

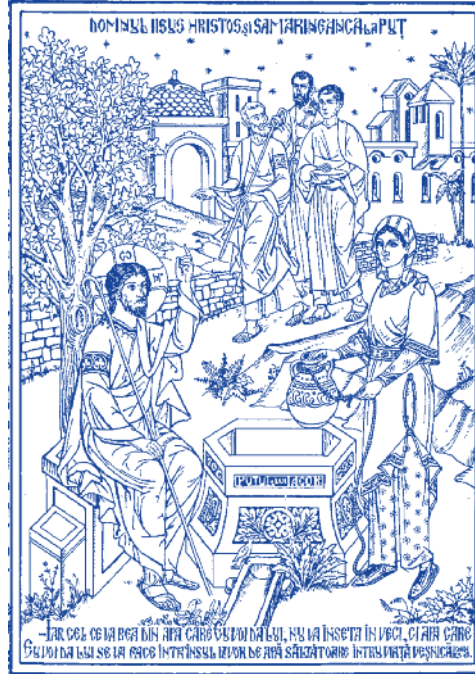
ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MAY 29, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

MEMORIAL DAY is this Monday, May 30th. Fr. Nick will be at Hope Cemetery from 10:00 am. The common Memorial Service will be at noon at the Altar in Hope. If you would like Fr. Nick to visit a grave in another cemetery, please contact him to make arrangements: 508-845-0088.

DOUGH ROLLING AND PITA BAKING SET FOR Saturday, June 11th, 9:00am to noon and Saturday, June 25th, 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.

GODPARENTS & GRANDPARENTS SUNDAY. On **Sunday, June 12th**, together with the closing ceremonies for Religious Education, we will host "Godparents and Grandparents Sunday." Children (and adults) are encouraged to invite their godparent or grandparent to join them at Divine Liturgy, after which a special prayer will be offered to affirm those relationships. We will also be hon-



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA

JESUS' ENCOUNTER

WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

APOSTOLIC READING: ACTS 11:19-30

GOSPEL: JOHN 4:5-42

TONE 4 - MATINS GOSPEL 7

oring graduates from our parish. A Parish Cookout will follow on the Church Grounds to kick off the summer with hot dogs, burgers, sausages and all the fixings. Lawn chairs and bats, balls, and other backyard games are welcomed. **If you would like to contribute to sponsoring the event, please see or contact Deb Sedares.** Adults: \$15.00 — Children: \$5.00. Reservations are needed by Sunday, June 5th. Sign up at the Candle Stand or see Eleanor Sedares during Coffee Hour or e-mail: info@StNicholasChurch.org. **Deb Sedares** (Dsedares@pinehills.com) and **Dimitri Saffron** (DSLandscape1@

yahoo.com) are organizing the cook-out. **Please let them know if you can help with the event.** A volunteer sign-up sheet is also posted on the Stewardship Bulletin Board in the church hall.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING is **Saturday, June 11th from 9 am to 2 pm.** Gerry Belba is coordinating, and we need about 3 people to help with traffic and coordination. Please contact him: vgbelba@msn.com.

CONGRATULATIONS TO Nersjian John Gjançi and Elia Elena Gjançi, the children of **Thomas & Anila Gjançi,** who were baptized this past Saturday, May 21st. Their sponsor was **Monika Durmillari.** *May our loving Lord bless them and their whole family. Many Years!*

UP-COMING

THE NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL is **Friday, June 17th.** The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Mon, May 30 Memorial Day, Hope Cemetery
- June 3, 4, 5 St. Spyridon Greek Festival
- Sat, June 4 NO Food Pantry
- Thurs, June 9 The Lord's Ascension
- Sat, June 11 e-Recycling, 9am-2pm
- Pita Dough Rolling, 9am-12pm
- Sun, June 12 Godparents/Grandparents Sunday
- Parish Cookout
- Mon, June 13 Parish Council Meeting, 6:30pm
- Fri, June 17 Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm
- Sat, June 18 Saturday of Souls, Lit, 10am
- Sun, June 19 PENTECOST
- Sat, June 25 Pita Dough Rolling, 9am-12pm
- Sat, July 2 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
- Sun, July 3 NO LITURGY, Archdiocesan Congress
- Sun, July 31 St. Michael Southbridge Annual Picnic
- Sun, Sept 18 stART on the Street Festival
- Thurs, Oct 6 Holy Trinity Wine/Food Fest

GREETERS TEAM 4:

DIMITRI SAFFRON AND SEAN FAHEY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW C:

PRIZIO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

day. **Help is needed Friday from noon** to cook and prepare food, and **at 5:00 on Friday evening** to transport and serve. If you'd like to help, contact **Fr. Nick**.

COMMUNITY NEWS

ST. SPYRIDON CATHEDRAL is holding its **Greek Festival** the weekend of June 3-5. Mark your calendars!

THE WEeping ICON of the Theotokos “**Kardiotissa**” (**Tender-Hearted**) from the St. George Orthodox Church in Taylor, PA, will be coming to the Ss. Constantine & Helen Church in Webster on Friday, June 17th. You may venerate the Icon from the afternoon. There will be a Paraklesis Service at 6:00 pm with anointing with Myrrh from the Icon.

FREE FUN FRIDAYS ARE BACK FOR THE SUMMER! Free Fun Fridays is the annual summer program that opens doors at no cost to visitors to many of the most treasured cultural venues in Massachusetts. This year, the Highland Street Foundation is partnering with 80 cultural institutions to provide a summer of fun, educational and enriching experiences. **Every Friday from June 24 to August 26, eight sites will be open for free.** All are welcome! This is a great program for families to take advantage of this summer. **To see the whole program, and the sites that available each Friday, go to: <http://www.highlandstreet.org>** or pick up a hard copy flier at the Church. Free Fun Fridays are organized by the Highland Street Foundation and a number of other prominent organizations.



THE FEAST OF MID-PENTECOST



After the Saviour had miraculously healed the paralytic, the Jews, especially the Pharisees and Scribes, were moved with envy and persecuted Him, and sought to slay Him, using the excuse that He did not keep the Sabbath, since He worked miracles on that day. Jesus then departed to Galilee. About the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles, He went up again to the Temple and taught. The Jews, marvelling at the wisdom of His words, said, “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” But Christ first reproached their unbelief and lawlessness, then proved to them by the Law that they sought to slay Him unjustly, supposedly as a despiser of the Law, since He had healed the paralytic on the Sabbath. Therefore, since the things spoken by Christ in the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles are related to the Sunday of the Paralytic that is just passed, and since we have already reached the midpoint of the fifty days between Pascha and Pentecost, the Church has appointed this present feast as a bond between the two great feasts,

thereby uniting, as it were, the two into one, and partaking of the grace of them both. Therefore today's feast is called Mid-Pentecost, and the Gospel Reading, “At Mid-feast” — though it refers to the Feast of Tabernacles — is used.

It should be noted that there were three great Jewish feasts: the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Passover was celebrated on the 15th of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish calendar, which coincides roughly with our March. This feast commemorated that day on which the Hebrews were commanded to eat the lamb in the evening and anoint the doors of their houses with its blood. Then, having escaped bondage and death at the hands of the Egyptians, they passed through the Red Sea to come to the Promised Land. It is also called “the Feast of Unleavened Bread,” because they ate unleavened bread for seven days. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the Passover, first of all, because the Hebrew tribes had reached Mount Sinai after leaving Egypt, and there received the Law from God; secondly, it was celebrated to commemorate their entry into the Promised Land, where also they ate bread, after having been fed with manna forty years in the desert. Therefore, on this day they offered to God a sacrifice of bread prepared with new wheat. Finally, they also celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles from the 15th to the 22nd of “the seventh month,” which corresponds roughly to our September. During this time, they live in booths made of branches in commemoration of the forty years they spent in the desert, living in tabernacles, that is, tents (Ex. 12:10-20; Lev. 23).

THE REPENTANCE THAT LEADS TO LIFE

THIS is the fifth Sunday of Pascha. Today's Gospel lesson is the Lord's encounter with the Samaritan Woman at the well (John 4:5-42). In today's Apostolic reading from Acts (11:19-30), we learn about the beginning of a missionary movement that will transform the fledgling Church from a small group of Jewish followers of Jesus Christ into a Spirit-filled force that will change the world.

There were two catalytic events that led to this development. The first was the persecution of Jesus' disciples following the stoning and martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:2 ff), especially in and around Jerusalem (v. 19). The second was the conversion and baptism of the Gentile centurion Cornelius by the Apostle Peter (Acts 10:1 ff).

Cornelius was a devout man. Like a number of non-Jews in this period, he was attracted to the God revealed to the Patriarch Abraham. He believed that this God was the one true God. He prayed regularly and constantly, asking for a sign. God would give him a sign.

During his stay in Joppa (remember last week's reading and the raising of Tabitha), Peter had a vision while at midday prayer. He fell into a trance and saw a large sheet lowered from heaven containing every kind of unclean animal. Then he heard a voice saying, "Kill and eat!" Peter protested that he had never eaten anything unclean. The reply came that what God has made clean, he had no right to call profane. The same vision came to him twice more.

At the same time, Cornelius, while at prayer in Caesaria, had an angelic visitation saying his prayer had been answered and that he should send for Peter in Joppa. When Peter arrived in Caesaria, the meaning of his own vision became clear: he was to accept the Gentiles into the Church. He received a warm welcomed by the growing Gentile community of Jesus' followers, who, like Cornelius and his family, were believers. This was a revolutionary moment.

Simultaneously, communities were forming far from Jerusalem. The martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution that followed had the unintended effect of scattering the Apostles and other members of the Jerusalem community throughout the world. The opening verse of today's reading mentions Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. But, we know that the Apostles themselves eventually traveled throughout the known world, even as far as India. When arriving in a new city, they would usually go first to the local Jewish synagogue to preach Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah who had now come. Then they would reach out to others, often Gentile believers like Cornelius, and proclaim to them the Good News of salvation as well. Today's reading from Acts shows us how this missionary process actually worked.

Disciples from Cyprus and Cyrene (a city on the North African coast in present-day Libya) went to Antioch to preach. Antioch was a city on the Mediterranean coast located in present-day southern Turkey. It was a well-positioned place from which Christianity could spread. It had been the capital of the Seleucid Empire and was one of the major cities of the Roman world, rivaling Alexandria. It had a large Jewish community, as well as groups of other peoples from throughout the Empire. The disciples mentioned in today's reading began to preach not only to the local synagogue, but also to the Greeks, that is, the Gentile population. They were enormously successful. St. Luke says, "The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord." (v. 21) News of this phenomenon reached the Apostles in Jerusalem and they decided to send Barnabas to investigate.

When Barnabas arrived in Antioch he was overwhelmed by what he saw. With his own eyes he witnessed the work of the Holy Spirit and rejoiced. St. Luke describes Barnabas as "a good

man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (v. 24), and we can see evidence of this in the next thing he does. After spending a little time with this new community, he goes to look for Saul (Paul) in Tarsus. His immediate instinct is to enlist the most skilled person for this kind of mission. Once he finds him he brings him to Antioch and together they meet with the Church there, teaching, encouraging and converting many. It was the starting point of the Church's missionary effort.

St. Luke captures this important moment with a small phrase: "It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians'" (v. 26).

While Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch a number of prophets came from Jerusalem. One of them in particular, Agabus, full of the Holy Spirit, predicted that there would be a severe world-wide famine. The disciples in Antioch decided on the spot that they would send relief to the brethren in Judea (v. 29) through Paul and Barnabas. Paul made it his practice that in each place where he preached and established Churches, he would make this same act of charity — to assist the brothers and sisters in Judea — part of the mission of these new communities.

So as with Peter in Joppa and Caesaria, and Paul and Barnabas in Antioch, the Christian communities are growing beyond their Jewish roots to include every type of person who accepts Jesus.

From this passage in Acts we learn two fundamental Christian duties: to share the Good News with everyone we meet, and always being ready to help those in need. These principles are at the heart of the Life in Christ. Our faith came by way of people who took up this call, and shared their joy with us. It is our turn to share with those around us; to impart to them the words that many long to hear, the words of "the repentance that leads to life" (v. 18).

Christ is Risen!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

2016 GRADUATES

"He has filled them with the spirit of God, with skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft." (Exodus 35:31)

We want to acknowledge members of our Church community who are celebrating a graduation and recognize their achievement.

HIGH SCHOOL

Dimitri Daniel Christo is graduated from Abby Kelly Foster Public Charter School in Worcester. He will attend Assumption College in the fall.

Tatiana Karadimitriou is graduated from Shrewsbury High School. She earned a full scholarship to attend the University of Southern California and study neuroscience.

Alex Trakadas is graduated from Grafton High School. Over the summer he will be working with the Special Olympics program in the Marlborough offices and will attend Quinsigamond Community College in the fall to pursue a Business and Political Science Degree.

Zoe Tsongalis is graduated from Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, NH. She will attend Providence College in the fall to study Education.

Christian Wybieracki (grandson of Janice and Randy Samara) is graduated from Boston College High School and will attend Bentley College in the fall.

COLLEGE

Christopher Bacon is graduated from Worcester State University with a Bachelors degree in Business Administration. He is planning to work in finance.

Alex Johnson is graduated from Worcester State University with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice

Stephen Keimig is graduated from Franklin Pierce University with a Bachelor of Arts, *summa cum laude*, in journalism and production. He was recipient of the Fitzwater Center Medallion for contributions to the public discourse by a graduating senior, among his other achievements.

Matthew Rucho is graduated from Wentworth Institute of Technology with a degree in Construction Management. He has accepted a position as an assistant Project Manager at Trinity Construction Co. in Wilmington, MA.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Christine Masterjohn has received a professional certificate in Health Care Advocacy from Assumption College.

May our loving Lord continue to bless their efforts and grant them a long life, health, prosperity, and many, many years!

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

OLORD, JESUS CHRIST, OUR GOD AND MASTER! It was your good pleasure to become one of us by taking flesh of the holy virgin, to be born into this world, to lie speechless in a manger, and to be baptized by John, though you had no need of any sort of purification. At the time of midpentecost, you went up to the temple and taught the crowds, who were in utter amazement at your wisdom when they knew you had no teachers. They did not know that you are in fact the wisdom of the Father and the creator of all things. On this day, O lover of humanity, make us, your sinful and unworthy servants, worthy of worshipping you and glorifying you, and of joyfully sharing in your holy mysteries. Inspire all our authorities with your wisdom and understanding, and lead them always to serve your people in justice and love. Support our brothers and sisters in all their troubles, wherever they may be, and give rest to all the departed. Keep all those here present in unity of mind and heart, and preserve us all from enslavement to our enemies, visible or invisible. When you come to judge the living and the dead, grant us the gift of meeting you freed of the burden of our sins and without fear of condemnation.

For you are the king of peace and the saviour of our souls, and to you we give glory, together with your eternal Father and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.