

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JULY 5, 2015

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

NO LITURGY AT ST. NICHOLAS NEXT SUNDAY, JULY 12. Fr. Nick will be away. Please take this opportunity to visit one of our sister Orthodox Churches.

SUMMER BREAK FOR COFFEE HOUR Sunday, July 5 through September 6. Regular coffee hour will not be held during the summer months to give our regular coffee hour crews a respite.

CONGRATULATIONS! to **Iliana and Sean Fahey** on the birth of their daughter **Katherine Victoria Fahey**. She was born at 8:15pm on July 2, 2015, weighing 7 pounds 6 ounces and 20.5 inches long. *Many Years!*

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.

GREETERS TEAM 1:
V. GERALD BELBA AND MARGARITE LANDRY

COFFEE HOUR
ON RESPITE FOR THE SUMMER

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 10:1-10 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 8:28-9:1

(JESUS HEALS THE GADARENE DEMONIACS)

TONE 4 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 5



DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, July 12 NO Liturgy at St. Nick's
Jul 25-26 Woonsocket Festival, Sat-Sun
Sat, Aug 1 Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
Sun, Aug 16 St Michael Southbridge Picnic
Sun, Sept 20 stART on the Street

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

NAMEDAYS

July 7

The Holy Martyr Kyriaki

Kyri Sedares

July 11

The Blessed Olga, Princess of Russia

Olga Lolo

Olga Thanas

July 12

St. Veronica, the woman healed by our Lord Jesus

Veronica Pandaru

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

COMMUNITY NEWS

SUMMER PICNICS/FESTIVALS:

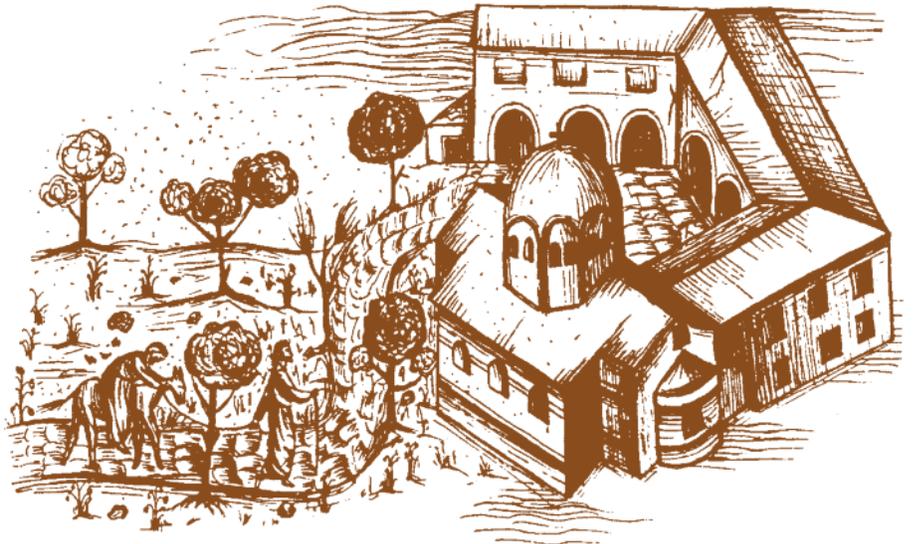
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST parish in Woonsocket will hold their annual Festival, Saturday and Sunday July 25-26 on the Church grounds.

ST. MICHAEL parish in Southbridge will hold their annual Picnic, Sunday August 16 on the Church grounds.

FINANCIAL FACT

"Burning the Mortgage"

We have received
\$117,000 in pledges (over 3 years)
towards our Burn The Mortgage Campaign.
This is 23% of our outstanding
principal balance of \$513,015



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

PREVENT us, Lord and Father, from being unmindful of you. Make us more and more sensitive to your presence, always growing in consciousness of you and your commandments. Inspire us to live correctly, filled with love for you and our neighbor. Let us be sensitive to your inspirations' and give us always the right response to them and the strength to carry them out.

By the grace and mercies and love for us of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

“HAVE YOU COME TO TORMENT US BEFORE THE TIME?”

THIS Sunday’s Gospel lesson touches on a very interesting and somewhat sensitive topic, demonic possession and mental illness. It is the account of the healing of the demoniacs of the Gadarenes (Gergesenes) found in the Gospel of Matthew (8:28-34). There are parallel accounts of this exorcism also found in Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39.

Throughout the Gospels, we find many people who come to the Lord asking for healing who today we might describe as suffering from various mental illnesses, but who the Evangelists record as “having” or being possessed by a demon.

Today, we view “abnormal” behavior through the lens of modern social and medical science, and this informs our understanding. We know how such maladies can lead a person to do many horrible things, both to themselves and to others. We could fairly describe these people as not being themselves, not being “in their right mind” — not reflecting the true essence of who they are. This Gospel passage provides us with an opportunity to look at mental illness and demonic possession from both a spiritual and social scientific perspective.

In Matthew’s account, prior to the Lord’s encounter with the demoniacs, he and the disciples reached land after having sailed through a tremendous storm. Even though the wind and water were raging, Jesus had been sleeping throughout, but, fearing death, his disciples woke him. He rose, raised his hands, and rebuked the winds and the sea. The disciples marveled, wondering “what sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?” (v. 27)

Shortly after, when on the shore, the



Lord encounters the demoniacs. The demons are similarly awed by Jesus, but they don’t wonder “what sort of man is this.” Unlike the disciples, they recognize him immediately. They know who he is. They say: “What have you to do with us, O Son of God?” (v. 29) But lest we think that the demons are happy to see him, they add: “Have you come to torment us before the time?”

Knowing that Jesus is going to expel them from these men, they ask permission to enter the herd of swine feeding nearby. He says to them: “Go.” They leave the persons they had possessed, and enter the swine, who run down the steep bank and drown in the sea.

There are a number of things to point out here. First the demons need Jesus’ permission to leave the persons possessed and enter the swine; the Lord has power over them. Second, the demons bring the swine to immediate destruction. It could be either that they delighted in killing the animals, or that the animals could not tolerate being

under their influence. And third, everyone witnessing this event was frightened. The townspeople even asked Jesus to leave (v. 34). The reality of demonic possession terrified them. The reality of evil overwhelmed them.

What should we understand from this story? First, God is always in charge. God’s grace was protecting the people possessed by the demons even while in their state of possession. We see what happened to the pigs when Jesus allowed the demons to enter them. This is what would happen to us if God allowed the demons free reign.

Second, the demons are working constantly for our destruction. We give them entry into our lives through our “passions:” greed, envy, even laziness and jealousy. And, they play with us.

Before we know it we are under their influence. For example, people struggling with addictions and mental illness often hurt and destroy themselves and others, many times feeling disassociated from their actions, as though someone or something else were controlling them and causing bad things to happen. Is this not “possession?”

When we choose to follow Christ, we don’t become someone else, we become more truly ourselves. When we choose to follow sin, we, like the demoniacs, serve as the “host” of other desires, and become controlled by them.

May we always follow God. May we always ask Him to lead us to ourselves.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA