power. They have a holiness. The spoken word is a gift given to us, and given to none of God's other creatures. And it is a gift that we must perfect, the gift of speech, the gift of communication, and the gift of music. It is a gift that we perfect and offer back to God as a spotless sacrifice and a pure offering, to our God who gave us the gift of words and music to begin with.

Here is a canon that deals with church singing and church singers. It is from the 75th Canon of the Council in Trullo that took place in the 7th century (691-692).

"We wish those who attend church for the purpose of chanting neither to employ disorderly cries and to force nature to cry out loud, nor to introduce anything that is not becoming and proper to a church; but on the contrary, to offer such psalmodies with much attentiveness and contriteness to God, Who sees directly into everything that is hidden from our sight. For the sons of Israel shall be reverent (Lev.15:30), the sacred word has taught us."

There is that word again, contriteness or contrition. Either humility or contrition has come up in almost every quote. Not only the ones that I am presenting, but all the ones I could find, from the Holy Fathers and from the canons. At our rehearsals, and our sessions with choirs, we talk about promptness, generally, and about dedication, both of which are important; but we need also speak about humility and contrition. If we take a poll of the Fathers those are the two characteristics that seem to be most important for church singers. Humility and contrition. They did not say anything about a beautiful voice.

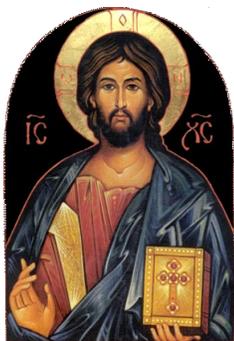
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Did you notice that? It has to be orderly; it has to start together and stop together. That is a good thing for choirs. Blend your voices, another good and very practical thing. But sing with humility and contrition, that is the most important thing.

The common thread that runs through these quotes is the need for humility and contrition. To be humble will be a struggle. We cannot buy humility; we cannot merely appear to be contrite. Humility and contrition are states of the heart and soul, that then manifest themselves in the behavior of body and attitude, and words, and psalmody. They are things that we need work on individually. There is no choir practice to rehearse humility. I wish we could! We cannot have a rehearsal for joint contriteness. When choir members come together in individual humility and individual contriteness, we offer up corporate doxology that He hears and that St. George would hear. Something that is an acceptable sacrifice, an acceptable oblation before the throne of God. Brothers and sisters, you have been gifted by God with an angelic gift. Using your voices for His praise is a gift given to you and not to everyone. It is a gift given to you but a gift which you share with the angels and the archangels. Make yourself worthy, by His grace, of that gift, and be worthy of the calling to which you have been called. Not to lead the congregation in prayer; that is secondary. Not to make a beautiful atmosphere for liturgy; that is tertiary, way down the list. But to offer up acceptable glorification before the throne of God, an oblation that He will receive upon His heavenly and ideal altar. An oblation then, like our oblation of bread and wine, which He will in turn offer back to us. When He accepts your offering, He does not keep it. He will take it, transform it, and send it back to touch the hearts, and the minds and the souls of you and your congregants. He will do that. You do not have to worry about doing it. If He can make bread into Flesh and wine into Blood, know that He can make your psalmody into an instrument of the Spirit, which can lead you and your fellow congregants closer to Him. Let Him be the only object of your worship, the only object of your praise, the only object of your glory. Then you cannot help but be humble and contrite, standing and considering and seeing only Him.

COME AND SEE



THIS PHRASE IS SIMPLE YET POWERFUL. IT CALLS US TO CHANGE OUR LOCATION – PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY. IF WE WANT TO FIND CHRIST, WE MUST MOVE TOWARD HIM. WE MUST GROW AND MATURE IN OUR FAITH.

GIVING YOUR TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE TO THE CHURCH IS AN OPPORTUNITY – AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE OUR PRIORITIES AND VALUES. IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS OUR THANKFULNESS, TO GIVE OF OURSELVES AND TO GROW IN GRACE.

IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK OF GOD. COME AND SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER WITH YOUR SUPPORT.

A CHECK MAILED TO THE CHURCH IS MEANINGLESS UNLESS IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY OUR PRESENCE, BY OUR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE, BY OUR PRAYERS, AND BY OUR COMMITMENT. GIVING IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR OUR COMMITMENT – IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF OUR COMMITMENT. COME AND SEE HOW YOU CAN GROW THROUGH SERVICE TO THE CHURCH.

COME AND SEE THE WORKS OF GOD, WHO IS AWESOME. (Psalm 66:5).

Pastoral Message

Dear Brethren,

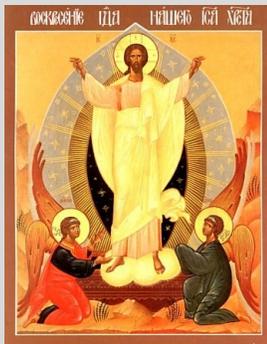
The virtue of chastity, or sexual self control; the value of virginity and of waiting until marriage is virtually gone in our western world today. Christendom is teetering. To carry these values and beliefs into the reality of today's world where the opposing message comes at us relentlessly through the various forms of media, academia, culture, politics, government, and even other churches, are like going against a great monster. So many of our Orthodox young people have succumbed to it.

Many minimize or cease their participation in Church life, some returning after marriage and the arrival of children, recognizing the Church's teachings and influence as a positive aspect in their lives. Very many never return, their faith shipwrecked as they find little relevance for the Church in their lives molded by modern, secular thought. It is a big problem which faces not only our Orthodox Church, but churches all over America and the Western world. Children not only face it, but also adults.

The early Church began in the pagan Roman world filled with sexual license and ambiguity. The first Christians were firmly connected with their faith and with each other. They did not look to the pagan world and its institutions for support. They accepted the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and lived each day as the Church, concerned with the advancement of His Kingdom in this world. It was a minority faith that was peculiar and strange to the masses. The members faced opposition and bitter persecution from the beginning. The names and stories of so many the martyrs of that period are with us today.

They are our heroes and our heritage as a believing community. Their faith, along with the ideals of chastity, sexual purity, the sanctity of marriage and self-control have changed the world. It is that faith, the Orthodox Faith, that continues that heritage even today in the presence of the licentious and profligate monster (or idol!) which we all face and are challenged by. As in the early Church, so today; being firmly connected to our faith in Jesus Christ and to each other is key. He and His Holy Church must be the center of our lives if we are to tame the influence of this monster our lives. It's time to repent, to organize and to pray. Retreat is not an option. May the Lord, in His mercy, bless you and inspire you!

Father Philip Reese



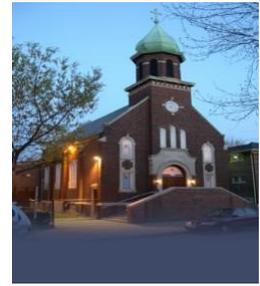
Memory Eternal!

**Give rest, O Lord, to the soul of Thy servant who has fallen asleep
and make his memory to be eternal!**

+Boris Prstojevic

Parish Announcements

Coffee hour sponsors: Dorothy Milich, Milka Marincic & Judy Kekich, Jasna Marjanovic Family



Thank you to the following people for their donations:

Chad Rushing for donating 3 plastic drain boxes for the kitchen

Milan Pletikapa for picking up, preparing & cutting up lambs for Pasha banquet

Tootsie Djikanovich for a case and 1/2 of communion wine for the alter in memory of her dear sister, Nada Watkins

Theopahn Thompson for donating 3 bottles of communion wine for the altar

Andja Jakovljevic for donating flowers for the planters in front of hall doors

And planting along with **Mirjana Trifunovic** all the flowers in the courtyard and patio to beautify our church

The **Shawki** and **Loban** families for donating flowers and decorating the Christ tomb for Pasha.



May Church Attendance Avg.

4/2/2017 – 76 😊 😊

4/16/17 – 320 😊 😊 😊

4/9/17 – 120 😊 😊 😊

4/23/17 – 99 😊 😊

4/30/17 – 59 Avg. 134

Message from the Board President

Dear Fellow Parishioners

First of all I would like to thank all of the volunteers who helped work our fish fries. Our fish fry season started with the end of February through and to April 14th. I think all of us enjoyed coming together, working hard for the benefit of the church. A comradery had developed and everyone could sense their importance in this effort.

With the first Sunday in April we were blessed with a visit from a Bishop Neophitos, Bishop of Kenya. An inspiring person with a very inspiring story to tell. While here in the U.S. he was able to visit and we were able to donate enough money for his diocese in Kenya to at least purchase a couple of Mopeds for his clergy to make their visits with needy parishioners.

I think our Easter holiday and luncheon was a wonderful time for families to come together, the turn out was exceptional and the weather was just as good. Again these events are always in need of volunteers. Without enough volunteers these events can be burdensome for those who do step forward so please step up.

Please make yourselves available for church sponsored events. There is truth in the phrase "Strength in Numbers". We all benefit when we all come together with the same goals in mind.

Thank You!

Dragan Acamovic

Coffee Hour

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED!!

THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTINUED TO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH BY SPONSORING SUNDAY COFFEE HOUR...SOMETIMES SEVERAL TIMES BY THE SAME PEOPLE. PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE DATE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SPONSOR. THERE IS A CALENDAR IN THE RIGHT HALLWAY LEADING TOWARDS THE KITCHEN. HERE IS A REMINDER AS TO WHAT IS INVOLVED AS A SPONSOR: SETTING UP THE TABLE, BUYING WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SERVE THEN CLEANING UP AFTER COFFEE HOUR. THIS IS ALL YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS THE SPONSOR! IF YOU ARE PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO DO THIS, HOPEFULLY A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND CAN HELP YOU. REMEMBER, THIS IS JUST A SNACK TO BE SERVED WITH COFFEE AFTER LITURGY FOR OUR PARISHIONERS. DONUTS, CAKES FROM SAMS ARE GREAT ITEMS. ITS YOUR CHOICE AND WHATEVER YOUR BUDGET WILL ALLOW. AS A REMINDER, PLEASE SERVE FASTING FOOD DURING THE LENTEN SEASONS. THANKS TO ALL FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT! FOR ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CALL ZDRAVKO ALEKSIC AT 314.226.6570.

COFFEE HOUR COMMITTEE

Радост је темељ слободе

Извор лажне религије је неспособност да се радујемо или, можда, пре одбијање да се радујемо, док је радост апсолутна суштина... Страх Божији и смирење су једино здрави када су повезани са том радошћу, и само тада су истинити и плодносни! Ван те радости добијају демонски карактер и постају најдубље изопачење било каквог религијског искуства. Религија страха; религија лажног смирења; религија кривице: све су то искушења и замке – врло снажне и то не само у свету, већ и у Цркви. “Религиозни” људи гаје неку сумњичавост према радости.

Први и основни извор свега је “радује се душа моја у Господу...” Страх од греха не спасава од греха! Радост у Господу спасава! Осећај кривице или морализам не ослобађају од света и његових искушења. Радост је темељ слободе на који смо позвани да станемо. Где, како и када је ово постало искривљено и монотono у Хришћанству? Или, заправо, где, када и зашто су Хришћани постали глуви за радост? Како, када и зашто је Црква, уместо да ослобађа људе који пате, почела да их садистички застрашује?

Људи непрестано долазе и питају за савет ... исповедам људе и причам, причам, причам; А нека ме слабост и лажни стид спречавају да им кажем: „Немам никакав савет за вас. Ја имам само слабу, климаву, али, за мене непрекидну радост. Желите ли то?“ Не, не желе!! Желе да причају о „проблемима“ и да ћаскају о „решењима“. Не, нема веће победе ђавола у свету од ове „психологизоване“ религије. У психологији има свега и свачега. Једна ствар која је у њој незамислива и немогућа јесте – радост.

Моћ греха није у томе што човека искушава очигледно зло, већ у томе што му срце заробљавају разне врсте ситних страсти и што не може нормално да дише и живи. У борби против овог затвора није довољно само заговарати побожност и молитву. Побожност може бити, а често и јесте, ситничава, а молитва може бити усмерена само на саму себе. Исто питање се поставља и у вези са благом нашег срца, у вези са радошћу. Без радости побожност и молитва су без благодати, јер је њихова моћ у радости. Религија је постала синоним за озбиљност која није усаглашена са радошћу. Зато је и слаба. Људи од религије желе ОДГОВОРЕ, МИР, ЗНАЧЕЊЕ, а значење је - РАДОСТ. То је одговор који у себи садржи све одговоре! „Јер си Ти истинита жеља и неизрецива радост оних који љубе Тебе, Христe Боже наш, и Тебе пева сва твар вавек.“

Протојереј Александар Шмеман

Kolo Korner

Dear sisters in Christ !

We made it through a very active month of April and we did it with flying colors.

The biggest challenge of the month was in organizing our Pascha banquet and I am happy to report it was well attended and turned out to be very successful event, thanks to the generosity of many volunteers who worked very hard behind scenes for all of us to have an enjoyable day.

A big thank you to the kitchen crew, who under the direction of Melanie Relich who once again volunteered to chair this event, we could enjoy another delicious meal. Thank you to Milan Pletikapa for taking the responsibility of roasting the lamb which was a delicious addition to our meal. Also, I would like to thank all of you who helped in any way from setting up, cleaning up and bringing in deserts for all of us to enjoy.

We may be small in numbers but mighty in our accomplishments. It just shows you when we come together and work as a team anything is possible!

I would also like to thank you for your cooperation in making Pascha reservations, it helps us greatly in the kitchen and therefore we are able to better serve you. So, it is mutually beneficial to both.

But the most important in all this is that we all come together and share a meal with our church family in a nice and warm atmosphere over a great conversation and enjoying each other's company. Personally, I cannot think of a more joyful way to celebrate the holy resurrection of our Lord and Savior. For me this is the point in having a Pascha banquet.

Thank you to our sisters who planted flowers around the church grounds and patio for all of us to enjoy.

Thank you all for your hard work and your continuing dedication to our kolo and our church!

Looking forward to seeing you all very soon.

As always, keep our sick sisters and their families in our hearts and in our prayers.

In Christ !

Ljubica Acamovic

Kolo president

Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church
Српска Православна Црква Свете Тројице
Мај/Мај 2017 Calendar/Календар

Friday 5	5.00 p.m. Vespers Вечерње
Saturday 6	9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy – St. Great-martyr George Света Литургија – Ђурђевдан
Sunday 7	10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy Света Литургија Choir Slava Celebration – Banquet immediately after Divine Liturgy
Thursday 11	5.00 p.m. Vespers Вечерње
Friday 12	10:00 am Divine Liturgy – St. Basil of Ostrog Света Литургија – Свети Василије Острошки
Saturday 13	4.30p.m. Vespers Вечерње
Sunday 14	10:00 am Divine Liturgy Света Литургија
Saturday 20	4.30 p.m. Vespers Вечерње
Sunday 21	10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy Света Литургија
Tuesday 23	5.00 p.m. Vespers Вечерње
Wednesday 24	10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy- St. Cyril and Methodius Света Литургија- Свети Ћирило и Методије 4.30 p.m. Vespers Вечерње
Thursday 25	10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy – Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ Света Литургија – Спасовдан
Saturday 27	4.30 p.m. Vespers Вечерње
Sunday 28	10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy Света Литургија