

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 9, 2014

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

### *GREAT LENT HAS BEGUN!*

**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.

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

**THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY** **Wednesday, March 12th** will be at **St. Spyridon Cathedral**. Liturgy begins at **6:00 pm**. Persons wishing to receive Holy Communion must prepare themselves in the usual manner, including toasting from at least noon.

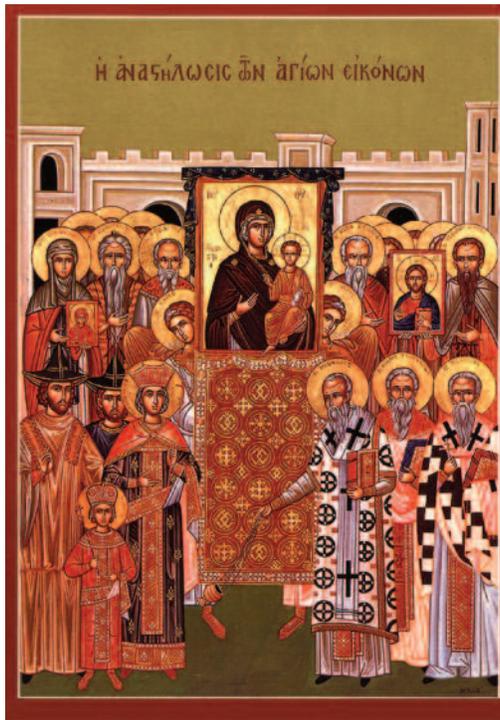
**THE PARISH COUNCIL** will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, March 10th at 6:30 pm**. Parish Council Members, please let Deb Sedares know if you are unable to attend.

**PITA BAKING**, weather permitting, **this Thursday, March 13th** at 9:00 am. Everyone's help is welcome. Questions? Please see Chris Toda. No experience necessary!

**GREETERS TEAM 2:**  
**GEORGE DEMAKE &**  
**MARGARITE LANDRY**

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**

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



**FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT**  
**THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY**  
**40 HOLY MARTYRS OF SEBASTIA**  
APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 13:11-14:4  
GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:14-21  
TONE 4    ☩    MATINS GOSPEL 4

**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 **Gary Michael Soter**, the son of George and Carol Soter. *May his memory be eternal!*

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by **George and Carol Soter and family** in his memory.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**A LECTURE ON ARCHBISHOP ANASTASIOS OF ALBANIA**, sponsored by the

Hellenic Arts Society, will be held on **Sunday, March 16th, at St. Spyridon Cathedral Hall**. Fr. Luke Veronis will speak on His Beatitude and how this Professor of World Religions at the University of Athens became a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, one of the most prominent voices in Orthodoxy today, and the greatest contemporary Orthodox missionary who carries the message of Good News to all the corners of the world!

## 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](mailto: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](http://www.htnr.net).

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, March 9 Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers 6 pm  
Mon, March 10 Parish Council, 6:30 pm  
Wed, March 12 PreSanctified Lit, St. Spyridon 6 pm  
Thurs, March 13 Pita Baking, 9 am  
Sun, March 16 Annual General Assembly  
Wed, March 19 PreSanctified Liturgy, St. George 6 pm  
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 CALLING OF NATHANIEL

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

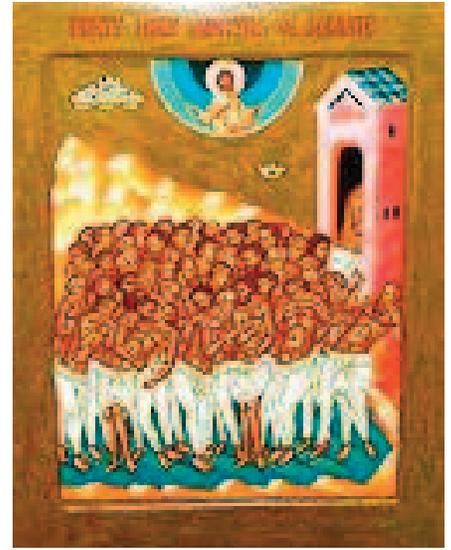
LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

ONLY TRUE GOD, who created the days and the nights - one for labor and good works and doing what is right, and the other so that we might rest from our toils — you who delight in our life and take pleasure in whatever good we do: During this lenten season, we beseech you to strip us of all vestiges of darkness and clothe us in the new humanity radiant with the light of virtue. Prepare. us for the paschal mysteries by letting our minds and hearts be filled with the praise of your name and not with apathy and indifference.

For yours is dominion, and yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE FORTY HOLY MARTYRS OF SEBASTIA

These holy Martyrs, who came from various lands, were all soldiers under the same general. Taken into custody for their faith in Christ, and at first interrogated by cruel means, they were then stripped of their clothing and cast onto the frozen lake which is at Sebastia of Pontus, at a time when the harsh and freezing weather was at its worst. They endured the whole night naked in such circumstances, encouraging one another to be patient until the end. He that guarded them, named Aglaius, who was commanded to receive any of them that might deny Christ, had a vision in which he saw heavenly powers distributing crowns to all of the Martyrs, except one, who



soon after abandoned the contest. Seeing this, Aglaius professed himself a Christian and joined the Martyrs on the lake, and the number of forty remained complete. In the morning, when they were almost dead from the cold, they were cast into fire, after which their remains were thrown into the river. Thus they finished the good course of martyrdom in 320, during the reign of Licinius. These are their names: Acacius, Aetius, Aglaius, Alexander, Angus, Athanasius, Candidus, Chudion, Claudius, Cyril, Cyri- on, Dometian, Domnus, Ecdicius, Elias, Eunoicus, Eutyches, Eutychius, Flavius, Gaius, Gorgonius, Helianus, Heraclius, Hesychius, John, Lysi- machus, Meliton, Nicholas, Philocte- mon, Priscus, Sacerdon, Severian, Sisinius, Smaragdus, Theodulus, Theophilus, Valens, Valerius, Vi- vianus, and Xanthias.



# MOSES FASTED AND SAW GOD

**T**HE EPISTLE lesson for this first Sunday of Lent is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews (11:24-26; 32-40). In chapter eleven of Hebrews St. Paul speaks of the meaning of faith and opens with his famous definition: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) He then gives us examples of people who down through the centuries, while not seeing and realizing the promise given them by God, nevertheless continued to persevere. Some of the verses from today's reading (v. 32-40) are also read on the Sunday before Christmas to remind us of how God's promise was realized in the birth of the Messiah. We read these words again, as we begin the Fast, to remind ourselves of the faith of all of the holy people — the saints— who persevered, never faltering in their faith.

What St. Paul says in Hebrews bears directly on what we celebrate this first Sunday of Lent. We remember how after a long civil struggle, holy images — icons — were restored in the life and worship of the Church. And while the struggle centered around painted or mosaic images of our Lord, his mother, and the other saints, the issue went much deeper than a controversy over artwork. The issue was, and continues to be, how does the invisible God make Himself known in our world?

The first and most important way God is visible in the world is in each of us. We believe that every human being is created in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). I think it is not too much to say we are God's living icons, or, at the very least, we are called to be that. This verse of Genesis says that God created us in His image and likeness. Reflecting on these two words, theologians have come to see a growth dynamic between the image of God "burned" into our very being, and the day-to-day way we strive to make that image within us real and visible. The men and women we call "holy" are

those who through trial and adversity kept their faith with God. When we look at them, we see God. More importantly, when a holy person looks at us, they too see God, in spite of all of our imperfections and doubts — the ways we struggle with our faith.

Today the iconoclast struggle takes a different form. Many fellow Christians have difficulty understanding the role of saints. The most straight-forward way to understand why we honor the saints is that these holy people — some of whom we recognize and know, but vastly more whom we do not know and are known only by God — are given to us as examples and role models. In a world where celebrities are idolized and discarded, we are in serious need of people who we can trust and follow.

The beauty of the saints is that they are people like us; people created in God's image who struggled to make their likeness match God's design. Some speak to us more directly because we can recognize our own struggle in the difficulties they endured. Others we simply admire for their total commitment to God and neighbor. They reveal God in a real and actual way. They worked and work in the world, making His presence known.

In this eleventh chapter St. Paul cites many such examples of persons with faith, but he highlights two in particular: Abraham and Moses. The verses we read before Christmas featured Abraham, because he was Jesus' very-great-grandfather, through Mary. In the first three verses of today's reading St. Paul concentrates on Moses.

We begin Lent by remembering Moses first and foremost because he is a "type" or image of Christ. Both were liberators. Moses foreshadowed the freedom Christ would bring. As Moses freed the children of Israel from slavery to Pharaoh and Egypt, Jesus, our Savior, freed us from slavery to Satan and death. As Moses led his people through

the waters of the Red Sea changing them from slaves to free persons, our Lord changes us from mortal to immortal in the waters of Baptism. As Moses renounced his royal status, embracing the low-status of his people, Christ left the heights of heaven to be one with us.

This is how St. Paul puts it: "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward." (v. 24-26)

Moses renounces the comfort of Pharaoh's house, choosing to "share ill-treatment with the people of God." In Philippians St. Paul speaks of how Christ identified himself with us, his people, by emptying himself. He took on the form of a servant. Even though he was in the form of God, he did not cling to his equality with God. He became humble and obedient, even to the point of death. (cf. Philippians 2:6-8)

In Moses we see a preview of what God was planning for us in Jesus Christ. In Moses' faith we see what God intends for each one of us, if we too share his faith. But lest we think that this faith Moses had was easy for him, pick up your Bible and read the Book of Exodus. It's not long. In it you will read not only of the confrontation with Pharaoh, but also the struggles Moses had with his brother Aaron, the whining of the Israelites, and his own temptations and sins. Throughout, he persevered and was rewarded by God.

In a hymn we sang last Sunday during Matins we heard: "Moses fasted for forty days and saw God." We are encouraged to follow his example, especially during Lent, so that we too might see Christ, radiant and risen.

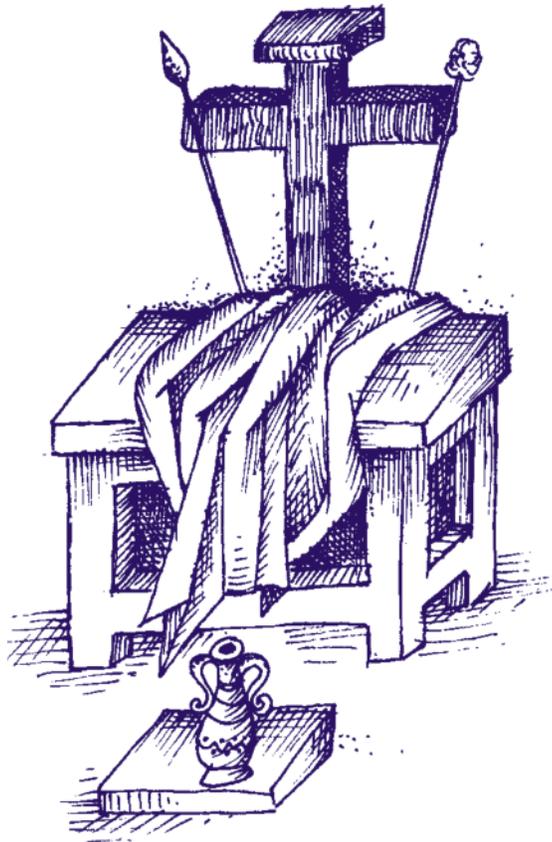
FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

# 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.