

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

JUNE 22, 2014  
THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**THANKS TO THE MUSTARD SEED VOLUNTEERS!** Those who cooked and those who served the meal this past Friday! The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day. Our next scheduled meal is **August 15th**. Contact Fr. Nick if you'd like to help.

**NO LITURGY** on Sunday, July 6th. Fr. Nick will be attending the Archdiocesan Congress in Chicago. Please plan on attending Liturgy at one of our sister parishes.

**COFFEE HOUR** will be going on summer vacation after June 29th. We'll pick it up again in the fall.

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored John and Louis Rucho in their memory of their mother Banusha.

## NAMEDAYS

**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



THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE SUNDAY OF ALL THE SAINTS

OF NORTH AMERICA AND ROMANIA

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 2:10-16 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 4:18-23

(THE CALL OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES)

TONE 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 2

**A**GE AFTER AGE, without ceasing, the sweet scent of all who have pleased you since time began ascends before your eternal throne, O you who are the only God and creator of us all. As we honor the memory of all your holy ones from every nation and people those who came before your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as those who came after him we present you with the fragrance of this burnt offering, and we beseech you: By the prayers of the Theotokos and all the saints, show us how to please you throughout our life in this world, that we may enjoy your presence together with them in the age to come.

For you alone are holy and dwell among the holy, O you who are always well-disposed to hearing us, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

**GREETERS TEAM 3:**  
EVANS TSOULES AND  
TOM FITZPATRICK

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**

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

*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 16-29 Apostles Fast

Sat, July 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry 9am-12pm

July 4-6 Archdiocesan Congress

Sun, July 6 NO LITURGY

Sun, July 20 Parish Picnic-St Michael, Southbridge

Aug 1-15 Dormition Fast

Sun, Sept 21 stART on the Street Festival

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

## FOLLOW ME!

**T**HE ONE THING that distinguishes our Christian faith from other religions and philosophies is the person of Jesus Christ. There have been and will continue to be many prophets and spiritual leaders who teach profound wisdom imparting deep spiritual insight, but none of these has asked what Jesus asked and asks of us: Follow me. Be like me.

The Evangelist John gives us an example of the difference between Jesus and all those who came before and after when he speaks of John the Baptizer in the very first verses of his Gospel. He says John was a witness who testifies to the light. He was not himself the light but a testimony to the true light (cf. John 1:7-9).

As we begin the cycle of readings from St. Matthew's Gospel during the weeks after Pentecost, the first thing we encounter is Jesus' call to Andrew and Peter: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). He will repeat this same call many times during his three-year ministry. It is repeated at every baptism, at every Liturgy, and in every prayer. Jesus calls us and waits for our response.

It is a personal call. Jesus speaks to each of us directly. It is not a general call. He isn't saying this generally, to everyone in the audience, like one would in speech. This is not how he is speaking to us. Rather, He is directing his question to each of us, personally. He is asking each and every one of us, personally, to follow him. No one is excluded from his call, but it is not a generic call. He calls each of us by name.

One has to be careful these days when speaking of the Lord's personal call. Modern Christian movements have misunderstood and even twisted what this personal call means. In a society where each of us is insisting that we're autonomous individuals with

next to no responsibilities toward one to another, speaking of a personal call and personal relationship can be easily misinterpreted. It seems to our ear to be an exclusive call: to me and no one else. That is never what God means.

Because of the recent history with these "Christian" movements, one needs only to say the words: "I have a personal relationship with Jesus," and people immediately classify you as a particular type of Christian. But, this type of personal relationship, just as a personal salvation — "I was saved on Monday last!" — is a deep misunderstanding of the type of relationship with God to which Jesus calls us.

Jesus came to heal our relationship with God our Father. Adam and Eve planted the seed of our distance from God, but we contribute to it through our own actions. Jesus came to show us how to undo the damage. He became one with us. He spoke to us like no one had ever spoken before. He taught us the wisdom of God and His love for us through stories and metaphors. He showed us by his own example how to change. And, he called us, by name, to follow him; to do as he has done. Read through the Holy Scriptures. You will notice that God always calls people by name. We truly become persons when we are addressed by our name. The first thing that parents do is name their child. We feel compelled to name even our pets. When we wanted to dehumanize someone we call them by a number or their function.

One of the hardest things to explain about our Christian faith is our understanding of the Holy Trinity. To many, including Christians, it seems confusing at best and polytheism at worse. But the Church did not come to its understanding of a Tri-Personal God by theological speculation. It was through the direct experience of God: how He revealed Himself and worked

in our lives. During the hymns sung and prayers we offered at Pentecost we said as much. We can know God personally and follow His call because when He created us in His image He gave us the gift of personhood.

When we hear and answer Jesus' call, we start to heal our own brokenness. The problem with many modern Christian movements is that they don't want to begin in the quietness of the heart. They want to fill us with loud noises. St. Seraphim of Sarov famously said: Save yourself and you save thousands. What this means is that the only way to help others is to focus on your own sins. He is like the flight attendant who says at the beginning of the flight: secure your own oxygen mask before you try to assist your neighbor.

One reason the social agenda of many "Christian" conservatives can seem irritating stems from the hollowness of the messenger. A truly holy person — the person who lives the Lord's call — speaks quietly and gently. His or her authority is rooted in the heart. They respect our personhood, the image of God that we carry, even when we ourselves don't respect it.

There is a powerful moment at the end of John's Gospel when the Lord is walking on the beach with Peter. He asks him three times, and in a variety of ways, if Peter loves him. It is the Jesus' way of lifting off of Peter's shoulder his threefold denial of Christ. Finally Jesus says to him: "Follow me." Peter turned and saw John some steps behind them and asks the Lord: "What about him?" Jesus said to Peter, that's up to me. You? Follow me! (cf. John 21:15-24)

So much of what passes for Christian morality is concern about someone else's behavior. Jesus offers us so many ways to lift the sin weighing on our shoulders and darkening our hearts, if we'd only listen. Follow me!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA