

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN FEBRUARY 23, 2014

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE FOUNDERS DAY LUNCHEON is TODAY Sunday, February 23. We will commemorate the anniversary of our first celebration of the Divine Liturgy here on Gold Street. The Luncheon is sponsored **in loving memory of Nick and Niki Demake**, by Lisa Demake and George & Angela Demake. **Donation is \$20 per adult and \$5 per child.**

HELP IS NEEDED with serving and after the luncheon with clearing the tables, resetting the hall, and clean-up of the kitchen and sink area. Please contact **Deb Sedares, Mary Anna Dymek and Christine Toda** if you can help. Many hands make light work!

PITA BAKING, weather permitting, **this Thursday, February 27th** at 9:00 am. Everyone's help is welcome. Questions? Please see Chris Toda. No experience necessary!

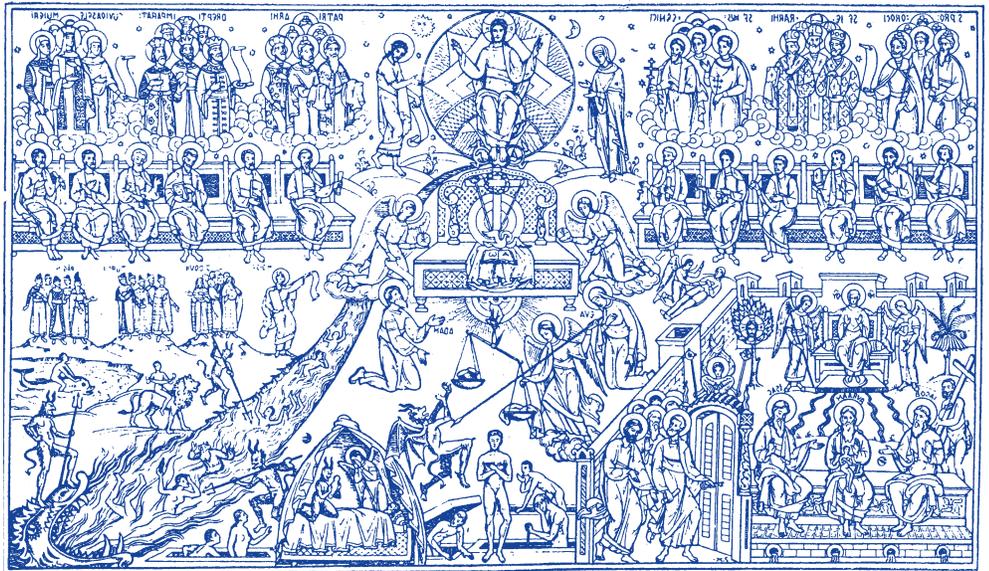
GREAT LENT begins Monday, March 3rd.

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES sponsored by the Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches will begin on **Wednesday, March 5th at 6:00 pm**

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

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW:
ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR
LUNCHEON SET-UP/CLEAN-UP**



THE SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT

(MEATFARE SUNDAY)

APOSTOLIC READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 8:8-9:2 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25:31-46

TONE 2 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 2

here at St. Nicholas.

► We will be hosting a Lenten meal following the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy on that evening. **Donations of prepared Lenten foods are needed as well as help with set up, serving and clean up following the service.** There is a sign up sheet at the candle stand for donations. Please see Presvytera Maria or Chris Toda.

► Also, persons wishing to receive Holy Communion must prepare themselves in the usual manner, including fasting from at least noon.

THANKS TO THE MUSTARD SEED VOLUNTEERS!

Those who cooked and those who served the meal this past Friday! The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **next Saturday,**

March 1st, from 9 am - noon. About 4 people are needed. This month we also have the responsibility of the 5th Saturday which is **March 29th**. Likewise, donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with Nicole Apostola or Lisa Mielnicki.

HOUSE BLESSINGS ARE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED. Due to Fr. Nick's illness, the schedule for house blessing is on hold. When Fr. Nick has recovered, we will resume house bless-

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, Feb 23 Founders' Day Luncheon
Thurs, Feb 27 Pita Baking, 9 am
Sat, March 1 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Mon, March 3 Great Lent begins
Wed, March 5 PreSanctified Liturgy
Sun, March 9 Annual General Assembly
Sat, March 29 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Sun, April 13 Palm Sunday
Sun, April 20 Great and Holy Pascha

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

ings and set up a schedule. You will be notified when we'll be at your home when a new schedule is set. Thank you for your patience.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY has been rescheduled for **Sunday, March 9th** following the Divine Liturgy.

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED for the coming weeks. Please speak with Presvytera Maria if you would like to sponsor one.

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.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF NURSING. Please contact Susan Benoit at sbenoit@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.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

ETERNAL FATHER: It is your will that the church must struggle to fashion the world into an all-embracing people who will find their way to you. By your grace, enable us to realize our future, namely, the attainment of citizenship with you in your new Jerusalem, created by cross and resurrection. And lead us to that state of redeemed bodiliness that we believe and hope awaits us.

By the grace and mercies and love for us of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



ON this day we commemorate the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the righteous Judge.

The most-godly Fathers place the present commemoration of the Second coming of Christ after the two parables of the preceding Sundays so that no one, having learned of God's love for humanity, might lead a life of negligence, saying to himself, "God loves humanity, and when I finally cease sinning, everything will go easily."

Hence, they appointed the remembrance of that fearful day in order to frighten the negligent with the thought

of death and the anticipation of the future torments and rouse them to the acquisition of virtue so that they will not merely trust in God's love for man but also bear in mind that He is a just Judge who rewards everyone according to his deeds.

The Holy Fathers placed this feast on Meatfare Sunday in order to check the indulgence and gluttony that usually occurs just before Lent by means of the fear this observance inspires just before Lent by means of the fear this observance inspires and to urge us on to sympathy for our neighbor. We can also understand this another way: by indulging ourselves, we were expelled from Eden and came under judgment and the curse — hence the present feast was placed here. And on the next Sunday, in the person of Adam, we shall be removed from delight of eating many foods, corresponding to the model of Eden, until Christ comes and brings us back to Paradise.

O Christ our God, through Your unutterable love for humanity, count us worthy to hear Your desired voice, and number us with the righteous, and have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

LISTEN TO THE WEEKLY NATIONAL ORTHODOX RADIO BROADCAST "COME RECEIVE THE LIGHT"

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

FOOD WILL NOT COMMEND US BEFORE GOD

THIS is the third and last preparatory week before Great Lent — the Sunday of the Last Judgment, also known as Meatfare (since we refrain from eating meat beginning the next day). The Epistle lesson is taken from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, 8:8-9:2. In this section St. Paul takes up the question of eating meat that has been offered to idols. He gives us two important principles that flow out of his understanding of what happens when a person accepts Christ and is incorporated into Him. The first is that we become free from servitude to the Law, to the world and to the Evil One. The second is that in Christian morality, charity (*agapé*) is a law above everything else.

St. Paul is answering a question addressed to him by the Corinthian community. They wanted to know if it were permissible for a Christian to eat meat that had been offered in sacrifice to a pagan god; and, if so, in which circumstances? This was a complicated issue. Usually, only a small portion of an animal was actually used as the sacrificial offering. The rest remained the property of the priests of the temple. This is how they supported themselves. As you might imagine there was a great deal remaining and this was sold to the butchers for purchase in the marketplace. You could never be certain if the meat you were buying had been offered to a pagan god.

There was another problem, one having to do with social relations. Very often a Christian would be invited by family or friends to some important event, like a birthday or a marriage — a family festival. These could be held in the pagan temple where there were special rooms available for such occasions. The food offered there had been given in sacrifice to the pagan god. Even if these events were held at home, the meat certainly had been offered in sacrifice. For a person of conscience this presented a real dilemma. For a recent convert from paganism, this represent-

ed a severe temptation, a kind of backtracking. For a Jewish convert, to eat meat sacrificed to a pagan god was unthinkable; Jews would have died before they would ever do such a thing. We Orthodox Christians face similar dilemmas. We are often invited to events and celebrations that fall on fasting days; this happens especially during the Christmas holiday season. While not necessarily as severe a matter of conscience as in the pagan world, we too are presented with the choice of either breaking the fast or offending our host. This is the issue the Corinthians have asked St. Paul to address.

Here it would be helpful if we read the entire section, from verses 8:8-13: "Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall."

The two questions around food ("fasting") have to do with our own *understanding* of 'food' in our greater relationship with God, and with our brother's or sister's *sensibility* regarding the same question. Food itself is absolutely neutral. God is not interested in what we eat; or in St. Paul's phrase: "Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do." In a very deep sense the fasting rules we follow are arbitrary. To adopt total vegetarianism certainly makes sense, but this will not put us in a better stance before God. What puts us in a better position before God is the

quality of our heart, not our stomach.

So, St. Paul tells the Corinthians, do you think you have a superior 'knowledge' such that you can eat idol-meat? You are destroying your fellow Christian who is 'weaker' and sees your license as a scandal; or, sees your license as a temptation.

If I knew my brother or sister were an alcoholic and that by drinking in front of them I would tempt them back to drink — even though I thought that I could regulate my own drinking — would my drinking in front of them be acceptable? Do I not have an obligation toward them? Is it not *agapé* love that is required of me?

St. Paul tells the Corinthians: "if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall." It is not only God that we need to be concerned with when we fast, it is also our brother and sister. We are 'fasting' together. We are struggling and striving together. We are each supporting one another. The old Latin saying obtains here especially well: *Unus Christianus, nullus Christianus* — One Christian, No Christian. We cannot be an individual Christian; we are Christians together, in community.

The holy fathers and mothers of our Church have given us the gift of the Fast. We are to use it for our own discipline, self-control, and spiritual progress. We are also to use it for the benefit of our brothers and sisters. Let not our zeal scandalize them. But also, let not our own weaknesses lessen our resolve to strive toward holiness and communion with God.

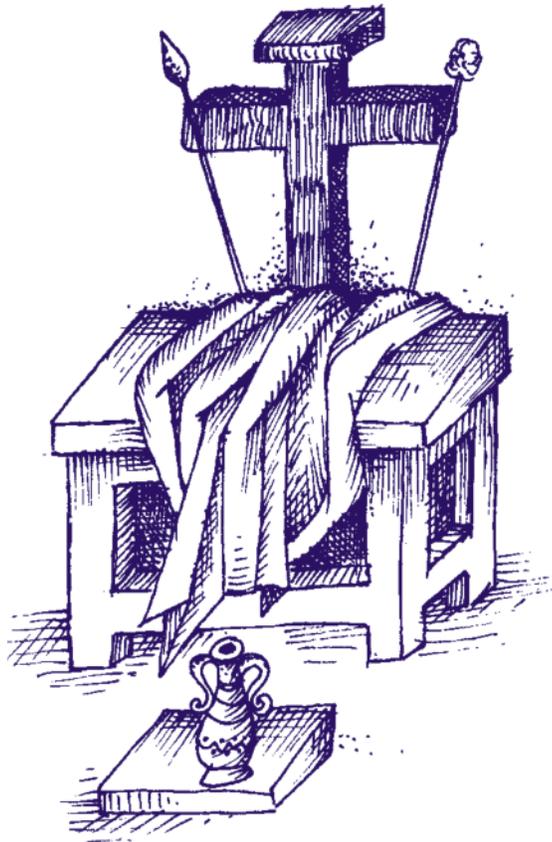
FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES 2014

Wednesday, March 5, 2014
St. Nicholas Church

Wednesday, March 12, 2014
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, March 19, 2014
St. George Cathedral



Wednesday, March 26, 2014
St. Mary's Assumption

Wednesday, April 2, 2014
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, April 9, 2014
St. George Cathedral

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest 'pot-luck' lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others.