

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN OCTOBER 16, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

WE WILL CELEBRATE THE LITURGY OF ST. JAMES next Sunday, October 23rd. This is an ancient Liturgy usually celebrated on St. James' Feast-day. Please plan on coming from the very start of the Liturgy (10:00am). This Liturgy is different from the ones we normally celebrate. This gives us an opportunity to experience the richness of our Church's ancient liturgical traditions.

PITA BAKING originally scheduled for yesterday, has been **rescheduled for this coming Saturday, October 22nd, 9:00 am to noon.** Any questions, contact Chris Toda at: thetodas@msn.com, or 508-832-6271. *All help appreciated. No experience necessary — there's a job for everyone.*

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold its regular monthly meeting **Monday, October 24th at 6:30 pm.** Parish Council Members, please let Fr. Nick know if you are unable to attend.

THANKS TO THE MUSTARD SEED VOLUNTEERS! Those who cooked and those who served the meal this past Friday! The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day. **Thanks**

GREETERS TEAM 5:
DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS
COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW C:
PRIZIO FAMILY
ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE TWENTY FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: TITUS 3:8-15 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 8:5-15 (PARABLE OF THE SOWER AND THE SEED)
THE SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE 7TH ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL
TONE 8 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 6

also to two of our families who offered to sponsor these meals. **Lillian Chachi and the Chachi family** sponsored a meal in memory of **Ann Marie** who originally urged our parish to engage this ministry in the 1980s, as well as **Mary Cocaine** who has regularly supported this effort. **God bless them!** Our next scheduled meal is **December 16th.** Contact Fr. Nick if you'd like to help prepare the meals.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES are in session. If you have not registered your child, and would like to do so, you may complete a registration form here at Church. If anyone would like more information, **speak with Valarie Stamoulis or Preoteasa Maria.**

As a reminder, quiet space to hold Religious Ed classes is limited. It takes very little to disrupt a class of children from lessons their teachers have prepared. **We ask for your cooperation during the time after**

communion, and during the sermon and coffee-hour. Please remain in the Church and do not disrupt classes by walking in the coffee hour area, hallway or the kitchen.

A 1-YEAR MEMORIAL is observed today for the servant of God **Ann Marie Chachi.** *May the Lord rest her soul among the just!*

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored in memory of **Ann Marie Chachi** by her family.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sat, Oct 22 Pita Baking, 9am-noon
- Mon, Oct 24 Parish Council Meeting, 6:30pm
- Sat, Nov 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
- Sat, Nov 19 Holiday Bake Sale,
Luncheon & Marketplace
- Sun, Nov 20 Shrewsbury Ecu Thanksgiving Service
Congregational Church, 7:00pm
- Sat, Nov 26 e-Recycle 9am-2pm
- Sun, Dec 4 Feastday Celebration

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

UP-COMING

As part of our **Holiday Marketplace on Saturday, November 19** we will again hold a **GIFT BASKET RAFFLE**. We are seeking donations of **NEW** items to be assembled into gift baskets as well as large wicker baskets. Questions? contact **Tim Rucho** (tjruchov@verizon.net)

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

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 at: 508-852-1000.

NAMEDAYS

October 18

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke

Fr. Luke Veronis

October 20

The Great-martyr Artemius of Antioch

Artemie Gavala

Artemis Gouvelis

October 26

The Holy Great-martyr Dimitrios of Thessalonika

Dimitri Soterios Apostola

Dhimitra Belica

Dimitri Daniel Christo

James L. Christo

James Demake

Dhimitri Disho

Dimitraq Lolo

Dimitraqi Lolo

Rev. Fr. Dimitri Moraitis

Dimitri Michael Saffron

James Seferi

James Evan Stamoulis

James Trakadas

James Vlamis



TODAY the Church remembers the 350 holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council under the holy Patriarch Tarasius (February 25). We celebrate their memory on the Sunday that falls on or immediately after the eleventh of this month.

The Synod of 787, the second to meet at Nicæa, refuted the Iconoclast heresy during the reign of Empress Irene and her son Constantine Porphyrogenitos.

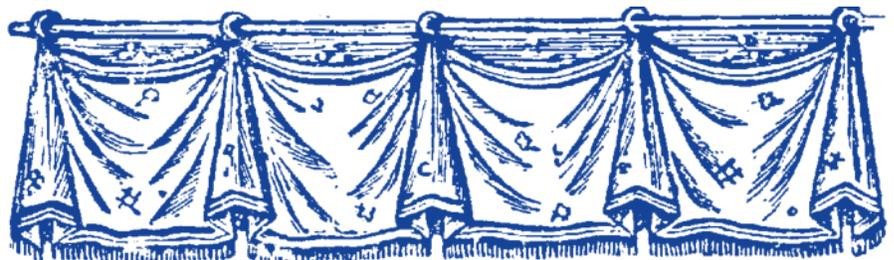
The Council decreed that the veneration of icons was not idolatry (Exodus 20:4-5), because the honor shown to them is not directed to the wood or paint, but passes to the prototype (the person depicted). It also upheld the possibility of depicting Christ, Who became man and took flesh at His Incarnation. The Father, on the other hand, cannot be represented in His eternal nature, because "no man has seen God at any time" (John 1:18).

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

LORD GOD, eternal Father: Give us the justice that will make us flourish like the palm tree; give us also the goodness that will enable us to grow before you like the cedar of Lebanon. Help us to avoid senseless controversy, to eschew judging, censoring, and criticizing, and to resist being enslaved to our own opinions. Planted in your courts, O Lord, may we grow by abandoning ourselves to your perfect will.

By the mercies 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.



AVOID STUPID CONTROVERSIES

THE Epistle lesson this week is related to the commemoration of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the second held in Nicæa in 787ad. This was the Council that addressed the issue of the proper role of icons in the Church and in worship. The selection today is from St. Paul's letter to his disciple and co-worker Titus (3:8-15). In it he addresses some of the finer points of pastoring a community, especially an early Christian one still influenced by many pagan enticements.

We read today from the very last verses of that Letter. St. Paul, after giving Titus his advice on how to guide the community in a Christian way, tells him: "I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men." (v. 8) St. Paul is a man of action. He believes the principles of faith are meant to be put into practice. This is equally true of many of the spiritual fathers of the Church. They believed that by practicing acts of charity and good works, a person integrates their faith into their very being. It is not enough for someone to have good intentions in their head; they also need to act on these same intentions with their hands, so that together faith can lodge in their heart.

He warns Titus to "avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile." (v. 9) This isn't to say that Titus himself was prone to such controversies, but rather that itinerant preachers were stirring up things everywhere. People in local communities, informed or ignorant, would form camps and tear each other apart. This is St. Paul's concern.

He tells Titus: "As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned." (v. 10-11)

The word translated as "factious" is,

in the Greek, "αἰρετικὸν" — "heretical" — although it didn't assume the specific theological meaning understood today until a few hundred years after St. Paul. The Greek root word of "heretical" literally means, "to choose;" that is to say, to single out one particular point and emphasize it to the exclusion of other points of view or understandings. Thus, such a person makes their one central point the whole truth. Many persons who the Church considers to be heretics were not entirely wrong. The problem was that the one point they clung to and emphasized changed the full meaning of the truth. In effect, their one point became their whole truth. The Church has always had a wider understanding of truth that could not be reduced to a singular concept.

St. Paul calls this "factious" person "perverted and sinful." Even without discussing St. Paul's understanding or intent of that word in the context of the early Church, we can see his point very easily in the way much public discourse happens today in shouting matches on TV, radio and in the public square. No doubt much of this is theatre, contrived for effect; but increasingly it is not. The factious person uses ideas and language to push people to extremes. The part is presented as the whole. In contrast, the truly thoughtful person tries to keep all perspectives in balance.

This does not mean there are no principles we should defend; of course there are! It is the "stupid controversies" and "dissensions" that St. Paul asks us to avoid; "quarrels" that are "unprofitable and futile." These last two words are key to understanding where and how someone should stand on a question of principle. Will the dispute ultimately build up the Body of Christ, or will it finally be unprofitable and futile? Understanding this difference is what makes one person a saint and another a heretic. It requires discernment.

Discernment is first and foremost a spiritual gift. It is the ability to distinguish between the various thoughts that

enter our mind and to recognize those that come from God and those that are from the devil. As such, the person with discernment can understand both the short and long term consequences of an action. Like all spiritual gifts, God gives discernment to a person of prayer. We all need God's help so that He might guide us toward people of true discernment whom we can listen to and learn from.

In St. Paul's last few lines to Titus, we gain insight into how he was so successful in establishing Churches throughout the Roman world. St. Paul had sent Titus to Crete to bring order to the Church there. He tells him he will "send Artemas or Tychicus" to Crete to replace him and then he would like Titus to come to Nicopolis to join him there. (v. 12) He asks him to "speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way;" to "see that they lack nothing." (v. 13) We suppose that these two, about whom St. Paul speaks in other letters, had brought this message to Titus. After they leave Crete they will visit other Churches.

Then he offers Titus a final piece of advice: "Let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful." (v. 14) While much has been made of St. Paul's principle of justification by faith, not by works (Romans 3:25ff), we see here, as in other places, the emphasis on how our faith should take concrete form, in ministering to those in need.

He reminds us that ultimately the Church is composed of communities of faithful people who love one another. He says: "All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all." (v. 15) And so this is how it should always be, one community embracing another in the love of Christ.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA