

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN DECEMBER 14, 2014 THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THANKS TO ALL WHO WORKED AND SUPPORTED THE FEASTDAY CELEBRATION. These include: those who prepared the meal; the young people who served the tables and helped clean-up afterward; the luncheon sponsors: the Tanacea/Saffron/Fahey/Shipra families; and those who attended and shared the joy of the Feast. **The Luncheon proceeds totaled over \$1,600!** The Feastday **Raffle realized over \$10,000** after prizes and expenses. Thanks to Dean Valoras for spearheading the Raffle and all those who bought and sold tickets. Congratulations to the winners!

\$2,500 Mark Stamoulis
\$500 Thomas Cavanaugh
\$500 Elaine Apostola
\$500 Arthur Peterson
\$500 Tefta Pojani
\$250 Dimitria Konde
\$250 Evan Sparages

CHRISTMAS BAKING ORDERS may be picked up: this coming Saturday morning between 9-12pm, Sunday after the Divine Liturgy, or at another time, according to agreement. Call 508-845-0088.

THE MUSTARD SEED MEAL is **THIS Friday, December 19th.** The Mustard

GREETERS TEAM 3:
EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW B:
KARADIMITRIOU/KALPIDO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE TWENTY EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS)

APOSTOLIC READING: COLOSSIANS 1:12-18 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 14:16-24
(THE PARABLE OF THOSE INVITED TO THE DINNER)
TONE 2 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 5

Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day. **Help is needed Thursday evening at 6:30 pm** to cook and prepare food, and at **4:45 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.

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT REHEARSAL will be held on **Saturday December 20th from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon.** **Parental assistance is needed with preparing the costumes and organizing props.** All Sunday School students are invited to participate in the Pageant program which will be presented to the parish on Sunday, December 21st following Divine Liturgy. Please **confirm your child's participation** by speaking with their

Sunday School Teacher during coffee hour following Divine Liturgy or by e-mail to info@stnicholaschurch.org.

THE FULL CHRISTMAS/ EPIPHANY SCHEDULE is available and attached to the Bulletin.

THE 2015 CHURCH CALENDARS in both English and Romanian are in! They are available in the Narthex. A small donation toward their cost would be welcomed.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Fri, Dec 19 Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm
Sat, Dec 20 Pageant Rehearsal
Sun, Dec 21 Children's Christmas Pageant
Wed, Dec 24 Vigil Lit at Holy Trinity, 9:30 am
Royal Hours, 3:00 pm
Great Vespers, 6 pm
Thurs, Dec 25 Divine Liturgy, 10 am
Thurs, Jan 1 New Year's Day Divine Liturgy, 10 am
Sat, Jan 3 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

THE PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD DEADLINE is **TODAY**, Sunday, December 14th. If you would like to add your names to those extending Christmas greetings from our parish, please see Betty Anderson.

THE COAT DRIVE CONTINUES for the rest of December into January at the Orthodox Food Pantry. There is particular need for men's large and extra large coats, but all kinds of coats, hats and gloves are needed. If you have good, clean and usable articles, please consider donating them. Bring them to the Church or **contact Lisa Mielnicki:** at lamielnicki@gmail.com or text her at 508-340-1547.

ARCHBISHOP NICOLAE'S PASTORAL LETTER on the occasion of the **Lord's Nativity** is available for you to read in English and Romanian available at the candles.

THANKS FOR ALL WHO VOLUNTEERED TO BUY GIFTS for the Holy Trinity Residents. Also, we appreciate **Eleanor Sedares'** efforts coordinating our parish's part in this effort. **God bless all of you!**

A NEW PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE ELECTED IN JANUARY, (the two-year term of the Parish Council expires this year). Please consider offering a stewardship of your time in this important ministry. We also are asking for people to serve on other Parish committees, if you would like to focus your efforts in just one area. However you'd like to serve, please speak with **Fr. Nick**.

TODAY WE HAVE A 40-DAY BLESSING for **Elizabeth Grace Cavanaugh**, God grant her, her parents Andy & Jackie, and big brothers Thomas and Will, **Many Years!**

WE ALSO HAVE FOUR MEMORIALS TODAY:

Eleni Nikolaidis is offering a Memorial for her husband, **Themistoklis**

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

GLORY TO YOU, LORD JESUS CHRIST, for allowing us to serve you. In fulfilling the law and the prophets in accord with the Father's divine plan, you raised us to a new covenant, leading us to worship in spirit and in truth. So, today, as we ponder your birth in our midst, we, your sinful and unworthy servants, entreat your goodness: In our hearts, engrave the mysteries of your incarnation as well as your constant presence within us, give us the strength to serve and worship you at all times, and lead us to that liturgy that never ends.

For you teach us to pray in your name, O Christ, reconciling us with the Father, to whom we give glory in the Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.

and other members of her family.

Carolina Ionete is offering a Memorial for her father, **Ion Gubavu**.

Carol Fotos is offering a Memorial for her husband, **Stephanos**.

And, a Memorial is also offered for **Gheorghe Mihai** who recently fell asleep in California.

May their memory be eternal!

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the **Ionete** and **Nikolaides** families in memory of their departed loved ones.

COMMUNITY NEWS

A HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE is being organized by **Fr. Timothy Lowe**. The dates are **April 23 to May 10, 2015**. If you are interested, speak with **Fr. Nick** for more details.

NAMEDAYS

December 12

St. Spyridon

the Wonderworker of Tremithus

Spiro Kelly

Spiro Spyrou

December 15

The Hieromartyr Eleftherios,

Bishop of Illyria

Lillian Chachi

December 17

St. Dionysios of Zakynthos,

Bishop of Aegina

Denise Sparages

The Holy Prophet Daniel

Dan Manescu

Dana Manescu

Dan Alexandru Nedelescu

Robert Daniel Salerno

December 21

The Forefather of our Lord, the Patriarch Jacob

Jacob Datz

The High Priest Aaron

Aaron Paul Christo

Adam the first man

Adam Donabed

Adam Mayer

The Holy Prophetess Abigail, wife of David

Abigail Mayer

The Righteous Deborah

Deborah Rucho

Deborah Sedares

The Righteous Noah

Noah Peter Christo

The Righteous Rebecca

Rebeka Tanacea

The Righteous Sarah

Sarah Maria Blanchard

Sarah Maria Bourisk

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.

PLEASE R.S.V.P.



THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL LESSON IS THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET (Luke 14:16-24). St. Matthew also has an account of this same parable (22:1-4) that we hear on the 14th Sunday after Pentecost. However, while both Evangelists relate a similar story, the different contexts in which they are placed shifts the focus of the parable. St. Matthew places his account of the Wedding Feast in a sequence of other parables that Jesus spoke intending to challenge the hypocrisy of the religious authorities of his time. St. Luke places his account in the context of Jesus teaching about humility and hospitality.

In trying to explain what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, Jesus uses the image of a Great Banquet. In an earlier part of this chapter (v. 8-9), he says, "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down in the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, and the host who invited both of you may come and say, 'Give up your place to this man.' And then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place." He goes on to say that "all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (v. 11).

Jesus then moves on to speak about hospitality. He says, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case that they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you" (v. 12-14).

Very often we struggle to understand what St. Paul means when he says, "by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). In the Lord's teaching on hospitality we gain an insight into what St. Paul means when he says we have been saved "by grace." When we read this parable many of us perhaps identify with the host who extends the invitation and is turned-down by his guests. But, in actuality, we are the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind who have been invited to the banquet. We are the ones who do not have the ability to repay. We have a place at the table only because of God's grace and His love.

This Parable of the Great Banquet can be very helpful for us as we prepare for the Feast of the Lord's Birth. When the Lord wants to show us what the Kingdom of God is like, he gives us joyful images like a banquet (Luke 14:16), or a wedding feast (Matthew 22:1), or a bridal chamber (Matthew 25:1, John 3:29). He also gives us transformative images like yeast (Luke 13:20), or the mustard seed (Luke 13:18). He wants us to see the Kingdom of God as something that will bring happiness to our lives even as we are changed by it.

And, who does God send to extend his invitation for us to attend this Banquet? God sends the invitation in the form of His Son, who embodies the very humility he preaches to us. This Son does not take the first seat, but the last. He does not impose himself, but comes as a vulnerable child. And showing us what he means by hospitality, he invites not only the rich and powerful, but also the lowly and the unimportant, the meek and the poor.

We all know it is hard to focus on the spiritual importance of the holiday. During this time of year we are wittingly or unwittingly distracted from responding to the Lord's invitation as we should. We are preoccupied with family and social obligations. There are decorations to hang and gifts to buy. Commercial interests conspire to twist the miracle of Christ's birth to increase the bottom line. Yet still, neither are we captives nor victims. We can choose. This is the point of the Parable. People were invited to feast at God's table yet they chose the distractions of life over the joy of the Kingdom.

We are invited to the Feast, but if we choose not to attend, the Banquet Hall will not remain empty. The Lord will fill His House, and He will fill it as it pleases Him (v. 23). We should take care not to be blinded by the frenzy of the season, and as a result reject the invitation offered us. Rather, we should actively seek out refuge in that quiet cave in Bethlehem, where rests a young child, the pre-eternal God.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



CHRISTMAS & THEOPHANY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2014

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
 Children's Christmas Program after the Liturgy

CHRISTMAS EVE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2014

Liturgy for the Vigil (at Holy Trinity) 9:30 a.m.
 Royal Hours 3:00 p.m.
 Great Vespers 6:00 p.m.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2014

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2014

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD ✻ FEAST OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2015

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 a.m.

EVE OF HOLY THEOPHANY MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2014

Royal Hours 9:30 a.m.
 Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil 6:00 p.m.
 Great Blessing of Water at end of Liturgy

SUNDAY AFTER HOLY THEOPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2015

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
 Great Blessing of Water at end of Liturgy



HOUSE BLESSINGS. The blessing of homes at Theophany will begin on Wednesday, January 7, 2015, and continue until all homes are blessed. As in the past, we will be setting times when we will be coming to bless your home. If there is a specific time that is more convenient for you, please call Fr. Nick to arrange it (508.845.0088).

