

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 7, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THIS SUNDAY — FEBRUARY 7TH — IS "SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY." Before the other "Bowl", the youth of our parish, in support of the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) "Souper Bowl" campaign will be preparing and serving bowls of delicious homemade egg-lemon chicken soup during coffee hour. A free will donation will be collected for each bowl served with all funds to be donated to the IOCC to support efforts to feed the hungry. The Chachi family is donating all the "Souper Bowl" costs in memory of their parents, and thanks to the generosity of a few parishioners, all donations collected will be matched in full! ***So a \$3.00 donation for a bowl of soup will turn into a total of \$6.00 to help feed the hungry.*** Let's support our young people in their efforts to help those in need and enjoy some delicious soup and fellowship!

PITA BAKING SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 20TH. We've schedule a session for Saturday, February 20th, 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. All help appreciated. No

GREETERS TEAM 1

V. GERALD BELBA AND
MARGARITE LANDRY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW A:

MARGARITE LANDRY,
CHRISTINE MASTERJOHN

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: 2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-10 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25:14-30

(PARABLE OF THE TALENTS)

TONE 3 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 3

experience necessary. If you'd like to participate, contact Chris Toda at: thetodas@msn.com, or 508-832-6271.

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish the past two Saturdays. 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 March 5th.

THE LATEST ISSUE OF THE FAITH/CREDINȚA (the Archdiocesan Magazine) is now available at the candles. Please take a copy home with you.

TODAY WE CELEBRATE MEMORIALS for Victoria Chachi, fallen asleep 3 years, and **Athena Tsoules**, fallen asleep two years. ***May their memory be eternal!***

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Florence Rucho** in memory of her mother, **Sophie George**, and also in memory of **Victoria and Gregory Chachi** by their family.

UPCOMING

OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL is Friday, February 19th. We'll need help cooking and serving. **Prep** help needed (3 persons), 6pm Thursday. **Prep** 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.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, Feb 6	Pita Dough Rolling, 9am - noon Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
Fri, Feb 19	Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm
Sat, Feb 20	Pita Baking, 9am - noon
Sat, March 5	Sat of Souls, Liturgy, 10am Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm
Mon, March 14	Great Lent Begins
Sun, April 24	Palm Sunday
Sun, 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



During his recent hospital stay, Alex Trakadas met former Patriot's offensive guard Joe Andruzzi. He let Alex try on his three Super Bowl rings. Alex's comments: "They were huge and heavy."

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND, GINA METRAS, HOLY TRINITY ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR, attended an event at the Massachusetts State House to assist the Anna Maria College Music Therapy Students with a presentation on our partnership through the Music & Memories Program. The presentation was well-received and there was a lot of interest and excitement from state representatives and other colleges and community organizations!

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.

WHO IS A FAITHFUL STEWARD OF THE CHURCH?

A faithful steward and member of the Orthodox Christian Church, who can receive or participate as a sponsor in any Sacraments of the church implies that the person:

- Is baptized and christmated an Orthodox Christian
- Comes to Church regularly
- Participates in the Life of the Church
- Participates in Holy Communion regularly
- Is a financial steward of the Church
- Goes to Holy Confession when necessary



Let's Work Together to be Mortgage Free!

Please Join Us!

HOW ARE THE INVESTMENTS DOING?

THIS week's Gospel reading is the Parable of the Talents found in the Gospel according to St. Matthew (25:14-30). While it is part of the regular cycle of Sunday readings, we do not hear this parable as frequently as some others; it depends on the date of Pascha. However, it does feature prominently in the Gospel reading for Holy and Great Tuesday, as well as in the hymns of Holy Week. More importantly, it falls within a whole series of parables and other teachings that the Lord, according to St. Matthew, delivers in the Temple in the days following his Entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), leading up to his sacrifice on the Cross.

Each of the Evangelists organized their telling of our Lord's teachings in a way that they saw as most effective. And while we shouldn't necessarily read the Gospel accounts as narrowly chronological, they certainly could be seen in this way. St. Matthew gathered a series of the Lord's powerful parables and teachings concerning the end-times and placed them as having been given in the days following his Entry into Jerusalem, when he was preaching and teaching in the Temple. This is what Jesus was referring to when he said to the Sanhedrin: "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me." (Matthew 26:55) He was there, in the Temple, openly teaching; they could have arrested him at anytime.

Given this context, the first thing we might want to appreciate about this Parable is the insight it gives us into the nature of the judgment that will happen when the Lord comes again; this time to settle the final accounts.

Something else also worth pointing out is how often the Lord uses monetary language when speaking of spiritual



things. For example, in the Lord's Prayer we say, according to the received translation, "forgive us our trespasses (sins) ...", where the original is actually "debts", as in money debt. Jesus understood how to drive a point home. He often spoke of sin and "what we owe God," in terms that focused on the pocketbook. People knew he wasn't talking about money, but nonetheless, the image remained powerful.

This parable itself is rather simple and straight-forward. A certain man is traveling, and entrusts his fortune to his servants (slaves) for them to manage in his absence. He gives one five talents, another two, and another one.

A talent, in Jesus' time, was a weight-measure. As you might surmise, given the context, a talent's weight is can also be an enormous sum of money. For example, an Attic talent of silver was the value of nine man-years of skilled work. During the Peloponnesian War, an Attic talent was the amount of silver that would pay a month's wages of a trireme crew of 200 men. Hellenistic mercenaries were commonly paid one drachma per day of military service. There were 6,000 drachmae in an Attic talent. Do

the math! This Master was entrusting his slaves with a fortune.

Another point. The way we currently understand the word "talent" comes directly from the Parable itself. While the primary meaning of the word, during Jesus' time and for centuries after, was as a weight and monetary measurement, because of the way it was used in the Gospel parable the word acquired its current meaning of "gift or aptitude." The resulting play-on-words is powerful. Money becomes talent. Talent becomes money. Talents and Money are not ends in themselves, they're meant for a greater purpose. It causes us to understand God's gifts to us in an entirely different way. We're expected to be productive with the talents given us, and we will be held to account in the end.

Each of the Master's servants had been entrusted with a sum according to his ability. Upon the Master's return (here, we are to understand this return as the Lord's Second Coming) he requires an accounting of what each had done with what he'd been entrusted. The first two say they've double their portfolio. The third, literally, hid it in the ground. The Master rewards the first two and is furious with the third. He says: "You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." (v. 26-30)

You might rightly ask, "For keeping

his investment intact? He at least didn't lose any of it!" And here is the terrifying message of this Parable. This servant is punished not for doing anything bad, but rather for not doing what he could have, what he should have.

When the Lord comes again he will be requiring of us a "return" on his investment in us. This is the where the play-on-words takes on special meaning. The Lord has given each of us "talents." What are we doing with them? How are we using them? Have they been invested selfishly or cowardly? Or, have they been invested with a view toward profiting our neighbor? These will be the questions asked of us.

I was studying theology the first time I really heard this Parable read liturgically. It was Great Tuesday morning. I was at Holy Cross in Brookline. It was a dark and gray morning, raining. I listening to the long Gospel reading of one parable and saying of the Lord after another speaking of the accounting that awaits us at the Judgment; recounting the destruction of the world at the end-times. I left the Chapel terrified. I never forgot the experience or the message. Neither should any of us, if we have ears to hear and eyes to see.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR IN THE TEMPLE
FEBRUARY 2ND

When the most pure Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary's forty days of purification had been fulfilled, she took her first-born Son to Jerusalem on this, the fortieth day after His birth, that she might present Him in the temple according to the Law of Moses, which teaches that every first-born male child be dedicated to God, and also that she might offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons, as required by the Law (Luke 2:22-24; Exod. 13:2; Lev. 12:6-8). On this same day, a just and devout man, the greatly aged Symeon, was also present in the temple, being guided by the Holy Spirit. For a long time, this man had been awaiting the salvation of God, and he had been informed by divine revelation that he would not die until he beheld the Lord's Christ. Thus, when he beheld Him at that time and took Him up into his aged arms, he gave glory to God, singing: "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, ..." And he confessed that he would close his eyes joyfully, since he had seen the Light of revelation for the

nations and the Glory of Israel (Luke 2:25-32). From ancient times, the Holy Church has retained this tradition of the churching of the mother and new-born child on the fortieth day and of the reading of prayers of purification.



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: When your divine Son was brought into the temple, carried along with the offerings to be sacrificed, the blessed Simeon received him from the arms of his mother. The elder's joy, however, was tempered by apprehension, for, with the eyes of the spirit, he saw the powers of heaven in attendance, glorifying the infant saviour with great awe and reverence. Just as the divinity of your Son did not consume the elder, do not let it consume us, either, though we deserve it for our indifferent, careless, and fickle way of living. Rather, as we prepare for the night that quickly approaches, grant us forgiveness of our sins, and let peace and tranquility restore our tired souls and bodies.

By the grace and mercy and love 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.