

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JANUARY 24, 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, 9:00am to noon. 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.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center for the **NEXT TWO Saturdays, January 30th and February 6th, from 9 am - noon.** About 4 people are needed. Likewise, donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with **Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola.**

THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY will continue until the end of January. If you haven't already scheduled a visit, and would like your home blessed please contact Fr. Nick by e-mail (frnick@stnicholaschurch.org)

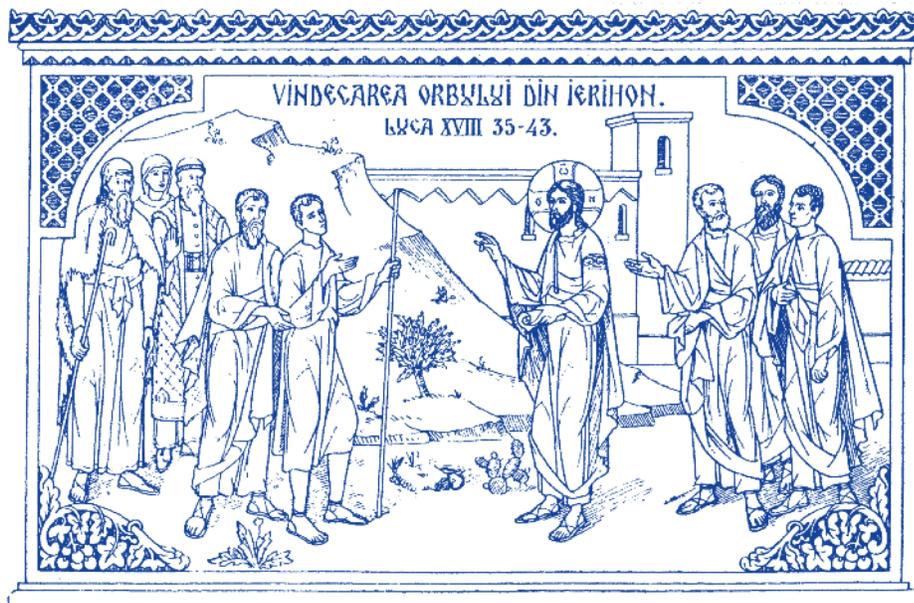
GREETERS TEAM 4:

DIMITRI SAFFRON AND SEAN FAHEY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW C:

PRIZIO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
EPISTLE: 1 TIMOTHY 1:15-17 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 18:35-43
(JESUS HEALS THE BLIND MAN OF JERICHU)
TONE 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 1

or on his cell phone: 508-335-7378.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Sofia Apostol.**

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AT HOLY TRINITY include: a Full-Time Physical Therapist, Staff Development Coordinator, Per Diem LPN & RN, and a Part-Time Cook. For more information, contact Michelle Williamson, the Human Resources Director, at 508-852-1000, or e-mail: mwilliamson@htnr.net

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.

COMMUNITY NEWS

VENERINI ACADEMY, a private Catholic elementary school (PK-3 through Grade 8) is holding an Open House Sunday, January 31st, from 12:15-3:00 pm. For more information: call the Admissions Office at 508-753-3210 x7310 or www.veneriniacademy.com.

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

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850
E-MAIL: FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG ♦ WEB: WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG

A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2016

Score a Souper Bowl Victory Against Hunger!

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

One in six Americans go hungry each day. Your gift of \$1 and one canned good can change that. On Super Bowl Sunday, February 7, rally your church youth and team up with IOCC to feed the hungry in your community. Set up a collection center in your parish and let's turn the biggest weekend in football into a super day of giving.

P.O. Box 17398
Baltimore, MD 21297-0429
Toll-Free: (877) 803-4622
Fax: (410) 243-9824
Online: iocc.org

International Orthodox Christian Charities



Let's Work Together to be Mortgage Free!

Please Join Us!

NAMEDAYS

- 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

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

MANY ARE THE DEMONS THAT ASSAIL US, almighty Father, that try their best to drag us away from you! Rise up and put them down, and let your hand snatch us out of their clutches. Give us victory in our struggles with them. Grace us with the might to cling to the ways of your commandments, in your footsteps, lest we stumble.

By the grace and mercies and love for us of your only Son, whom you are blest, together with your all holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.

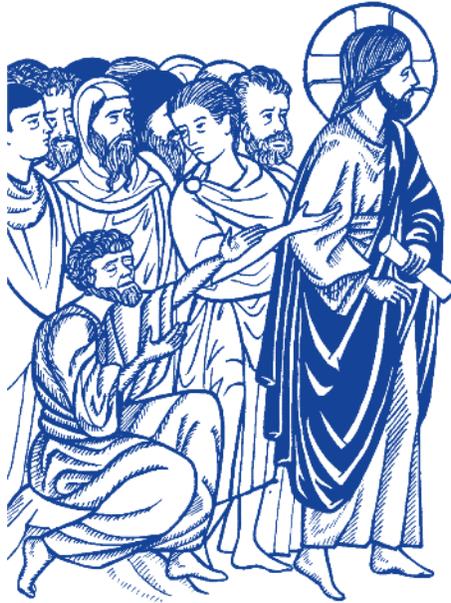
LORD, LET ME SEE AGAIN

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL READING, taken from Luke 18:32-43, is the account of Jesus' restoring the sight of a blind man from Jericho. There are two other versions of this same miracle in the Scripture: Matthew 20:19-34 and Mark 10:46-52. All three Evangelists place this healing just before the Lord's Entry into Jerusalem. It is a prelude to the Passion.

Jesus enters Jericho and there is a commotion as he passes. A blind man is sitting on the side of the road begging; a common occurrence in those days. The first thing that we notice in this story is that once the blind man has been told who is passing by — Jesus of Nazareth — he immediately begins to cry out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (v. 38) I have explained in prior homilies the significance of that title. To call him "Son of David" is to acknowledge him as the Messiah. Certainly the blind man (who we know through St. Mark's account was named Bartimæus) had heard about Jesus, and the other miracles he had performed. For Bartimæus this was the moment he had hoped for: a chance to have his sight restored.

You can imagine the scene. Jesus is passing by. There is a crowd of people, each one for their own reason wanting to see this man about whom so much had been said. The able-bodied and sighted people are ignoring the poor, ill-clad and blind beggar. Suddenly, Bartimæus decides that he is not going to simply melt into the pavement, but is going to assert himself. "Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'" (v. 39)

St. John Chrysostom, in reflecting on the blind man's request, tells us to "learn that though we be very vile and



outcast, if we approach God with earnestness ... we shall be able to receive whatever we might ask." He goes on to say that even if we are hindered or discouraged, we should persist. Even if we do not receive what we ask from God immediately, we should not tire. And so, he urges us to emulate this man in his fervor and devotion.

When he hears the man's pleading, Jesus stops and asks that he be brought before him. Unlike in other similar situations, Jesus does not ask the man if he believes, but asks, simply, "What do you want me to do for you?" (v. 41) There is a very practical reason for Jesus to put the question in this way. He wants the man to tell him what his request is, and he also wants everyone else to know that Jesus is giving him what he is requesting. The man answers, "Lord, let me see again." The Lord says to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." (v. 41)

We are able to see the man's gratitude in the fact that once he had regained his sight he "followed him, glorifying God." (v. 43) Like the Samaritan leper who was healed and returned to give thanks to Jesus, this man gives similar evidence of his faith.

St. Luke offers us an even more subtle lesson. I mentioned that each of the three Evangelists who recount this miracle place it just before Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem. In the verses preceding this healing, St. Luke tells us that Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and told them of what was going to happen in Jerusalem. "But they understood nothing about these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what he said." (v. 34) In pointing this out, St. Luke gives us a parallel: there is more than one kind of blindness. Bartimæus may have been physically blind, but the disciples were spiritually blind. As Jesus healed Bartimæus, so too he would heal the disciples so that they could see, and then believe.

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