

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN AUGUST 9, 2015

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**THE DORMITION FAST** in preparation for the Feast of the Falling-Asleep of the Theotokos began this past Saturday, August 1st, and continues until Saturday, August 15th. During this two-week period we will hold a number of special services. Please refer to the full schedule on the next page.

**PITA BAKING** this coming Thursday, August 13th, 9:00 am, as well as the rest of Thursdays in August. All help welcome. Questions? See Chris Toda.

**ORTHODOX FOOD CENTER NEEDS BAGS**, both plastic and paper. We all have hundreds of these filling our pantries. This is your chance to save the Food Center some cash and do even more good by recycling. Please collect good, usable paper and plastic bags and bring them either to the Pantry on Saturday morning between 10 a.m. and 12 noon (St. Spyridon Cathedral, side entrance), or to our parish and we'll have someone from here deliver them.

**WE CELEBRATE A 40-DAY BLESSING** today for **Katherine Victoria Fahey**, and her mother **Iliana Fahey**. God bless them, and of course, Sean as well. *Many Years!*

**GREETERS TEAM 5:**  
DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

**COFFEE HOUR**  
ON RESPITE FOR THE SUMMER

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



### THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:9-16 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 17:14-23

(JESUS HEALS THE BOY WITH AN EPILEPTIC DEMON)

TONE 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 10

## UPCOMING

**OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL** is on Friday, August 21st. We'll need help cooking and serving. If you'd like to help, please talk to Fr. Nick.

**AN ELECTRONICS/ WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING** day is set for **Saturday, August 29th**. If you're able and willing to help, please speak with Gerry Belba.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

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

**ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION** Albanian Orthodox Church will be celebrating its **100th Anniversary the weekend of September 26-27**. There will be a Grand Banquet Saturday night, September 26, starting at 6:00 pm with a cocktail hour and dinner at 7:00 pm at St. George's Hall. Keep the

date open. More details to follow.

## 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.

**SAVE THE DATE!** October 15, 2015. Holy Trinity's 9th **FOOD and WINE FEST**. This year's event will be at St. Spyridon Cathedral. Look for more details soon!

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Tues, Aug 11 Supplication to Theotokos, 6:30 pm  
Thurs, Aug 13 Pita Baking, 9:00 am  
Fri, Aug 14 Dormition Vespers, St. Mary's 6:30 pm  
Sat, Aug 15 Dormition Liturgy, St. Mary's 9:00 am  
Sun, Aug 16 St Michael Southbridge Picnic  
Fri, Aug 21 Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm  
Sat, Aug 29 e-Recycling, 9am-2pm  
Sat, Sept 5 Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm  
Sun, Sept 20 stART on the Street

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

## AUGUST SERVICES

### *Dormition Fast Period (Aug 1-15)*

- ◆ **Supplication Service** to the Theotokos at St. Nick's, Tuesday, August 11, 6:30 pm
- ◆ **Dormition Vespers** — St. Mary's, Friday, August 14, 6:30 pm
- ◆ **Divine Liturgy** at St. Nick's, Saturday, August 15, 9:00 am

## stART on the Street

**PITA & PASTRY CONCESSION AT "START ON THE STREET:" Sunday, September 20th.** (Rain Date – Sunday, September 27th). St. Nicholas is returning to this community art festival, held on Park Avenue in Worcester between Pleasant and Highland Streets, **which draws over 20,000 attendees each year.** Our Church will again be one of the vendors in the Food Court selling pita and pastry. This is a HUGE undertaking for us, and requires your "sweat stewardship" to realize the **fundraising potential of \$5,000.** Please watch the announcements and the Stewardship Bulletin Board in the Church Hall for additional information on how you can help with this event. Preparations for the event will be on Friday evening, September 18 and Saturday, September 19. And help will be needed as well as throughout the day on Sunday. Pita baking is also currently underway and help is needed with that part of the effort as well. The venue is established and presents a great opportunity to showcase our goods to the larger community. **The only variable is YOU!** St. Nicholas needs your commitment of time and effort to make this a success! The volunteering schedule needs will be posted on the Bulletin Board soon. **For more info, speak with Deb Sedares or Chris Toda.**

## 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**

## NAMEDAYS

### August 6

#### *The Holy Transfiguration of the Savior*

S. Richard Seferi

### August 8

#### *The Holy New Martyr Triandaphyllos*

Rose Armida Salerno

### August 15

#### *The Falling Asleep of the Most Holy Theotokos*

Maria Blanchard  
Mary Cocaine  
Maria Dumitriu  
Monika Maria Durmillari  
Maria Kalpidou  
Maria Prelipcean  
Nancy Maria Tsongalis  
Mary Tsoules  
Marietta Zaruha

### August 26

#### *The Holy Martyrs Adrian and Natalia at Nicomedia*

Natalia Dimitra Karadimitriou  
Natasha Zhaka

### August 29

#### *St. Theodora of Thessalonika*

Gina Theodora Trakadas

## A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**B**LESSED ARE YOU, LORD GOD of tenderness and mercy, for the gift of this new day and for bringing to us the fulness of grace in the person of your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. These days fill us with special joy and confidence because of the Theotokos, whose dormition we celebrate. As we set out, once again, to work out our salvation with the help of your Christ, give us all we need to serve you in our brothers and sisters, not only during this coming day, but throughout our lives. And let the holy virgin's prayers for us be a pledge of our eternal salvation.

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

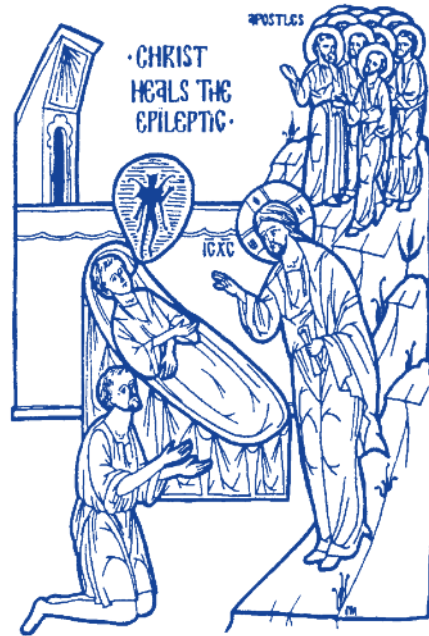
## FAITH AS TINY AS A MUSTARD SEED

**T**HE Gospel reading for this tenth Sunday after Pentecost is the healing of the epileptic boy (Matthew 17:14-23). St. Matthew tells us that this healing happened as the Lord and his disciples were coming down from the mountain where He had been transfigured. There was a crowd there waiting, and a man came up to him begging him to heal his son. A dramatic moment, and there are many players. There is the father and his son; the disciples; the demons; and of course, the crowd. For each, this encounter provokes a dilemma. For some a crisis, of faith. The father of the boy, the disciples, and even the members of the crowd will find the nature and depth of their faith tested. The demons will foresee their time of reckoning.

It is clear from the way the boy's father approaches Jesus that he was not a faithful man. He had come to Jesus out of desperation, not necessarily with the conviction that the Lord could do this. He had first brought the child to the disciples, but when they were unable to cast out the demon he decided to seek out the "higher source."

Jesus rebukes the father, but he doesn't do it directly. Rather, he addresses the rebuke more generally to all those present, saying: "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you?" (v. 17) The truth is that even after seeing so many of the signs and wonders he has worked, it is not just the father, but the crowds gathered around him who still have a hard time believing. Finally, he says to the father: "Bring him here to me."

The Evangelist Mark adds a few more details to this story. He says that when the spirit saw Jesus he convulsed the boy (Mark 9:20). Even if the boy's father did not know who Jesus was and what he could do, the demon did. Jesus then asked the boy's father how long he had been afflicted with this condition, to which the father replies "from child-



hood." He then adds: "If you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us" (Mark 9:22).

Jesus immediately turns his question around telling him: "If you are able! — All things can be done for the one who believes" (Mark 9:23). Again, St. Mark records the father as saying: "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Confronted with his own doubt and consumed with love for his child, the father at last comes to a sense of what it means to believe. He needed to learn to trust in God and ask for God's help especially when his trust was weakest.

What Jesus is saying to the man — and, of course to us as well — is that if we believe we will be given the power to heal, or work even greater things. But still, he does not wait for the father's faith, or that of the disciples; rather, in his compassion for the boy he heals him directly and immediately.

The disciples' dilemma is different. The Lord had given them "authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness" (Matthew 10:1). After everyone had left, they came to Jesus privately asking why they could not cast out this spirit. They were probably anxious and afraid they had lost the grace that had

been entrusted to them. Even Peter, James and John, who had seen the Lord transfigured in all his glory on Mount Tabor, were shaken (Matthew 17:1-8). Jesus gives them a similar answer to that which he gave the boy's father: "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith as a grain of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (v. 20). And then he adds: "But this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting" (v. 21).

Having given them this great power to heal, the Lord now instructs them on principles that support this power, this gift. He says that genuine faith, even as small as a mustard seed, has limitless power. But, this faith has to be strengthened, nurtured, and supported by prayer and fasting. Prayer brings us into God's presence and teaches us to listen to Him. Fasting helps us to distance ourselves from the excesses of this physical existence, making us lighter, and more spiritual.

Just a couple of words about the demons or evil spirits. The Biblical worldview sees the struggle between good and evil, sickness and health as a cosmic battle between God and those who pretend to be god. We have a scientific worldview, but I would hasten to add this doesn't mean that the ancient world was without science, far from it. But, they saw evil and good in personal terms. If you've ever struggled with a debilitating illness, physical or psychological, I'm sure that there were times that you felt that there was a malevolent force behind your suffering.

However, we are not abandoned in our struggles. God is with us. Each of us has the capacity to believe. God gave us this 'mustard seed' when He created us. The key to faith is trust. Trust is the fertile soil in which the seed of faith is planted, and it will grow into a magnificent and glorious tree.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA