

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN OCTOBER 23, 2016

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

WE WILL CELEBRATE THE LITURGY OF ST. JAMES today Sunday, October 23rd. This is an ancient Liturgy usually celebrated on St. James' Feastday. 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 last Saturday, has been **rescheduled for this 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.

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

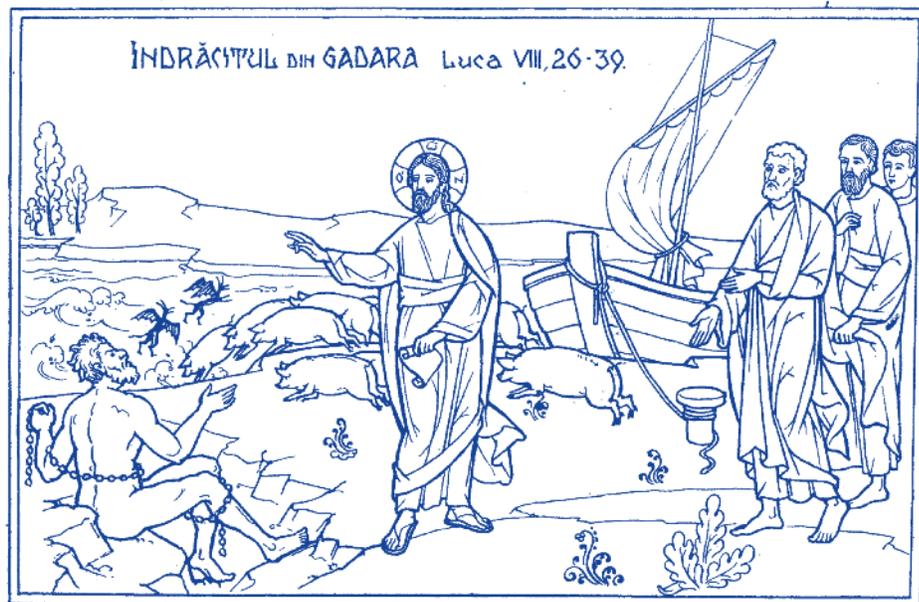
GREETERS TEAM 1:

V. GERALD BELBA AND MARGARITE LANDRY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW D:

ILIANA & SEAN FAHEY, DIMITRI SAFFRON,
CHRISTOS & SPIRO SPYROU

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: EPHESIANS 2:4-10 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 8:26-39

(JESUS HEALS THE GERASENE DEMONIAC)

TONE 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 7

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.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored in memory of **Aurica Gavala**, Artic's mother, by the Gavala Family.

UP-COMING

As part of our Holiday Marketplace on Saturday, November 19 we will again hold a **GIFT BASKET RAFFLE**. If you have a creative flair, put together a gift basket based on a favorite

theme! We are also seeking donations of **NEW** items to be assembled into gift baskets as well as large wicker baskets. Questions? contact **Tim Rucho** (tjruch@verizon.net)

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity will be holding a **CRAFT AND VENDORS FAIR**, on **Saturday, November 5th** from 9:00am-4:00pm. Tons of crafters/vendors to choose from! Food and Fun for all! Raffles and Prizes! Stock up on Holiday Gifts! **For more**

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

info: gmetras@htnr.net or 508-852-1000.

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



THE HOLY APOSTLE JAMES THE BROTHER OF GOD (OCTOBER 23)

THE Holy Apostle James, the Brother of God (Adelphotheos) was the son of Righteous Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos (December 26). From his early years James was a Nazarene, a man especially dedicated to God. The Nazarenes vowed to preserve their virginity, to abstain from wine, to refrain from eating meat, and not to cut their hair. The vow of the Nazarenes symbolized a life of holiness and purity, commanded formerly by the Lord for all Israel. When the Savior began to teach the nation about the Kingdom of God, St James believed in Christ and became His apostle. He was chosen as the first Bishop of Jerusalem.

St James presided over the Council of Jerusalem and his word was decisive (Acts 15). In his thirty years as bishop, St James converted many of the Jews to Christianity. Annoyed by this, the Pharisees and the Scribes plotted together to kill St James. They led the saint up on the pinnacle of the Jerusalem Temple and asked what he thought of Jesus. The holy Apostle began to bear witness that Christ is the Messiah, which was not the response the Pharisees were expecting.

Greatly angered, the Jewish teachers threw him off the roof. The saint did not die immediately, but gathering his final strength, he prayed to the Lord for his enemies while they were stoning him. St James' martyrdom occurred about 63 A.D.

The holy Apostle James composed a Divine Liturgy, which formed the basis of the Liturgies of Sts Basil the Great and John Chrysostom. The Church has preserved an Epistle of St James, one of the books of the New Testament.

In 1853, Patriarch Hierotheus of Alexandria sent a portion of the relics of St James to Moscow. The Church distinguishes between the holy Apostle James the Brother of God, and St James the son of Zebedee (April 30) and St James the son of Alphaeus (October 9).

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

PRESERVE US from rashness, Lord God of gentleness, that we may not be taken captive by ignorance, and show us how to nourish gentleness of spirit that we may attain knowledge, for you love the gentle but the rash you banish from your presence. Show us how to flee irascibility so that we may live in gentleness and without fear.

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

WE ARE GOD'S WORKMANSHIP

THIS week we begin reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. Ephesus was a large seaport on the western coast of Asia Minor (in present day Turkey) and the capital of the Roman province of Asia. Paul stayed in Ephesus twice, the second time for over three years. In the earliest manuscripts the title "to the Ephesians" is missing. This, together with the fact that he sends almost no personal greetings as he customarily did (even though he certainly knew scores of people in that community) has led many Biblical commentators to suggest that this may have been a general letter that St. Paul had sent out to be read in the many communities he had established.

In this letter Paul speaks about God's great plan for humanity, hidden up until now, but revealed fully in Jesus Christ. His intention is to create a single messianic people of God, uniting both Jew and Gentile. Social and religious barriers that had previously divided humanity are eliminated by faith in Jesus Christ. This is "Good News" for everyone. We have been redeemed, that is, liberated from bondage to the Evil One, bondage to sin and death.

Today's reading begins at Chapter 2, verse 4 and continues through verse 10. In the first Chapter of Ephesians he speaks of God's plan. Here he presents us with the challenge of responding to God's plan. He reminds us of God's love. "God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses ..." (v. 4-5). One of the most important 'rules' or 'truths' we can ever learn is this: we only know how to love because we ourselves have been loved by others. God is the first one who loves us. He has given us our parents and family who love us. He gives us children so that we can share this love. Even if our earthly relationships have fallen short of this, still our Heavenly Father never fails us.

Listen to the words that St. Paul uses

to describe this. He doesn't simply say God is merciful and loving. He tells us He is rich in mercy. God loves us out of His great love. God is abundant in His affection for us. It is this love God has for *us* that sustains us.

The passage continues, "... even when we were dead through our trespasses [He] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (v. 5-7)

There are three points that I would like to highlight in this passage. The first is that we participate directly in our Lord's rising from the dead. Jesus died the death that awaits us because of our sin. But, in His sinless death we share in His life. Through our faith in Him, we are changed and risen. Our rising happens not only after our physical death, it happens now when we believe in God's love for us in Christ Jesus. Even while we are breathing, we were dead because of our sin. Jesus' sacrificial love changed this.

The second point is: "by grace you have been saved." St. Paul says this three times in the short passage we read today. Our salvation is a gift; we didn't earn it. We can't earn it. We could never earn it. God restores us because He loves us.

The third point is that God has not only restored us, but He allows us to share in the glory of His Son. He "raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." When we say in the Creed that "He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father," we should understand that we have a place at His right hand as well, because of Jesus.

This vision of God enthroned in Heaven is completed by St. Paul when he says: "that in the coming ages [God] might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in

Christ Jesus." One of the common assumptions in the world in which St. Paul lived was that history had a number of ages (seven) and these were cyclical (they kept repeating). In our Liturgy we express the idea of eternity by saying God's glory is "now, forever, and to the ages of ages." St. Paul is expressing something similar when he tells us God's love and grace will be shown toward us in the "coming ages."

After telling us all of this St. Paul reminds us again, "by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God — not because of works, lest any man should boast." (v. 8-9) Then he adds something else: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (v. 10)

Here is another 'rule' or 'truth' that we need to remember and keep alive in our hearts. If we are able to be saved by faith it is because we are God's "workmanship." We were created in Christ Jesus, that is: the creative Word of God, His Son, shaped and formed us. Why? — for good works.

God in His great love created us good, to do good. We do good not to earn salvation, but to complete God's work in us. God prepared this path of good works "beforehand, that we should walk in them." What St. Paul means here is that the good we do one to another, and together for all, leads us back to God. This is how we "work out our own salvation." (Philippians 2:12) Doing good is how we communicate with God. In every good and kind thing we do we show ourselves to be God's handiwork. By growing in Him, we reveal the full glory that is within us. We do this by faith in Jesus Christ who loves us and saves us.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA