

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, May 24, 2020

The Sixth Sunday of Pascha

of the Man Born Blind

Apostolic Reading: Acts 16:16-34

Gospel: John 9:1-38

Tone 5 • Matins Gospel 8

[\(Click here for a PDF version of this week's news\)](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LITURGY THIS WEEK WILL CONTINUE AS IN THE RECENT WEEKS PAST. The Parish Council is working on procedures for "opening" on the first Sunday of June. They will keep you informed.

THE LIVE STREAMING of the Services continues. You can count on our regular Sunday services: Matins at 9:00am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00am.

- ***For the Live-Streaming of Sunday Services,*** go to: www.stnicholaschurch.org and click on **"Live Streaming Services"**
- ***To view previous Services*** on our YouTube Channel, [click here.](#)

THERE WILL BE NO SERVICES AT THE CEMETERY this Memorial Day weekend, due to the Covid restrictions.

STEWARDSHIP. This is a difficult time for everyone, on so many levels. One is economic. But if are able, please continue to send what stewardship offering that you feel you can afford. Keep in mind that ***the Church is also in the same situation.*** There are on-going expenses. You may mail any contributions to the Church address, or you may give on-line, at the parish website by [clicking here](#). God bless you and keep you safe!

HIS BEATITUDE PATRIARCH DANIEL has addressed an encouraging ***message to the Church on the current COVID-19 pandemic*** where he underscores that "the situation of the pandemic calls us to transform suffering into hope and isolation into the desire for more communion among people." You may view his address by [clicking here](#). (Romanian with English subtitles.)

WE HAVE A COVID FUND. There are people both in our parish and who come to the Church who are in need. There will very likely be even more as this situation continues. ***If you need help,*** whatever it might be, including financial assistance, please contact Fr. Nick. We'll find a way to assist you. ***ALSO,*** we are asking the faithful in our parish ***WHO ARE ABLE,*** to perhaps contribute toward this fund. We've set up a small committee, headed by Fr. Nick, to administer this fund, and distribute what we're able to give as equitably as possible. ***May God keep us all!***

REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER. You already know that Fr. Nick maintains a Parish Diptych. He remembers all of the members of the Parish, living and dead, as he prepares the Holy Offering at every Liturgy. But each one of us has a part in that prayer as well. Sometimes we bake a Prosphora and bring it, along with names of people who need our prayers, to be remembered during the Liturgy. Very often, when we enter the Church we light a candle, or two or three, as another kind of offering for people we love. The distancing imposed upon us has definitely put a crimp in these and other beautiful practices, but here's a suggestion. ***Send the names of people you'd especially like to be remember*** to Fr. Nick. He'll make sure they are prayed for during the Liturgy. If you'd like to have ***candles lit as well,*** make a note on the message that you send, and we'll make sure candles are offered. If you'd like to ***make a donation,*** that would be a help for our Parish. Either mail it to the Church address, or give on-line by [clicking here](#).

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

This is the latest update from Holy Trinity (18 May 2020).

From the time the COVID crisis began, Holy Trinity has gone above and beyond what was required by the state and CDC. Holy Trinity takes pride in continuing to be transparent and give timely and accurate facts to resident families. Our thoughts and prayers are with families who have experienced significant loss during this public health crisis and understand how difficult it is for families unable to visit with their loved ones.

While this is a difficult time, we look to the good things we've experienced – we have seen the community come together by providing staff meals, entertainment for the residents, celebrating milestone birthdays and local media have taken note of the positive news. We also have been coordinating window visits for our resident families, especially now that the weather is improving.

On Television — Holy Trinity on Spectrum News! (Go to our on-line version for the link.)

Update — Currently there are 25 positive residents, some who are showing symptoms, but many who are not. All residents are regularly monitored for symptoms and for any change in status. The good news is that many residents who were previously positive are now considered negative according to the current guidelines. Holy Trinity is grateful to the staff for their hard work and dedication in getting these residents past this terrible virus.

Staff Thank You Meals — Staff thank you meals have been a tremendous success in showing the staff appreciation, allowing the community to take part in sharing their appreciation and providing business to local restaurants. This week Garden Fresh Courthouse Café, The Flying Rhino, Ciao Bella, Thai and I, and Lil M's were the meal suppliers and we were fortunate enough to have Feed the Fight Boston donate to provide a meal for the staff as well. The staff were also treated to some Wicked Good cookies to close out National Nurses Week. Holy Trinity is still taking donations for the staff meals. To contribute, go to: <https://www.htnr.net>

State COVID-19 Inspection — MassHealth performed an inspection last week and Holy Trinity achieved 28 points out of a possible 28! Thank you to senior management for their hard work and preparation to make this happen in such a short amount of time. Holy Trinity staff continues to prove why Holy Trinity is, and should be, considered the gold standard of nursing homes. With only a week to prepare for a first of its kind inspection, including never before seen requirements, as well as having over 30 staff absent would be insurmountable for most nursing homes to overcome. Our staff, however, took on the challenge and met it admirably! Remember, HOLY TRINITY has set up a dedicated web page on its site to address questions and changing information. We urge all families and other interested persons to go directly to the site — <https://www.htnr.net/coronavirus> — for answers to the questions you might have.

2020 Graduates

"He has filled them with the spirit of God,

with skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft." (Exodus 35:31)

We want to acknowledge members of our Church community who are celebrating a graduation and recognize their achievement.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

— **Mihai Gavala**, son of Artic and Cristina Gavala, is graduated from Sutton Middle School, and will attend St John's High School in Shrewsbury.

HIGH SCHOOL

- **Gabriela Joanna Gavala**, daughter of Artic and Cristina Gavala, is graduated from Worcester Academy and will attend Union College in Schenectady, New York. She will study Biology/Psychology and hopes to enroll in the PreMed track.

- **Elodie Killick**, daughter of Elaine and Nicholas Killick, is graduated from Doherty High School. She will be attending the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in the fall studying Biology.

- **Dan Alexandru Nedelescu**, son of Bogdan and Sandra Nedelescu, is graduated from the Massachusetts Academy of Math and Sciences at WPI. He will attend the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta to study Computer Science.

- **Eleni Polymeros**, daughter of William and Laura Polymeros, is graduated from Blackstone Valley Technical High School. She will be attending Worcester State University in the fall.

COLLEGE

— **Dimitri Christo**, son of James and Lea Christo, is graduated from Emmanuel College in Boston with a BA in Graphic Design. He is working for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

— **Matthew Alexander Collins**, son of James and Becky Collins, is graduated from Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston with a BS in Computer Information Systems.

— **Tatiana Karadimitriou**, daughter of Kosmas Karadimitriou and Maria Kalpidou, is graduated from the University of Southern California. She is working in a cancer research lab during her gap year as she applies to medical school.

— **Christian Polymeros**, son of William and Laura Polymeros, is graduated from Massachusetts Maritime Academy with a BS in Facilities Engineering.

— **William Polymeros**, son of Dean and Harriett Polymeros, is graduated from University of Massachusetts at Amherst with a BS in Renewable Energy Engineering.

— **Brian Rucho**, son of Christopher and Julie Rucho, and grandson of Florence Rucho, is graduated from Westfield State University with a BS in Liberal Studies and is pursuing his electrician's license.

— **Zoe Tsongalis**, daughter of Gregory and Nancy Tsongalis, is graduated from Providence College in RI with a BA in Elementary and Special Education. She will begin her teaching career in the Hartford Public School System in VT.

— **Christian Wybieracki**, grandson of Janice Samara, is graduated from Bentley College in Waltham with a BA in Finance. He is pursuing a position in his field.

GRADUATE STUDIES

— **Elias Christo**, son of James and Lea Christo, is graduated from Roger Williams University with a MA in Architecture. He is preparing for the national Architectural Registration Exam and pursuing employment at a residential architecture firm in New England.

— **Matthew Moore**, grandson of Janice Samara, is graduated from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, with a MA in Bio-Medical Engineering. He is pursuing a position in his field.

May our loving Lord continue to bless their efforts and grant them a long life, health, prosperity, and many, many years!

Orthodox Links

[Romanian Orthodox Metropolia](#) of the Americas

[Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America](#) (Assembly of Bishops)

[International Orthodox Christian Charities](#) (IOCC)

[Orthodox Christian Mission Center](#) (OCMC)

[Orthodox Christian Radio Network](#) (OCN)

[Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches of Central Mass.](#) (CEOC)

The Ascension

The Lord Jesus passed forty days on earth after His Resurrection from the dead, appearing continually in various places to His disciples, with whom He also spoke, ate, and drank, thereby further demonstrating His Resurrection. On this Thursday, the fortieth day after Pascha, He appeared again in Jerusalem. After He had first spoken to the disciples about many things, He gave them His last commandment, that is, that they go forth and proclaim His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. But He also commanded them that for the present, they were not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait there together until they receive power from on high, when the Holy Spirit would come upon them.

Saying these things, He led them to the Mount of Olives, and raising His hands, He blessed them; and saying again the words of the Father's blessing, He was parted from them and taken up. Immediately a cloud of light, a proof of His majesty, received Him. Sitting thereon as though on a royal chariot, He was taken up into Heaven, and after a short time was concealed from the sight of the disciples, who remained where they were with their eyes fixed on Him. At this point, two Angels in the form of men in white raiment appeared to them and said, "Ye men of Galilee,

why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven” (Acts 1:11). These words, in a complete and concise manner, declare what is taught in the Symbol of Faith concerning the Son and Word of God. Therefore, having so fulfilled all His dispensation for us, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended in glory into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of God the Father. As for His sacred disciples, they returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, rejoicing because Christ had promised to send them the Holy Spirit.

It should be noted that the Mount of Olives is a Sabbath’s day journey from Jerusalem, that is, the distance a Jew was permitted to walk on the day of the Sabbath. Ecumenius writes, “A Sabbath day’s journey is one mile in length, as Clement says in his fifth Stromatis; it is two thousand cubits, as the Interpretation of the Acts states.” They draw this conclusion from the fact that, while they were in the wilderness, the Israelites of old kept within this distance from the Holy Tabernacle, whither they walked on the Sabbath day to worship God.

A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord

Sweet Jesus, our saviour: We who enjoy the effulgence of the sun and who delight in the luminescence of the moon give thanks to you for the gifts of light and sight. In our good fortune, most of us have never actually known the meaning of being blind, and we cannot even begin to appreciate what a life of total darkness is. You, however, know all things, so your understanding and tenderness brought you to bestow a twofold enlightenment on that poor fellow who had been deprived of sight from his mother’s womb. As we commemorate his healing during this paschal season, we entreat you to preserve us from all interior blindness that we may always see reality as it is in fact, and live accordingly.

For you are the healer of our souls and bodies, Christ our God, and we give you glory, together with your eternal Father and your all-holy, good, and lifegiving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Way of Salvation

This is the sixth Sunday of Pascha. Today’s Gospel lesson is the Lord’s healing of the man blind from birth (John 9:1-38). In the reading from Acts (16:16-34) St. Luke tells us of the start of St. Paul’s missionary work in Europe. Paul had been visiting the coastal cities of Asia Minor with Silas and Timothy. One night “a vision appeared to Paul ... a man of Macedonia was standing

beseeking him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us'" (Acts 16:9). And so Paul and Silas sailed to Philippi, a large city in that province.

Today's reading begins with the encounter Paul and Silas had with a slave girl while they were going toward a place outside of Philippi where the Jews usually gathered to pray on the Sabbath. She had a "spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by soothsaying" (v. 16). In the original Greek the phrase a "spirit of divination" is actually a "Pythonic spirit," referring to the snake that the god Apollo was believed to have slain at Delphi. In Apollo's temple at Delphi, a priestess of Apollo called the 'Phythius' would prophesy in the god's name there. So rather than believe this spirit as something benign, we should understand the girl as possessed.

The girl followed Paul and Silas for a number of days crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation" (v. 17). Finally Paul had reached his limit and "turned and said to the spirit, 'I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out that very hour" (v. 18).

St. Paul did this for two reasons. The first was to free this poor girl from the exploitation of both the demon and her masters. The second was because the spirit meant to deceive and mislead those people who had come to believe in Jesus through Paul's and Silas' preaching. Paul and the other Apostles never drew attention to themselves when they preached. Their goal was to proclaim salvation in the name of Jesus Christ. The objective of this demon was to gain credibility by correctly saying who and what these Apostles were, only then to later use this gained confidence for evil purposes. Paul knew this, and this is the reason he cast out the demon.

We can see Paul's wisdom in what happened next. Her masters, instead of believing her words that Paul and Silas were indeed "servants of the Most High God, who proclaim the way of salvation," immediately seized them and brought them before the local magistrates complaining that, "these men are Jews and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice" (v. 21-22). A riot began. The magistrates had Paul and Silas flogged and imprisoned.

During the night while Paul and Silas were singing hymns and praying in prison, an earthquake opened the jail doors and loosened the chains binding Paul and the other prisoners. The jailer woke up, thinking that everyone had escaped. He was ready to kill himself, when Paul cried out

to stop him. He told him that no one had escaped. The jailer was so moved that he fell down before Paul and Silas and asked how he might be saved. Finally, he and his whole household believed and were all baptized.

There are at least three important lessons in this story. The first is that believing in Jesus Christ and proclaiming him to the world is not always popular. Sometimes it can lead to outright persecution. Paul and Silas were not doing anything wrong, yet they were seized, brought up on false charges, beaten, put in stocks, and imprisoned. They were never even given the opportunity to defend themselves.

The second lesson is that when evil things befall us we should accept them without complaint. Paul and Silas were not sitting in the prison bemoaning their fate. They were not complaining to God: “Why me? I was doing your will! Why didn’t you protect me?” Rather, they were singing hymns and praying. We should understand that we grow when tested. Sharing and witnessing to our faith is like exercising — exercising our soul. It brings growth. We know what happens to a body that sits all day in front of the TV. It gets fat and lethargic. Exercise strengthens. Comfort weakens. God intends to strengthen us through many of the difficulties we may encounter.

The third important lesson is that we should not try to gain advantage at the expense of others. Paul and Silas were unjustly imprisoned. They could easily have used the opportunity of the earthquake to escape. What would have been the result? The jailer would have committed suicide, his children would have been orphaned, and his family disgraced. Even if Paul and Silas managed to save themselves, they would have been seen by many as in fact guilty as charged, and their preaching would have been in vain. Instead, by trusting in God and enduring their trials, the jailer and his family were saved, not only physically, but also spiritually. The truth of the Good News they preached spread throughout the whole city, even and especially to the pagans. Most importantly, Jesus was glorified.

I would like to emphasize this last point. We are living through world-wide economic and socio-political storms. Even though some people and places seem to have passed through the worst of it, many more have not. These crises are not “acts of God,” but created by people, many of whom identify themselves as Christians, and who think nothing of taking advantage of opportunities without considering the consequences of their actions on others. We see this same sort of selfish behavior exercised in many different ways each and every day. Sadly, we ourselves often behave similarly. Can we learn from these catastrophes? Can we be like Paul

and Silas? Can we be witnesses to “the way of salvation”? Perhaps. And if we rise to our high-calling, many will indeed be saved.

Christ is Risen, Indeed!

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Thurs, May 28	Ascension of the Lord
Sat. June 6	Saturday of the Dead
Sun, June 7	Pentecost

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
34 Gold St | Shrewsbury MA 01545-6238
508-845-0088 | fax: 508-845-8850 | email: FrNick@StNicholasChurch.org
www.StNicholasChurch.org
Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am

This email was sent to << Test Email Address >>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription](#)
[preferences](#)

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church · 34 Gold St · Shrewsbury, MA 01545-6238 ·
USA

