

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 8, 2015

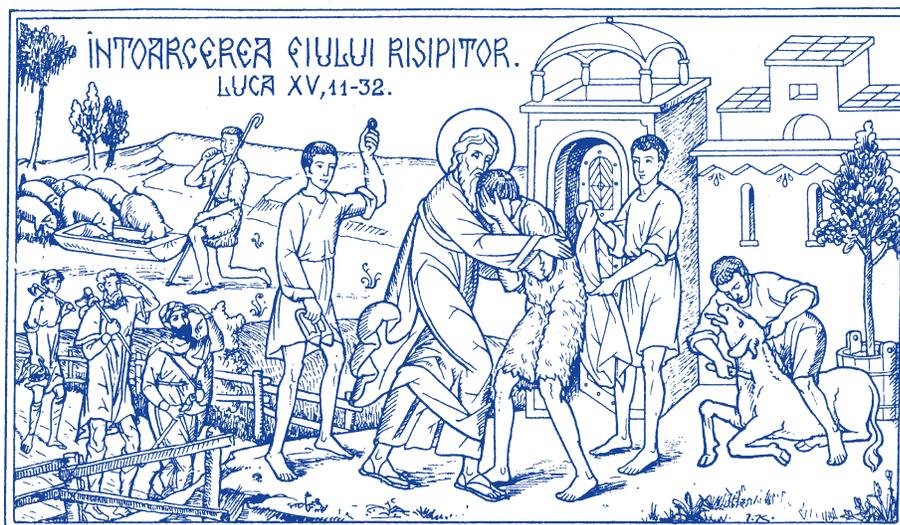
THIS WEEK'S NEWS

SATURDAY OF THE SOULS is **February 14th**. Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 am. If you would like to make the Memorial Wheat (coliva), please contact Fr. Nick.

PITA BAKING, this **Thursday, February 12th at 9:00 am**. We need to rebuild our inventory for the coming holidays. Everyone's help is welcome. Questions? Please see **Chris Toda**. No experience necessary!

BREAD BAKING LESSONS. Presvytera will be holding **bread/koulourakia baking sessions on Saturday, February 14th**. The bread session begins at 9:00 am and the koulourakia session begins at 1:00 pm. There is a double purpose The first is to **teach** people how to make holiday breads and koulourakia. The second is to **build our inventory** for the upcoming Easter holidays. If you'd like to both learn and help our parish, please contact her at: mzm@netplus.com.

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday, as well as last Saturday. Our



THE THIRTY FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: 1 CORINTHANS 6:12-20 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 15:11-32

(SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON)

TONE 2 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 2

regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9am to noon. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with Nicole Apostola or Lisa Mielnicki. Our next Saturday is March 7th.

THE MUSTARD SEED MEAL is **Friday, February 20th**. The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day. **Help is needed Friday morning at 9:30 am** to cook and prepare food, and **at 4:30 on Friday evening** to transport and serve. If you can help with preparing the meal or transportation/serving, or if you have any questions, contact **Fr. Nick**.

A NEW PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE ELECTED IN FEBRUARY, (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'd like to focus your efforts in a particular area or project. However you'd like to

serve, please speak with **Fr. Nick**.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by in memory of **Sophie George** by her daughter Florence Rucho. And also in memory of **Elsa Kolitzis**.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Notre Dame Academy is inviting all current seventh grade and transfer students to spend an academic day there. For more information call: 508-757-6200 x229 or email: admissions@nda-worc.org. NDA is a Catholic college prep high school for young women.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, Feb 1 Triodion Begins
Thurs, Feb 12 Pita Baking, 9:00 am
Sat, Feb 14 Sat of the Souls, Liturgy 10am
Fri, Feb 20 Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm
Mon, Feb 23 Great Lent Begins
Wed, Feb 25 PreSanctified Lit at St. Nick's 6pm
Sat, March 7 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Sun, April 12 Great and Holy Pascha

GREETERS TEAM 3:

EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW B:

KARADIMITRIOU/KALPIDO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850

E-MAIL: FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG ♦ WEB: WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG

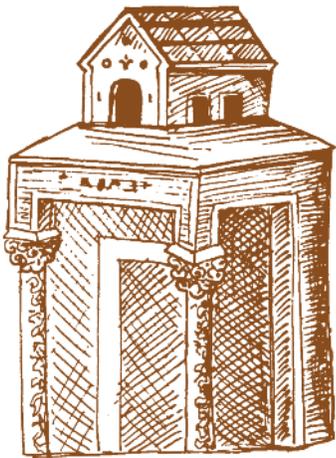
A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

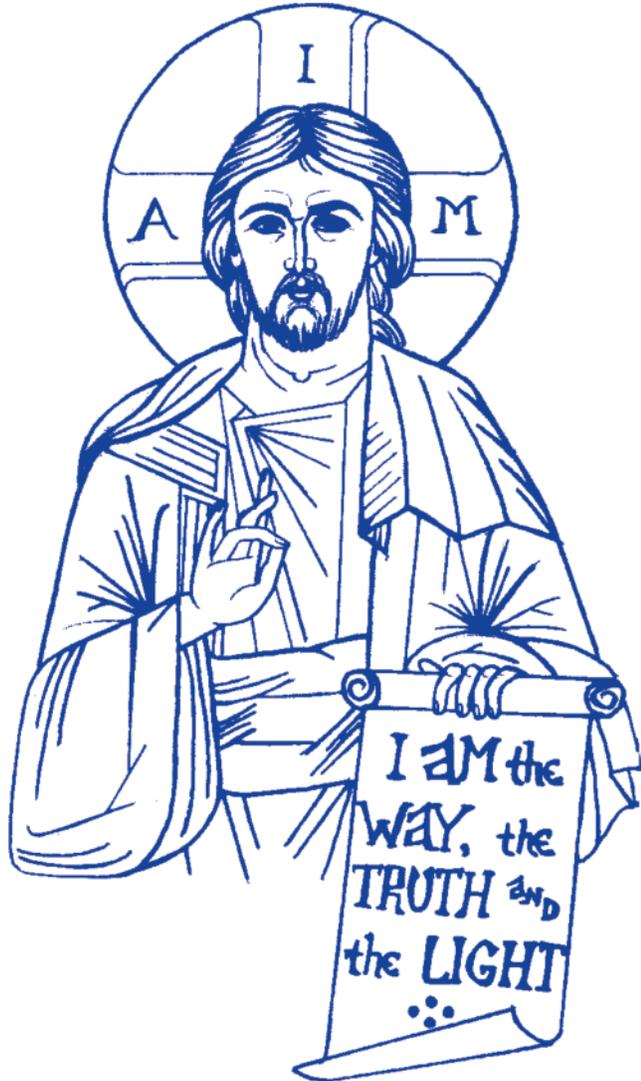
GLORY TO YOU, O FATHER, for allowing the two elders to gaze upon your Christ! Glory to you, O Son, for giving Simeon the strength to welcome you into his arms! Glory to you, O Spirit, for letting the two elders depart in peace! O holy Trinity, one God: As we go forth to another day, make us also worthy of welcoming your Christ in the person of our brothers and sisters. At all times, touch our souls with your tender mercies, suffuse our lives with peace and tranquillity, and let us meet this day creatively, with freshness of wisdom, understanding, and vision.

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



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.



THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

O Lord and master of my life! Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness, of ambition and vain talk!

Instead, give me the spirit of prudence and humility, of patience and charity.

Yes, my king and Lord, let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others: For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

AND, HE CAME TO HIMSELF

THIS is the second Sunday of the Tridion, the Sunday of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). By way of preparing us for Great Lent and assisting us on our journey, the holy fathers have given us this Gospel reading as another example of repentance. As with the parable of the Publican and Pharisee, we are asked to draw from this story hope and faith in God's love for us.

In one important respect this parable is very much like that of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). It has entered into our cultural imagination and vocabulary, even for those people who would be hard-pressed to know its scriptural context. The story of the Prodigal coming home remains a powerful image of repentance and forgiveness, of return and acceptance.

There are three important 'players' in this story: the father, the elder son, and the younger son. It is not an uncommon dynamic: sibling rivalry, youthful excesses, rebellion against parents. The elder is being groomed to be the heir. From the story we can see that he takes this role seriously. He is hardworking and diligent. The younger son is a 'lost soul.' He is every parent's sleepless night. He resents his brother and chafes at his father's love.

Out of the blue the younger son demands of his father his inheritance (v. 12). There is a subtle 'knife' here. The son wants his inheritance before his father is even dead. In a sense, he is cutting himself off from his father as though he were already dead. Nonetheless, his father grants his request and divides his wealth, giving his younger son what would have been his only after he were gone.

The younger son gets his 'freedom.' (Don't we often equate money with freedom?) Because he has the means, now



he can do whatever he wants. And he does so, that is until the money runs out. Having now found the limits to his 'freedom' the younger son has to find some way to support himself. The only work he can find is to feed pigs (v. 15); this would be no more palatable to him then, than it would be to us today. This was his 'down and out' moment. Feeling the pangs of hunger, and envious of what the pigs themselves were eating, "he came to himself" (v. 17).

I believe that the whole parable turns on this one phrase. Having been stripped of everything, but especially his dignity, the younger son finally can see himself clearly — he comes to himself. This is the first step toward real repentance, to see ourselves as we really are. It is also a dangerous moment, because it can lead us in either of two directions: to despair or to change.

Instead of despairing, this young man chooses to go back to his father and beg for forgiveness. We know he's sincere because he decides that he's not worthy of 'sonship.' Rather, he will ask his father simply to give him a job, to

treat him like a hired servant (v. 18-19).

The Lord says that his father, even when the young man "was still far off ... saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him" (v. 20). Dismissing the son's pleas concerning his sins, the father rejoices at his return and restores everything.

The elder brother, when he returns home from working in the fields, and finding that his profligate brother had come back, was understandably angry and resentful. He blows up at his father, furious at the easy way he welcomed back this brother. The resentment he felt from years of having been the faithful son, doing his father's will, always doing the "right thing," comes out in a torrent of anger and hurt (v. 28-30).

The father tries to comfort his eldest son, even as he tries to teach him compassion and love, and encourages him to accept his brother, once dead to them, and now alive (v. 32).

This story is so powerful because we know these people intimately. *We* are the prodigal who needs to turn back and be embraced and loved by our Heavenly Father. *We* are the hardworking older child in need of learning compassion, forgiveness, and how to welcome back those who want to change. *We too* are the parent who grieves at the foolish and wayward ways of our children, standing at the window, waiting for them to come home. In this one story we find ourselves, but most importantly, we also find our way back home, but only if we first come to ourselves.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA