

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 4, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS stART on the Street

START ON THE STREET is **Sunday, September 18**. This is an important fundraiser for our community. Help is needed. A few hours from each of us will do the trick. Here's what's needed:

- **Friday, September 16**. Prep, packing and organizing supplies. At the Church from 12 noon through early evening. A couple of hours will make a difference.
- **Sunday, September 18**. We start early at the Church to transport tent, supplies and food items to the site.
- **All day Sunday** crews are needed to warm pitas at the AHEPA house and at the tent to sell.
- **At day's end** we need to transport everything back to the church, clean-up and stow the gear.

All help is welcome! We especially encourage our youth to lend their energy. While this is work, it is very much a fun event. Come and lend a hand. Enlist your kids, grandkids or a friend or two. Let us know when you can help by signing up in church on Sunday. You'll see

GREETERS TEAM 4:
DIMITRI SAFFRON AND SEAN FAHEY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: 1 CORINTHIANS 9:2-12 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 18:23-35
(THE PARABLE OF THE UNGRATEFUL SERVANT)
TONE 2 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 11

the work is broken up into 2-4 hour blocks.

For more info, speak with **Deb Sedares, Chris Toda or Betty Anderson**.

AN E-RECYCLING EVENT will be held on **Saturday, September 17th from 9am-2pm**. **Gerry Belba** is coordinating and will be looking for volunteers to help with traffic control. If you're interested and available, please talk to him.

THE IOCC is engaged in relief efforts all over the globe, but in particular they are at work in **Louisiana and Syria**. Please consider a donation to help those who are in desperate need. Go to: www.IOCC.org or call: **877-803-4622**.

TWO MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY fell asleep in the Lord this week. **Kaliopi Demma**, at age 96, was a founding member of our parish, a stalwart of our com-

munity. She leaves her **daughter, Joanne Prizio, and sons Arthur Demma and Samuel Demma**, as well as many grand and great-grandchildren. **May her memory be eternal!**

In addition, **Vangjel Naum**, 101, the father of **Carol Fotos** also fell asleep this week. **May our loving Lord rest his soul as well!**

WE ALSO CELEBRATE TODAY A 40-DAY MEMORIAL for the servant of God **George Trakadas, father of James**

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sept 3-5 Marlborough Greek Festival
- Thurs, Sept 8 Nativity of the Theotokos
- Sept 10-11 Greek Festival, Webster Church
- Wed, Sept 14 Elevation of the Precious Cross
Lit at Holy Trinity, 9:30am **Fast Day**
- Fri, Sept 16 Prep for stART, noon thru 5pm
- Sat, Sept 17 e-Recycling, 9am-2pm
- Sun, Sept 18 stART on the Street Festival
- Tues, Sept 20 Holy Trinity General Assembly, 7pm
- Sept 23-24 Greek Festival, Fitchburg Church
- 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

(Dimitrios) Trakadas. *May his soul rest among the just!*

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the **Trakadas family** in memory of Jim's father George.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

HOLY TRINITY is holding its **annual General Assembly meeting on Tuesday, September 20th at 7:00pm**. Delegations from each of the Worcester area parishes are asked to attend. If you are interested please speak with either Fr. Nick or George Demake.

Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center has the following **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**: CNA's, RN's and Dietary Aides. Please contact Michelle Williamson, Dir. of Human Resources, (508) 852-1000 or e-mail: mwilliamson@htnr.net

Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is an Orthodox Charity and relies on your donations to continue their mission of providing the best care possible.

COMMUNITY NEWS

SS. ANARGYROI PARISH IN MARLBOROUGH will be holding its annual **Greek Festival, Labor Day weekend** (Saturday through Monday). For more information check their website: www.stsanargyoi.org.

ST. MICHAEL IN SOUTHBIDGE 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.

STS. CONSTANTINE AND HELEN IN WEBSTER is holding its annual **Greek Festival on Saturday, September 10, 11:00-9:00pm and Sunday, September 11, 11:00am-5:00pm**. More information can be found at www.schwebster.org.

HOLY TRINITY IN FITCHBURG is holding its **Greek Festival Friday, September 23, 5-10pm and Saturday, September 24, 11am-10pm**. Rain or Shine. The Church is at: 1319 Main St, Fitchburg. There is Free Parking/Shuttle from Valley West Shopping Center, 134 River St. **Info: 978-342-1216**.

NAMEDAYS

August 29

St. Theodora of Thessalonika

Gina Theodora Trakadas

August 30

St. Alexander,

Patriarch of Constantinople

Alexander Charalambides

Emilia Alexandra Galeriu

Dr. Alexander Gouvelis

Alexandra Mazanitis

Alexandru Nace

Conner Alexander Polymeros

Alexanna Soter

Alexander James Trakadas

September 5

St. Elizabeth the mother

of St. John the Baptist

Elizabeth Anderson

Elizabeth Grace Cavanaugh

Elizabeth Florica Galeriu

Lisa Mielnicki

Karen Elizabeth Wilder

The Holy Prophet Zachariah,
father of St. John

Zachary Spataro

September 8

The Nativity of the

Most Holy Theotokos

Presvytera Maria Mossaides

September 9

The Holy Ancestors of God

Joachim and Anna

Ann Marie Clem

Anna Maria Collins

Ann Trakadas



A PRAYER IN TIME OF DROUGHT

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

OLORD GOD ALMIGHTY, Who lifts the clouds from the ends of the earth, Who made lightning in the rains, Who brings up the winds from their storehouses, Who summons the waters of the sea and pours them upon the face of all the earth, we pray You, and we implore You, confessing our sins and entreating Your rich mercies: Command the clouds to rain, have compassion on all Your earth, show loving-kindness to old and young and infants sucking at the breast, to Your servants, sons and daughters, and all beasts of the earth, that it bring up for us bread for food and herb for the livestock. Accept the prayers of all Your people, and reject not the groans of the poor, neither rebuke us with Your anger, nor punish us with Your wrath, nor let Your thirsting people be despoiled by famine. For every eye hopes on You that they will receive drink from You in due season. We trust You, and knowing none other save You, we await from You rich mercies.

For You are a good and loving God, and to You we send up glory: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

IS IT FOR OXEN THAT GOD IS CONCERNED?

THIS is the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, and the reading is taken from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, 9:2-12. In this excerpt, St. Paul is defending the authenticity of his Apostolic authority against some in the Corinthian community who appear to have challenged it.

From what we can understand of the arguments directed at undermining his authority, one point was that St. Paul's did not exercise the normal prerogatives of an Apostle, such as being financially supported by the community. I say 'from what we can understand' because we have to infer the argument of those opposing St. Paul from his response. We do not have other documents — such as the original letters coming from Corinth to St. Paul — to know precisely what they were saying. Nevertheless, we can still glean a great deal from St. Paul's writings.

Without inflating his Apostleship, he tells them simply, "If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord." (v. 2) He doesn't raise his other missionary work as proof; he tells them to look to themselves and their own community, at the work he has done there in Corinth. This is proof enough.

He then addresses the Apostolic prerogatives that he has not availed himself of. "Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?" (v.4-6) He is telling them plainly that just because he chose not to burden the community with supporting him and Barnabas, does not mean that he had forfeited this right. The Church community has a duty to support those preaching and ministering to them.

We are reminded in these verses of some historical facts. All of the original twelve Apostles, except for John, were married. Paul chose to remain unmar-

ried, perhaps because of the arduous nature of the missionary activity he was called to, or perhaps because he felt that the Lord's coming would be very soon and the new age would then begin. Regardless, he claims his right to be married, without feeling the need to exercise it. (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:23ff)

Similarly, we know that St. Paul was a tent maker. This is how he supported himself when he would go to a new city to preach the Gospel. He and many others sacrificed a great deal in order to bring the Good News of salvation to people everywhere.

He then begins a very down to earth way of explaining why he has a right to expect to be compensated for his ministry among them. "Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?" (v. 7) Each one of us feels that it is only fair that we receive adequate remuneration for our work. This is at the very heart of our life in common. This is the foundation of our economy. But, the basic principle is even more obvious.

"Do I say this on human authority?" asks St. Paul. "Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.' Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop." (v. 8-10) One of the more amazing aspects of the Law is that even three thousand or more years ago fair payment for work rendered was considered central to being in a right relationship with God. Moses tells us that God is concerned with just treatment of laborers.

Everything that St. Paul has said up until this point was to prepare us for his central point: "If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others

share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ." (v. 11-12)

Things are not so very different today as they were in first century Corinth. The question of properly compensating people for their labor is again at the center of our nation's economic discussion. People are working harder for less. The Scripture has something to say about this, despite the common misperception that "religion has no place in economic discussions."

In the Church the question of clergy salaries remains a lively one. How much should the priest be compensated? Is he really worth it? At least in here in North America, this question still sparks a discussion.

There has rarely been a time more than our own when the Church has needed the "best and the brightest" to devote themselves to the preaching of the Gospel. We live in an epoch of huge cultural shifts. People are searching for a way to understand the changes in society and find meaning — find God — in what they are experiencing. We need people who have more insight, more understanding, and more spiritual wisdom than the average person to help minister to us. These persons need to be compensated at least as well as other professionals whom we regularly engage to assist us in our earthly existence. Very simply, if we ask people to help us spiritually, we need to support them and their families.

I believe that among the most important issues facing the Orthodox Church here is the adequate compensation of the clergy. If this issue is not addressed, the consequences will be dire. As St. Paul reminds us, "Is it for oxen that God is concerned?" It is certainly both oxen and us.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

AS LIGHT APPEARS AND DISPELS THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT, we welcome another morning that comes to us from your almighty and benevolent hand, a you who never sleep. Help us to throw off the sleep of the past night, so that we may greet your gift of this new day by singing you our hymns of praise and glory with attention and true devotion. As we worship you today, we also give thanks to you for the Theotokos, whose birthday we celebrate. Grant that we may live as she did, seeking your divine will in all things, and through repentance let us give birth to your Son in the spirit as surely as she gave birth to him in the flesh.

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 NATIVITY OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY THEOTOKOS AND EVER VIRGIN MARY:

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of mankind.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of mankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since St Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's

mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcome the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Sts Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Sts Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feastsdays at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

St Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. St Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained to extreme old age and prepared them-

selves by virtuous life for a sublime calling: to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God, and of them would be born a most blessed daughter Mary, through Whom would come the Salvation of all the World.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all mankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion.