

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JULY 24, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

PITA BAKING is scheduled for this coming **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. **ALSO**, we'll be making the fillings for the pitas the night before, on **Friday, July 22nd at 7:00pm**, and we're looking for a few men to help with this. Direct questions on **FILLINGS** to **George Demake**. Any other questions, contact Chris Toda at: 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. *All help appreciated. No experience necessary — there's a job for everyone.*

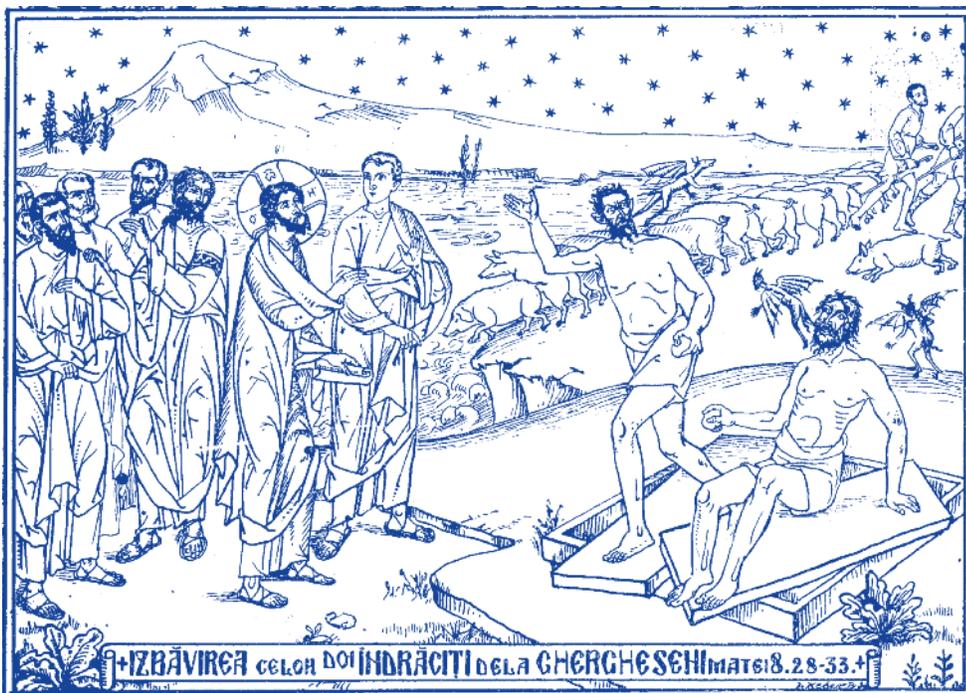
The latest issue of the *Credința/The Faith* quarterly Archdiocesan publication is available at the candles. Please take a copy home with you.

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, August 8th at 6:30 pm**. Parish Council Members, please let George Demake know if you are unable to attend.

GREETERS TEAM 3:
EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

NO COFFEE HOUR THIS WEEK

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 10:1-10 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 8:28-9:1

(JESUS HEALS THE GADARENE DEMONIACS)

TONE 4 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 5

UP-COMING

We'll be holding **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 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 100,00 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.stgeorgeworcester.org or by sending a check to:

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 Bible School
- Sun, Aug 14 Vespers for Dormition at St. Mary's 6pm
- 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

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.



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE
 LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

ONLY SOVEREIGN LORD, divine and incomprehensible unity in trinity of persons. As the lights of this world fade into darkness, let your thrice-radiant brilliance illumine our lives with ever greater clarity and strength. Our words cannot begin to describe the mystery we experience, for how could we ever truly grasp your unchanging wisdom and the power of your goodness! Yet, ever-changing as we are, we dare to approach you, our immutable creator, with this prayer: Make us hold fast to our faith. Teach us how to worship you in spirit and in truth. Strengthen us against superstition, childishness, and fascination for every passing fad. And, when we have persevered in the face of doubt and difficulty, grant us the enjoyment of your unapproachable light.

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



**THE HOLY GREAT PROPHET
 ELIAS (ELIJAH)
 July 20th**

Elias of great fame was from Thisbe or Thesbe, a town of Galaad (Gilead), beyond the Jordan. He was of priestly lineage, a man of a solitary and ascetical character, clothed in a mantle of sheep skin, and girded about his loins with a leathern belt. His name is interpreted as “Yah is my God.” His zeal for the glory of God was compared to fire, and his speech for teaching and rebuke was likened unto a burning lamp.

He sternly reprov'd the impiety and lawlessness of Ahab and his wife Jezebel. He shut up heaven by means of prayer, and it did not rain for three years and six months. Ravens brought him food for his need when, at God’s command, he was hiding by the torrent of Horrath.

He multiplied the little flour and oil of the poor widow of Sarephtha of Sidon, who had given him hospitality in her home, and when her son died, he raised him up. He brought down fire from Heaven upon Mount Carmel, and it burned up the sacrifice offered to God before all the people of Israel, that they might know the truth. At the torrent of Kisson, he slew 450 false prophets and

priests who worshipped idols and led the people astray. He received food wondrously at the hand of an Angel, and being strengthened by this food he walked for forty days and forty nights.

He beheld God on Mount Horeb, as far as this is possible for human nature. He foretold the destruction of the house of Ahab, and the death of his son Ohozias. He divided the flow of the Jordan, and he and his disciple Elisseus passed through as it were on dry land; and finally, while speaking with him, Elias was suddenly snatched away by a fiery chariot in the year 895 B.C., and he ascended into heaven, where God most certainly translated him alive, as He did Enoch (Gen. 5:24; IV Kings 2: 11). The Prophet Elias appeared with Moses on Mount Tabor to speak with our Lord when He was transfigured before His disciples.



NAMEDAYS

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

July 24

The Holy Great Martyr Christina
 Christine Masterjohn

CONFESS WITH YOUR LIPS AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART

THIS is the fifth Sunday after Pentecost. In today's reading from his Letter to the Romans (10:1-10) St. Paul speaks about two radically different ways of looking at salvation. Should we understand salvation as following rules and regulations? Or, more comprehensively, as the correct way of living?

He opens this passage by revealing the deep longing he has for his own people. He says that his heart's deepest desire is that the Jewish people might be saved. (v. 1) He recognizes that "they have a zeal for God," but he feels that it is not enlightened, even misguided. (v. 2) Having misunderstood and even ignored the way God works, they tried to do it their own way, by their own power. (v. 3) Trying to fulfill the Law by human effort alone, they have been unable to achieve the goal. Moreover, they have ignored the Messiah who Himself was the perfection of the Law. "For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes." (v. 4)

There are inherent risks when trying to follow the law, any law, but even more so God's Law. Those who are 'law abiding' can become self-righteous, thinking that by following this or that provision or stricture of the law they are better than other people. Then there are those who either follow the minimum provisions of the law, or try to find loopholes by interpreting the law literally. These are the "connivers." In either case the true spirit of the law is rarely observed, and even subverted.

You don't need to look very far beyond family dynamics to see how this actually works. A parent lays down a particular rule for the children. One child simply does what's been asked, while another breaks the rule, usually with some excuse. There are often "shades of gray," but the squabbling around who did and did not do what was asked usually leaves one punished and the other feeling vindicated. But, has either of them really fulfilled the

true end of what the parent was asking? Was the parent's objective simply about getting the children to following rules, or was there a higher purpose? As a parent, I often walked away from this kind of situation feeling like I failed.

God's Law is infinitely more complex and thorough. When you read the provisions of the Law in the Pentateuch (the first five Books of the Old Testament) you quickly gain an appreciation of both the comprehensive nature of the Law, as well as the difficulty, if not impossibility, of fulfilling it.

Christ, the Messiah, fulfilled the Law in what he did and who he is. This is what St. Paul means when he says that "Christ is the end of the law." Christ is the 'end' in two ways. First, he is the completion of the Law — this is what the Lord means when he says, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17) And, in fulfilling the Law, the Lord also brings the Law to an end. It has served its purpose.

St. Paul wants us to understand that the Law is life-giving, and that faith in Christ Jesus makes fulfilling the Law, in the truest sense, attainable. St. Paul paraphrases in verse 5 what God said to Moses concerning the Law that God had given to Israel: "You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live: I am the Lord." (Leviticus 18:5)

But St. Paul also wants us to understand that God assists us in doing His will, so he also reminds us of what Moses said to the Children of Israel just before he died, in order to encourage them. "Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so

that we may hear it and observe it?' No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe." (Exodus 30:11-14)

St. Paul takes Moses' words and re-frames them, telling us how, with faith in Christ, we receive the ability to do God's will as a gift. "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does [the righteousness that comes from faith] say? "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart." (v. 6-8) What both Moses and St. Paul are emphasizing is the way in which God makes Himself completely accessible to us.

When he says "Who will ascend into heaven?" he means, God has already become incarnate for us. When he says, "Who will descend into the abyss?" he means, Jesus our Christ has already destroyed the power of death. We shouldn't worry about these things even in the deepest recesses of our heart. God is always near to us. Jesus is always near to us. He is on our lips and in our hearts.

By drawing ourselves closer to God through Jesus, we allow the Holy Spirit to write the Law on our hearts. It isn't a matter of 'following' the Law; it is a matter of embodying the Law. It becomes our way of life, a part of who we are.

St. Paul finishes this section with what was a Baptismal confession of faith in the early Church. "Confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Furthermore he explains, "one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved." (v. 9-10)

In this way, when we believe in Him, God's Word becomes a part of us: written on our hearts and expressed in every word we speak.