

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 2, 2014

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

GREAT LENT begins TOMORROW
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
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 dona-
tions. Please see Presvytera Maria or
Chris Toda.

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

**A HUGE "THANK YOU" TO: Michael
Gourgouras, Mary Anna, Paul and
Allie Dymek** for producing yet another
successful and delicious luncheon! St.
Nicholas is fortunate to have your gen-
erous commitment and stewardship.
ALSO, a special thanks to **Lisa Miel-
nicki and George & Angela Demake**

**GREETERS TEAM 1:
V. GERALD BELBA & CĂLIN GALERIU**

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW C:
PRIZIO FAMILY**



CHEESEFARE SUNDAY — THE SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS THE CASTING OUT OF ADAM AND EVE FROM PARADISE

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 13:11-14:4 ☩ **GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:14-21**
TONE 3 ☩ **MATINS GOSPEL 3**

for their sponsorship of the luncheon
which really allows for the fruits of our
labors to benefit St. Nicholas and pro-
vide for an opportunity for fellowship
and community for the parish. And fi-
nally, **thanks to all who helped** with set
up, preparations, clean up, serving and
all the rest. **Thanks from the bottom of
our hearts!**

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOX VESPERS
will be celebrated **March 9th, 6:00 pm,**
at St. George Cathedral, 30 Anna St,
Worcester.

THE PARISH COUNCIL will
hold its regular monthly
meeting on **Monday, March
10th at 6:30 pm.** Parish
Council Members, please let
Deb Sedares know if you are
unable to attend.

PITA BAKING, weather per-
mitting, **this Thursday,
March 6th** at 9:00 am. Every-
one's help is welcome. Ques-
tions? Please see Chris Toda.
No experience necessary!

**THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY
VOLUNTEERS** for working the Ortho-
dox Food Center on behalf of our
parish yesterday. Our regular commit-
ment is the first Saturday of the month
from 9am to noon. About 4 people are
needed. If you can help in this worth-
while ministry, please speak with
Nicole Peterson or Lisa Mielnicki. Our
next dates are: March 29th (we are re-
sponsible for the 5th Saturday this
month) and our regular Saturday, April
5th.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, March 3 Great Lent begins
Wed, March 5 PreSanctified Liturgy, St. Nick's 6 pm
Thurs, March 7 Pita Baking, 9 am
Sun, March 9 Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers 6 pm
Mon, March 10 Parish Council, 6:30 pm
Wed, March 12 PreSanctified Liturgy, St. Mary's 6 pm
Sun, March 16 Annual General Assembly
Sat, March 29 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Sat, April 5 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

THE ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY has been rescheduled for **Sunday, March 16th** following the Divine Liturgy.

TODAY WE CELEBRATE a memorial for the servant of God **Dr. Victor Lorian**, fallen asleep 40-days. *May his memory be eternal!*

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by his wife Mrs. Marina Lorian and family in his memory.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

COMPASSIONATE LORD: At night we sleep comfortably, in spite of the mediocrity of our lives. So now, finding ourselves alive, once more, and able to greet the beauty of another morning, we are disturbed at the lethargy in which we live. We beseech you, therefore: Give us determination to succeed in repentance. During these lenten days, change our ravenous appetites to control everyone and everything into a praiseworthy desire for self-control, so that, learning the wisdom of this self-restraint, we may enjoy the freedom of all your sons and daughters.

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.

THE SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS CHEESEFARE SUNDAY

On this day, Cheesefare Sunday, we commemorate the banishment of Adam, the First Creature, from the Paradise of Delight.

Our Holy Fathers appointed this commemoration before the beginning of Great Lent to demonstrate how beneficial the medicine of fasting is to human nature and how shameful are gluttony and disobedience by an example of the results of each. They set before us the example of Adam, the first formed man. Skipping over the detailed account of the innumerable things made for him in the world, they give a clear, case-in-point demonstration of how many evils he suffered — and hence introduced into our nature — from neglecting to fast for only a short time. Furthermore, they show that the first precept of God given to mankind was the ideal of fasting. By not keeping this precept but yielding instead to his stomach, or rather to the serpent-deceiver by the agency of Eve, Adam not

only failed to become God, but he also brought death upon himself and communicated this sickness to the entire human race. In order to remove the first Adam's indulgence, the Lord fasted forty days, thus obeying the commandment of fasting. This was the origin of the forty-day Fast of Great Lent. It was instituted by the Holy Apostles so that, if by means of Great Lent we keep the Fast, unlike Adam who did not, we might again enjoy the incorruptibility that he lost.

Therefore, it is because Adam neglected to fast just once that we have had to endure such woes. The commemoration of this is appointed now at the beginning of Holy Lent so that by remembering how many evils the failure to fast has brought upon us, we might welcome Great Lent eagerly and gladly keep the Fast. For by means of it, we can attain theosis — deification — of which Adam fell short. We shall attain this only by lamenting and fasting until the appointed time that God shall visit us. For it is not easy or feasible to regain what we have lost in any other way.

We should know that today we ask forgiveness from our brothers and sisters in Christ so that we may begin the race in the stadium of Great Lent unhindered by any animosity. As long as we live self-centered lives, we cannot forgive our neighbor — our ego will not allow it. Once our lives are God-centered, however, we are able to forgive others as God forgives us. Let us remember that God's mercy and forgiveness to us is often hidden in our mercy and forgiveness to others. Our Lenten journey is not an isolated or individual affair but a "family" event. Therefore, we are reminded in today's reading from the Holy Gospel that unless there is mutual forgiveness between one another, there can be no true reconciliation with God.

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.

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

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

LIVE HONORABLY, AS IN THE DAY

TOMORROW we begin Great Lent. The Scripture readings chosen for this Forgiveness Sunday are meant to give us some guidance as we set out. In the Gospel of Matthew (6:14-21) the Lord tells us to forgive one another, as well as to fast with joy and in secret. In the selection we read from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (13:11-14:4) we also receive some sound advice on the proper way to approach the Fast. As a way to steel the resolve of the Roman Christians, he reminds them of the sleep and darkness from which they have emerged, and the day of salvation that draws every closer. He also counsels them not to judge how and what people eat — this is an echo from last week's reading from First Corinthians.

One of the powerful themes during Lent, especially at both the beginning and end, is the Lord's return — His Second Coming. Not only did we hear of this in the last Sunday's Gospel lesson, but the same subject was also present in all of the weekday readings during the past two weeks. Many of these same readings, as well as others on the Lord's Coming, will be read during Holy Week.

As Christians we experience and live the reality of the Kingdom on two levels. The first is in the changed reality we now live because Jesus our Savior has come. St. Paul reminds the Roman of this in the first part of the reading. The second level is the expectation of the Lord's coming-again. We await the great day of judgment when the Lord will come in glory. Then everything and everyone will be sorted out. This is the Judgment spoken of in last week's Gospel reading.

When we hear words like 'sleep' and 'waking' or 'night' and 'day', these are used to give us a way to understand a deeper spiritual reality: our movement from captivity to evil, to freedom in Christ. So, St. Paul tells the Romans: "You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from

sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." (v. 11-12) The early Christians (St. Paul included) believed that the Lord would be coming again soon. In addition, everyone in these communities was a convert to faith in Jesus Christ. Both the darkness they had left and the day drawing near were very palpable to them. It is hard to feel this same immediacy for us who have grown up in the Good News of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, part of our objective during Lent is to heighten and deepen within us the experiences of which St. Paul speaks.

St. Paul next turns to how we should actually live now: "Let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." (v. 13-14) It would be easy to interpret these lines as St. Paul being 'prudish,' but this is not the case. St. John Chrysostom says that St. Paul is not speaking against normal partying, drinking, socializing or conjugal relations. He is warning us against the excesses of these that lead us to pervert our true human nature — our nature in Christ.

The fast is meant as a time for us to regain our sense of who we are and what we are called to be. To "live honorably as in the day" is to embrace our true selves — who God created us to be and to which He calls us again.

The second theme in this week's reading concerns judgment: forming opinions about and criticizing others. He uses the same categories of 'weak' and 'strong' as he did when writing to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 8:8ff). This suggests that the matter of whether or not a Christian could or should eat food offered to idols was being discussed in Churches through-

out the ancient world. While today we might not face the question of food offered to pagan gods, we do have the Church's fasting rules that present a similar spiritual challenge.

St. Paul says: "Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand." (v. 14:1-4)

The first thing that strikes us is that the 'weak' are eating vegetables, and the 'strong' are eating freely. Our fasting rules are the absolute inverse: the strong are those who abstain and the weak are eating freely. Fasting is an important spiritual discipline, but it is our own personal discipline. We fast not because God needs our fasting, but rather because we need to change our focus from our stomach and desires, to the deeper reality of our love for God and His love for us. When we are tied down to the things of earth, it is hard to ascend toward Heaven.

Because fasting requires us to be disciplined, it is very easy to fall into the sin of pride. We may feel our fasting deserves some recognition, by God and others. We can feel we are better than those who do not fast, or, do not fast rigorously. But, "who are you to pass judgment on servants of another?" Our fasting is our own, something private between us and God. Our good works are our own, a secret between us and God. Our prayer is our own, the quiet conversation we have with our Lord. But, may each of us grow together during this time of the Fast, and so be worthy to see the Light of Christ's Resurrection.

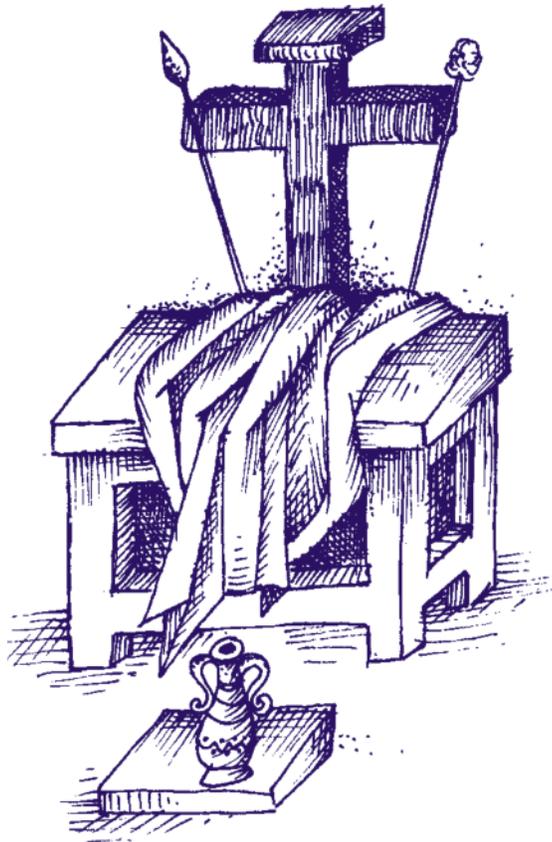
FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

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.

We venerate your pure image O Good One, begging forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God. Of Your own will You condescended to ascend upon the Cross in the flesh and delivered those you created from the bondage of the enemy. Wherefore, thankfully we cry out: When You came to save the world You filled all things with joy, O our Savior.



Triumph of Orthodoxy Vespers

Sunday, March 9th 6:00 PM
Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches
of Central Massachusetts

St. George Cathedral
30 Anna St.
Worcester, MA 01604