

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN DECEMBER 6, 2015 THIS WEEK'S NEWS

We are celebrating our *Parish Feastday TODAY*, honoring the *patron Saint of our Community, the holy Bishop St. Nicholas*. Following the Divine Liturgy we'll have a **FELLOWSHIP POTLUCK LUNCHEON**. This will afford us the opportunity to spend some time with our Parish family before we plunge into the frenzy of the holidays.

ALSO, WE WILL HOLD THE DRAWING FOR THE FEASTDAY RAFFLE during the Luncheon. If you haven't purchased your tickets, please see Dean Valoras right after Liturgy.

THE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD DEADLINE IS TODAY! Make sure you see either Tom FitzPatrick or Evans Tsoules to make sure you're listed. You will want to be a part of this festive Christmas greeting to our Church community.

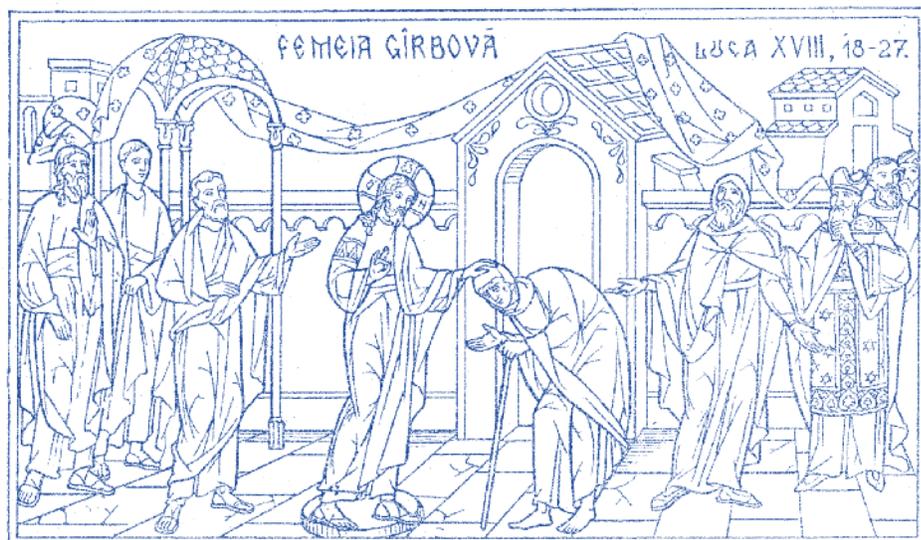
CHRISTMAS BAKING ORDERS are due **TODAY**. Please fill out your order form and hand it in to **Betty Anderson**.

OUR NEXT PITA BAKING SESSION is **Saturday, December 12th beginning at 9am**. Assistance is needed with setting the hall, the pita making and baking, cleaning the hall and kitchen and then resetting the hall for church on Sunday. Plenty to do for bakers and

GREETERS TEAM 2:
ARTIC GAVALA AND CĂLIN GALERIU

FEASTDAY CELEBRATION:
ALL HANDS ON DECK

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: **EPHESIANS 6:10-17** ☩ GOSPEL: **LUKE 13:10-17**

(JESUS HEALS THE WOMAN WITH OSTEOPOROSIS)

⊕ MATINS GOSPEL: 5

non-bakers, alike, and all to support our church. We need everyone's support in this effort so please see or contact **Chris Toda** and let her know if you will be able to participate. **No experience necessary!**

OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT will be held on Sunday, December 20th. We will not have any rehearsals but **all children who would like to participate MUST arrive on time to Church** so they can be fitted with a costume and assigned a part.

OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL is Friday, December 18th. We'll need help cooking and serving. **Prep** help needed (3 persons), 6pm Thursday. **Cooking** help needed (2 persons), noon Friday. **Serving** help needed (5 persons), 5:30pm Friday. If you'd like to help, please talk to Fr. Nick.

WE ARE IN THE NATIVITY FAST. Let us use this time to withdraw from the noise of the "Christmas Season," in order to reflect on the great

mystery of Emmanuel: God-with-us!

THE 2016 CHURCH CALENDARS in both English and Romanian are available at the Candles. Please consider making a donation to cover the costs!

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9am to noon. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with **Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola**. Our next Saturday is January 2nd.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sat, Dec 5 Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
Great Vespers for St. Nicholas, 6pm
- Sun, Dec 6 St. Nicholas Feastday Celebration
- Sat, Dec 12 Pita Baking, 9 am
- Fri, Dec 18 Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm
- Sun, Dec 20 Christmas Pageant

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

COMMUNITY NEWS

IMPORTANT HOPE CEMETERY NEWS. The Orthodox section of Hope Cemetery in Worcester is completely full. The Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches has been trying to get the City of Worcester to expand the Orthodox section for quite some time. The City of Worcester has scheduled **a second public hearings to deal with the cemetery master plan.** on **Monday, December 14, 2015 at 6:30 pm in the Esther Howland Chamber in City Hall.** This is the Orthodox community's chance to express our desire to have more plots earmarked for the Orthodox community. There is land available in the cemetery adjacent to the existing Orthodox section. In order to expand the Orthodox section the community should make its desire known at these hearings.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FROM THE ORTHODOX COMMUNITY are provided each year to each one of the residents of Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehab. Our Parish is responsible for providing some of those gifts. You will be asked to purchase and wrap the gift, and bring it to the Church on Sunday, December 13th. **Eleanor Sedares (508-753-3106) is coordinating this effort** for our parish and can offer suggestions if you need ideas of what to get.

Holy Trinity staff and residents are preparing for a fun-filled season of Christmas festivities.

This week starts off with decorating the building and Christmas tree.

On Tuesday, December 8th at 6:30pm, residents will have visits from the St. Spyridon Youth Group (GOYA).

On Saturday, December 12, 2:00pm - 4:00pm, Holy Trinity is hosting a HOLIDAY FAMILY OPEN HOUSE, with entertainment by the WPI Chorus in

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

BLESSED ARE YOU, LORD GOD OF OUR FATHERS, for giving us your only Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, as our refuge and stronghold, that evil might never master our lives nor the enemy enslave us! Now, as we offer you these prayers in watchfulness and expectation, enable us to call on your holy name, filled with understanding and love. Prepare us for the celebration of your Son's birthday by renewing in us a spirit of true dedication and discipleship, and grant that we may always enjoy your saving power.

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

the Main Dining Room. All are welcome — Please join us for refreshments, music and fellowship!

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.

NAMEDAYS

December 4

The Great-martyr Barbara and St. John of Damascus

Barbara Jean Grniet

December 6

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lychia

Archbishop Nicolae

Rev. Nicholas Apostola

Nicole Soumela Apostola

Nicholas Belishta

Nicholas Charalambides

Robert A. Clem

Nikolla Endriko

Frank W. Ford

Nicholas John Johnson

Nicole Amelia Karadimitriou

Nicholas Mazanitis

Nicolae Nace

Rev. Fr. Nicolae Simion

Nicholas George Soter

Nicole Sparages

Nicholas Tonna

Nicole Marta Trakadas

Nicholas Valoras

Nikollaq Zhaka

December 12

St. Spyridon the Wonderworker of Tremithus

Spiro Kelly

Spiro Spyrou

December 15

The Hieromartyr Eleftherios, Bishop of Illyria

Lillian Chachi

FINANCIAL FACT

"Burning the Mortgage"

***Our mortgage started in October, 2002
with a principal balance of \$794,500.
Today, our balance is \$524,753 (12/15).***

SET FREE FROM OUR BONDAGE

THIS week's Gospel lesson is the story of how Jesus healed a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years (Luke 13:10-17). "She was bent over and quite unable to stand straight." (v. 11) Today we would say that she very likely had osteoporosis that led to curvature of the spine. Many of us know people who suffer in this way. Those of us who have had occasion to visit people in a nursing home have probably seen more than a few women like this. (It is something that afflicts women much more than men.) There was a woman in my neighborhood who was so bent over that it was impossible when seeing her, not to suffer with her. Needless to say, it is a debilitating illness, and this poor woman had been suffering like this for eighteen years.

This particular story is unique to the Gospel of St. Luke, which is in keeping with his habit of highlighting for us Jesus' attention toward the poor and the weak. Here, we are told, that while he was preaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath Jesus saw her and called her over to him. She didn't ask anything of him, but rather *He* reached out to *her*. From among all the people in the assembly, he noticed her and her suffering. He said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." (v.12) Laying his hand on her she stood up straight and began praising God (v. 13).

He was immediately criticized by the leader of the synagogue for having broken the rules around work on the Sabbath. Jesus is outraged at the hypocrisy. He says, "Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water?" (v. 15) There were (and still are) intricate rules around what could or could not be done on the Sabbath. In one commentary on the

Law, tying and untying knots was strictly forbidden, while in another commentary certain kinds of knots were exempt. Similarly, it was forbidden to lead animals more than 2,000 yards to water. Jesus is intimating that these rules were regularly broken out of necessity. No one would not tie or untie a rope or not water thirsty animals if their well-being were at stake.

This is the power behind his point, when he says: "Ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" (v. 16) The congregants immediately understand the hypocrisy and the lack of compassion that Jesus is decrying. I would also draw your attention to a subtle point in this account. Jesus says that *Satan* had bound this woman. Often we think that illness is a punishment from God, or just a natural part of life. The Lord calls this bondage, not



punishment. He certainly doesn't see this as natural. He wanted her healthy and whole. Moreover, he wants us healthy and whole.

It is perhaps not too much to see in this crippled woman an image of humanity bound and held captive by the Evil One. It brings to mind the old Latin hymn that we sing at this time of year:

"O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear."

We should — all of us — prepare for His coming. We should set aside time for prayer and fasting, withdrawing from the frenzied pace of life. We should make room in our hearts to welcome that young child who comes to us, in order to free us, He who is the pre-eternal God.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA