

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

JUNE 8, 2014

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**PITA BAKING**, this Thursday, June 12th at 9:00 am. Everyone's help is welcome. Questions? Please see Chris Toda. No experience necessary!

**THE PARISH COUNCIL** will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, June 9th at 6:30 pm**. Parish Council Members, please let Deb Sedares know if you are unable to attend.

**THANKS TO THOSE WHO MAKE OUR RELIGIOUS ED & "WELCOME SUMMER" PARISH COOKOUT POSSIBLE.** First of all to the Sedares family that sponsored the event. To those who prepared and cook. To those who set up and tore down. And to those who cleaned up and put away. We realized about \$800 for the Church from this event. Also, another congratulation and blessing to our graduates and our prayer that the Holy Spirit will strengthen and guide them.

**THE MUSTARD SEED MEAL** is scheduled for **Friday, June 20th**. The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day. **Help is needed Friday NOON** to cook and prepare

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

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW B:**  
MARIA KALPIDOU, TATIANA  
KARADIMITRIOU, ELIAS CHRISTO,  
DIMITRI CHRISTO



### THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

APOSTOLIC READING: ACTS 2:1-11 ☩ GOSPEL: JOHN 7:37-53; 8:12  
EVERYTHING ACCORDING TO THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

food, and **at 5:00 on Friday evening** to transport and serve. There is a sign-up sheet on the Stewardship Board in the Hall or contact Deb Sedares if you can help with preparing the meal. Contact **Fr. Nick** if you have any questions.

**COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED** for the coming weeks. Please speak with Presvytera Maria if you'd like to sponsor one. **ALSO**, the Coffee Hour will be going on summer vacation after June 29th. We'll pick it up again in the fall.

## 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.



### DATES TO REMEMBER

- June 6-8 Grecian Festival
- Sun, June 8 Pentecost
- Mon, June 9 Parish Council, 6:30 pm
- Thurs, June 12 Pita Baking, 9 am
- Fri, June 20 Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm
- Sat, July 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry 9am-12pm
- July 4-6 Archdiocesan Congress
- Sun, July 6 NO LITURGY
- Sun, Sept 21 stART on the Street Festival

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

## NAMEDAYS

### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**O**NLY TRUE GOD, known by reason to be one and by faith to be three, one God in three Persons; O eternal Father, who sent your only Son for our salvation, without ever being diminished by your love; O only Son, who came and took on our nature to save us, without ever being diminished by your self-sacrifice; and you, O all-holy Spirit, consoler, who share your gifts with us, without ever being diminished by your generosity! O divine Trinity: As we celebrate this feast of Pentecost, we beseech you to manifest your power in our lives by the growth that always heralds your presence. Undo and uproot all that is wrong with us. Refashion our minds and hearts with your wisdom and love, and enable us to labor unceasingly to banish all evil from our lives. By your gentleness make our minds and hearts supple and pliant, open and responsive to you in every moment that confronts us, and perfect and enrich our lives moment by moment, that we may reach the glory of eternal life.

For yours it is to have mercy on us and save us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.

**June 8**

*The Holy Martyr Kalliopi*

Kaliopi Demma

**June 15**

*The Sunday of All the Saints*

Amalia Polymeros

**June 27**

*The Holy Myrrh-bearer Joanna*

Joanne V. Prizio

**June 29**

*The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul*

Patrick Disho

Petraq Dragoti

Paul Dymek

Petrika Lolo

Kenneth Paul Maynard

Rev. Fr. Peter Michael Preble

Paul Soter

Peter Toda

Peter Demetri Tsongalis

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# DISCERNING THE SPIRIT

**I**T SEEMS TO BE COMMON TODAY to distinguish between being religious and spiritual. Seeing these two as opposing ideas would not have occurred to people even a few decades ago, but today we regularly hear people say, “I’m spiritual, but not religious.” We see this reflected in polls where large percentages of the population say they believe in God, without really defining what they might mean by God. Often it is a way of expressing the fact that they feel there is a transcendent aspect to life, but don’t quite know how to identify it. It’s spiritual.

Today is Pentecost. If there were ever a holiday for spiritual people, this is it. The description of how God’s Spirit came down on Jesus’ disciples as wind and fire surely is not the staid stuff of what most people think of as religion. The apostles were speaking in tongues, both foreign languages and the language of the Spirit (glossolalia). There was so much energy in the air that people thought they were drunk. They weren’t drunk; they were filled with the Spirit.

St. Paul says that it is only the spirit within us that can truly know what it is to be human. And also, “no one comprehends what is truly God’s except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11). So, it isn’t too far off the mark when in quieter reflective moments people speak of themselves as being spiritual. They accurately sense that it is through their spirit they get a glimpse into their true selves. It is by listening to their heart they sense there is more to existence than what they can see and touch.

St. Paul says something more about Christians. He says that we have the Spirit of God, and through Him we have received the gifts of the Spirit (v. 12). He says that even to be able to discern these gifts we ourselves need to be spiritual, that is, not bound by “earthly cares,” as we sing in the Cherubim

Hymn. Here is an important difference between being “spiritual” in the way I think most people mean it, and being spiritual in the way St. Paul means it.

The Cherubim Hymn can be a helpful way to understand about what it means to be spiritual. First, it is unique among all of the hymns and prayers in the Liturgy. We are not directing our words to God, rather we are speaking to one another and ourselves. “*We who mystically represent ...*” “*Let us lay aside all earthly cares ... that we may receive ...*” These words are meant to help us align our spirit with God’s.

The other important aspect of the Cherubim Hymn is that it marks a transition from the Liturgy of the Word to the Liturgy of the Eucharist; from teaching and thinking about God, to the direct experience of God. We move from hearing about God to actually tasting Him.

So much of the first part of the Liturgy is given to getting our minds and hearts focused. One purpose for all of the repetitions at the beginning of the Liturgy — “Again and again ...” — is that it takes time to chase the noise of life out of our minds. We cannot listen to the Spirit and experience the love of God if our heads are filled with thoughts of what we are going to be doing after Liturgy, or how we are going to get the kids to their sports practice, or the difficulties we’re facing in the workplace. So, again and again, the deacon calls us back to the spiritual work at hand.

This spiritual work is difficult. Anyone who has tried to sit quietly and simply free their minds can tell you that our minds are in constant motion. We are unable to control even a single thought. When people speak of religion negatively, they often point to the structures or rules, but we can never accomplish anything worthwhile without discipline. It is like that old vaude-

ville joke, “How do you get to Carnegie Hall? ... practice, practice, practice.”

My concern when people set up a tension between religion and spirituality is that they have not given full consideration to the spiritual aspect of our existence. When St. Paul speaks of the spiritual person he says that she or he has integrated the “rules” in their heart (Romans 2:15). This is also what Jesus meant when he said that he came to fulfill the Law, not to destroy it (Matthew 5:17). Rules and organizations are not ends in themselves. They are means to a higher way of being.

Another real danger is when people think the spiritual realm is always benign. It is not. Within the Liturgy and in the spiritual writings we refer to many evil spirits who wish to distract and even destroy us. Popular culture is filled with horror movies and other images of evil, but I sometimes wonder how seriously people take these examples. We *should* take them seriously. When we witness people doing terrible and horrific things, which spirit do you think they have? Not every “angel of light” comes from God.

Our spirit longs to know God. When we embrace Christ, God sends His Spirit on us as a sign of our adoption as His sons and daughters. St. Paul says, “the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26). God’s very Spirit guides us in the knowledge of truth.

So, when you’re tempted to say that you may not be religious, but you are spiritual, just make sure that you mean it the right way. Yes, reject stiff and narrow adherence to dead rules. And, yes, embrace the Spirit who penetrates the very depths of our being. Enliven yourself with God’s love.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA