

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

stART on the Street

START ON THE STREET is TODAY, 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:*

ALL DAY TODAY, crews are needed to warm pitas at the AHEPA house and at the tent to sell.

AT DAY'S 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. **Check with Deb Sedares, Chris Toda, or Betty Anderson.**

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

GREETERS TEAM 1:
V. GERALD BELBA AND MARGARITE LANDRY
NO COFFEE HOUR TODAY
ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SUNDAY AFTER THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS

APOSTOLIC READING: GALATIANS 2:16-20 ☩ GOSPEL: MARK 8:34-9:1

(TAKING UP ONE'S CROSS AND FOLLOWING CHRIST)

TONE 7 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 5

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.

NO COFFEE HOUR TODAY, due to stART.

UP COMING

WEST BOYLSTON FALL FESTIVAL. We will have a Food/Pastry concession at the West Boylston Fall Festival on **Saturday, October 3rd.** More details next week.

HOLY TRINITY is holding its annual **General Assembly** meeting on **Tuesday, October 6th at 7:00 pm.** We need delegates from our parish. **Interested?** Speak with Deb Sedares or Fr. Nick.

COMMUNITY NEWS

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: 6:00 pm cocktail hour; 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.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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
Fri, Oct 16 Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

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!

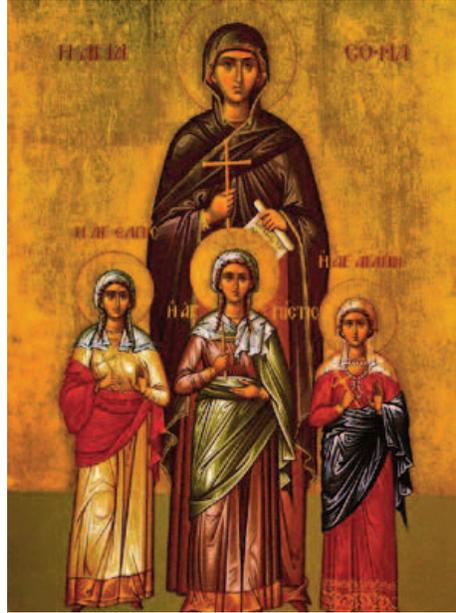


A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

OCREATOR AND MAKER OF THIS HOUR: Another morning finds us here before you, celebrating the exaltation of the precious cross, that immortal and life-giving tree that bore the saviour's body in death. From barren wood and bitter death was that tree made, but its stark and naked limbs produced un-failing fruit and leaves that never fade. It was the very price that saved us from the law of old, a price paid not in gold or silver, but in the blood of that pure and spotless lamb. Enlighten us as we reflect on this mystery, O God and Father. Impress on our feeble minds how much we need to embrace the cross, in whose rough surface we see ourselves as we really are.

By the grace and mercy 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.



SOPHIA & HER THREE DAUGHTERS: FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

These Saints were from Italy and contested for the Faith about the year 126, during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. Faith was twelve years old, Hope, ten, and Love, nine; each was tormented and then beheaded, from the eldest to the youngest. Their mother Sophia mourned at their grave for three days, where she also fell asleep in peace; because of her courageous endurance in the face of her daughters' sufferings, she is also counted a martyr. The name Sophia means "wisdom" in Greek; as for her daughters' names, Faith, Hope, and Love (Charity), they are Pistis, Elpis, and Agape in Greek, and Vera, Nadezhda, and Lyubov in Russian.

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"

Our monthly mortgage payment is \$4,719.99, and 39% goes towards the principal, and the remaining 61% is interest paid to the bank!

HOW MUCH IS YOUR LIFE WORTH?

THE Gospel lesson for the Sunday following the Feast of the Elevation of the Precious Cross adds the personal dimension to our understanding of what it means to call ourselves Christians. The Gospel lesson for the Sunday *before* the Feast of the Cross (taken from St. John, 3:13-17) spoke of what God, in the person of Jesus Christ, was doing for us through His sacrifice on the Cross. *This* Sunday's Gospel lesson found in St. Mark (8:34-9:1) speaks to how we should respond to God's great act of love.

The passage opens with an invitation. The Lord says: "If any want to become my followers ..." (v. 34). Even when we hear what it will mean to "become a follower," we shouldn't lose sight of this first important point: the Lord is *inviting* us. He doesn't command. He doesn't threaten. He asks. He says, "if."

The rest of the verse is where we find out what it means to follow Christ. It is a real challenge and often difficult to hear. The Lord tells us that if a person decides to accept His invitation, "... let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Usually we run through the verse quickly, treating it all as a single statement, but it actually contains three separate actions. Let's take a look at each, one at a time.

What does it mean to "deny" oneself? The Lord does not mean to simply refrain from doing something that we would like to do — although this is certainly part of it. Jesus is talking about looking at ourselves in the same way we would look at another person whom we do not know at all. He is asking us to give ourselves the same sort of critique and spiritual scrutiny that we might give a perfect stranger as we look at them from a distance. The original Greek word that we translate as "deny" is actu-



ally much stronger. It has a meaning closer to "renounce" oneself than "deny."

We need to develop a certain distance from ourselves if we want to grow spiritually. For example, often we can clearly discern the issue or problem that another person is facing, while it remains unapparent to them. This is true on both the physical and spiritual planes. When a parent wants to help their child get the best education possible, they will select the tutor who will push the child to his or her limits. We know that a physical therapist can push someone with an injury beyond what they thought they were capable of. Only someone with distance and spiritual insight can push you to recognize and confront such things. We need to regulate and train ourselves like a drill sergeant would. This is what the Lord means when he says we must deny ourselves.

The second is to take up our cross.

We commonly describe some genuine difficulty or tragedy as our "cross," and properly so, because it is certainly a burden that we carry. However, here the Lord is talking about the cross that leads to death. In the passage just before this Jesus was talking to His disciples about His impending Crucifixion, but they didn't understand him. They wanted Him to save His own life. By speaking of the cross here He is explaining to His followers what the price of discipleship is. We must be prepared to die for the Gospel. We must be prepared to die to ourselves — to our passions, our self-interest, and our will. Sometimes this will also mean our very life itself.

Finally, we are told to follow him. Even if we deny ourselves to the point of death, this alone will not "save our lives" if we do not follow Christ. Many misguided and perhaps evil people have lost themselves to a cause, even to the point of death. The self-denial and acceptance of one's cross, without following the ultimate truth can lead to destruction. In our own day we have been afflicted with countless "suicide" terrorists who cause pain, suffering and death to innocent people, all the while considering themselves "martyrs." It is by following Christ, by learning from His example, that self-denial and the burden of the Cross find true meaning, become life-giving.

The Lord tells us to put our lives in proper and true perspective, and then to choose correctly. "What will it profit a person to gain the whole world and forfeit their life [soul]? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?" (v. 36-37) Our Lord invites us to walk the path of life; but ultimately, it remains our choice.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA