

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN APRIL 6, 2014

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY Wednesday, April 9th will be at St. George. Liturgy 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 **TODAY, 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.**

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, April 7th at 6:30 pm.** Parish Council Members, please let Deb Sedares know if you are unable to attend.

**GREETERS TEAM 2:
MARY ANNA DYMEK &
MARGARITE LANDRY**

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

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



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT — ST. MARY OF EGYPT

APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 9:11-14

GOSPEL: MARK 10:32-45 (REQUEST OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE)

TONE 8 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 8

PITA BAKING, weather permitting, **this Thursday, April 10th** at 9:00 am. Everyone's help is welcome. Questions? Please see Chris Toda. No experience necessary!

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

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, April 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Mon, April 7 Parish Council, 6:30 pm
Wed, April 9 Pre-Sanctified Lit at St. George 6pm
Thurs, April 10 Pita Baking, 9 am
Sun, April 13 Palm Sunday & Luncheon
Fri, April 18 Great Friday Children's Retreat
Sun, April 20 Great and Holy Pascha

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O YOU WHOSE PERFECT WILL gives birth to each new morning: As we throw off sleep to come before you, we are uncertain — even apprehensive — about this day and how it will turn out. We are bereft of the faith and love that normally engender hope, and, yet, in spite of everything, we somehow dare to aspire to greatness. Therefore, master, shatter the chains that bind us, open our eyes to the things as they really are, and give us success in struggling toward that blessed end, so that, with all your saints, we, too, may feast the paschal mysteries of Christ, our Lord.

For blest and glorified is your most honorable and magnificent name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

and break-the-fast together. *All are welcome!*

GREETERS ARE NEEDED to assist on Sundays with various activities including: greeting parishioners and visitors, activity at the candle stand, seating, and directing participants during the Liturgy. We would like to have a minimum of two greeters each Sunday. A "job description" is posted on the Church Bulletin Board. Greeters are scheduled to serve on a rotating basis, no more than once a month, except for special services such as during Holy Week. If you are interested in finding out more information, please see any member of the

Parish Council. All are welcomed. Thank You!

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

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
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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

THE HEAVENLY LITURGY

WITH THE FIFTH SUNDAY of Great Lent the Church, through Scriptural readings and hymns, is preparing us to participate in the cornerstone of our faith: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe that his death is no ordinary death, rather Jesus, innocent and blameless in every respect, consciously offers himself to be punished in the place of all of the rest of us who really deserved to be punished. He sacrifices himself for us.

Today's Gospel lesson from Mark (10:32-45) tells us of the conversation Jesus had with his disciples in which he directly tells them that he will not only be condemned to death, but that he will rise again three days later. The Apostolic reading is from the Letter to the Hebrews (9:11-14) where St. Paul speaks of the animal sacrifices offered under the Old Law, and how this practice was designed to prepare us so that we could understand and appreciate Jesus' sacrifice.

Sacrifice is a basic part of who we are as human beings. If we love we know about sacrifice. Parents constantly sacrifice for their children. Lovers repeatedly sacrifice themselves to prove their love. If we injure or offend someone, we try to find a way to repair what we've done, and it always involves a sacrifice.

Most early religions involved sacrifice of living things to their gods in order to repair and restore their relationship. Sometimes these offerings were acts of thanksgiving — sacrifices of food for a bountiful harvest. Sometimes these were sin offerings and could involve animals and even human beings. God's Covenant with His people, the children of Israel, required such sacrifices, all except human ones. Animals and plants were regularly offered. The Jerusalem Temple was the primary, if not only, place where these offerings were made.

In our modern urban society most of us have had very little experience with slaughtering an animal. The language of blood and offering of blood seems at best an abstraction. (We'd more than likely rather not think about it at all, in real terms.) The Scriptures, however, are full of this language. The Eucharist, the primary Christian celebration, centers on partaking of the Body and Blood of our Lord. I am sure that most of us have questioned, at least on one occasion, what could possibly be meant by so graphic an image.

Blood is the source of life. The Hebrews believed that being the source of life it was also a sign of the divine within us. This shouldn't be difficult for us to understand. When we describe someone who has had a mortal wound, we say that "the life is draining out of them." We speak of "the life that courses through our veins." If we are composed mainly of water, most of that water is in the form of blood.

Blood does at least two things in our bodies. It brings the nutrients, including oxygen, to every part of our body that allows our cells to grow and be maintained. It also takes away the waste. It is the medium for feeding and cleansing our body.

When an animal was sacrificed, especially when the animal was sacrificed on the Day of Atonement, its blood was used to purify and sanctify, not unlike the way in which we use Holy Water. The High Priest, when he offered this sacrifice, offered a double sacrifice: one for himself and his family, and the other for the people of Israel. The New Testament refers to Jesus as the High Priest, but unlike other high priests, Jesus had no need for the first sacrifice; he was and is pure. However, we are the ones who need the second sacrifice. Jesus becomes this sacrifice for us. Let us look at the text of today's reading:

"But when Christ appeared as a

high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (Heb 9:11-14)

It is important to remember that the author of Hebrews is speaking of a Heavenly altar. The earthly temple is modeled on the one in Heaven. In this earthly temple only the High Priest could enter the inner sanctuary, the Holy Place, and just once a year, and only after he had purified himself with a sacrifice. Jesus has no need of this purification. Rather, because he offered himself as a sacrifice, he carries within himself the purifying blood. He is the sacrifice. During the Liturgy in a prayer addressed to Christ, the priest says: to Christ: "you are the offer and the offered, the one who receives and is distributed." This poetic phrase captures the mystery of Jesus' self-sacrifice.

God comes to us in the person of Jesus the Christ, the Word of God. Out of love for us, He offers himself up as the one to be sacrificed. He is both High Priest and Sacrificial Offering.

While not exactly the same, there is an example I can offer that might help illustrate this mystery. During the Communist persecutions, there were people, priests, who knew they were going to be killed for Christ the next day. As is our rule, Liturgies are celebrated on consecrated altars in which the relics of saints have been placed.

Knowing that they themselves would be sacrificed as martyrs shortly, these men celebrated the Liturgy on themselves. They offered Christ's sacrifice on the altar of their soon-to-be sacrificed bodies.

We no longer offer animals or other humans; those were meant as a preparation for Christ's unique sacrifice. His sacrifice put an end to it. Instead our Lord gave us the sacrifice of bread and wine, the unbloody sacrifice. These he changes, through the Holy Spirit, into his Body and his Blood. When we partake of the life-giving Body and Blood of our Lord, we are redeemed and reconciled to God the Father through Jesus' sacrifice. We are purified and changed.

Moses constructed the earthly Tab-

ernacle after the image given him by God (Exodus 25). When we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, the Eucharist, we participate in the one Sacrifice of the Son of God. Just as Moses' Tabernacle was made according to the image of the Heavenly Tabernacle, so it is with us when we enter into the Divine Liturgy celebrated here on earth, a model of Heavenly Liturgy where God's Name is continually proclaimed.

It may be difficult for us to envision this Heavenly Liturgy, a place where Christ is enthroned, and the angels and saints unceasingly glorify God, but it exists. If God should so grace us, we might even catch a glimpse of this Heavenly Liturgy during the celebration of the Eucharist in our own parish. If our hearts are pure we will be given this foretaste of God's promise.

During the coming Paschal celebration, when we are given the opportunity to contemplate Jesus' suffering and sacrifice, let us ask God to give us this vision of the Heavenly Liturgy. At the same time, we should remember the people who out of love continually sacrifice themselves for us. They may be relatives or friends, but they may also be people whom we do not know, who serve us out of duty and love for all.

We should also ask our Lord to strengthen us for the trials and sacrifices that will be asked of us. Love requires sacrifice. If we love, especially as Christ loves, we will be asked to show it.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



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@pine-hills.com)