

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN SEPTEMBER 18, 2016

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS **stART** on the Street

**START ON THE STREET** originally scheduled for this Sunday, September 18th, **has been postponed by the organizers until NEXT Sunday, September 25th**, because of the predictions of rain and thunderstorms. 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 what you can do:

- **Saturday, September 24.** Prep, packing and organizing supplies. At the Church from 12 noon through early evening. A couple of hours will make a difference.
- **Sunday, September 25.** 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.

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

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



### SUNDAY AFTER THE ELEVATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS

APOSTOLIC READING: GALATIANS 2:16-20 ☩ GOSPEL: MARK 8:34-9:1

(TAKING UP OUR CROSS AND FOLLOWING CHRIST)

TONE 4 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 2

While it is work, this 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 the work is broken up into 2-4 hour blocks.

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

**ST NICHOLAS CHURCH SCHOOL STARTS THIS SUNDAY.** Our Youth are a central part of our parish. and each of us can help. Parents, please register your children and help them get to Church on time. If you're interested in teaching or assisting with Church School this year, or working on one of the special Youth events, our kids could use you! **We are particularly in need of a person to teach the Pre-School class; see Valarie if you are**

**able and interested. PARENTS:** if you haven't done so already, please complete the **REGISTRATION FORM**. If anyone would like more information, **speak with Valarie Stamoulis or Preoteasa Maria**. Providing vibrant and meaningful opportunities for our Youth to learn about their Orthodox Faith and traditions, and work and play together is key to ensuring that our Orthodox Faith and the community of St. Nicholas remains vibrant for generations to come.

**THE IOCC** is engaged in relief efforts all

### DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sun, Sept 18 Opening of Religious Ed Classes
- Tues, Sept 20 Holy Trinity General Assembly, 7pm
- Sept 23-24 Greek Festival, Fitchburg Church
- Sun, Sept 25 stART on the Street Festival
- Sat, Oct 1 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
- Thurs, Oct 6 Holy Trinity Wine/Food Fest
- Fri, Oct 14 Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm

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E-MAIL: FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG ♦ WEB: WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG

A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

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](http://www.IOCC.org) or call: 877-803-4622.

## 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 interest please speak with either Fr. Nick or George Demake.

**HOLY TRINITY'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL FOOD AND WINE FEST ON OCTOBER 6TH**, 5:30-8:30pm at St. Spyridon Cathedral. Celebratory Champagne and Sparkling Wine Tasting & Seminar at 5:45pm! Live Music, Raffle Prizes, Great Food! You don't want to miss it! For tickets call Irene Tsoules at 774-239-9238 or Eleanor Sedares at 508-753-3106 'Like' on Facebook, "Annual Food and Wine Fest."

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**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**.

**NOTRE DAME ACADEMY** is holding an open house on **Thursday, Oct 6th at 7:00 pm** for prospective students (young women grades 9-12). For info: [www.nda-worc.org](http://www.nda-worc.org), or call: 508-757-6200 x229.

## A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**O**CREATOR AND MAKER OF THIS HOUR: Another morning finds us here before you, celebrating the exaltation of the precious cross, that immortal and life-giving tree that bore the saviour's body in death. From barren wood and bitter death was that tree made, but its stark and naked limbs produced unfailing fruit and leaves that never fade. It was the very price that saved us from the law of old, a price paid not in gold or silver, but in the blood of that pure and spotless lamb. Enlighten us as we reflect on this mystery, a God and Father. Impress on our feeble minds how much we need to embrace the cross, in whose rough surface we see ourselves as we really are.

By the grace and mercy and love for us of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## NAMEDAYS

**September 14**

***The Exaltation of the Precious and Lifegiving Cross***

Stavri Tanacea

**September 17**

***The Holy Martyr Faith, Daughter of St. Sophia***

Faith Mayer

***The Holy Martyr Sophia of Rome***

Sofia Apostol

Sophia Amyra Apostola

Carol Fotos

**September 18**

***The Holy Martyr Ariadna of Phrygia***

Ariana Sparages



## A PRAYER IN TIME OF DROUGHT

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**O**LORD 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.

## IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE

**T**HIS is the Sunday after the Universal Exaltation of the Precious Cross. Today's Epistle Lesson, like last week's, is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians, 2:16-20. In this passage St. Paul sums up his teachings about the relationship between faith in Jesus and adherence to the Law of Moses. One could say, that in a very concise way, St. Paul synthesizes in these seven verses his whole teaching on this subject which he expands on in his letters to both the Romans and the Galatians.

What lies at the heart of his teaching is that salvation comes to us through faith in Jesus the Christ. It cannot come through "works of the law," (v. 16) because no one can fulfill all of the provisions or precepts of the Law. In spite of all our efforts, we remain far from perfection. However, this fulfillment of the Law was accomplished by and in Jesus. He literally embodied the Law, doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. But more importantly, He showed us that it is in our willingness to follow God with our whole being, to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30), to have total faith in Him and His Christ, that allowed and allows us to be justified before God. Salvation is a free gift to us from God; what we need to do is trust in Him completely.

The reason St. Paul is so upset with the Galatians is that they have doubted that their faith in Jesus is sufficient basis for their salvation when listening to the Jewish Christians (Judaizers) that I spoke of last week. Following their teachings they are now opting for "works of the Law" as the proper means for "justification." Circumcision, that we heard so much about in last week's reading, is the shorthand for this.

St. Paul begins this part of his Letter by using the example of St. Peter and himself — Jews of the first order. He says that even they "know that a man is

not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ." They themselves, "have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified." (v. 16)

We should review again the way in which St. Paul uses the word "justified." In colloquial terms, to be "justified" means to be able to stand before God without being embarrassed. It means that we have enough virtue that we can face God and not hang our heads in shame. Think about it in this way, if your employer were to call you into his or her office to question you about your job performance, could you "stand" before them with your head held high? Or, would you be hanging your head in contrition? The root word of "justified" is the Latin, "iust," which means "right." When we are justified, we stand right with God.

Now St. Paul addresses the central question plaguing the Galatians: "But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not!" (v. 17) The anxiety of the Galatians is this: does simple faith in Jesus suffice? Can this faith be enough to wipe away my sin? And, if it isn't, is Jesus now an agent of sin? St. Paul says: "Of course, not!" We can stand before God in and through our faith in Jesus! Works will not do it, only our faith will.

Then he moves to the next level of questions: "if I [namely, St. Paul] build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor." (v. 18) Here he is referring to those advocating that followers of Christ now follow the Mosaic Law. The 'building up' refers to returning to the Mosaic Law as a basis for justification before God. The 'tearing down' refers to his advocacy for faith in Christ. To change course would be worse for him; there is no hope in the Old Law, the only way is forward, the

only sure way is faith in Jesus. He points to his own life, first as a pious Jew who followed the Law rigorously, but then found salvation through faith in Jesus.

"For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God," (v. 19) St. Paul says. There are three levels of meaning in this verse. The first is that Christ was put to death by the Law; the Jewish authorities handed Jesus over to die because they contended that He had violated the Law. The second level is that Paul, and all Christians, are one with Christ in Baptism. As Christ was put to death because of the Law, so are we. Even more, we are "put to death" because we truly violate the law through our sins. So, in this sense it is very true that through the Law we died to the Law. The last level of meaning is the most important. In dying to and through the Law, we, like Christ, are resurrected. Because we become one with Christ in our Baptism, we both die and live in and through Him. We are totally transformed.

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," (v. 20) St Paul declares. What he experiences is what we long for: the new life in Christ. We want to feel deep within us the newness that our Lord Jesus makes available to us. What we oftentimes lack is the will and courage to "live by faith in the Son of God who loves" us. We keep ourselves at arm's-length, not fully embracing the commitment that would give us St. Paul's confidence. Let us strive to embrace the Lord's loving Cross, and accept the gift of everlasting life that He offers us.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

# THE ELEVATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS

In spite of the fact that the pagan Roman emperors tried to completely eradicate from human memory the holy places where our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and was resurrected for mankind, eventually after 300 years, by Divine Providence, the great Christian sacred remains, the Sepulchre of the Lord and the Life-Creating Cross were again discovered and opened for veneration. This

took place under the Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337).

Ardently desiring to find the Cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, St Constantine sent his mother, the pious Empress Helen (May 21), to Jerusalem, providing her with a letter to St Macarius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Although the holy empress Helen was already in her declining years, she set about completing the task with enthusiasm. The empress gave orders to destroy the pagan temple and the statues in Jerusalem. Searching for the Life-

Creating Cross, she made inquiry of Christians and Jews, but for a long time her search remained unsuccessful.

Finally, they directed her to a certain elderly Hebrew by the name of Jude who stated that the Cross was buried where the temple of Venus stood. They demolished the pagan temple and, after praying, they began to excavate the ground. Soon the Tomb of the Lord was uncovered. Not far from it were three crosses, a board with the inscription ordered by Pilate, and four nails which had pierced the Lord's Body (March 6).

In order to discern on which of the three crosses the Savior was crucified, Patriarch Macarius alternately touched the crosses to a corpse. When the Cross of the Lord touched the dead one, he came to life. Having beheld the raising of the dead man, everyone was convinced that the Life-Creating Cross was found.

Christians came in a huge throng to venerate the Holy Cross, beseeching St Macarius to elevate the Cross, so that even those far off might reverently contemplate it. Then the Patriarch and other spiritual leaders raised up the Holy Cross, and the people, saying "Lord have mercy," reverently prostrated before the Venerable Wood. This solemn event occurred in the year 326.

During the discovery of the Life-Creating Cross another miracle took place: a grievously sick woman, beneath the shadow of the Holy Cross, was healed instantly. The elder Jude and other Jews there believed in Christ and accepted Holy Baptism. Jude received the name Cyriacus and afterwards was consecrated Bishop of Jerusalem.

During the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-363) he accepted a martyr's death for Christ. The holy empress Helen journeyed to the holy places connected with the earthly life of the Savior, building more than 80 churches.




## Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center

10th Anniversary

### Annual Food & Wine Fest

Thursday, October 6, 2016  
5:30pm - 8:30pm

5:15pm—Champagne & Sparkling Wine Tasting & Seminar  
at St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Worcester, MA

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Ads must be received by September 9, 2016

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