

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

JULY 20, 2014
THIS WEEK'S NEWS

PITA BAKING, THIS Thursday, July 24th at 9:00 am. Will be working on inventory for the stART event. **Extra help is needed** and everyone's help is welcome. Questions? Please see Chris Toda. No experience necessary!

A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE CLEANING VOLUNTEERS. This past week we started a thorough cleaning of the Kitchen and adjoining spaces. This was in addition to the usual Cleaning Crew who worked in the Church and Hall areas. **George Demake** is coordinating a group for finishing the cleaning **THIS SUNDAY AFTER LITURGY.** If you can help, please contact him: gdemake@charter.net.

ALSO, ITEMS IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE the kitchen are up for grabs if anyone wants/needs them (or knows someone who might). What's left will be donated to the Veterans Shelter kitchen/food service. These are extras that are never used.

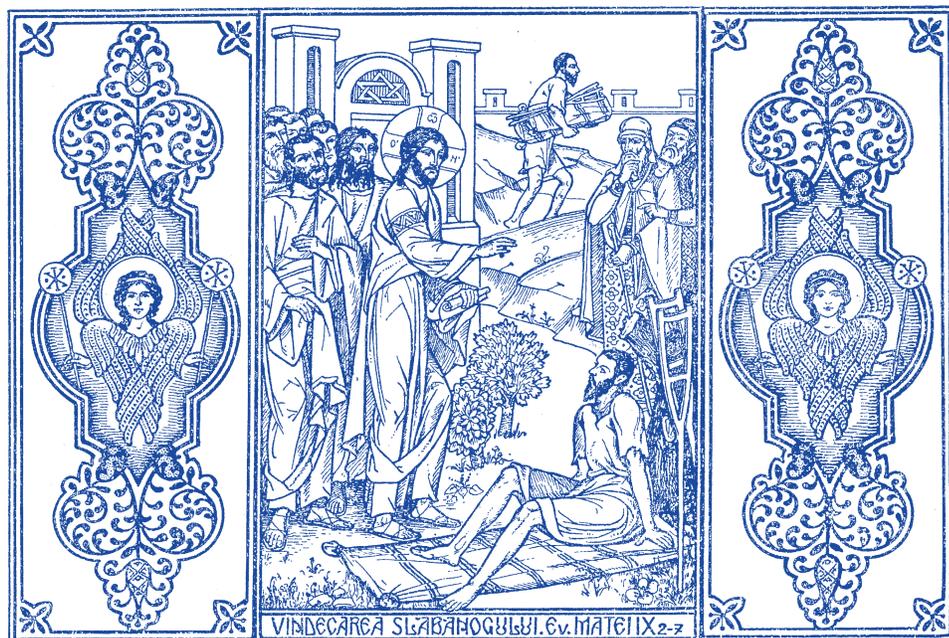
THE PARISH COUNCIL meeting has been moved to **Tuesday, July 29th at 6:30 pm.** Parish Council Members, please let Deb Sedares know if you are unable to attend.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **Saturday, August**

GREETERS TEAM 2:
MARY ANNA DYMEK &
MARGARITE LANDRY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

COFFEE HOUR ON VACATION



THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 12:6-14 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 9:1-8

(JESUS HEALS THE PARALYTIC AT CAPERNAUM)

TONE 5 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 6

2nd, from 9 am - noon. 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.**

THE MUSTARD SEED MEAL is scheduled for **Friday, August 15th.** The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day. **Help is needed Friday afternoon (after Liturgy)** to cook and prepare 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.

A MEMORIAL is held today for the servant of God **Gregory Chachi**, fallen asleep

three years. May his memory be eternal!

COMMUNITY NEWS

ST MICHAEL, SOUTHBRIDGE, will be held on **TODAY Sunday, July 20th,** 12:00pm - 6:00pm, on the grounds at Romanian Avenue in Southbridge. St. Michael is celebrating its 90th Anniversary this year, so this is a very special occasion. Featured will be: Shish-Kebab, Homemade Romanian

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sun, July 20 Parish Picnic-St Michael, Southbridge
- Thurs, July 24 Pita Baking, 9:00 am
- Tues, July 29 Parish Council, 6:30 pm
- Aug 1-15 Dormition Fast
- Sat, Aug 2 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry 9am-12pm
- Thurs, Aug 14 Dormition Vespers, St Mary 6:30 pm
- Fri, Aug 15 Dormition Liturgy, 10:00 am
- Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm
- Sat, Sept 6 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry 9am-12pm
- Sun, Sept 21 stART on the Street Festival

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

Pastries, Live Music, and many more surprises. Admission is free and the event is rain or shine.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

SAVE THE DATE! October 9, 2014. Holy Trinity's 8th **FOOD and WINE FEST** in conjunction with Holy Trinity's 20th Anniversary promises to be a great evening! This year's event will be at St. George Orthodox Cathedral. Look for more details!

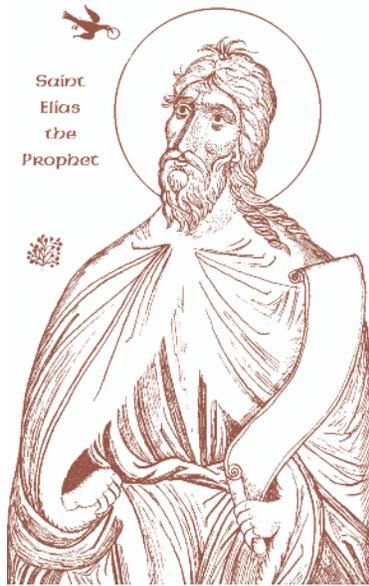
Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center & Holy Trinity Hospice are Orthodox Charities and rely on your donations to continue the mission of providing the best care possible.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

OUR LIVES, LORD, are often marred by the difficulties we have living with each other. Innocent misunderstandings are bad enough, but rancor, gudge-bearing, and spitefulness test our resolve to forgive one another and please you, and we then feel hurt by the mutual offensiveness. Remove all bitterness from our hearts and make us forgiving enough to dismiss all these offenses in each other as weaknesses rather than malicious acts. Unfortunately, they are the simple chemistry of life, the result of living with each other so closely.

For you are a merciful and loving God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.



THE HOLY GREAT PROPHET ELIJAH (ELIAS)

JULY 20

The Holy Prophet Elijah is one of the greatest of the prophets and the first dedicated to virginity in the Old Testament. He was born in Tishba of Gilead into the Levite tribe 900 years before the Incarnation of the Word of God.

St Epiphanius of Cyprus gives the following account about the birth of the Prophet Elijah: "When Elijah was born, his father Sobach saw in a vision angels of God around him. They swaddled him with fire and fed him with flames." The name Elijah (the Lord's strength) given to the infant defined his whole life. From the years of his youth he dedicated himself to the One God, settled in the wilderness and spent his whole life in strict fasting, meditation and prayer. Called to prophetic service, which put him in conflict with the Israelite king Ahab, the prophet became a fiery zealot of true faith and piety.

During this time the Israelite nation had fallen away from the faith of their Fathers, they abandoned the One God and worshipped pagan idols, the worship of which was introduced by the impious king Jereboam. Jezebel, the wife of

king Ahab, was devoted to idol worship. She persuaded her husband to build a temple to the pagan god Baal, which led many Israelites away from the worship of the true God. Beholding the ruin of his nation, the Prophet Elijah began to denounce King Ahab for impiety, and exhorted him to repent and turn to the God of Israel. The king would not listen to him. The Prophet Elijah then declared to him, that as punishment there would be neither rain nor dew upon the ground, and the drought would cease only by his prayer. Indeed, the word of Elijah was a torch (Eccles. 48: 1) The ➔

NAMEDAYS

July 16

The Holy Martyr Julia of Carthage

Julia Donabed

July 17

The Holy Great Martyr Marina (Margareta) of Antioch in Pisidia

Margareta Gikas

Margarite Landry

Lindsey Marina Sparages

Marina Sparages

July 20

The Holy Prophet Elijah (Elias)

Louis P. Belba

Elias James Christo

Irli Ilie Durmillari

Louis P. Messier

Louis Rucho

Louis Evan Stamoulis

July 24

The Holy Great Martyr Christina

Christine Masterjohn

July 26

The Holy Martyr Parascheve of Rome

Premtina Thamel

July 27

The Holy Great-martyr and Healer Panteleimon

Peter Mountzouris

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

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

➤ heavens were closed for three and a half years, and there was drought and famine throughout all the land.

During this time of tribulation, the Lord sent him to a cave beyond the Jordan. There he was miraculously fed by ravens. When the stream Horath dried up, the Lord sent the Prophet Elijah to Sarephta to a poor widow, a Sidonian Gentile who suffered together with her children, awaiting death by starvation. At the request of the prophet, she prepared him a bread with the last measure of flour and the remainder of the oil. Through the prayer of the Prophet Elijah, flour and oil were not depleted in the home of the widow for the duration of the famine. By the power of his prayer the prophet also performed another miracle: he raised the dead son of the widow.

After the end of three years of drought the Merciful Lord sent the prophet to appear before King Ahab, and promised to send rain upon the earth. The Prophet Elijah told the king to order all of Israel to gather upon Mount Carmel, and also the priests of Baal. When the nation had gathered, the Prophet Elijah proposed that two sacrificial altars be built: one for the priests of Baal, and the other for the Prophet Elijah who served the True God.

The Prophet Elijah told them to call on their gods to consume the sacrificial animals with fire, and he would call on his. Whichever was first to send fire on the sacrifice would be acknowledged as the true God. The prophets of Baal called out to their idol from morning till evening, but the heavens were silent. Towards evening the holy Prophet Elijah built his sacrificial altar from twelve stones, the number of the tribes of Israel. He placed the sacrifice upon the wood, gave orders to dig a ditch around the altar and commanded that the sacrifice and the wood be soaked with water. When the ditch had filled with

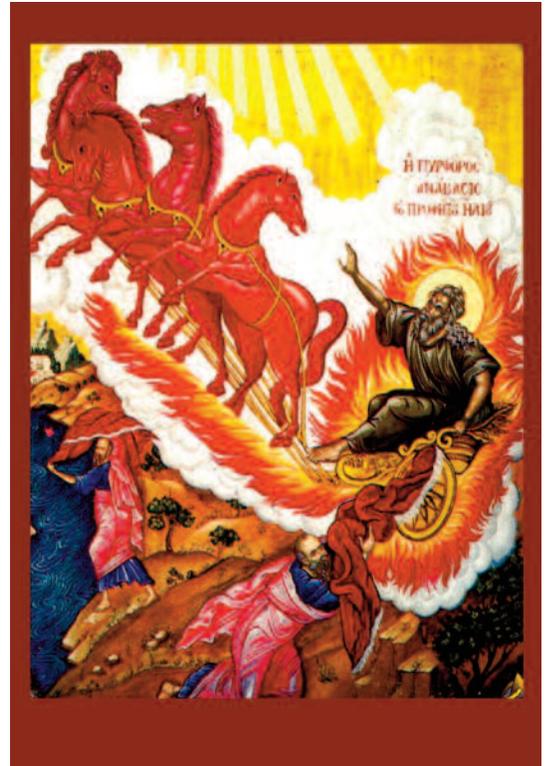
water, the prophet turned to God in prayer. Through the prayer of the prophet fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, and even the water. The people fell down to the ground, crying out: "Truly, the Lord is God!" Then the Prophet Elijah had all the pagan-priests of Baal put to death, and he began to pray for rain. Through his prayer the heavens opened and an abundant rain fell, soaking the parched earth.

King Ahab acknowledged his error and repented of his sins, but his wife Jezebel threatened to kill the prophet of God. The Prophet Elijah fled into the Kingdom of Judea and, grieving over his failure to eradicate idol worship, he asked God to let him die. An angel of the Lord came before him, strengthened him with food and commanded him to go upon a long journey. The Prophet Elijah traveled for forty days and nights and, having arrived at Mount Horeb, he settled in a cave.

The Lord told him that the next day Elijah would stand in His presence. There was a strong wind that crushed the rocks of the mountain, then an earthquake, and a fire, but the Lord was not in them. The Lord was in "a gentle breeze" (3 Kings 19: 12). He revealed to the prophet, that He would preserve seven thousand faithful servants who had not worshipped Baal.

Later, the Lord commanded Elijah to anoint Elisha into prophetic service. Because of his fiery zeal for the Glory of God the Prophet Elijah was taken up alive into Heaven in a fiery chariot. The Prophet Elisha received Elijah's mantle, and a double portion of his prophetic spirit.

According to the Tradition of the Holy Church, the Prophet Elijah will be the Forerunner of the Dread Second Coming of Christ. He will proclaim the



truth of Christ, urge all to repentance, and will be slain by the Antichrist. This will be a sign of the end of the world.

The life of the holy Prophet Elijah is recorded in the Old Testament books (3 Kings; 4 Kings; Sirach/Ecclesiastes 48: 1-15; 1 Maccabees 2: 58). At the time of the Transfiguration, the Prophet Elijah conversed with the Savior upon Mount Tabor (Mt. 17: 3; Mark 9: 4; Luke. 9: 30).

Orthodox Christians of all times, and in all places, have venerated the Prophet Elijah for centuries. The first church in Russia, built at Kiev under Prince Igor, was named for the Prophet Elijah. After her Baptism St Olga (July 14) built a temple of the holy Prophet Elijah in his native region, at the village of Vibuta.

In iconography the Prophet Elijah is depicted ascending to Heaven in a fiery chariot, surrounded with flames, and harnessed to four winged horses. We pray to him for deliverance from drought, and to ask for seasonable weather.

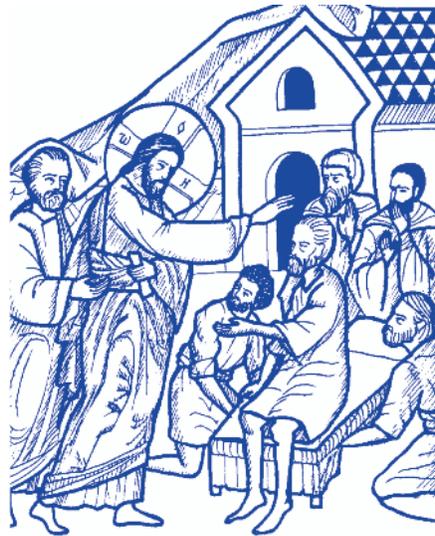
BECOMING WITNESSES TO HIS GLORY

DURING the annual cycle of Sunday Gospel lessons, we hear two separate accounts (at different points in the cycle) of the miraculous healing of the paralytic in Capernaum. The one for this Sunday is taken from the Gospel according to St. Matthew (9:1-8). The other, read on the second Sunday of Great Lent, is from the Gospel of St. Mark (2:1-12). There is also a third account of this same healing in the Gospel of St. Luke (5:17-16).

As a point of interest, the cycle of Scriptural readings begins at Pascha with the Gospel of John. Matthew is read from the Sunday after Pentecost until the Sunday before the Elevation of the Cross. The Gospel of Luke begins after the feast of the Precious Cross and continues until the beginning of Great Lent, at which time we read from the Gospel of Mark up until Holy Week. If we take into account the weekday readings, the entire New Testament is read each year during the services, beginning to end.

We also find that the first three Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—often have parallel accounts of the same events. Modern Biblical scholars believe that these three Evangelists were referencing a common collection of writings about the life and sayings of the Savior when they began to pen their particular Gospel. Remember that the Gospels were among the last books written of those included in the New Testament. The earliest are the Letters of the Holy Apostles Paul and Peter. The Gospel of John, his Letters and the Book of Revelation were the very last to be written.

At first glance it sometimes seems that the first three Gospels are simply retelling the same story, but if we examine the texts more closely we'll find that each of the Evangelists adds details that are sometimes not found in others. For example, in the account of the healing of the paralytic, the versions in Mark



and Luke tell us that Jesus was in a house and the friends bringing the paralytic could not enter through the door, so they removed part of the roof and lowered him down to Jesus. Matthew does not include this detail. Luke tells us that the people in the house were largely “Pharisees and teachers of the law,” a detail missing from Matthew and Mark.

We know from our own personal experience that different people recounting the same event often pick up on particular points that others may miss. Sometimes this is due simply to personal perspective; each person brings their life experiences and understanding as they might understand and describe an event.

Also, and we see this in the Evangelists' writings, the Gospel authors are telling a whole story with overriding themes. Each is telling the story of Jesus emphasizing particular aspects of his presence among us that they felt were important for us to hear. So, we should read each of the Gospels as a whole, because each Evangelist is trying to describe his personal experience of the Lord.

Now, to the Gospel lesson itself. (It might be helpful to read the text, Matthew 9:1-8, before proceeding.) I believe that most important aspect of this

story is the very subtle way the Lord reveals who he actually is to those around him, without ever saying it explicitly. It might seem the point of story is the healing, but look more closely at the text. When the paralytic is brought to Jesus by his friends, St. Matthew says that, “Jesus saw their faith [then] said to the paralytic: “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven” (v. 2).

The Evangelist says “when Jesus saw *their* faith.” Jesus is acting not simply on the faith of the person he's going to heal, but also on those interceding on his behalf. Again, the Lord doesn't say “walk” to the paralytic, but rather “your sins are forgiven.” He focuses on the spiritual aspect of the healing first and then addresses the physical or bodily aspect.

Also, notice how the Lord reveals himself to the Pharisees and scribes. Knowing that some of them are *thinking* “this man is blaspheming,” he says: “Why do you think evil in your hearts?” (v. 4) Who knows the thoughts of our heart except God? Who can forgive sins except God? Without directly revealing his relationship to his Father, the Lord tells them: “But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (v. 6). He speaks of an authority given him, but then goes on to prove this authority by saying to the paralytic: “Rise, take up your bed and go home.”

Jesus, the God-Man, heals both the spiritual and the physical. Christ, the one who brings “Good News” sends the man healed home to be a constant testimony to His coming. The Savior, who brings the fulfillment of the Law, teaches the teachers of the Law the true nature of the Law, that is, to restore our relationship with God.

Let us pray that we too may be healed, both in body and soul like the paralytic; that we too may become constant witnesses to his glory.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA