

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN FEBRUARY 14, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

DOUGH ROLLING AND PITA BAKING SET FOR NEXT TWO SATURDAYS. We've schedule a **DOUGH ROLLING** session for Saturday, February 13th, 9:00am to noon and **PITA BAKING** 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 experience necessary — there's a job for everyone. If you'd like to participate, contact Chris Toda at: thetodas@msn.com, or 508-832-6271.

OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL is **THIS** 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. **ALSO**, We want to thank **Bill and Katina Cocavessis** for generously sponsoring this month's meal!

"SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY" RAISES \$1,000. Thanks to generosity of our parishioners and the hard work of our young people, \$1,000 was realized in

GREETERS TEAM 2

ARTIC GAVALA AND CĂLIN GALERIU

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW B:

KARADIMITRIOU/KALPIDO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: 2 CORINTHIANS 6:16-7:1 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 15:21-28

(THE CANAANITE WOMAN)

TONE 4 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 4

support of IOCC's "Souper Bowl" campaign. Free will offerings totaled \$500 and was matched by a few of our parishioners. The Chachi family donated all the "Souper Bowl" costs in memory of their parents. **God bless all of you!**

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Florence Rucho** in memory of her mother, **Sophie George**.

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 in-

dividuals 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, Feb 13 Pita Dough Rolling, 9am - noon
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

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas



Stephanie Sparages, Deb Sedares, Nicole and Tatiana Karadimitriou, Alexandra Valoras, and Jordan Sparages hard a work preparing the soup for Souper Bowl Sunday last week

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

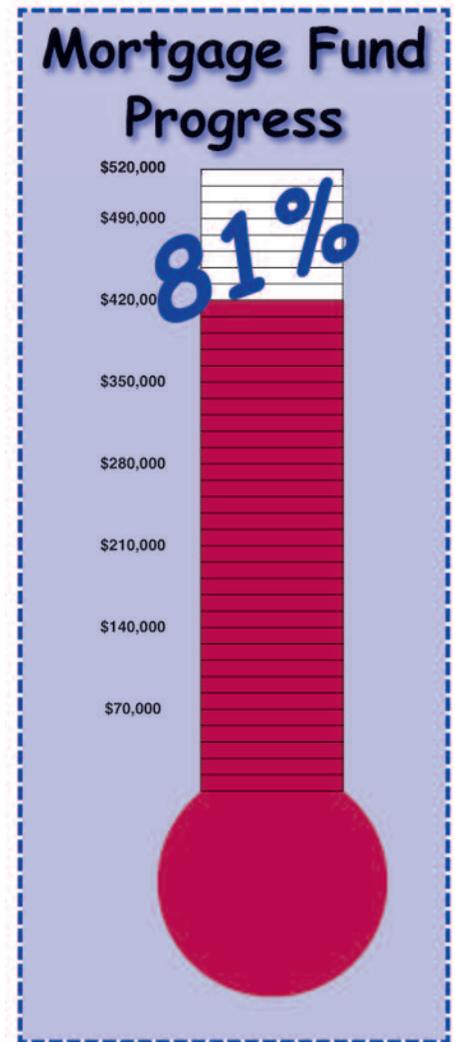
LORD OUR GOD: You desire peace for us — peace, tranquility, and calm in our lives — at all times. We beseech you, therefore, to make us instruments of your peace, sources of calm and tranquility for one another daily. Keep us wakeful and alert lest our careless thinking and speaking provoke disharmony, unrest, and agitation in ourselves as well as in the lives of those with whom we live and work.

For you are a God of peace and tranquility, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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 regularly and when necessary



Let's Work Together to be Mortgage Free!

Please Join Us!

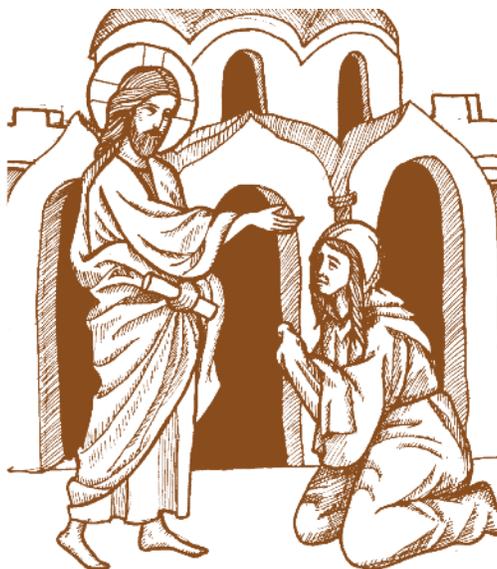
LORD, HELP ME!

THIS week's Scripture reading is the story the Canaanite Woman's faith, from the Gospel of Matthew (15:21-28). The last several weeks the prescribed readings have been from the Gospel of Luke, and we will return to that order next week, but this passage from the Gospel of Matthew (generally read from Pentecost to the Feast of the Cross) is interjected just before we begin the Tridion period. I believe that this is done to give us an example of faith to emulate; we can see in this woman the virtues of persistent prayer and great humility.

The story begins with Jesus leaving Israel proper and going north to Tyre and Sidon, near Canaanite territory. He had been followed by crowds and desired a quiet place to be with his disciples. When he came into the region a local woman, a Canaanite, came to him and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon" (v. 22). Jesus does not even turn to acknowledge her. Still, she doesn't stop, but continues to follow after him. The disciples urge him to "send her away, for she keeps shouting after us" (v. 23).

He says, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." She responds, as she kneels in front of him, "Lord, help me" (v. 25). He speaks even more harshly to her, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (v. 26). She replies to him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table" (v. 27). Jesus looks at her and answers, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish" (v. 28). Her daughter was healed immediately.

This is a remarkable and even uncharacteristic interchange. First, look at how she makes her request. She is not only insistent, she is also very direct: "Have mercy on me!" "Lord, help me!" We do not find the usual polite entreaties, like with the Centurion



(Matthew 8:5), or Jairus (Luke 8:41). And she persists even when Jesus ignores her.

Next there is the form of her request. She wants her daughter healed, but she says, "Help me." The truth is that it is very likely that the mother needed as much help as the daughter. Given her possession, or illness, the daughter may have been more or less aware of her condition. The real burden is on the mother who has the responsibility of caring for her and watching her suffer.

Jesus' response is even more curious; he says nothing. The disciples urge him to speak to her, to even grant her request—because that is the other way of "sending her away." Regardless, they want to get rid of her. When Jesus does say something, he addresses not her but the disciples. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Still, she does not give up.

Then Jesus says something that seems at little jarring. "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." We should note two words here. Whereas he had called the Israelites "sheep," even if they're lost, he now calls them "children." The woman, being a Canaanite, he calls a "dog." This term requires a little explanation. Jews

generally referred to Gentiles as "dogs." The original Greek word has more the sense of "house dog" or "pet," and she wouldn't have reacted in quite the same way as we might today. Nonetheless, it was still meant to demean. It was like calling an African American "boy" or "Nigger," as we sometimes still here even today. But, she does not even flinch. There is not a word of protest or indignation. In fact, she accepts what he says and furthers the analogy by entering into a little repartee with Jesus.

"Yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." She takes the insult and turns it to her advantage. A quick wit was highly appreciated in the Middle East of Jesus' day. And while she might have been quick-witted, we should not lose sight of her humility and faith. She was not going to give up. Jesus responds, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."

Notice, he doesn't say, "Your daughter is healed," or "I will come to your house." He says, "Let it be done for you as you wish." Jesus was testing her faith and showing the disciples the true nature of humility. We are reminded of the time the disciples were not able to heal the epileptic boy. When they asked Jesus why they couldn't do this, he said, "because of your little faith. ... If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

This is a lesson for us as well. How often do we simply give up, because after having made one feeble request from God, we become disheartened that what we desire has not been given? Or, when we feel as though we've been sorely tested by God, we become angry or discouraged? This woman teaches us how to believe, how to ask, and how to follow our Lord.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA