

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JANUARY 17, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

PITA DOUGH ROLLING. It's that time again! We did so well with our sales for the holidays that we've depleted our inventory. We've schedule a session for Saturday, January 30th. We need 12-15 people, so that the work is evenly distributed and we can finish with prep and clean-up in 3 hours. No experience necessary. If you'd like to participate, contact Chris Toda at: thetodas@msn.com, or 508-832-6271.

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.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored in memory of **Elizabeth Elias** by the **Sedares family**.

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 3:

EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW B:

KARADIMITRIOU/KALPIDO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE TWENTY NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

EPISTLE: COLOSSIANS 3:4-11 ✚ GOSPEL: LUKE 17:12-19

(JESUS HEALS THE TEN LEPERS)

TONE 8 ✚ MATINS GOSPEL 11

services to its residents.

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 Me-

tras 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

- Sat, Jan 30 Pita Dough Rolling, 9am - noon
Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
- Sat, Feb 6 Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
- Fri, Feb 19 Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm
- Mon, March 14 Great Lent Begins
- May 1 Great and Holy Pascha

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas



JANUARY 17
ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

NAMEDAYS

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

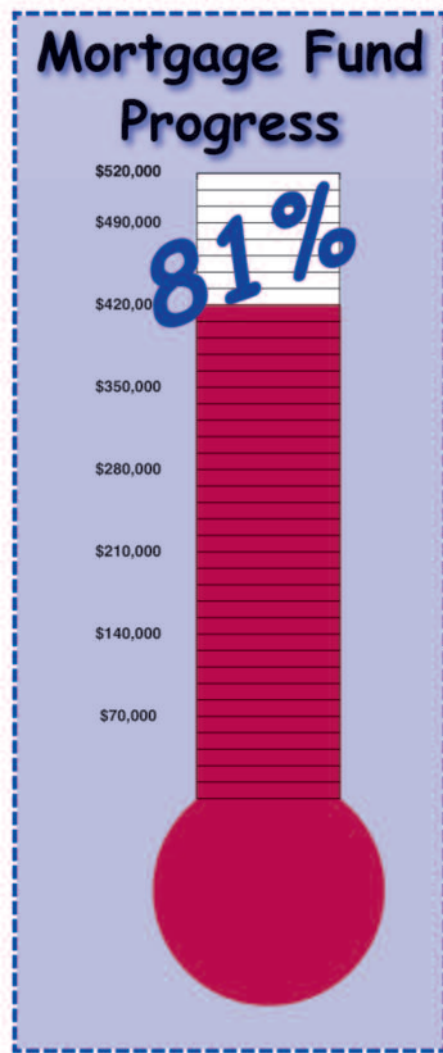
Rev. Fr. Gregory Christakos

Dr. Gregory Tsongalis

January 28

St. Ephraim the Syrian

Rev. Fr. Ephraim Peters



Let's Work
Together
to be
Mortgage
Free!

Please Join Us!



JANUARY 18
SS. ATHANASIOS AND KYRIL
PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

LORD be good to us and fill our minds with insight. Tune the ears of our spirit to the subtleties of living according to your good news. Make us understand that life is a precious gift from you and not ours to abuse. Teach us how to appreciate the value of life and the riches it presents to us, and how to have a healthy confidence in ourselves at all times without ever foolishly trusting solely in our own devices. And let not our prosperity deprive us of understanding.

So that ever enlightened by your wisdom, we may give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.

GET UP, YOUR FAITH HAS MADE YOU WELL

THIS week's Gospel reading, the account of the healing of the ten lepers (Luke 17:12-19), is written very much in the form of a parable, even as it recounts a true event, not simply a story told as a teaching tool. Ten men were afflicted by leprosy. They happen upon Jesus, beg for mercy and were healed. To be stricken with leprosy was like being given a living death sentence. You were seen as cursed and unclean. As with the Ebola epidemic, someone who had contracted leprosy was driven from family and friends. And like AIDS, especially in the early days of this epidemic, you were forced to hide yourself and live apart, sometimes in a colony, but often alone. In many ways, it was worse than being dead.

When Jesus entered this particular village the ten of them recognize him, and, while keeping their distance, called to him saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" (v. 12-13) It is clear from the way they address him that they understood who he was. They most likely had heard of his healing power. Jesus answers them simply: "Go and show yourselves to the priests." (v. 14)

The priests were the only ones authorized to attest to a healing. Today we understand that what people called "leprosy" in Biblical times could have been other skin ailments as well, not necessarily what is known today as Hansen's Disease. Nonetheless, neither Hansen's nor conditions such as eczema are easily cured. For Jesus to have told those afflicted to present themselves to the priests meant that they were healed.

As they were traveling on their way to the priests, the ten looked and saw that they had indeed been made whole. But, only one of them, when he realized he had been healed, turned back and fell at the feet of Jesus to thank him. It is at this point that we realize this man is different from the other nine, not only for his act of gratitude, but also because of



his nationality. He is a Samaritan. (v. 15-16)

Jesus then says something he usually doesn't say after he has healed someone. He asks, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" (v. 17-18) First, in the way Jesus asks the question, he is telling us that the other nine were Jews. Second, he tells us that there is something else special about this man, apart from the fact that he is a Samaritan. Jesus gives us an insight into the character of this individual.

We know that there was a tension between Jews and Samaritans (cf. John 4:5ff). However, apart from ethnic and religious differences — his social standing — we are drawn to look at his character. We see that he possesses a depth of heart that seems to be missing from the other nine. Having been healed of such a grievous illness, could you imagine not running back to thank the person who had healed you? Yet as we see in this passage, 90% of this small sampling of humanity did not. And, from experience, I might hazard the guess

that this is probably the rule, not the exception. This is a hard reality, and difficult to accept. Can it really be that most people would not stop to give thanks, neither to the person who healed them nor to God? Would you?

Many of the Patristic commentators use this passage as a way to emphasize the ingratitude of the Jews and the gratitude of the Gentiles. I truly do not think this is the point of this story. As I have seen it, many people are quick to call on God and promise anything when they are suffering, but few remember their promises when they have become well. When our need has passed and we become comfortable again, we resume our normal behavior. If we were grateful and attentive before, we very likely will be grateful and attentive afterward. If not, then not.

In the final verse of this story Jesus tells the Samaritan: "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well." (v. 19) But what of the other nine who were cured as well? If it was this man's faith that cured him, how were these other nine cured? There are two responses. The ingratitude of the nine will continue to effect them throughout their lives. If they don't repent, their hearts will harden and they will become bitter. For the grateful, every gift is a blessing, and even in hard times they find reason to rejoice.

Remember this: God's Grace falls as rain on each and every one of us. He doesn't discriminate. But, more often than not we are totally oblivious of that gift, or even worse, ungrateful. God nonetheless continues to pour His love down, hoping that we will turn to fall at His feet and give thanks. (v. 16) This, my brothers and sisters, is the degree to which he loves us.

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