

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 27, 2016

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**A SLIDE PRESENTATION AND TALK ON THE HOLY LAND** will be offered by Margarite Landry and Fr. Nick after Coffee Hour on **THIS SUNDAY, March 27th** and on Sunday, April 10th. Both they and Presvytera Maria traveled with Fr. Timothy last year just after Pascha and toured extensively in Israel/Palestine. They will share not only their photographs, but, more importantly, their insights into the situation in the Holy Land and the position of the remaining Christians living there. Presentations with questions and answers will be no more than 45 minutes. *Plan on staying a little later on both Sundays!*

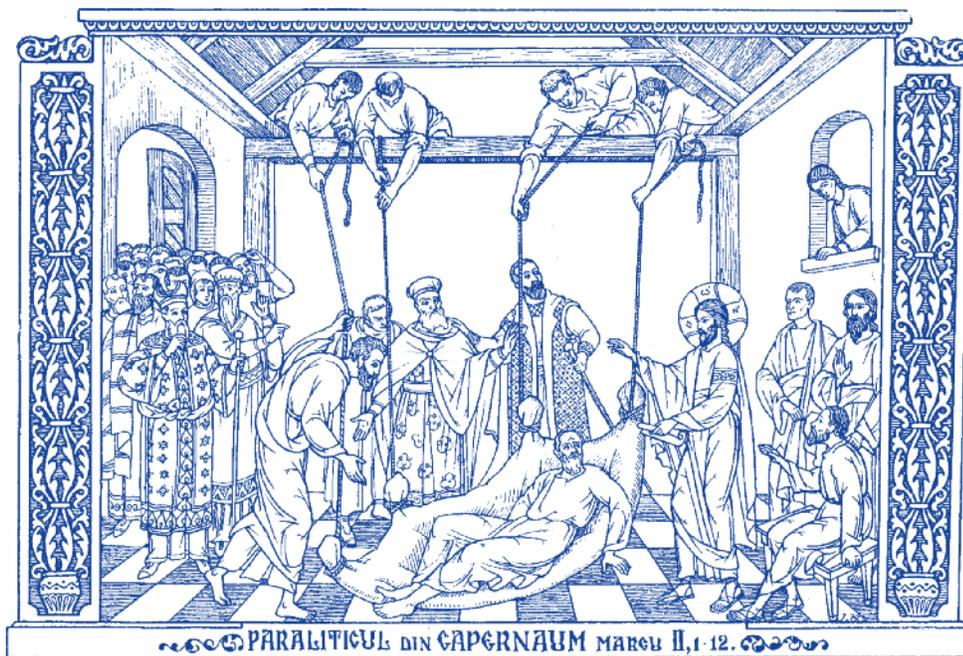
**A BLOCK OF TICKETS HAS BEEN RESERVED** for the production of **JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR**, for **Sunday April 10 at 2:00 pm**. There is a poster and sign up sheet on the bulletin board at the Church for this event. Questions/reservations, e-mail (gdemake@charter.net) or call (774-535-2821) **George Demake**.

**THE PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY** for this coming Wednesday, March 30th, is at St. Spyridon Cathedral, at 6:00 pm.

**GREETERS TEAM 3**  
EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW D:**  
ILIANA & SEAN FAHEY,  
DIMITRI SAFFRON,  
CHRISTOS & SPIRO SPYROU

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



### THE SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 1:10-2:3 ☩ GOSPEL: MARK 2:1-12  
(JESUS HEALS THE PARALYTIC IN CAPERNAUM ☩ ST. GREGORY PALAMAS)  
TONE 2 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 10

**THE ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY** of our Parish will be held on **Sunday, April 3rd**, following the Divine Liturgy.

**THE PARISH COUNCIL** will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, April 4th at 6:30 pm**. Parish Council Members, please let George Demake know if you are unable to attend.

**GET YOUR BAKING ORDERS FOR EASTER IN.** Pick up and fill out and order form. Pascha will be here before you know it and we need to plan our baking schedule. Questions about orders? See Betty Anderson.

**VESPERS AND CONFESION** will be held **each Saturday evening at 5:00 pm during Great Lent**. Fr. Nick will be available for confession each week after Vespers, and

before Vespers by appointment (e-mail Fr. Nick).

**FOOD PANTRY.** Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **next Saturday**,

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, March 27	Holy Land Presentation, after Liturgy
Wed, March 30	PreSanctified Lit, St. Spyridon, 6pm
Sat, April 2	Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm Vespers & Confession, 5pm
Sun, April 3	General Assembly, following Lit
Mon, April 4	Parish Council, 6:30 pm
Wed, April 6	PreSanctified Lit, St. Mary, 6pm
Sat, April 9	Electronics Recycling 9 am-2 pm Vespers & Confession, 5pm
Sun, April 10	Holy Land Presentation, after Liturgy Jesus Christ Superstar, 2pm
Fri, April 15	Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm
Mon/Tues	School Vacation Week
April 18-19	Youth Retreat
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

**April 4th, 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.**

We learned the sad news that **Khouria Marguerite Shaheen** fell asleep in the Lord this past Sunday, March 20th. Many of you may recall that together with her husband, V. Rev. Fr. George Shaheen, they served the St. George Cathedral here from 1981-1985. **May her memory be eternal!**

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

## UP-COMING

**A CHILDREN/YOUTH RETREAT** is planned for the first two days of **April Vacation Week, Monday and Tuesday, April 18th and 19th.** For all ages, through High School. Starts at 10:00 am and ends at 1:30 pm. Lunch and snacks provided. We're doing this in conjunction with the Ss Anagyroi parish in Marlborough; Monday, April 18th will be at Ss Anagyroi. and Tuesday, April 19th will be at St. Nicholas. There are no fees, but you will need to register, for planning purposes. Fr. Gregory Christakos (fathergreg@stsanagyroi.org) and Valarie Stamoulis (valarie.stamoulis@gmail.com) are coordinating. Contact either with questions and registration data. More information to follow

**OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL** is Friday, April 15th. 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.



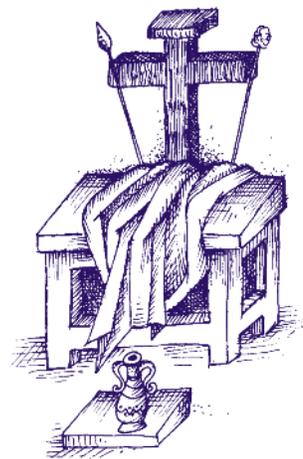
## NAMEDAYS

**March 25**  
**The Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos**

V. Gerald Belba  
Lea Christo  
Mary Anna Dymek  
Vangjush Lolo  
Evan Sparages  
Evan Stamoulis  
Lynne Tonna  
Evans Tsoules

**April 5**  
**The Holy Martyr Victor**  
Victor Ioan Nedelescu  
Victoria Wilder

**April 11**  
**St. Calinic of Cernica**  
Călin Galeriu



## PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES 2016

Wednesday, March 30, 2016  
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, April 6, 2016  
St. Mary's Assumption

Wednesday, April 13, 2016  
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, April 20, 2016  
St. George Cathedral

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest 'pot-luck' lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others.

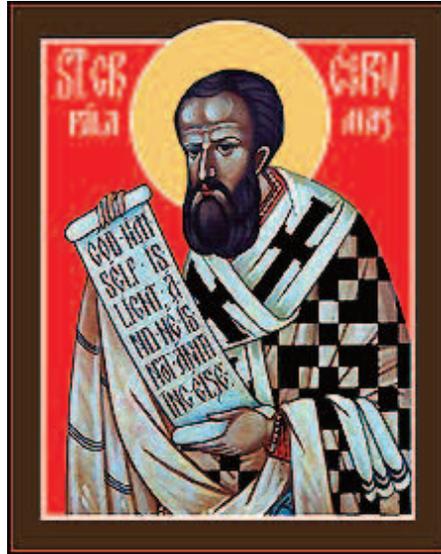


## A LENTEN PRAYER

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**L**ORD AND MASTER OF OUR LIVES: Educate us, your ignorant servants, during these lenten days, by letting your wisdom enlighten our minds and hearts. Make us alert, lest the deceits of this world seduce us. Teach us how to distinguish between substance and appearance, how to discern what is of the Holy Spirit and what is not. Do not leave us to fight the enemy of our life by ourselves, for he is constantly striving to silence the word of life within us. Rather, be with us today, and every day, through your loving mercy.

For you are good and full of love for us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.



## ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

**T**his divine Father, who was from Asia Minor, was from childhood reared in the royal court of Constantinople, where he was instructed in both religious and secular wisdom. Later, while still a youth, he left the imperial court and struggled in asceticism on Mount Athos, and in the Skete at Beroea. He spent some time in Thessalonica being treated for an illness that came from his harsh manner of life. He was present in Constantinople at the

Council that was convened in 1341 against Barlaam of Calabria, and at the Council of 1347 against Acindynus, who was of like mind with Barlaam; Barlaam and Acindynus claimed that the grace of God is created. At both these Councils, the Saint contended courageously for the true dogmas of the Church of Christ, teaching in particular that divine grace is not created, but is the uncreated energies of God which are poured forth throughout creation: otherwise it would be impossible, if grace were created, for man to have genuine communion with the uncreated God. In 1347 he was appointed Metropolitan of Thessalonica. He tended his flock in an apostolic manner for some twelve years, and wrote many books and treatises on the most exalted doctrines of our Faith; and having lived for a total of sixty-three years, he reposed in the Lord in 1359.

## 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

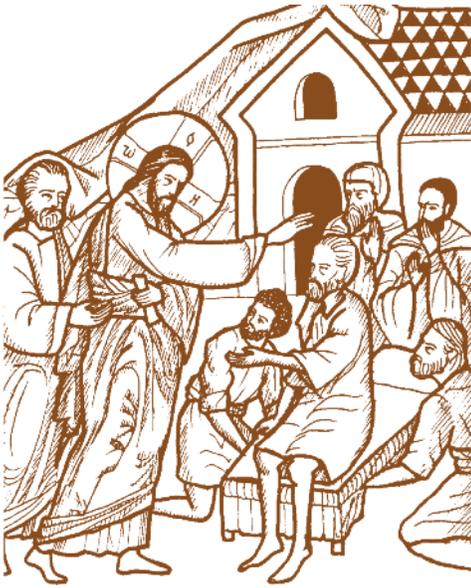
## THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

**L**ord and master of my life! Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness, of ambition and vain talk!

**I**nstead, give me the spirit of prudence and humility, of patience and charity.

**Y**es, my king and Lord, let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others: For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

## THE LORD WHO SEES INTO OUR HEARTS



**T**HIS is the second Sunday of Great Lent, when we remember the great Archbishop of Thessalonika, St. Gregory Palamas. During Lent, the Gospel readings are taken from St. Mark, and this week we hear the account of the healing of a paralytic man in Capernaum (Mark 2:1-12). Capernaum was the largest city in the region of Galilee. It was not far from Nazareth, where Jesus lived as an adult. This account begins with his return to Capernaum after having begun his ministry touring the cities and towns of Galilee.

St. Mark records that after he had been baptized in the Jordan by John, and then tempted in the desert by the devil, Jesus started preaching of the coming “kingdom” (Mark 1:15). Shortly after, He called his first disciples (v. 1:16-20) and then proceeded to: heal a man with an unclean spirit (v. 1:21-28), lift the fever of Peter’s mother-in-law (v. 1:29-32), and cure many other sick and demon-possessed people (v. 1:32-34). He went on a “preaching tour” in the surrounding cities and towns, and during this time healed a leper (v. 1:40-45). When he returned to Capernaum the word had spread of the miracles and

wonders. He is now famous. People flocked to see and hear him. St. Mark records that when they heard that he was home, “so many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door” (v. 2:2). Jesus “was speaking the word to them” and everyone wanted to listen.

While Jesus was speaking, four men came to the house where he was carrying a paralyzed man on a stretcher, and because they could not enter through the doorway, they tore up part of the roof and lowered the paralytic down through the hole. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (v. 5). Because of the faith of these four men as well as that of the paralytic, Jesus healed the man, but he does it in such a way as to truly display his power as the Son of God.

The scribes who were sitting and listening to Jesus immediately understood the importance of what he was saying. They said to themselves — that is, they questioned in their hearts — “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (v. 7) Jesus turns to them and said, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk?’” (v. 8-9)

Jesus just revealed an even greater miracle. He showed his true power. He knew their thoughts. He could read their hearts. The prophets said that God alone had the power to know the human heart. For example, Solomon says of God, “only you know the human heart” (2 Chronicles 6:30); calling on God, David says, “you who test the minds and hearts” (Psalm 7:9); Jeremiah says, “The heart is devious above all else ... who can understand it? I the Lord test the mind and search the heart” (Jeremiah

17:9-10); and the Lord speaking to Samuel says, “the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

And so, after telling the scribes what they were thinking, in their hearts, Jesus then turned to the paralyzed man and said, “Stand up, take your mat and go to your home” (v. 11).

As you read this Gospel lesson you might be confused by verse 10. Just before the Lord told the paralytic man to take up his bed, St. Mark writes, “but that you may know that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.” While at first glance it seems that Jesus is addressing this to the scribes, when we study the verse in depth we see that the grammar and the context do not support this understanding. This verse was clearly meant for us, the readers. St. Mark wants *us* to understand that Jesus, even as the Son of Man, does not loose his authority as God to forgive sins. In other words, we should not let the wonder of the miracle distract us from the true importance of this event and who Jesus is.

Moreover, we should remind ourselves of Jesus’ willingness not only to forgive our sins, but to bear them as well. This is the central focus of our Paschal preparation. Even while we marvel at his ability to heal the sick, we should also prepare our hearts to ask for his forgiveness, for this is indeed the greater miracle.

— FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA