

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN SEPTEMBER 13, 2015 THIS WEEK'S NEWS

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH SCHOOL YEAR begins TODAY. We are still looking for teachers and aids. Interested? Please see **Deb Sedares** or **Preoteasa Maria**.

THE FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS is Monday, September 14th. It is a strict fast day.

DETENTION POND PROJECT. **Dimitri Christo**, a son of the parish, is organizing a project to improve the barrier around the detention pond next to the Church parking lot. The purpose of the barrier is ensure safety, and while not necessarily a beautification project, it will look better too. The barrier will be made up of Rosa Rugosa bushes, a natural check on people wandering into the pond. **He is looking for \$10-20 donations to make this project happen.** The budget is \$600, toward the Rosa Rugosa bushes and incidentals. **Questions?** e-mail him at: dimitrisgchristo@gmail.com.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Timothy Rucho** in memory of his father, **Peter Rucho**, fallen asleep 40-years.



THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS

APOSTOLIC READING: GALATIANS 6:11-18

GOSPEL: JOHN 3:13-17

(JESUS SPEAKS WITH NIKODIMOS)

TONE 6 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 4

stART on the Street

START ON THE STREET is Sunday, **September 20**. This is an important fundraiser for our community. **Help is needed. A few hours from each of us will do the trick. Here's what's needed:**

Friday, September 18. Prep, packing and organizing supplies. At the Church from **12 noon through early evening**. A couple of hours will make a difference.

Sunday, September 20.

We start early at the Church to transport tent, supplies and food items to the site.

All day Sunday crews are needed to warm pitas at the AHEPA house and at the tent to sell.

At day's end we need to transport everything back to the church, clean-up and stow the gear.

All help is welcome! We especially encourage our youth to lend their energy. While this is work, it is very much a fun event. **Come and lend a hand.** Enlist your children or a friend. Let us know when you can help by signing up in church on Sunday. You'll see the work is broken up into 2-4 hour blocks.

For more info, speak with Deb Sedares or Chris Toda, Betty Anderson.

COMMUNITY NEWS

SS. CONSTANTINE & HELEN, Webster will hold its Greek Festival on **September 12** from 11am-10pm and **September 13** from 11am-5pm. Enjoy delicious Greek food and pastries, watch traditional dancers and have great fun!!! <http://schwebster.org>

HOLY TRINITY, FITCHBURG is holding their Annual Greek Festival, Saturday, **September 19th**, 11 am - 10 pm. For more information: 978-342-1216.

ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION Albanian Orthodox Church will be celebrating it's **100th Anniversary the weekend of September 26-27**. There will be a Grand Banquet Saturday night, September 26: 6:00 pm cocktail hour; dinner at 7:00 pm at St. George's Hall. Keep the date open. More details to follow.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sun, Sept 13 Religious Ed Classes Begin
- Mon, Sept 14 Elevation of Precious Cross, *strict fast*
- Sun, Sept 20 stART on the Street
- Sat, Oct 3 Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
West Boylston Fall Festival
- Tues, Oct 6 Holy Trinity General Assembly, 7pm

GREETERS TEAM 5:
DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW: A
MARGARITE LANDRY,
CHRISTINE MAST ERJOHN

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: On this feast of the holy cross, that luminous beacon shining forth throughout the ages, we cry out to you from our darkness of mind and spirit. Let the light of this holy cross blaze forth in our lives, and let it illumine our enemies as well, so that, when it has dispelled the darkness from us all, we may cast off all the antipathy, distrust, and resentment we so easily hold for each other. As this light transforms and transfigures us, let it bring us together to feast the new creation brought about by your Son.

By the grace and mercy and love for mankind 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.



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!



TROPARION OF ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting our rulers to prevail over adversaries, and protecting Your commonwealth by Your Cross.

KONTAKION OF ELEVATION

Lifted up on the Cross by Your free will, Christ God, grant mercies to the new commonwealth that bears Your name. Gladden our faithful rulers by Your power, giving them victories over their adversaries. May Your alliance be for them a weapon for peace, an invincible standard.

NAMEDAYS

September 5

St. Elizabeth the mother of St. John the Baptist

Elizabeth Anderson
Elizabeth Florica Galeriu
Lisa Mielnicki
Karen Elizabeth Wilder

The Holy Prophet Zachariah, father of St. John

Zachary Spataro

September 8

The Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos

Presvytera Maria Mossaides

September 9

The Holy Ancestors of God Joachim and Anna

Ann Marie Chachi
Ann Marie Clem
Anna Maria Collins
Ann Trakadas

September 14

The Exaltation of the Precious and Lifegiving Cross

Stavri Tanacea

September 17

The Holy Martyr Faith, Daughter of St. Sophia

Faith Mayer

The Holy Martyr Sophia of Rome

Sofia Apostol
Sophia Amyra Apostola
Carol Fotos

September 18

The Holy Martyr Ariadna of Phrygia

Ariana Sparages

FINANCIAL FACT

"Burning the Mortgage"

We have over \$42,000 in our brokerage account and there are great tax advantages when donating your stock to the Church.

LIFTED UP UPON THE CROSS



THIS Sunday we prepare ourselves for the coming Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross that is celebrated on September 14th. The selected Gospel lesson is from St. John (3:13-17). It is part of the discussion our Lord had with a Pharisee named Nikodemus, who was also a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling Council of the Jewish nation at that time. Nikodemus, along with Joseph of Arimathea, would be the ones to bury Jesus after his Crucifixion.

Not wanting to be noticed, Nikodemus came to Jesus at night time. He perceived Jesus to be a “teacher who has come from God” (v. 2), but he had not yet come to truly understand who our Lord was. In this passage we hear Jesus speak about being “born again” (v. 3). He knows that Nikodemus is beginning to understand, so He enlightens him on being born from earth, and being born

from above. He tells him he must be “born of the Spirit” (v. 8). Finally, Jesus gently reveals to him who He actually is. This is where the Gospel lesson for today begins.

Jesus says to him: “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man” (v. 14). Then, in a way that will only become clear to Nikodemus after Jesus’ Resurrection, He speaks of His Crucifixion and the power it will have to save the world. “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life” (v. 14-15).

The reference here is to an incident in the desert where the people of Israel, after their liberation from Pharaoh and Egypt and dissatisfied with their situation, complained against God and Moses (Numbers 21:5-9). God in his anger sent poisonous serpents that bit the people. Many died. Repenting, the people came to Moses and asked him to pray to the Lord that this curse be taken away. The Lord told Moses to make an image of a serpent out of bronze and to lift it high on his staff. Anyone who had been bitten, if he looked upon the bronze serpent, would live.

This might seem a rather obscure reference, even for us who have studied the Scriptures. Here is what this means. Jesus is telling Nikodemus that this incident in the desert is a prefiguring, a “type,” of the Crucifixion. God had sent the serpents as punishment. Then God tells Moses to use the very instrument

of His punishment (the image of the serpent) as the means for healing and redemption. In the Lord’s self-sacrifice on the Cross, God uses the very curse that had befallen humanity because of Adam’s sin, namely death, as the means for our salvation. If we look up with faith at the Lord hanging on the wood of the Cross, we too will be healed and live.

This Preparatory Gospel lesson ends with a hopeful and prophetic set of passages, the most famous of which is: “for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (v. 16). The persons who selected this passage want us to begin to understand *why* God sent His Son. As we witness His Cross being unearthed and lifted up for all to see, they want us to mediate on the real significance of this event. The finding and elevation of the Cross is not simply an archeological find, it is God’s power. It is the victory of life, over the forces of darkness and death.

God does not want us to die, but to live—forever. He does not consider “sin” the final word, but rather “repentance.” He offers us the Cross, like He did the “serpent” in the desert, as a sign of eternal life, if we look upon it and believe.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA





The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary: The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of mankind.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of humankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee,

Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since St Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcome the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Sts Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Sts Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feastdays at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

St Joachim in deep grief went into

the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. St Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained to extreme old age and prepared themselves by virtuous life for a sublime calling: to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God, and of them would be born a most blessed daughter Mary, through Whom would come the Salvation of all the World.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all humankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate ... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion.