

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JANUARY 5, 2014

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**WE CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY** this weekend. Sunday is the Forefeast and Monday is Theophany itself. Both days Matins is a 9:00 am and Liturgy at 10:00 am followed by the Great Blessing of Water.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES** have resumed after the Christmas break. Remember, quiet space to hold Religious Ed classes is limited. It takes very little to disrupt a class of children from lessons their teachers have prepared. **We ask for your cooperation during the time after communion, and during the sermon and coffee-hour.** Please remain in the Church and do not disrupt classes by walking in the coffee hour area, hallway or going to the kitchen.

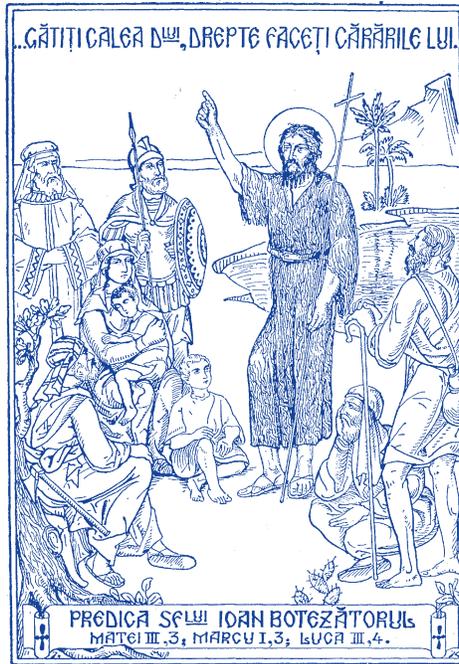
**THE PARISH COUNCIL** will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, January 13th at 6:30 pm.** Parish Council Members, please let Deb Sedares know if you are unable to attend.

**THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS** for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month

**GREETERS TEAM 3:  
EVANS TSOULES AND  
TOM FITZPATRICK**

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW D:  
ILEANA & SEAN FAHEY,  
DIMITRI SAFFRON, CHRISTOS SPYROU**



### THE SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY

**APOSTOLIC READING: 2 TIMOTHY 4:5-8**

**GOSPEL: MARK 1:1-8**



**TONE 3 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 6**

from 9am to noon. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with Nicole Peterson or Lisa Mielnicki. Our next Saturday is February 1st.

**ARCHBISHOP NICOLAE'S CHRISTMAS PASTORAL LETTER** in English or Romanian may be downloaded off the website or hard copy in the narthex.

**THE 2014 CHURCH CALENDARS** in both English and Romanian are in! They are available in the Narthex. A small donation toward their cost would be welcomed.



## BURN THE MORTGAGE CAMPAIGN

**THE "BURN THE MORTGAGE CAMPAIGN"** launched at our St. Nicholas Feast Day luncheon is underway. Our goal is to pay off our entire church building debt over the next three years! As we announced at the luncheon we already have over \$100,000 in pledges committed towards this goal! You may pick up a copy of the pamphlet which we distributed at the Feast Day Luncheon that explains this campaign at the candle stand. We have a number of people who have volunteered to work along side the other members of the Parish Council and Father Nick to assure the success of our efforts. This campaign committee members include: Gerry Belba, Jackie Cavanaugh, Tom Fitzpatrick, Margarite Landry, Bogdan Nedelescu, Tim Rucho, George Soter and Evans Tsoules. As we enter the New Year each of us will be asked to consider how we might participate in this campaign. Please take some time to prayerfully consider the work that is before us as a parish and how you might like to participate in it along with your fellow parishioners. May God Bless you and your loved ones with health, happiness and every good thing through the coming year!

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, Jan 6 Theophany - Liturgy 10:00 am

Mon, Jan 13 Parish Council Meeting, 6:30 pm

Sat, Feb 1 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry

**34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850**

**E-MAIL: FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG ♦ WEB: WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG**

*A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas*

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

*Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center & Holy Trinity Hospice are Orthodox Charities* and rely on your donations to continue the mission of providing the best care possible.

**NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR SOUGHT:** Please contact Dolores Schermer at dschermer@radiusexecutivesolutions.com

**HOLY TRINITY HOSPICE ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR SOUGHT:** Please contact Francis McGrath at fmcgrath@htnr.net.

**ALSO, EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AT HOLY TRINITY** are always posted on the website. Current positions include: Several CNA, LPN and RN positions available. For information on these positions and other openings, please visit: [www.htnr.net](http://www.htnr.net).

### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**L**ORD, OUR GOD, LIGHT OF ALL THE WORLD: The brilliance of this feast of lights dazzles the eyes of our souls. For today you enlighten us with the intimate knowledge that you are three in one. Today, you enlighten us by the appearance and manifestation of the Lord Jesus in the Jordan. Today, you enlighten us with the understanding that your salvation is for all peoples without exception. Therefore, by the never-fading radiance of your light, rescue us from the power of darkness and make a place for us in your kingdom. Fill us with your glory and reveal the splendor of your presence to every nation, that we may all find forgiveness of our sins and true freedom.

For you are indeed our God, the Father of lights, and we give glory to you, your co-eternal Son, and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## NAMEDAYS

### January 1

#### *St. Basil the Great*

William Cocavessis  
Bryan Donabed  
William Keimig  
Ronald William Laconto, III  
Vasia Lolo  
Vasilika Lolo  
William Polymeros  
Dr. Ross Porter  
Valarie Stamoulis  
Vasilika Tanko

### January 6

#### *The Holy Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*

Francis Polymeros  
Jordan Sparages

### January 7

#### *The Holy Prophet and Forerunner John the Baptist*

John Banks-Binici  
Joanna Boukalis  
Rev. Fr. John Daly  
Nita Dumitriu  
Sean Fahey  
Ian Mayer  
Jonathan Paul Maynard  
John Rucho  
John David Thoren



## LONGING FOR HIS APPEARING

**T**HE Epistle Lesson for the Sunday before Theophany is taken from St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 4:5-8. This letter was probably written by Paul while under arrest in Rome, and the tone of it reads like a last will and testament. He knows there is almost no possibility of release. On the contrary, it is very likely that he will be put to death. The reason this passage is chosen to be read today, just before Theophany, is a phrase in verse 8 where St. Paul speaks of those who long for the appearance of Christ: His epiphany. On January 6th we will celebrate God's self-revelation at Jesus' Baptism by John in the Jordan, even while it is the Lord's second-coming to which Paul is referring in this verse.

Knowing that Timothy is worried, if not grieving, over St. Paul's situation, he wants to offer words of both encouragement and comfort. He says to Timothy, "always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully." (v. 5) He wants Timothy, who in many ways he considers his heir in ministry, to focus on the task at hand, namely his ministry. He tells him to "be sober." Other translations use words such as 'watchful' and 'steady.' What St. Paul is saying is that Timothy should be absolutely resolute, unaffected by the winds that may blow.

He then advises him on the difficulties of ministry. He doesn't mince words; he tells him directly: "endure suffering." Ministry has always had its challenges. In times of persecution it can mean imprisonment, torture and even a horrible death, the kind of death St. Paul himself was facing. Even in peaceful times grief and affliction can come from 'faithful' members of one's own community. St. Paul is offering Timothy some very practical advice for someone who wants to preach the Gospel.

"Do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully." Here he

is speaking of preaching the Gospel faithfully; being true to the message given us by the Lord Himself.

Then St. Paul turns to his own situation. He wants Timothy to understand that he is clear about what will happen to him and is rejoicing in it. It is the fulfillment of his life. St. Paul uses two different metaphors to help Timothy understand. The first is the holy sacrifices offered to God, and the second is the sacrifice of a warrior or athlete.

"I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come." (v. 6) A libation is a liquid offering, usually wine or oil. Unlike other kinds of sacrifices or offerings where only a portion was offered up, a libation was poured out totally. St. Paul is telling Timothy that his whole life has been such an offering. He is also telling him that he realizes the time for his total sacrifice is at hand.

And then he introduces the image of an athlete: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day." Any athlete knows what it means to compete. He or she must train. Training means sacrifice — giving up things that one might like to do, in order to achieve the desired goal. This is not the only place where St. Paul compares the physical example of an athlete to the commitment and discipline needed for the spiritual struggle. It is very apt, because it gives concrete form to a contest that is by definition ethereal. It helps us to understand the importance of regular and faithful spiritual "training" using the exercises given us, such as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. By putting our faith into practice through these and other similar activities we enable our whole person to become true reflections of who God created us to be.

However, in this verse St. Paul is

speaking not of the beginning of the race, but its end. Having "kept the faith," he tells us, "there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (v. 8) In St. Paul's day, the winner of the race received a laurel crown. In the spiritual race he envisions not a crown of leaves, but one woven with branches of virtue.

He says that this same crown awaits not only him, but "all who have longed for his appearing." I said at the outset that this verse is the reason why this reading is chosen for today, to prepare us for the Feast of the Lord's Epiphany. The Greek word "epiphany" (appearance or manifestation) was frequently used to describe the "manifestations" of pagan gods, or emperors making divine claims. St. Paul uses it to speak of the Lord's Incarnation or, as in this case, His Second Coming.

Each morning at the opening of the Matins service we sing: "God is the Lord, and has revealed (epiphany) Himself to us! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." (Psalm 118) God revealed Himself not only in the past: to Abraham and the Patriarchs, to Moses and the Prophets, to the Apostles and the Saints. He reveals Himself to us each morning, each time we awaken from the death of sleep. In this same Psalm we say, "I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord." (v. 118:17) To know God is to live. God reveals Himself so that we can share in His life.

In just a few days we will celebrate that event where God reveals Himself in the fullness of His Tri-Personal reality: Father, Son and Spirit. Jesus in the Jordan hears the voice of His Father while the Holy Spirit descends as a dove. This is joy for all who have longed for his appearing!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

# Stewardship in Action!

*As you think about your stewardship offering for 2014, please consider making a commitment to help in one of the many ministry and parish administration opportunities here at St. Nick's. A few to consider are listed below:*

**Outreach Ministry:** Caring and compassionate people are needed to spend time and assist some elderly or shut-ins in our community. Needs vary from person to person, but in general we seek individuals willing to make a once-per-week commitment to visit with members of our Parish family and provide support as needed (help with chores, take shopping, bring a hot lunch, run an errand, or just visit and socialize). Consistency and dependability are important qualities in this role.

**Data Entry:** An individual is needed to offer 2-4 hours per week at the Church doing basic data entry at the direction of the Priest / Treasurer. Knowledge of basic accounting and Microsoft Office programs is helpful, especially how databases work, and diligence and precision are needed qualities.

**Parish Mailing Coordinator:** A liaison is needed to learn the rules and procedures of non-profit bulk mail through the USPS, to train volunteers to assist, at the direction of the Priest / Parish Council to compile items to be included, and to schedule mailings.

**Mustard Seed:** Volunteers are needed to coordinate this ministry of our Church to respond to our Lord's command to "feed the hungry." The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker house providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day. Our Parish is committed to providing and serving that meal on a Friday evening six times per year. In particular, one person is needed to plan the menu and coordinate volunteers for cooking of the meal. Another person is needed to organize the delivery of the food to the Mustard Seed and to organize volunteers to serve the meal, and return pans/clean-up back at the Church.

**Religious Education for Children:** There are many opportunities if you are interested in teaching or assisting with Church School and/or working with the Youth of our parish on activities and programs geared to them.

**Teen / Young Adult Programming:** A particular need in our parish is one or two adult leaders or coordinators for teen / young adult programs and activities. The focus tasks would be outreach to teens, organize and schedule meetings, and assist and guide the group towards self-directed initiatives and programs.

**"50-Something" Coordinator:** A volunteer or two is needed to plan daytime activities for retirees solely for the purpose of fellowship and enjoyment. Responding to interests of participants, this person would plan and organize excursions, day trips, social gatherings or other types of activities as desired.

**Marketing / Public Relations:** A volunteer is needed to learn about and access free media opportunities to promote Parish events and fundraisers. Areas to research and explore include free public service announcements provided to non-profits by radio stations, newspapers, online community listings, local cable television, etc.

**Coffee Hour Clean-Up Crews:** We schedule 4-5 groups of people to take responsibility for cleanup following regular coffee hour on Sundays. We need more volunteers to add to existing groups. Rotating responsibilities mean that you'll be on-duty only once a month.

**St. Nick's Kitchen:** Throughout much of the year, baking occurs on Thursday mornings with prep work preceding on Wednesday evenings. Annually, sales of baked goods is our most successful fundraiser, and we are in dire need of some new volunteers to learn the skills and techniques, as well as to assist with general kitchen tasks.

**Orthodox Food Center:** Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9am to noon. About 4 people are needed each week.

**Greeters:** We would like to schedule 4 - 5 groups of people (2 to 3) to take responsibility for greeting members and visitors to the church each Sunday during Liturgy and assisting with the candles, ushering and related duties. Rotating responsibilities mean that you'll be on duty only once a month.

*Please speak with Fr. Nick or Deb Sedares to learn more about these opportunities to serve or to be directed to the appropriate contact person.*