

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 30, 2014

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY Wednesday, April 2nd will be at St. Spyridon. Liturgy and begins at 6:00 pm. Persons wishing to receive Holy Communion must prepare themselves in the usual manner, including total fasting from at least noon.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff the Orthodox Food Center **THIS coming Saturday, April 5th.** About 4 people are needed. 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 Peterson or Lisa Mielnicki.**

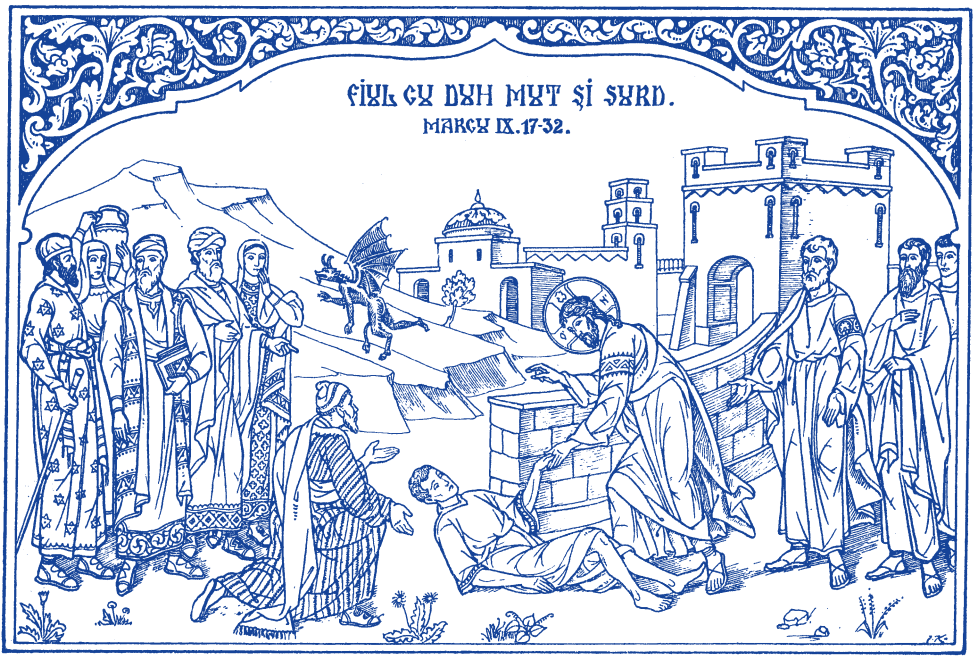
BAKING ORDERS FOR EASTER need to be in by **Sunday, April 6th.** If you have family or friends who would like pitas, pastry, or pastry platters for the holiday, please make sure we get the orders in time! Order forms are at the candles. **Any questions, please contact Chris Toda.**

PITA BAKING, weather permitting, **this Thursday, April 3rd** at 9:00 am. Everyone's help is welcome. Questions? Please see Chris Toda. No experience necessary!

GREETERS TEAM 1:
V. GERALD BELBA & CĂLIN GALERIU

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW C:
PRIZIO FAMILY



FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 6:13-20 ✙ GOSPEL: MARK 9:17-32
TONE 7 ✙ MATINS GOSPEL 7

A HOLY THURSDAY/GREAT FRIDAY VIGIL will be held following the Service of the 12 Gospels of our Lord's Passion (Matins of Great and Holy Friday). Teens and others interested in participating in the Vigil please speak with **Deb Sedares.**

THE GREAT FRIDAY CHILDREN'S RETREAT will be held on **Friday, April 18 starting at 10:30 am,** and concluding with a celebration of Great Vespers at 2:00 pm. All children grades kindergarten through 8th are welcome to attend. Younger children are welcomed accompanied by a parent. A sign-up sheet will be posted at the candle stand. Please be sure to register your child to attend. Besides assisting with the children's lessons and activities, assistance is needed with lunch, snacks and other logistics. For additional information and offers to assist, please

contact **Valarie Stamoulis or Mary Anna Dymek.**

DONATIONS FOR MIDNIGHT PASCHAL MEAL are requested. Please see **Presvytera Maria** if you would like to contribute and assist with preparing and serving the meal. Please join with your fellow parishioners to celebrate the Resurrection and break-the-fast together. **All are welcome!**

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wed, April 2 Pre-Sanctified Lit at St. Spyridon 6pm
Thurs, April 3 Pita Baking, 9 am
Sat, April 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Wed, April 9 Pre-Sanctified Lit at St. George 6pm
Sun, April 13 Palm Sunday & Luncheon
Fri, April 18 Great Friday Children's Retreat
Sun, April 20 Great and Holy Pascha

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

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

LEND AN EAR, LORD, and answer us, for we are poor and miserable! Look after our souls, for we are your friends; save your servants, O God, for we trust in you! Attend to our prayers, and show us a sign of your favor as we struggle for true repentance during this lenten season. Enable us to grow in the spirit of the prophets, to exercise the faith of the apostles, to win the nobility of the martyrs, to attain the wisdom of the fathers, and to imitate all the virtues of the saints, so that with them we may arrive at the paschal mysteries of your only Son.

For you deserve all glory, honor, and worship, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THANKS TO THE "E-WASTE RECYCLING DAY" CREW, spearheaded by Gerry Belba. Our next "recycling day" is Saturday, May 31st.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the **Christo family**.

PALM SUNDAY DINNER

Please join us for our annual **PALM SUNDAY DINNER** following the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, April 13, 2014**. A traditional baked fish dinner will be served and homemade baked macaroni and cheese for children. **Tickets are**

\$20.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children. Thanks to the generosity of **Mike and Casie Soter, and the Apostola/Mossaides families**, all proceeds from the dinner will benefit St. Nicholas Church. Reservations may be made at church, by e-mail or by calling the church at 508-845-0088 and leaving a message.

WE ALSO NEED HELP with preparing the meal and setting the hall for the dinner following the liturgy on St. Lazarus Saturday, as well as assistance with serving the dinner and clean up following. **A sign-up sheet is posted on the Stewardship Bulletin Board** in the hall or you can e-mail Deb Sedares (dsedares@pinehills.com)

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

AT HOLY TRINITY are always posted on the website. Current positions include: Several CNA, LPN and RN positions available. Also, LPN and CNA positions available at the Ichabod Washburn Hospice Residence. For information on these positions and other openings, please visit: www.htnr.net.

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.

DONATIONS FOR HOLY WEEK

General donations in any amount to defray the cost of decorations for the Paschal Feast are most appreciated. Some specific needs are:

Flowers for Palm Sunday Icon	\$50.00
Palms	\$100.00
Flowers for Bridegroom Icon	\$50.00
Holy Thursday Gospel Candles	\$60.00
Wreaths for Cross (Great Friday)	\$50.00
(Resurrection)	\$100.00
Resurrection Icon	\$50.00
Bay Leaves for Holy Saturday	\$100.00
1 Gallon of Olive Oil	\$25.00
½ lb Incense	\$40.00
Priest's Paschal Candle	\$50.00
Rose Oil for Epitaphion	\$25.00

Flowers for Epitaphion	\$500.00
Decorations for Pascha	\$350.00

Please see Fr. Nick or Lillian Chachi to make a donation

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

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

PROMISES GIVEN AND KEPT

THIS FOURTH SUNDAY of Great Lent brings us closer to our spiritual goal: the light of our Lord's Resurrection. Today's Apostolic reading is taken from the Letter to the Hebrews, 6:13-20. There are two aspects of this passage that I would like to concentrate on. The first is Melchizedek: who he is, the nature of his priesthood, and how he figures into the prophecy of the coming Messiah. The second is God's promise to Abraham, how he kept it and what this promise means for us.

I have always been fascinated by Melchizedek. Before I was even able to really consider who he was and why St. Paul wrote about him so extensively, I just loved his name. It means "king of justice", but without knowing that, I thought it sounded exotic and made me want to find out more about him.

The reality is that there is very little written about him in the Bible. The only place where he actually appears is in Genesis. Here is what is recorded: "After [Abram's] return from the defeat of Chedor-laomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him a tenth of everything." (Genesis 14:17-20)

From these three verses a whole understanding of how the Messiah's coming would change the nature of our relationship with God was developed and written about in the Jewish community. St. Paul's description in the 7th chapter of Hebrews follows the commonly held beliefs of rabbis and Jewish scholars compiled in the Talmud (the accepted commentary on the Jewish Scripture).

The first thing that they under-

stood is that the Messiah is to be eternal king and priest. Because Melchizedek appeared "out of nowhere" and then "disappears", without father and mother, they saw this as a sign of the eternal Messiah.

The next insight taken from these verses is that Melchizedek is superior to Abram (later to be Abraham). After his victory against the kings who were in and around Jerusalem, Abram offers tithes (a tenth) to Melchizedek. This means that he recognized him as a priest of "God Most High." This action would later be interpreted in the Talmud and by St. Paul as recognizing the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek. Christian writers saw the offering of bread and wine as a foreshadowing of the Eucharist.

Melchizedek is the king of Salem, which later became known as Jerusalem. "Salem" means peace. So, Melchizedek is the King of Peace (another title of the Messiah). In addition, through Melchizedek's encounter with Abraham, it is clear that God decided Jerusalem would be the center of His earthly presence among us long before the descendants of Abraham return from their captivity in Egypt.

Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek has a mystical quality to it. At this point in Abraham's story he has just begun his journey of faith. God Most High has chosen him, but Abram does not know how to respond. Some Church fathers say it is Christ Himself who is appearing to Abram in the person of Melchizedek, in the same way He appeared to Moses in burning bush. Often, when we need God the most He appears to us, in a mystical guise, to help us and direct us.

This leads me to the second point I would like to highlight from today's reading: God's promise, His word. St. Paul speaks of "God's oath" as immutable — not able to be altered or changed. He uses the human example of giving an oath as a way to remove

doubt during a dispute. We are asked to give an oath when testifying at a trial or in other official circumstances as a way to demonstrate that we speak the absolute truth. Our word is our bond. If we lie we are imprisoned. God promised many things to Abraham, and St. Paul says that because he couldn't swear by anything greater, he swore by Himself. This means God wanted to secure His promise in such a way that Abram would believe him.

Yet still, Abram needed more assurance of the promise. He wanted to know with some certainty that what God had told him, had promised to him, would indeed come to pass. God promised him a grand legacy, yet he had no heir, no son or daughter. He asked God for a sign.

God told him to look to the heavens, to the night sky, and said that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars he saw. Unfortunately, because of modern nighttime "light pollution" very few of us get to see the night sky in all of its brilliance, but Abram did. "And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6) He saw the myriad of stars in the heavens and believed the truth of God's word.

Because of his faith and as a sign of it, God gave Abram a new name: Abraham, and Sarai his wife: Sarah. He chose them, well beyond childbearing years, to found a new people: Israel. From this nation the Savior was born.

So many signs have been given to us, not only in Biblical times, but also here and now. We pray to God and He hears us. We ask for His help and He gives it. The world is full of suffering and pain; we will not escape this, at least not in this life. However, the Lord gives us the proof of His promise in the suffering of His Son, and His rising from the dead. In Jesus the promise is fulfilled. Everything we endure is not without purpose. God's word is true.

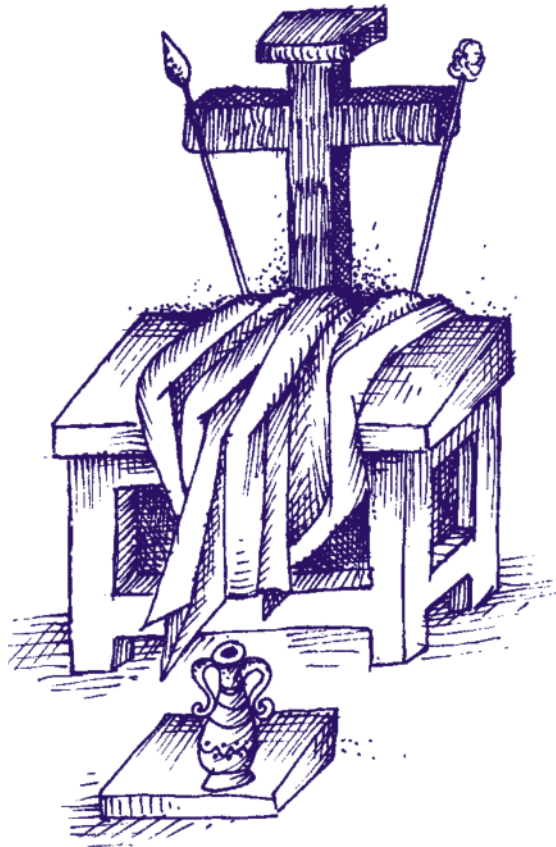
FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

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.