

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MAY 18, 2014

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

LOOKING FOR THIS YEAR'S HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE GRADUATES in our Parish so they can be recognized on Sunday, June 1st. If you know of a soon-to-be graduate, please inform Fr. Nick or Tim Rucho.

MEMORIAL DAY is Monday, May 26th. Fr. Nick will be at Hope Cemetery from 10:00 am. The common Memorial Service will be at noon at the Altar in Hope. If you would like Fr. Nick to visit a grave in another cemetery, please contact him to make arrangements: 508-845-0088.

AN "E-WASTE RECYCLING DAY" will be held on **Saturday, May 31st, from 9-2 here at the Church.** You can get rid of unwanted electronic appliances at a minimal cost and help protect the environment. **A few folks are needed to help** direct traffic into and out of the church parking lot. Please see Gerry Belba during coffee hour if you can help.

RELIGIOUS ED & "WELCOME SUMMER" PARISH COOKOUT: The last day of classes for Sunday School is this Sunday, May 18. We will end the Reli-

**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 PASCHA

THE SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

APOSTOLIC READING: ACTS 11:19-30 ☩ GOSPEL: JOHN 4:5-42

TONE 4 - MATINS GOSPEL 7

gious Ed year officially on Sunday, June 1 with our annual "Godparents and Grandparents Sunday." That Sunday, the youth of our parish will be greeters and assist with the service. Children (and adults) are encouraged to **invite their godparent or grandparent to join them at Divine Liturgy, after which a special prayer will be offered to affirm those relationships.** In addition, we will recognize our parish graduates (high school, college and post graduates) and conclude with a Parish Cookout on the grounds! Picnic blankets and lawn chairs are encouraged. A back yard

feast of hot dogs, hamburgers and sausages, with sides and all the fixings, will be served. Adults: \$15, Children: \$5. Thanks to the generosity of the Sedares

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Tues, May 20 Holy Trinity Gen Assembly, 7 pm
- Mon, May 26 Memorial Day, Hope Cemetery, noon
- Thurs, May 29 The Lord's Ascension
- Sat, May 31 Electronics Recycling 9am-2pm
- Sun, June 1 Godparents & Grandparents Cookout
Close of Religious Ed for year
- June 6-8 Grecian Festival
- Sat, June 7 Saturday of Souls, Lit 10 am
- Sun, June 8 Pentecost
- Fri, June 20 Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm
- Sat, July 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry 9am-12pm

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

Family who is sponsoring the Cookout, all proceeds from the day will benefit St. Nicholas Church. *All are welcome!*

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

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

THE HOLY TRINITY ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY will be held on Tuesday, May 20th at 7:00 pm at Holy Trinity. Each parish of the Council is allowed up to 5 delegates. If you would like to represent our parish please speak with either Fr. Nick or Deb Sedares.

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.



THE FEAST OF MID-PENTECOST

After the Saviour had miraculously healed the paralytic, the Hebrews, especially the Pharisees and Scribes, were moved with envy and persecuted Him, and sought to slay Him, using the excuse that He did not keep the Sabbath, since He worked miracles on that day. Jesus then departed to Galilee. About the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles, He went up again to the Temple and taught. The people, marvelling at the wisdom of His words, said, "How

NAMEDAYS

May 21

The Holy Equals-to-the-Apostles

Constantine and Helen

Constantine Apostol
Elaine Apostola
Konstantin Charalambides
Presvytera Eleni Christakos
Amalia Helene Collins
Hannah Constance Datz
Dina Entwistle
Iliana Victoria Fahey
Elena Galeriu
Ileana A Nace
V. Rev. Fr. Dean Paleologos
Constanța Papit
Eleni Polymeros
Elena Prelipcean
Elaine Rocheford
Dina K. Salerno
Eleanor Sedares
Elaine Tanacea
Dean Valoras

knows this man letters, having never learned?" But Christ first reproached their unbelief and lawlessness, then proved to them by the Law that they sought to slay Him unjustly, supposedly as a despiser of the Law. Therefore, since the things spoken by Christ in the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles are related to the Sunday of the Paralytic that just passed, and since we reached the midpoint of the fifty days between Pascha and Pentecost, the Church appointed this feast to tie the two great feasts into one. Therefore today's feast is called Mid-Pentecost.

It should be noted that there were three great Jewish feasts: the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Passover was celebrated on the 15th of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish calendar, which coincides with our March. This feast commemorated that day on which the Hebrews were commanded to eat the lamb in the evening and anoint the doors of their houses with its blood. Then, having escaped bondage and death at the hands of the Egyptians, they passed through the Red Sea to come to the Promised Land. It is also

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

OSKILLFUL AND INGENIOUS ARTISAN OF LIFE: On this glorious day of celebration, we come before you to thank you for raising your Son from death to the glory of new life at your right. As we celebrate his victory over death, we beseech you to remove the burdens that weigh heavily on our hearts. Dry our tears, and clothe us in the vesture of immortality, in that raiment that reflects the light of your glory. Today, as we stand here before you, prepare us for the joy of the eternal kingdom by directing our lives along the path of righteousness. Finally, at the end of our days, let us — together with all our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters, our teachers, and all those who have gone before us — receive the incorruptible crown in the fellowship of the kingdom on high.

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

called "the Feast of Unleavened Bread," because they ate unleavened bread for seven days. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the Passover, first of all, because the Hebrews had reached Mount Sinai after leaving Egypt, and there received the Law from God; secondly, it was celebrated to commemorate their entry into the Promised Land, where also they ate bread, after having been fed with manna forty years in the desert. Finally, they also celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles from the 15th to the 22nd of "the seventh month," which corresponds to our September. During this time, they live in booths made of branches in commemoration of the forty years they spent in the desert, living in tabernacles, that is, tents (Ex. 12:10-20; Lev. 23).

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

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

YOU WORSHIP WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW

WE LIVE IN A UNIQUE TIME IN HUMAN HISTORY. I'm not speaking of the technological marvels, nor of their ecological and environmental effects. I do not mean the social and political changes that began three hundred years ago and are still shaping and shaking nations and people everywhere. Rather, for the first time in our history the real spiritual debate is not between one conception of God over another; it is between people who believe and those who don't. I'm not referring solely to atheists — people who see natural materialist causes behind the existence of the universe. I'm thinking about the person who believes there's something out there, but can't really define it. The one who says, "I'm spiritual, but not religious."

Our world is engaged in scores of conflicts that most people would consider to be caused by religious differences. How often do we hear, "Religion causes so much hatred and killing"? Never mind that when one peels back the layers of slogans and stereotypes, there are usually very predictable motives behind the conflicts: poverty, power-grabbing, and social manipulation. By another name: sin.

Yet, when we read a headline about another suicide bombing we are very likely to blame religion in general, even while we know that fanatics, not saints, are pushing people to hate. Lumping all religion into one group steers people with some sense of the divine toward a mushy and fuzzy spirituality, lacking focus and discipline. Instead of a real search for God, we often settle for a warm feeling expressed by a Hallmark moment.

Today's Gospel reading addresses this phenomenon. St. John tells us of Jesus' encounter with a woman when he and his disciples were traveling through Samaria on their way back to Galilee (John 4:1-42). He started what we today would call an "interfaith dialogue." Jews and Samaritans did not

speak to one another. Jews considered the Samaritans to be apostates (worse than heretics). Nonetheless, Jesus asks her for a drink of water and the dialogue between them ensues. [It's an interesting passage and worth reading, but I lack the space to retell it here. Please read it.] For our purpose, know that there was as much animus between Jews and Samaritans then, as there presently is between any two groups of warring people in the Middle East. Needless to say everyone — the woman, the disciples and the villagers — were all surprised that Jesus had engaged her in a conversation.

Once the initial shock that Jesus would talk to her waned, she began to engage him in a discussion about their religious differences. They exchanged points of view, as we might today, but finally he says to her: "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:22-24). While not wanting to diminish her basic faith, the Lord also wanted to set the record straight.

Consider what the Lord says to her: "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews." When people speak of their spirituality using "warm and fuzzy" terms, they are in effect worshiping the God whom they do not know. They'll admit this outright. They will be unable to specify exactly what they believe. That's what they mean by, "I'm spiritual, not religious."

We shouldn't be surprised that people have a generally undefined notion of God. We Orthodox Christians believe God hard-wired us with a desire to know him. Human beings innately know there is a God and begin

searching for Him. Sociologists say there has never been a human society that was not religious in one way or another.

However, this general longing for God is not enough. To fully appreciate who God is and who we are, He needs to tell us. Hence: "We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews."

God chose a particular people, a particular tribe, to which to reveal Himself. He could have chosen any tribe. And through these very ordinary people, as saintly and sinful as any other, He slowly taught the way to godliness. God is a god of self-revelation. Without that revelation we would be caught up in endless Hallmark moments; warm and fuzzy sentiments that lead nowhere. Or, profound philosophical arguments that leave us spiritually empty.

God loves us and wants us to have a real relationship with Him. He sent us His Son in order to help us understand this. When the Samaritan woman Photini begins engaging in superficial theological argumentation, Jesus immediately brings her back to reality: "Go and get your husband and come back!" Of course, even though she's had five husbands, the man she's living with now is not her husband. God isn't interested in clever arguments. He wants us to be humble and real when we talk to Him, just as He is humble and real when He loves us.

It is impossible for us to love a God who is a "warm and fuzzy" feeling. It is like being married to a sentiment, not a person. It's in our head, not our being. We need to worship what we know.

To know God is the ultimate goal in life. It gives meaning to our existence. People can live without food and water easier than they can live without meaning. If we find ourselves adrift it is because "warm and fuzzy" is finally insufficient.

Christ is indeed Risen!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA