

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JANUARY 3, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY began Thursday, January 7th and continues throughout January. Fr. Nick will be sending you a notice with a specific date and time, but if you have a preference, please contact him by e-mail (frnick@stnicholaschurch.org) or on his cell phone: 508-335-7378.

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

TODAY WE CELEBRATE TWO MEMORIALS: For the servant of God **Florika Dragoti**, fallen asleep 6 months, and the **departed members of the Manescu family. May their memory be eternal!**

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Dan and Liana Manescu** in memory of their departed loved-ones.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

WHAT'S NEW AT HOLY TRINITY:

Holy Trinity is pleased to announce Brother Ryan Carlson, a seminarian, will be working with Father Nicholas Apostola to provide volunteer pastoral

GREETERS TEAM 2:

ARTIC GAVALA AND CĂLIN GALERIU

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW A:

MARGARITE LANDRY,
CHRISTINE MASTERJOHN

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

EPISTLE: EPHESIANS 4:7-13

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 4:12-17

(THE LORD BEGINS HIS MINISTRY)

TONE 7 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 1-

services to its residents.

The St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos will be hosting a coffee hour social on Thursday, January 14th at 2:00 PM.

Check out Holy Trinity's December 2015 Newsletter at htnr.net on the home page!

Want to directly help residents of Holy Trinity with daytime events?

Small donations for events at Holy Trinity are:

- * Sunday AM Dunkin Donuts for one floor - \$75.00
- * Soda Cart for one floor - 475.00
- * Ice Cream truck visit - \$250.00
- * Various local bus trips for 6

to 8 residents - \$250.00

- * Afternoon music entertainment - \$150.00
- * Flowers for dining room - \$40.00/dozen, 2 times/ month
- * Music Therapy Resident lessons - \$50.00/hr.

Donations can be made by contacting The Holy Trinity Activities Director, Tina Metras at 508-752-1000.

HOLY TRINITY HOSPICE offers exceptional care for individuals facing serious illnesses and those at the end of life. It provides individualized care for loved ones in their place of residence, whether that be at home, in an assisted living or at a nursing facility. Holy Trinity Hospice would be honored to help through your difficult time. If you would like further information, please call our office at 508-791-8200 and ask for the Hospice Director, Beth Miller or the Community Liaison, Ursula Hanus.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, Jan 10 Sun after Theophany, Liturgy 10 am
Sat, Jan 30 Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
Sat, Feb 6 Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
May 1 Great and Holy Pascha

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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,

O LORD, OUR GOD, LIGHT OF ALL THE WORLD: The brilliance of this feast of lights dazzles the eyes of our souls. For today you enlighten us with the intimate knowledge that you are three in one. Today, you enlighten us by the appearance and manifestation of the Lord Jesus in the Jordan. Today, you enlighten us with the understanding that your salvation is for all peoples without exception. Therefore, by the never-fading radiance of your light, rescue us from the power of darkness and make a place for us in your kingdom. Fill us with your glory and reveal the splendor of your presence to every nation, that we may all find forgiveness of our sins and true freedom.

For you are indeed our God, the Father of lights, and we give glory to you, your co-eternal Son, and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.



NAMEDAYS

January 1

St. Basil the Great

William Dino Cavanaugh
William Cocavessis
Bryan Donabed
William Keimig
Vasia Lolo
Vasilika Lolo
William Polymeros
Valarie Stamoulis
Vasilika Tanko
William Tsoules

January 6

The Holy Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Francis Polymeros
Jordan Sparages

January 7

The Holy Prophet and Forerunner

John the Baptist

Rev. Fr. John Daly
Nița Dumitriu
John Ermilio
Sean Fahey
Ian Mayer
John David Thoren

January 12

St. Tatiana the Martyr of Rome

Tatiana Sofia Karadimitriou

January 17

St. Anthony the Great

Anthony Theodore Christo
Scott Anthony Maynard
Anthony Rucho
Tony Nicholas Trakadas

January 18

St. Athanasios

Patriarch of Alexandria

Thanas Lolo
Arthur Peterson

January 22

The Holy Apostle Timothy

Rev. Fr. Timothy Lowe
Timothy Rucho

January 25

St. Gregory the Theologian

Rev. Fr. Gregory Christakos
Dr. Gregory Tsongalis

January 28

St. Ephraim the Syrian

Rev. Fr. Ephraim Peters

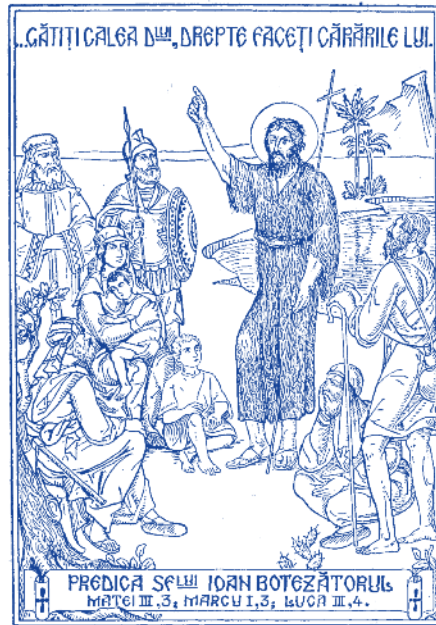


THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

ON THIS SUNDAY, FOLLOWING THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY, we read how our Lord began his earthly ministry (Matthew 4:12-17). Immediately after his Baptism in the Jordan River by John, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days and nights, and there He was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1-11). He did not begin to preach immediately, but, like the prophets before him, he withdrew to the desert to fast and pray. St. John Chrysostom adds that the Lord wanted to give us an example: after our own baptism we should expect to be tempted and put to the test, and that private prayer in solitude, along with fasting, were critical to the spiritual life.

Even after his trial in the desert, Jesus does not begin his ministry. He will not begin preaching while John is still active. John's prophetic ministry was intended to prepare the way for people to be receptive to Jesus' call, but while he was still preaching and baptizing, most people thought that John was the Messiah. John had a great following, including a number of disciples that gathered around him. Chrysostom says that the Lord was careful, in this way, not to divide and confuse the people. He waited for John to complete his ministry before beginning his.

So, only when the Lord hears that John has been arrested and imprisoned does He begin his ministry. St. Matthew says, that "when Jesus heard that John had been arrested ... he left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea" (v. 12-13). To emphasize the importance of this move, St. Matthew then quotes the Prophet Isaiah (9:1-2) who says, that "the people [of Galilee] who sat in darkness have seen a great light." Then Matthew tells us that Jesus begins his ministry by proclaiming: "Repent,



for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (v. 17).

The move from Nazareth to Capernaum was significant in a number of ways. Practically speaking, Nazareth was a small village and Capernaum was one of a number of busy and prosperous small cities on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. If he wanted to reach a large and diverse population with his message, Capernaum was the logical place to go. There is another reason as well, a spiritual reason alluded to by St. Matthew when he quotes Isaiah. The original territory of the Tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali was the first to be separated from ancient Israel. Therefore, the first part of Israel that had experience the destructive wrath of God now should be the first to hear the good news of salvation.

Jesus' message is a little softer than John's. John was the "voice crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'" (Matthew 3:3). The Lord takes up the central theme of

John's preaching: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1, 4:17), but His call for repentance is surrounded by the warmth of His love and the comfort of God's forgiveness.

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is easy to misunderstand, especially in the English translation. We normally translate the Greek word "βασίλεια" (vasilia) as "kingdom." However, a much more accurate translation would be "reign," as in the reign of a ruler. "Kingdom" gives the sense of a territory or a nation. "Reign" evokes the sense of the way in which a ruler rules. When Jesus speaks of the Reign of God or the Reign of Heaven, he's not talking about a place, but rather a way of understanding how God should become the ruler of our hearts. "Once Jesus was asked ... when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is within you.'" (Luke 10-21)

Perform this small exercise. Go back and read again the passage from St. Luke quoted above. Only, this time substitute the word "reign" everywhere you read "kingdom." Can you see how it changes your perspective on where to look for the "kingdom" of God? God reigns from the inside, not the outside. He knows that only way to change how we act toward one another is to change who rules our hearts.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

“BURN THE MORTGAGE” CAMPAIGN ENTERS FINAL STAGE



Nearly two years ago, the parish undertook an initiative to pay off the principal amount due under the church's mortgage in order to finish this first phase of our building project. Presently, the principal balance due on the mortgage is \$523,000. As a result of our campaign, we've received 19 pledges totaling \$117,250.

By God's Grace, we have wonderful announcement to make. Thanks to the faithfulness and generosity of Vasil (Billy) and Elva Gartsu, founding members of our parish, St. Nicholas has received a bequest in the amount of \$300,000 to be applied against the principal debt of our mortgage. We are humbled and overwhelmed by their example of stewardship and faithfulness. Vasil and Elva were humble and hardworking people. Throughout their lives they were faithful stewards of their time, talent and treasure to the church. When Elva married Billy she was

not Orthodox. In fact, when they were married the entire service was conducted in Romanian and Elva didn't understand a word. It was only when Fr. Nicholas was appointed priest at St. Nicholas, and the services were celebrated in English, that she began attending Liturgy regularly, pulling Billy along with her. It was then that Elva expressed her desire to embrace the Orthodox faith. Together, they became stalwarts of the Parish.

Vasil fell asleep in the Lord over a decade ago. Elva continued her devotion to the Lord and her dedication to the Parish. Remembering the original Church on Hammond Street in Worcester, she expressed her constant desire to see a new Church on our current site in Shrewsbury. While she didn't see the new Church itself, she certainly saw the new structures and design. As she declined in health, her constant wish was that whatever resources she had should be devoted

to seeing the completion of the new St. Nicholas. Both her and Vasil's faith are a great blessing for our St. Nicholas community.

Where are we now? How do we get to where we need to be? As a result of the pledges previously made and this generous and profound gift, ONLY \$106,000 remain to be paid on the principal in order to finish paying off this current debt! Given where we began only a few years ago, our St. Nicholas Parish has a property valued at \$1.9 million dollars. Yet, we still have the Church building to build.

OUR CHALLENGE RIGHT NOW is to finish the work and receive pledges that would pay off the full debt by Palm Sunday 2016. Of course the dollar total is important, but equally as important is that we have every member of our parish contribute towards this goal, at whatever level is within their means.

During the season of Epiphany Fr. Nick visits each of our homes to bless them and ask for God's blessing on our families in the coming year. We also ask this year that each one of us consider the importance of our St. Nicholas community in our lives. Reflect on the example of faith and love that Vasil and Elva Gartsu have shown. We all need to participate in the paying off of our church mortgage to the Glory of God and to securing the future of His Church for generations to come.

Attached is a pledge form for your consideration. Please fill it out and send it in as soon as possible.

With love in Christ,

Thomas Fitzpatrick, Chair
"Burn the Mortgage" Campaign