

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JULY 3, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

There will be **NO DIVINE LITURGY AT OUR CHURCH ON SUNDAY, JULY 3RD**, because Fr. Nick will be attending the Archdiocese Congress in Hamilton, Ontario. Please take this opportunity to visit one of our sister Orthodox Churches.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **THIS Saturday, July 2nd, 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.

A THANK YOU FROM AARON.

Dear St. Nicholas Family,

Thank you so much for all of your support over the past week. As of Sunday, precisely through your help, I reached my fundraising goal to attend Project Mexico with the Sts. Constantine and Helen's youth team. I am extremely grateful to all of you for this opportunity and look forward to sharing my experiences with you when I return. This would not have been made possible if not for your generous contributions.

*With love and gratitude,
Aaron Christo*

COMMUNITY NEWS

St. George Orthodox Cathedral will once again host the **FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN MOBILEPACK** event on August



THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA AND ROMANIA

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 2:10-16 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 4:18-20

(JESUS CALLS THE DISCIPLES)

TONE 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 2

20th. They look to raise \$22,000, sign up 500 volunteers and pack 100,00 meals. Meals are sent to one of 70 countries where children are actively starving to death. Within months of eating this food, children's health begins to improve. Each meal costs only 22 cents. Please consider making a donation today by visiting: www.stgeorgeworchester.org or by sending a check to:

Feed My Starving Children
Attn: MobilePack #1608-054MI
401 93rd Avenue NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433



NAMEDAYS

July 7

The Holy Martyr Kyriaki

Kyriaki FitzGerald

Kyri Sedares

July 11

The Blessed Olga, Princess of Russia

Olga Lolo

Olga Thanas

July 12

St. Veronica, the woman healed by our Lord Jesus

Veronica Pandaru

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O HOLY TRINITY, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT: As

we think of your saints, we see how truly devoted to you these men and women were at all times. Filled with the light of your wisdom, and with no thought for themselves, they were always turned toward others, toward all your creatures. They were friendly to all, compassionate and tender, even-tempered and ready to forgive everyone without exception. Nothing could undo their peace and inner calm, nor could anger or fear or any emotion gain control over them. Free of all vain expectations, they remained intent only on reaching you. Always animated by a deep love for you, they worked solely for your glory in purity of heart. Today, as we honor them, we beseech you to keep the image of their holiness alive in our minds and hearts, so that we, too, may ever live to please you.

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

FEAST OF STS PETER & PAUL

JUNE 29TH

The hymns for their Feast speak of Sts Peter and Paul as leaders (koryphaioi), and chiefs of the Apostles. They are, without a doubt, the foremost in the ranks of the Apostles.

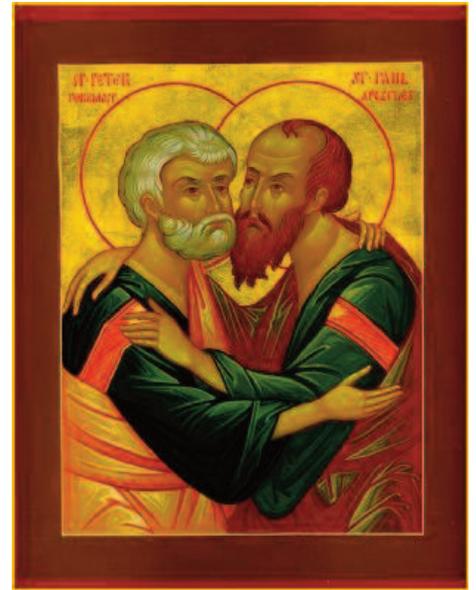
The koryphaioi were leaders of the chorus in ancient Greek tragedy. They set the pattern for the singing, and also for the dance movements and gestures of the chorus. Before Sophocles, there were twelve members of the chorus, and Sts Peter and Paul were the leaders of the twelve Apostles.

Both St Peter and St Paul received new names, indicating a new relationship with God. Simon the fisherman became known as Cephas (John 1:42), or Peter after confessing Jesus as the Son of God (Mt.16:18).

St Peter, the brother of St Andrew, was a fisherman on the sea of Galilee. He was married, and Christ healed his mother-in-law of a fever (Mt.8:14). He, with James and John, witnessed the most important miracles of the Savior's earthly life.

Despite his earlier recognition of Christ as the Son of God, he denied Him three times on the night before the Crucifixion. Therefore, after His Resurrection, the Lord asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Then He told Peter to feed His sheep (John 21:15-17).

After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, St Peter addressed the crowd (Acts 2:14), and performed many miracles in Christ's name. He baptized Cornelius, the first Gentile convert (Acts 10:48). He was cast into prison, but escaped with the help of an angel (Acts 5:19). St Peter also traveled to many places in order to proclaim the Gospel message. He wrote two Epistles,



which are part of the New Testament.

St Peter was put to death in Rome during the reign of Nero. According to Tradition, he asked to be crucified upside down, since he did not feel worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord.

St Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, and lived in Tarsus in Cilicia. He once described himself as a Hebrew, an Israelite of the seed of Abraham (2 Cor. 11:22). He was also a Pharisee and a tent-maker (Acts 18:3) who had studied the Law with Gamaliel at Jerusalem.

At first, he was called Saul, and had persecuted the Church. He was present at the stoning of St Stephen (Acts 7: 58). Then, on the road to Damascus, he was converted when Christ appeared to him. Blinded by the vision, he was healed when Ananias laid his hands on him. After his cure, he was baptized (Acts 9:18).

St Paul preached the Gospel in Greece, Asia Minor, and in Rome, and wrote fourteen Epistles. Tradition says that he was martyred in Rome about the year 68.



LISTENING TO OUR CONSCIENCE

THIS Sunday we begin reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans. In the New Testament this Letter appears right after Acts and is the first of all of the Apostolic Letters. While not a comprehensive presentation of St. Paul's theology, it represents a very systematic approach to his thinking. Unlike most of his other Letters which were usually addressed to Churches that he had either founded or ministered to, St. Paul was writing to a Church that he did not know personally. In one sense this Letter was a way of introducing himself to that community.

In the selection for this Sunday, the Second after Pentecost (Romans 2:10-16), St. Paul takes up an important question. How and why do we do good? Is it because God has given us (or, more accurately, the Jews) the Law, to follow? Or, is it because there is something innate in us that guides us? He tells the Romans: "glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality" (v. 10-11). From the outset he makes his position clear. All people have the natural capacity to do good and that God is not partial to any person. God is concerned about what a person does, not who a person is.

Throughout his writings St. Paul not only contrasts the differences between Jew and Gentile, he tries to simultaneously harmonize these differences. One major difference was that the Jews had been given the Law by God through Moses. In Jewish theology, to hear the Law and know it was to have an advantage over other peoples. St. Paul wanted to challenge this way of thinking.

For the faithful Jew, adherence to the Law was and is the path of salvation. However, we shouldn't think of "Law" too narrowly, too black and white. And while there certainly are provisions of the Law that many feel should be strictly followed, it is more accurate to think of the Law as a way of life; rules for living

the way God intends us to live.

So, St. Paul wants us to notice that people of conscience, Jew or Gentile, are always striving to do good. He says, "All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified" (v. 12-13). Here St. Paul echoes St. James when he says: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). In another place we hear St. Paul say, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Ephesians 2:8-10). His point in Ephesians, as well as here in Romans, is that faith in our Lord Jesus Christ leads us to be the kind of persons that God intended from the beginning. And, that we are innately predisposed toward this faith, toward this way of life.

This innate sense of right and wrong is what later came to be called "the natural law." The Ten Commandments given by God to Moses and through him to the Children of Israel (Exodus 21:1-17) are the primary example of the harmony between God's Law and what we are guided toward by our conscience. The Commandments that form the heart of the Law, are also found, in one way or another, in the basic code of conduct in every human society throughout history.

This is what St. Paul means when he says: "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their

conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them" (v. 14-15). He is referring to the basic sense we have of what it means to be a good person.

The first thing a person who wishes to pursue the "good life" does is to engage their conscience; to actively listen to what their heart is telling them. The average person usually finds two obstacles in their way. The first is that they have become deaf to the voice of their heart. The second is that their conscience is so buried by sin that it is very hard to find.

The Fathers use an image to help us understand the problem. They liken the conscience to a mirror. For most of us this mirror is caked over with the soot of sin. How can it reflect God's light? The first step on the path of repentance is to clean the mirror of our conscience from the layered soot of sin. Slowly we will find that it will reflect God's light to illumine our way.

St. Paul emphasizes the *doing* of good because it is an objective way for us to see that our conscience is leading us down the right path. Ideas floating in our heads look different to us once we put our hand to the task. This interplay, this back and forth, between our desire to do good and our actual deeds is the scrubbing action that cleans our conscience. The cleaner our heart the more reliable a voice it will be to lead us toward the good.

St. Paul leaves us with these ominous words to contemplate. In speaking of the Day of Judgment he says that it is our own "conscience [that] bears witness" against us, and that our "conflicting thoughts" will accuse or perhaps excuse us "on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus" (v. 16). May our conscience be clear on that terrible Day.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA