

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JULY 10, 2016

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**PITA BAKING** is scheduled for **Saturday, July 23rd 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](mailto:thetodas@msn.com), or 508-832-6271. We are planning on baking sessions every other Saturday until September. We'll post the dates next week.

**THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS** for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday. 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 August 6th.

**TWO MEMORIALS ARE CELEBRATED TODAY.** We remember:

**Florika Dragoti**, (mother of Petrika Dragoti) fallen asleep one year.

We also remember **John Johnson**, the deceased husband of Angela De-

**GREETERS TEAM 1:**  
V. GERALD BELBA AND MARGARITE LANDRY

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:**  
ALL HELP APPRECIATED THIS WEEK

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



### THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 5:1-10

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:22-33

(SERMON ON THE MOUNT  
THE CARES OF LIFE)

TONE 2 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 3

make and the father of Alex and Nicholas Johnson, fallen asleep twenty years.

*May their memories be eternal!*

**THE COFFEE HOUR** this week is sponsored in the memory of both **Florika and John** by their respective families.

## CONGRESS REPORT

**THE BIENNIAL CONGRESS OF OUR ARCHDIOCESE** was held this past weekend in Hamilton, Ontario. It was an historic Congress on many levels. The most important decision taken was the establishment of a Romanian Orthodox Metropolia

for North and South America, but primarily for the United States of America and Canada.

What the creation of a Metropolia means for us and our Romanian Orthodox community is that it is the next step in organizing the Church here along authentically canonical principles. What was voted was the establishment of a diocese (episcopate) for the United States and another for Canada, each with their own bishop. At the same time, the possibility remains for creating other dioceses, according to the future needs in either the United States or Canada, as well as in South America.

This idea of a Metropolia has been discussed for a long time. The hope had been that the division in our Romanian Orthodox community, one aftermath of the Second World War, could be healed and that we could united again. This possibility has come to be seen as extremely unlikely, and consequently our Archdiocese, soon to be Metropolia, has decided to move forward.

Most of the other business at the Congress was of a usual nature: financial reports, committee reports, annual reports of the hierarchs, and the like. These will be reported on in future issues of the *Credința*.

The Statutes that were voted by the Congress will now be sent to the Holy

### DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sat, July 23 Pita Baking, 9am-noon
- Sun, July 31 St. Michael Southbridge Annual Picnic
- Mon, Aug 1 Dormition Fast Begins
- Sat, Aug 6 Feast of Transfiguration  
Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
- Aug 8, 9, & 10 Vacation Church School
- Mon, Aug 15 Feast of the Dormition
- Fri, Aug 19 Mustard Seed Meal
- Sun, Sept 18 stART on the Street Festival
- Thurs, Oct 6 Holy Trinity Wine/Food Fest

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*A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas*

Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church for approval. Once done, the hierarchs recommended for the newly created dioceses will be installed for our new Metropolia.

The other important moment of the Congress was the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Holy Resurrection community in Hamilton. The Church and community center had been thoroughly refurbished for the occasion, and so, before the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, the Church proper was again blessed and reconsecrated as part of the 100th Anniversary.

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

## 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

**July 16**

*The Holy Martyr Julia of Carthage*

Julia Donabed

**July 17**

*The Holy Great Martyr Marina (Margareta) of Antioch in Pisidia*

Margareta Gikas

Margarite Landry

Lindsey Marina Sparages

Marina Sparages

**July 20**

*The Holy Prophet Elijah*

Elias James Christo

Irlie Ilie Durmillari

Louis Rucho

Louis Evan Stamoulis

## UP-COMING

We'll be holding a **VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL** on **August 8, 9, & 10 (Monday – Wednesday)**, from 9am – noon each day, together with the our sister parish of Ss Anagyroi in Marlborough. The theme will be "*The Names of Jesus.*" There will be more information forthcoming along with a registration form. **Questions? contact Valarie Stamoulis: [valarie.stamoulis@gmail.com](mailto:valarie.stamoulis@gmail.com) or 508-393-3517.**

## COMMUNITY NEWS

St. George Orthodox Cathedral will once again host the **FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN MOBILEPACK** event on **August 20th**. They look to raise \$22,000, sign up 500 volunteers and pack 100,000 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.stgeorgeworcester.org](http://www.stgeorgeworcester.org) or by sending a check to:

Feed My Starving Children

Attn: MobilePack #1608-054MI

401 93rd Avenue NW

Coon Rapids, MN 55433

**ST. MICHAEL IN SOUTHBRIDGE** will be holding its **9th Annual Romanian Golf Open on Saturday, September 10th**. For more information and/or to register, call Luke Yanka at 508-958-4144 or e-mail: [lsyanka@yahoo.com](mailto:lsyanka@yahoo.com).



## A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**WE BESECH YOU, LORD GOD OF GLORY:** Restrain us lest we fashion more and more idols to worship. Show us how idol-ridden we already are and help us to wipe them out, for though they are not statues of gold and silver, they are not any less idols, the by-products of our forgetfulness of you. Prevent us from worshipping honor, position, and possessions, homes, money, and yes, even our children and other loved ones. You be our only God, and let us glorify and worship you alone.

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

## WOULD WE DIE FOR OUR ENEMY?

**T**HIS THIRD SUNDAY after Pentecost we continue reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (5:1-10). In this passage St. Paul explains how faith in our Lord Jesus Christ does not simply restore our relationship with God, but transforms it. We are able to stand before our heavenly Father as a true, albeit adopted, child of God. He calls this ability to stand before God "justification." I think it appropriate to use our current legal term "standing" as a way to help us understand St. Paul's meaning, because he is, out of the Torah, is making a legal argument. To have "standing" in the legal sense means that you have a "right" to be in court; you have a place there. When St. Paul says, "we are justified by faith," (v. 5:1) he means that we can stand before God because we belong there.

In the previous chapter, St. Paul provides the example of the Righteous Abraham. He says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." (v. 4:3) Even though Abraham and Sarah were very old, God promised him that he would be the father of many nations. Abraham believed Him. His act of faith in God made him righteous, made him able to stand before God.

St. Paul continues this line of thought when he tells us that, "since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God." (v. 5:1-2) It is because of our faith that we have peace with God. On the other hand, because of our sin and lack of faith—our disobedience—we lose this peace, but it can be restored to us through Jesus and our faith in him. Through him, as St. Paul says, we now have access to the grace that allows us to stand before God; and this gives us hope.

Having said that "we rejoice in our

hope," St. Paul directs us to an even deeper reality. He says, "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings." (v. 3) After having told us of the gift that God offers us by believing in Him, he then tells us that this faith which gives us hope, will also comfort us in the very real trials of this life. We rejoice in God not only for the good things given us, but even during the sufferings that life holds for us.

So, St. Paul sets before us a progression, a pattern, for spiritual growth. He says that, "suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope." (v. 3-4) Our hope isn't abstract; it is grounded in the very real trust that we place in God during the most difficult times of our lives. Remember Jesus' words: "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

We should appreciate the difficulty in translating St. Paul's words in this verse. What we translate into English as *endurance* or *patience* is the Greek word *ὑπομονή* (*ipomoni*), which captures both of these concepts together. He is speaking of a "constant patient endurance;" a constancy which forms and develops a tried and tested character through tribulation. This kind of character begets hope. It takes away the fear of what the future may bring.

After describing what *we* need to do—what our part is— St. Paul returns to God's initiative. He says that "hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us." (v. 5) He doesn't say that the Holy Spirit has been given to us as though measured out. Rather, God's love has been "poured" into our hearts. This is an image of overflowing grace; an abundance of love. God is not holding back; He is overwhelming us with His presence.

In order to emphasize his point, St.

Paul gives us the ultimate example. "While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." (v. 6) We are the ungodly. God did not wait for us to turn and repent. He did not wait for our expression of faith. He proved his faithfulness and love "while we were yet sinners." (v. 8)

Listen to St. Paul's argument: "Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man—though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (v. 7-8). I have often reflected on this verse, taking St. Paul's words very seriously. Would I give up my life even for a good person? Could I even contemplate sacrificing myself for someone who was my enemy? But, this is what he who we call Lord, God and Savior did for us, his enemies; his disobedient children. He did it because he loves us and wants to call us back to our Father.

St. Paul finishes his argument with these words: "Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." (v. 9-10)

St. Paul is giving the Romans and us hope and urging us on to courageously pursue the spiritual life, the life of faith. He points to God's love for us as expressed by His Son's sacrifice. He tells us that because of this, God and humanity are reconciled—we can be restored to what He intended us to be. He urges us to believe, to have faith in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, and in this way the hope that we have of God's love for us will be poured into our hearts.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA