

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 22, 2015

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**GREAT LENT** begins Monday, February 23rd.

**THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES** sponsored by the Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches will begin on **Wednesday, February 25th at 6:00 pm** here at St. Nicholas.

► We will be hosting a Lenten meal following the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy on that evening. **Donations of prepared Lenten foods are needed as well as help with set up, serving and clean up following the service.** There is a sign up sheet at the candle stand for donations. Please see Presvytera Maria or Chris Toda.

► Also, persons wishing to receive Holy Communion must prepare themselves in the usual manner, including fasting from at least noon.

**THANKS TO THE MUSTARD SEED VOLUNTEERS!** Those who cooked and those who served the meal this past Friday! **We had the particular joy of six volunteers: Natalia Karadimitriou, Nora Kraft, Prisha Singh, Sammy Welch, Meher Gandhi and Anusha Loganathan,** who, as a Project Outreach

### **GREETERS TEAM 1:**

V. GERALD BELBA & CĂLIN GALERIU

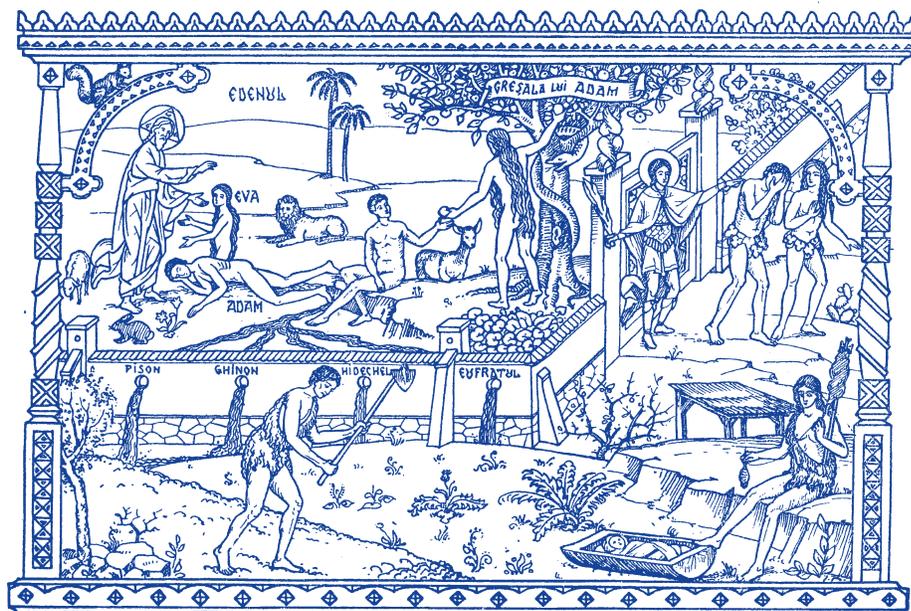
### **COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW D:**

ILEANA & SEAN FAHEY,

DIMITRI SAFFRON,

CHRISTOS & SPIRO SPYROU

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



## THE SUNDAY OF THE CASTING OUT OF ADAM & EVE FROM PARADISE

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 13:11-14:4 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:14-21

(CHEESEFARE SUNDAY / FORGIVENESS SUNDAY)

TONE 4 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 4

part of the Destination Imagination program, decided to help cook and serve the meal this month. The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day. Our next scheduled meal is **April 17th**. Contact Fr. Nick if you'd like to help.

**THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY** celebration will be held on **Sunday, March 1st at St. George Cathedral at 6:00 pm**. His Grace Bishop John will be the prime celebrant together with the other clergy of the local Orthodox parishes. Please join us in this beautiful Lenten service.

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored in memory of the departed members of the **Tsoules Family: Athena & Vasilios; Diana & Dimitri;** by Thomas Fitzpatrick.

## 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.

## 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

Mon, Feb 23 Great Lent Begins  
Wed, Feb 25 PreSanctified Lit at St. Nick's 6pm  
Sun March 1 Sun of Orthodoxy Vespers, 6pm  
Wed, March 4 PreSanctified Lit at St. Spyridon 6pm  
Sat, March 7 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry  
Sun, April 12 Great and Holy Pascha

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

## A LENTEN PRAYER

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**L**END AN EAR, LORD, and answer us, for we are poor and miserable! Look after our souls, for we are your friends; save your servants, O God, for we trust in you! Attend to our prayers this evening, and show us a sign of your favor as we struggle for true repentance during this lenten season. Enable us to grow in the spirit of the prophets, to exercise the faith of the apostles, to win the nobility of the martyrs, to attain the wisdom of the fathers, and to imitate all the virtues of the saints, so that with them we may arrive at the paschal mysteries of your only Son.

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



## SUNDAY OF THE CASTING-OUT OF ADAM AND EVE FROM PARADISE

**T**he Holy Fathers have appointed the commemoration of Adam's exile from the Paradise of delight here, on the eve of the holy Forty-day Fast, demonstrating to us not by simple words, but by actual deeds, how beneficial fasting is for man, and how harmful and destructive are insatiety and the transgressing of the divine commandments.

For the first commandment that God gave to man was that of fasting, which the first-fashioned received but did not keep; and not only did they not become gods, as they had imagined, but they lost even that blessed life which they had, and they fell into corruption and death, and transmitted these and innumerable other evils to all of mankind. The God-bearing Fathers set these things before us today, that by bringing to mind what we have fallen from, and what we have suffered because of the insatiety and disobedience of the first-fashioned, we might be diligent to return again to that ancient bliss and glory by means of fasting and obedience to all the divine commands. Taking occasion from today's Gospel (Matt. 6:14-21) to begin the Fast unencumbered by enmity, we also ask forgiveness this day, first from God, then from one another and all creation.

## 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!

**I**nstead, give me the spirit of prudence and humility, of patience and charity.

**Y**es, 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.



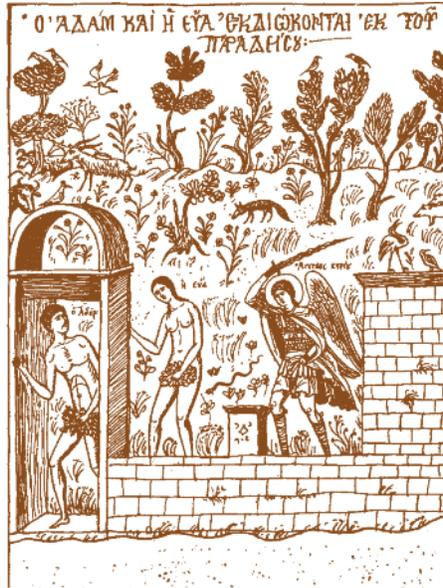
# FOR IF YOU FORGIVE OTHERS ...

**T**HIS is the last Sunday before beginning Great Lent. Today we remember the Casting-out of Adam and Eve from Paradise — the price they paid for not obeying God and eating from the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because we share their condition, we too feel the pain of living outside of Paradise. Our Lenten journey is meant to help us find our way back.

The Gospel reading for today (Matthew 6:14-21) is like a road map for that journey. We call today the “Sunday of Forgiveness.” In the opening verse of the Gospel lesson the Lord tells us: “If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (v. 14). The first step on our Lenten journey is to forgive one another. We have the custom on this day, as a necessary precondition for entering Lent, to go and ask forgiveness of each other, sealing our request with a holy kiss. It is a powerful ritual. In asking our loved ones to forgive us the small and large hurts that we might have inflicted on them during the past year, we can lift a weight from our shoulders, lightening our load for the journey. Asking and giving forgiveness from those friends and acquaintances that we might have truly offended brings healing to our heart and theirs.

The Lord continues his admonition by reminding us; “If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (v. 15). The remembrance of wrong is like a cancer that eats away at us. To not forgive is as wrong as to deny our sin and not ask for forgiveness. A right-relationship with God can only be had if we have a right-relationship with one another. In these two verses Jesus makes clear the words of the Lord’s Prayer in which we ask our heavenly Father “to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

The Lord then goes on to speak of the three aspects of what is often simply



referred to as “fasting”: abstinence from food, prayer, and almsgiving. Embracing each of these three elements comprises the essence of what it means to truly observe the Fast. Fasting is spiritual discipline; it is like athletic training. We must build up to it, carefully balancing each aspect of the training, never neglecting or overdoing any part. Also, like athletic training, we submit ourselves to it with discipline and in obedience. We don’t make up our own rules. We seek the advice of someone with experience, ideally our spiritual father.

By abstaining from food we aim to lighten ourselves, both physically and spiritually. Abstaining from animal products gives our bodies a rest from the heaviness of certain foods. Consigning food to its proper place, eating lightly and appropriately, allows our spirit to control our bodies, not the other way around. Abstinance from food is also a way for us to understand and practice abstaining from all the other material distractions that lead us away from Christ.

Abstinance from food is powerful because there are few things that compel us more strongly than our stomach. But other glitzy things of this world are equally difficult to resist, and even as the

compulsion driving us toward them seems less obvious. This is our supreme struggle, and Lent helps us to see it more clearly.

Devoting ourselves to more regular prayer strengthens and focuses us. Fasting is not dieting; it is spiritual exercise. It does us no good to abstain from food if we do not feed our souls. Our true food is “every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). When we read and meditate on the Holy Scriptures, when we open our hearts to God in prayer, when we remain silent and still, giving God room to speak to us, we nourish ourselves with the food of everlasting life.

Finally, we are not to store up for ourselves treasures on earth, but rather in heaven (cf. v. 19-20). Sharing with those in need is a natural impulse especially as we grow into the fullness of Christ. We show the fruits of our growth by loving and helping others, tangibly. Almsgiving is a critical part of this three-legged stool that is the Fast. We must equally: fast from food, pray regularly, and give to those in need. To neglect one or the other inhibits our growth during Great Lent.

There is a hymn we sing during the first week of the Fast that summarizes our challenge: “Brethren, as we fast bodily, let us also fast spiritually. Let us untie everything that binds us to iniquity. Let us cut through the tangle of every settlement made by intimidation; let us tear up all unjust agreements. Let us give bread to the hungry and welcome the homeless poor into our homes, so that we may receive from Christ our God great mercy.” May it be so for each one of us. And, while I hope to speak to each of you individually during Lent, and especially on this Sunday of Forgiveness, still, let me now and personally beg of you forgiveness for whatever I might have done. Forgive me a sinner!

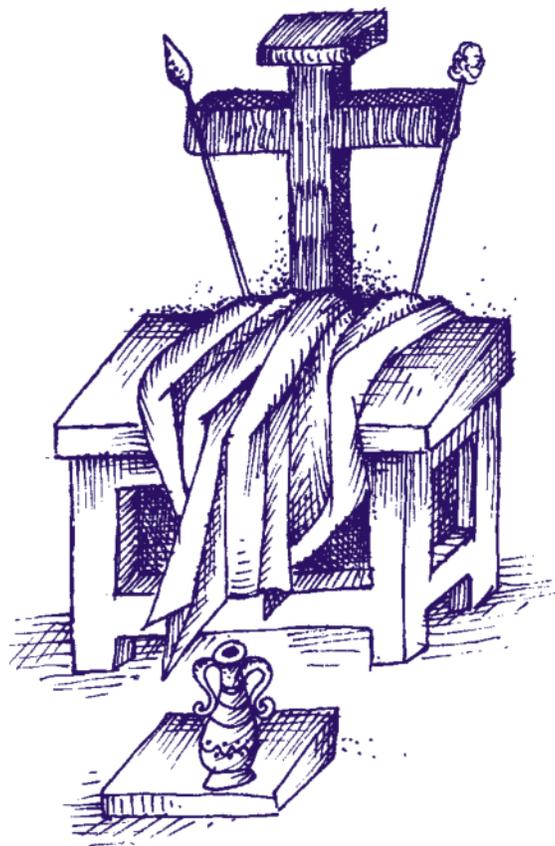
FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

# PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES 2015

Wednesday, February 25, 2015  
St. Nicholas Church

Wednesday, March 4, 2015  
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, March 11, 2015  
St. George Cathedral



Wednesday, March 18, 2015  
St. Mary's Assumption

Wednesday, March 25, 2015  
St. George Cathedral

Wednesday, April 1, 2015  
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest 'pot-luck' lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others.

# *Triumph of Orthodoxy*



*Join us as all the members of the Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches of Central Massachusetts gather around His Grace, Bishop JOHN, to celebrate the Church's victory in restoring the use of Icons*

**Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 PM**

**St. George Orthodox Cathedral**

**30 Anna St. Worcester MA 01604**



*We venerate your pure image O Good One, begging forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God. Of Your own will You condescended to ascend upon the Cross in the flesh and delivered those you created from the bondage of the enemy. Wherefore, thankfully we cry out: When You came to save the world You filled all things with joy, O our Savior.*