

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN NOVEMBER 20, 2016

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**A HUGE THANK YOU** to all who helped set up, prepared, cooked, served, and did all of the necessary tasks at the Holiday Market Place, Bake Sale and Luncheon yesterday. It was a great success! We are still selling baked goods for your Thanksgiving celebration in Coffee Hour today.

**THE CHRISTMAS FAST** began this past Tuesday, November 15th. **FASTING IS THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS!** In addition to fasting from food, you may want to consider fasting from shopping as well — or at least choosing when and how much to shop. Don't shop on Thanksgiving. Use it as a family day. Don't shop on Sundays. Instead, relax with your friends. We *can* do things that will feed our souls, while perhaps striking a note for a saner society as well.

**TODAY IS IOCC SUNDAY: A Day of Sharing.** IOCC is the charitable arm of our Orthodox Church. It does amazing work throughout the world and here at home. Find out how it serves our Lord in the person of the most vulnerable among us, visit: [IOCC.org](http://IOCC.org). We'll be taking a collection today from our parish.

### GREETERS TEAM 5:

DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

### COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW D:

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

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



**THE TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
FORE-FEAST OF ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS TO THE TEMPLE  
EPISTLE: EPHESIANS 5:8-19 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 12:16-21  
(*THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL*)  
TONE 5 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 11

Also, read Metropolitan Nicolae's Pastoral Letter for IOCC Sunday available at the candles. His Eminence is the Assembly of Bishops' Liaison to IOCC.

**THE FEASTDAY RAFFLE** is in the works. People should have received the tickets we mailed. **But, we also need to sell additional tickets.** If you have any questions, see **Dean Valoras** who is heading up this effort.

**THE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD** is happening once again this year! The parish Christmas card is mailed to the entire membership of our St. Nicholas Family. The Christmas Card flier is available at the Church. If you'd like more information, please contact Tom FitzPatrick or Evans Tsoules in Coffee Hour or by e-mail, to tell us how to place your name. **We want our whole Community to be a part of this Christmas greeting!**

**AN ECUMENICAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE**, sponsored by the Shrewsbury Clergy Association will be held tonight Sunday, November 20th at 7:00 pm at First Congregational Church on the Shrewsbury Common.

**AN ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING** day is set for **Saturday, November 26th.** If you're able and willing to help, please speak with Gerry Belba.

**THE 2017 CHURCH CALENDARS** are here, in both English and Roman-

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Tues, Nov 15 Christmas Lent Begins  
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  
Sat, Dec 3 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry  
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](mailto:FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG) ♦ WEB: [WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG](http://WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG)

*A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas*

ian. Pick them up at the candles. Please consider a small donation to cover the costs.

We are saddened to learn that **CHRISTY BELBA**, an original founding member and life-long supporter of our St. Nicholas parish, fell asleep in the Lord, Thursday, November 16th, one day shy of his 95th birthday. Mercadante Funeral Home in Worcester is directing the arrangements. Check their website for details. *May his memory be eternal!*

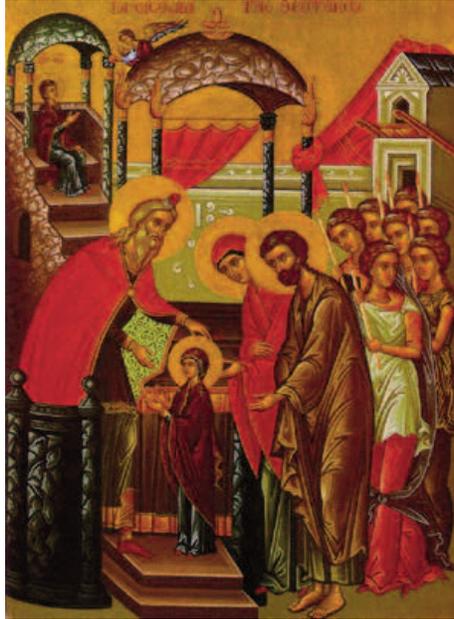
## UP-COMING

**OUR PARISH FEASTDAY CELEBRATION** will be held on **Sunday, December 4th**. We are pleased to announce that **His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae** will be joining us for the festivities. A catered luncheon will be held. *Reservations are absolutely necessary!* A flier with details and reservation form is available at the candles. Also, we are seeking **donations of sponsorship to help underwrite the costs of this event**. We have already received a number of sponsorship donations, but more are needed. If you have it in your heart to offer a gift of sponsorship, please speak with Fr. Nick or Tim.

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**Holy Trinity** is participating in the **Worcester Senior Center's Thanksgiving Celebration and Craft Fair** on Tuesday, Nov. 22nd, 10am - 2pm at the Senior Center, 128 Providence St, Worcester. Start your holiday shopping early! Support Holy Trinity (there'll be a Holy Trinity craft table there) and the Senior Center Crafters! There will also be a Thanksgiving lunch for Seniors sponsored and served by Mayor Joseph Petty with entertainment by Chandler Magnet Elementary School chorus (Seniors, you need to sign up for that).

Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center has the following **EMPLOY-**



## THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE

NOVEMBER 21

According to the tradition of the Church, the Theotokos was brought to the Temple at three years of age, where she was consecrated to God and spent her days until she was fourteen or fifteen years old; and then, as a mature maiden, by the common counsel of the priests (since her parents had reposed some three years before), she was betrothed to Joseph.

### *Apolytikion of Entry of the Theotokos in the Fourth Tone*

Today is the prelude of God's pleasure and the proclamation of man's salvation. The Virgin is clearly made manifest in the temple of God and foretells Christ to all. Let us also cry out to her with mighty voice, "Hail,

**MENT OPPORTUNITIES: CNA's, RN's and Dietary Aides.** Please contact Michelle Williamson, Dir. of Human Resources at: 508-852-1000.

## NAMEDAYS

**November 14**

### *The Holy and All-praised Apostle Philip*

Philip Rucho  
Phillip Sedares

**November 16**

### *The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew*

Scott Matthew Belba  
Matthew Robert Clem  
Matthew Collins  
Matthew Soter

**November 25**

### *The Great-martyr Katherine of Alexandria*

Katina Vanthia Christo  
Katina Cocavessis  
Kathryn Eleanor Sedares  
Katina Spataro  
Katherine Stamoulis  
Emily Katherine Valoras

**November 26**

### *St. Stylianos of Paphlagonia*

Steliana Naumescu

**November 30**

### *The Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called*

Andrew Cavanaugh  
Andrew John Demake  
Andrew Opio  
Andrew Tanacea

fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation."

### *Kontakion of Entry of the Theotokos in the Fourth Tone*

Today, the most pure temple of the Savior, the precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the sacred treasure of God, enters the house of the Lord, bringing the grace of the Divine Spirit. The Angels of God praise her. She is the heavenly tabernacle.

## WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

**T**HIS is the twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost. The Epistle Lesson is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 5:8-19. The section we read last week was concerned about the unity of the Church — what we would normally think of as the parish. St. Paul now directs our attention to the importance of our behavior; how we should live the faith we say we have in Jesus our Lord.

St. Paul is very straight-forward on how he wants the Ephesians to reflect on their behavior. He wants them to think about what their lives were like before accepting Christ, and what their lives are like now that they have accepted Him. He says, "for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord." (v. 8-10) St. Paul uses an image that is as clear to us as it was to the Ephesians: the spiritual struggle is between the forces of darkness and the forces of light. The difference between darkness and light is like the difference between evil and good. St. Paul isn't being a "dualist." (Dualists taught that everything could be seen in the stark contrast between black and white.) Yet, he is saying that those who follow God, who follow Jesus, need to distinguish themselves by their way of life. There is a choice in front of us. All we need to do is open our soul's eye to see it. Often the choices are as clear as day is from night.

He caps this verse with the comment: "try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord." Discovering for ourselves what it is that would please the Lord is a helpful guiding principle as we grow spiritually. Light and darkness are only metaphors for the creative tension within our psyche — our soul — as we strive to discern God's will for us. Each of us struggles *not* to do things we know will be detrimental to us and others, even as we aim to do things that we feel will bring us closer to God. The back

and forth of it is the essence of what it means to grow spiritually, to grow in the Life in Christ.

St. Paul offers us very concrete advice on how to measure our growth. "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light." (v. 11-13)

Sunlight disinfects. Some say it's better than Clorox. Hanging clothes out in the sun to dry is not only environmentally wise, it has the additional benefit of purifying on the microbial level. The metaphor of light as a disinfectant points us to a deeper spiritual reality. God's light burns away our sins and purifies us. When acts of sin and evil are exposed to the light they lose their allure as well as their power. When a person's sins are made known publicly, the glamour of their lives quickly evaporates in the light of day.

"Therefore it is said, 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.'" (v. 14) Sleep is another way of speaking about deadness to spiritual reality. We have suffered a great world-wide economic crisis, yet many still seem to be asleep to its root causes: personal selfishness, greed beyond conception, and desire to live beyond not only our own means, but even our planet's ability to sustain us. When the Scripture speaks of 'sleep' and 'death' we should think about the deeper spiritual truth that God wants us to understand. When we are awake we are conscious to the things around us and better able to understand their consequences.

This is why St. Paul tells the Ephesians: "Look carefully ... how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil." (v. 15-16) The days were not any more or less evil in St. Paul's time than in ours. Each of us is equally vulnerable

to the dangers of our particular time and needs to try to be 'wise.' Do we walk carefully? Do we make the best use of our time? Do we seek out what is pleasing to the Lord? Keeping Judgment Day in front of us will help us focus our attention, if we chose to reflect on it often enough.

"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (v. 17) When we succumb to temptation, we forget our high calling. Again, our human struggle is a constant back-and-forth in our minds and hearts. It is part of being alive. We face a thousand choices a day, and must remember each has a moral consequence. We may be tempted to cut corners or even sin outright, but when we think about things in the light of day, we realize that doing God's will is really what we ourselves want. It is the foolishness of sinful temptation that keeps us away from truly becoming ourselves.

Finally, St. Paul warns us, "do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit." (v. 18) There was a practice among some of the Mystery cults in his time to become 'high' not by God's Spirit, but by other kinds of more earthly spirits. We must always strive to be filled with the Holy Spirit, truly loving one another and "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all [our] heart." (v. 19)

Faith should be embodied in the way we live. It is not that good deeds justify us before God, but they *will* make us God's children. The way we treat one another, those who love us as well as those who hate us and wish us harm, is the way the world will know that we follow our Lord, Jesus Christ, crucified and risen!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**B**LEST BE YOUR NAME, O LORD, now and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its setting, praised be your holy name! And to whom, O Lord our God, shall we offer our grateful praise, if not to you? You are the first and foremost benefactor of our lives. You are the one who bestowed on us all the good that we are and have. You gave us the riches of this world, and in unspeakable wisdom and insight, you revealed to us the mystery of your unfathomable will. Therefore, Lord, as we rejoice now, in preparation of our annual day of thanksgiving, grant that we may always perceive and appreciate the wonders of your creation and accept them from your hand as we should, conscious of your goodness, responsive to your love, and humbled by your generosity.

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.



# IOCC SUNDAY

A DAY OF SHARING

*Share in  
our Ministry  
of Love  
and Caring*



NOVEMBER 20, 2016

[iocc.org/DayofSharing](http://iocc.org/DayofSharing)

Paul Jeffrey/ACT

