

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MAY 17, 2015

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE NEWLY-ELECTED PARISH COUNCIL will take the oath of office this Sunday at the close of the Divine Liturgy. The Members for the 2015-2017 term are: V. Gerald Belba, George Demake, Sean Fahey, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Călin Galeriu, Artemie Gavala, Margarite Landry, Michael Prizio, Dimitri Saffron, Deborah Sedares, Evan Stamoulis, Christine Toda, Evans Tsoules.

THE NEW PARISH COUNCIL will hold its first meeting on **Monday, May 18th at 6:30 pm**. At that time the election of officers will be held.

THE FEAST OF THE LORD'S ASCENSION is **Thursday, May 21st**. We'll be celebrating the Feast with our sister Parish of Ss Anargyroi in Marlborough. Liturgy begins at 10:00 am. This day is also ...

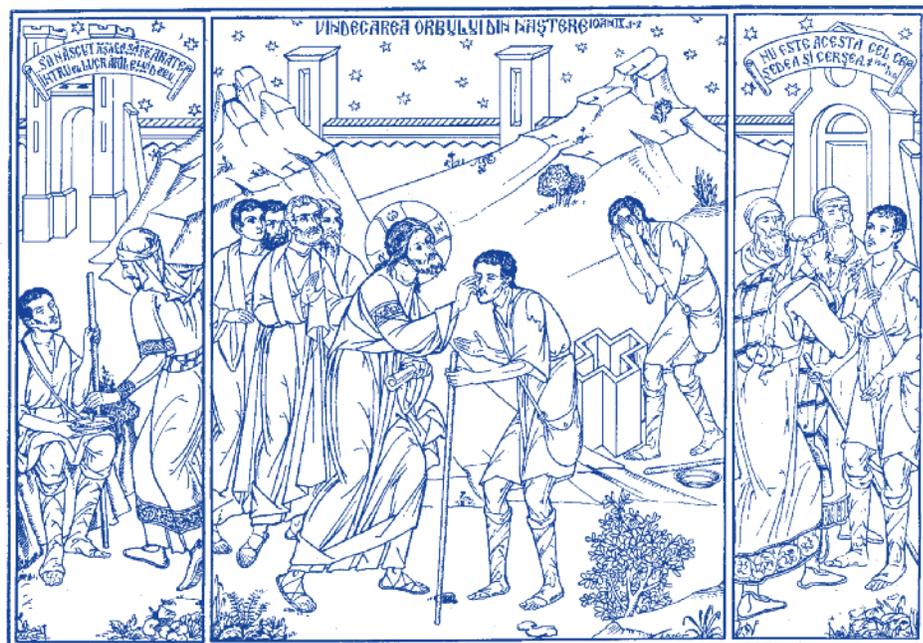
THE FEAST OF SS CONSTANTINE & HELEN. Our sister parish in Webster is celebrating its patronal Feast with Great Vespers on Wednesday evening at 6:00 pm.

MEMORIAL DAY is Monday, May 25th. Fr. Nick will be at Hope Cemetery from 10:00 am. The common Memorial Service will be at noon at the Altar in

GREETERS TEAM 3:
EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

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

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

APOSTOLIC READING: ACTS 16:16-34 ☩ GOSPEL: JOHN 9:1-38
TONE 5 ☩ RESURRECTION GOSPEL 8

Hope. If you would like Fr. Nick to visit a grave in another cemetery, please contact him to make arrangements: 508-335-7378.

THE LATEST FAITH/CREDINȚA Magazine is now available at the candles. Please take a copy home with you.

THE 2015 ARCHDIOCESAN ALMANAC is also available at the candles.

A MEMORIAL is celebrated today for the servant of God **Genevieve Apostola**, fallen asleep three years.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored in her memory. *May our good and loving Lord rest her soul among the just!*

COMMUNITY NEWS

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN. St. George Orthodox Cathedral is hosting a MobilePack event where **500 vol-**

unteers will come together on June 27th to pack 100,000 life-saving meals for starving children in developing countries. This will be the only location in the entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts to host this event. The goal is to raise \$22,000. Adults and children as young as 5 years of age will measure and scoop ingredients, seal bags, and prepare boxes for shipping. Registration will be live May 16th. You may **donate online** at www.stgeorgeworcester.org or mail your check to: Feed My Starving Children; ATTN: MobilePack #1506-

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, May 17 Parish Council Swearing-in
Tues, May 19 Holy Trinity General Assembly
Thurs, May 21 Ascension, Lit at Ss Anargyroi 10 am
Mon, May 25 Memorial Day — Hope at 10 am
June 5, 6, & 7 Albanian Festival at St. Mary's
Sat, June 6 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry

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

99AU; 401 93rd Avenue NW; Coon Rapids, MN 55433. Checks should be payable to: FMSC, memo line MobilePack #1506-99AU.

THE 2015 ALBANIAN FESTIVAL will be held the weekend of **June 5, 6, and 7** by **St. Mary's Assumption Albanian Orthodox Church** on Salisbury Street in Worcester. Please plan on attending and supporting our sister parish! For more information go to: <http://albani-festival.org/>

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

THE HOLY TRINITY ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY will be held this **Tuesday, May 19th at 7:00 pm**, at the Nursing Home. If you would like to be a delegate from our parish, please speak with Deb Sedares or Fr. Nick. Everyone is invited to attend.

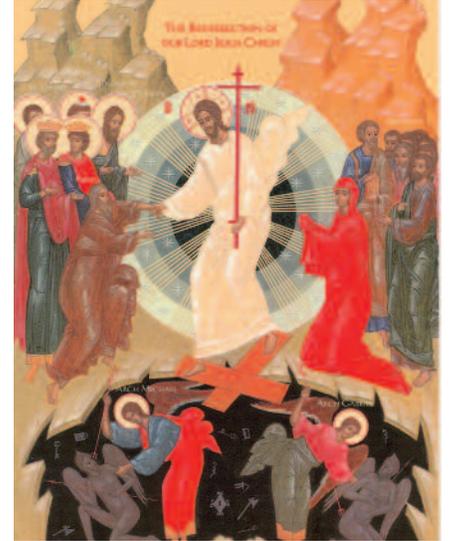
Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center & Holy Trinity Hospice are Orthodox Charities and rely on your donations to continue the mission of providing the best care possible.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O YOU WHO LEAD US along the path of salvation through the grace of these paschal mysteries: Inspire us to respond with all our hearts to this gift of your love. Just as your Son opened the eyes of the man born blind, open our eyes to the wonders that flow from your hand both within us and all about us. Enable us to avoid sin lest something worse than physical blindness befall us. And keep our minds and hearts ever focused on you, that in all things we may sing your praises with all creation.

For all the powers of heaven praise you, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



NAMEDAYS

May 5

The Great Martyr Irene of Thessalonica

Irene Mountzouris
Irene Tsoules

May 9

The Holy Martyr Christopher

Christopher Masterjohn

May 21

Saints Constantine and Helen, equals to the Apostles

Constantine Apostol
Elaine Apostola
Konstantin Charalambides
Presvytera Eleni Christakos
Amalia Helene Collins
Hannah Constance Datz
Dina Entwistle
Iliana Victoria Fahey
Elena Galeriu
Ileana A Nace
Rev. Fr. Dean Paleologos
Constanța Papit
Eleni Polymeros
Elena Prelipcean
Elaine Rocheford
Dina K. Salerno
Eleanor Sedares
Elaine Tanacea
Dean Valoras



FINANCIAL FACT

“Burning the Mortgage”

*If we didn't have a mortgage,
we would have saved almost
\$90,000 over the last 3 years!*

GOD'S GENEROSITY

IT IS DIFFICULT not to be overwhelmed when one contemplates the mystery of God's love for us. Of course, love in and of itself is a mystery — sometimes we speak of it as chemistry, but I think mystery is still a more apt term. There is a dynamic to love that cannot be calculated by formulas. At the very least, it is unpredictable, in the sense that it does not follow the normal patterns of logic.

This past Wednesday, while listening to the appointed lesson for the day while celebrating Liturgy at Holy Trinity, I was once again struck by God's generosity and love. The reading was the story of the feeding of the five thousand with two fish and five loaves, this time told by the Evangelist John (6:1-15). It is a powerful story that captures the imagination. It at once satisfies our longing that no one should ever be found hungry or wanting, while at the same time reaffirms our faith in a generous and loving God.

We are in the middle of Spring and can feel and see the abundance of God's creation; it can be overwhelming. Everything is bursting with life. My car is covered with thousands of maple seeds. (How many does a tree need to produce in order to ensure its survival!?) Yet the cornucopia of seeds and weeds, flowers and shoots are but an image given to us of God's Grace that pours over us like a deluge.

At the same time, while there is an outpouring abundance God's love, there is also a preciousness to it, a care for even the smallest things. After everything had been distributed and, "when they were satisfied, [Jesus] told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost'" (John 6:12). The leftover fragments are precious. Jesus is not subscribing to a "throw-away" culture. The creation is holy, every part of it.

From those five loaves and two fish they collected twelve baskets of leftovers. People thought they were going to go hungry and instead there was food to spare in spades. In our short-sighted anxiety, we find it difficult to image that God might have a larger plan for us than we can expect from the limits of our human perspective.

Today's reading is the account of the "healing" of the man blind from birth. I put the word "healing" in quotes because in truth Jesus forms his eyes anew from the mud and his saliva. It is an act of creation no less than that of Adam and Eve. He had no eyes, the Gospel says. Jesus literally molded them for him.

But the more interesting question for us is the one raised by the disciples who asked Jesus: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him'" (John 9:2-3).

At first read this seems like a harsh statement. It would almost be easier to believe that his blindness was a result of someone's sin rather than the arbitrariness of God to make a spiritual point, but we need to think about it more deeply. God doesn't punish — at least not in the way we think (or perhaps wished) that he would. Nor does sickness or congenital illness occur to simply make us suffer. Suffering does not have any intrinsic positive value. Rather, illness happens as a result of any myriad of reasons. God always calls us to salvation in whichever situation we might find ourselves. For the man born blind God comes to him as the Word himself. God's work will be revealed in him.

In the baptismal service, in between the exorcisms and the baptism proper, the priest pronounces a blessing over

the person coming to be baptized. It is a quote from 1 Timothy 2:4. He says: "Blessed is our God who desires that everyone be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." I will tell you that every time I say this blessing I am overcome with emotion. It is such a powerfully personal blessing. I think of what God has called this person who will soon be baptized to. I think about how God has personally called each of us, including me. I never think of it as a general call ("all of humanity"), but each one of us individually. Here is God's generosity in action.

So, the greater miracle for me is not the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fish, rather it is in the twelve baskets of leftovers to be "kept in the fridge" for the next meal. Nothing is to be lost. Everything, everyone, is precious. We all need to bide our time and trust in God's plan.

I like to contrast the story of the Paralytic of two weeks ago with this Blind Man. Each had a long wait to encounter God's plan for them. Each was healed and completely restored. Yet, they processed the same experience differently. The Paralytic encounters God in the flesh, yet is unaffected and totally capable of rejecting him. The Blind Man, in spite of severe interrogation and abuse from the religious authorities, never once flinches from testifying to the Grace of God worked in him. God desires that all come to the knowledge of the truth; but, the choice remains ours.

The Lord orders us to gather up every fragment so that nothing be lost. We are those fragments. Let's hope that we are not lost in the gathering.

Christ is Risen!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA