

## St. Peter the Apostle Parish Slava in Fresno



This year marked the 68th celebration of Petrovdan for the Fresno faithful as we gathered as the Eucharistic parish community which has been mystically identified with Ss. Peter & Paul—through Christ—to specifically ask them to intercede in our behalf, and to glorify God “who is wonderful in His saints.”

The day began with the celebration of Matins followed by the Hierarchical Liturgy. At the conclusion of Matins and prior to the start of the Liturgy, Bishop Maxim tonsured Joseph Alsobrook and Jonathan Hart to the clerical rank of Readers, the first of the Minor Orders in the Church. From the first to the concluding prayer, our beloved Bishop presided over a Liturgy full of the beauty, power, and grace of God apparent to all and made possible only by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Concelebrating the Liturgy together with His Grace, were: Protopresbyter Stamatis Skliris, a renown iconographer and artist whose iconographic illustrations are used in the diocesan Divine Liturgy Book who was visiting Bishop Maxim from Athens, Greece; our parish priest, Protopresbyter Stavrofor George Gligich; Father John

Mikitish, (OCA) visiting from New Haven, CT; and our parish Deacon Joseph Wesseler.

Following the reading of the Gospel, Father Stamatis Skliris delivered a wonderful sermon on the importance of humility in our lives. While we all recognize humility as a virtue, Fr. Stamatis pointed out that humility is often underestimated, and that a truly humble person suffers far less temptation than one who suffers from pride. Fr. Stamatis's sermon was especially applicable for the occasion for a church named after St. Peter, the leader of the apostles, and he said that humility was especially important for leaders like St. Peter: he who is first must be a servant to all.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, there was a procession around the church with a stop in the east where our dear Bishop read the Gospel. Upon entering the church, the parish celebrated its Slava with the blessing of the kolac and wheat. Jonathan and Deborah Hart, together with their children Joseph and Emily were the Kumovi, being honored for their many years of giving their time and talents to the church. The children of the church delighted in singing the praises of the Holy Apostles, and the bread was broken to be shared by all.

Following the services, the faithful entered the hall and were treated to a delicious meal of grilled lamb, roasted vegetables, and rice lovingly prepared by the Circle of Sisters committee chaired by Cheryl and Ernie Duran. Joining us for the Luncheon were Father James and Presvytera Donna Pappas from our neighboring parish of St. George Greek Orthodox Church. There is a very warm and beautiful relationship between our parishes, which has existed since the founding of St. Peter Church in 1951.

During the program our St. Peter Youth Scholarship Committee awarded scholarships to our parish High School graduates: Amanda Pruse (\$1000.00) and James Woolsey (\$500). Father George had asked Amanda to share with everyone present a beautiful essay which she had written as a part of her scholarship application entitled: "Me Life in Christ and what it means to be an Orthodox Christian". Our Kumovi Jonathan and Deborah Hart were then presented with an Icon of the Apostle Peter for their dedicated years of service by our Parish Council president Jim Ward. At the conclusion of the afternoon program, Bishop Maxim had all of the children come forward to receive a blessing as he gave each child a small wooden Cross. All in all, it was an exceptional day that will long be remembered by all present when His Grace, Bishop Maxim, our beloved Bishop shared his love, leadership and wisdom with his parishioners at St. Peter the Apostle Church on











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