EPISTLE BEFORE THEOPHANY: This morning’s Apostolic Reading is from St. Paul’s letter to Timothy, chapter 4, verses 5-8. It is found in our books on page 154.

The Apostle Paul declares that the time is for the manifestation of the end. He encourages Timothy to conduct himself in a way that is worthy of the salvation that God has bestowed upon him. He reminds him of the faith that he has given him. This faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and it is the foundation upon which Timothy must build his life. Paul also warns Timothy about the dangers of false teaching and encourages him to guard against it. The Apostle mentions that the end is near, and it is important to live a life that is worthy of the calling of God.

GOSPEL READING OF THE DAY: This morning’s Gospel Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, chapter 1, verses 1-8. It is found in our books, pages 319-321.

The reading is the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. It describes how Jesus went into Galilee and preached the gospel, healing those who were sick. He was welcomed by the people and began to build his ministry. This reading sets the stage for the rest of the Gospel, as Jesus continues to preach and heal throughout his ministry.

Today’s Apostolic Reading is from St. Paul’s letter to Timothy, chapter 4, verses 5-8. It is found in our books on page 154.

Today’s Gospel Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, chapter 1, verses 1-8. It is found in our books, pages 319-321.

Introduction to Orthodoxy (Sundays, 9 a.m., upstairs). This class is especially intended for those who are thinking about converting to Orthodoxy and for family members and friends who would like to support them on their journey, but it is also open to people who are already Orthodox and who would like to deepen their understanding of their faith. We explore Christian theology and practice through reading selections of Scripture, the Church Fathers, the lives of the Saints, and other texts representative of the Orthodox worldview. These readings are the starting point for our discussions, which aim at clarifying doctrine and worship and helping us to discover (or rediscover) week after week, what we belong in the church. If you are interested in attending the class, please contact Alexandros Kozak at orthodoxy-agkozakswakemail.com.

Today’s new windows are being installed in the entryway to the new Cathedral. Please see a representative plaque, which will be installed. It is located above the gallery doors, you will see that the first window of the 135 windows to be installed in the new Cathedral has been installed. It is dedicated to our friend and patroness, the late Sister Mary Joseph. The name of the donor will be listed as donors on the commemorative plaque, which will be installed in the entryway to the new Cathedral.

First Window Goes in, More and More Being Installed Until All 135 Are in Place: If you peer out the gallery doors, you will see that the first window of the 135 windows to be installed in the new Cathedral has been installed. It is located to your right, adjacent the courtyard triple double doors. The windows, all of which are arched, were crafted for us by Pella. The windows have been a donor opportunity for us. For a donation of $5,000, parishioners and friends of the Cathedral may donate a window. Their names will be listed as donors on the commemorative plaque, which will be installed in the entryway to the new Cathedral.

Thank You, 2016 Stewards: A church is only as vibrant as the faith of the people who make up the community. Annunciation Cathedral is blessed to have dedicated people, who worship regularly and who contribute, making possible the many ministries offered by our parish. Recently, we’ve had significant changes in the Cathedral’s personnel. This does not, however, diminish the service which the parish offers to you, its parishioners, nor the level of support which the parish enjoys from you. If anything, it energizes our parishioners to expect, rightfully, more and better programs, as we engage in articulating a vision for our parish for its second hundred years. On December 6, we observed “Stewardship Sunday” at the Cathedral. Through your stewardship, you declared your support of the Cathedral and its ministries for 2016 and beyond. 94 Stewardship pledges were received on that day. Now, is this good? Yes and no. Yes, because it represents just under a third of the level of support we enjoyed in 2015, and we anticipate the Cathedral office at 415 864-8800, and again in 2016. On the other hand, our community has a potential of having 800 stewards. There are at least that many families with whom we communicate on a regular basis, and who consider the Annunciation Cathedral to be their parish church. So, how do we get everyone on board? By keeping at it, by staying the course. By continuing to extend the invitation, as the Lord himself does. As He says in Scripture, specifically, in the Book of Revelation, “ Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (Revelation 3:20).

Meanwhile, we pause to acknowledge and thank our stewards. The February 2016 issue of the Herald, which will go to press on January 15, will feature an “honor roll of stewards.” In that issue, we will print the names of all those who will have declared their support for 2016. In order to be listed, please forward your 2016 Stewardship pledge card by January 15. If, for some reason, you have not received a pledge card, please call the Cathedral office at 415 864-8800, and we will be happy to send you another card. If you prefer, you may pick up a card when you come to the Cathedral for worship, or you may speak with Gus Vouchilas, our Stewardship Committee Chair, or with Father Stephen, fathersteve@annunciation.org.
We are completely done with metal stud framing and exterior Densglass (the yellow panels you see on the outside). Plywood and wood blocking are now complete on all tile roof areas, as well as the domes. Waterproofing has been completed, with lath, and plaster to follow. Meanwhile, the windows are being installed, and will be completed soon, weather permitting.

Excitement mounts as we watch this magnificent structure evolve, as it represents everything we are and everything we believe as Greek Orthodox Christians. It is also a symbol of the faith that our own generation has cultivated, and what we hope to leave behind, to inspire the generations to come.

We’ve noted on a number of occasions that we have raised $6 million towards this project, with another $4.7 to go. And we have explained how much has been spent and on what. Additionally, we have projected a timetable for completion of the project—summer of 2016; this includes the normal functioning of the garage. At that point, we are planning to hold a Gala event, to celebrate a great accomplishment, as we turn to Phase two (the completion of the interior). Work on the interior, including appointments and iconography, should take another year or so. Certainly, we hope to be able to plan for its consecration, in 2017, four years before our 100th anniversary. All this, of course, will depend upon your prayers and continued support.

May God bless our undertaking, for God is the one who spoke to Moses, then, and who speaks to us, today: “Build me a Sanctuary, and I will appear among you.” (Translated from the Septuagint: Καὶ ποιήσεις µου ἁγίιάσµα, καὶ ὀφθήήσοµαι ἐν ὑµµῖν. (Exodus 25:8). May we prove worthy of the trust God has in us to rebuild His Church.

“The Church shall be a home for Orthodox Christians from every ethnic and national background. It shall be a house of prayer for all humankind, in which the Holy Name of our Triune God shall be extolled and all of creation sanctified.”

(Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Ground breaking, November 6, 1997)