

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

JANUARY 15, 2017

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY CONTINUES.** As in the past, we are setting times to bless your home. If you haven't gotten a notice yet, please talk to Fr. Nick. Also, if there is a specific time that is more convenient for you, please e-mail or call (508-335-7378) Fr. Nick to arrange it.

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR EXTRA HOLY WATER BOTTLES!** Many of you have Holy Water bottles at home. Please return the ones you're finished using. You can give them to Fr. Nick when he comes to bless your house, or just bring to Church on Sunday.

### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**G**OD, OUR GOD: By your merciful goodness, your grace shapes your image in us so that we reflect your divine glory in spite of all that we do to soil it. In spite of the abyss that separates our reality from yours, we seek to be united with you in this world as in the next. Give us the spiritual tools to do our share of the work in reflecting you, that our way of life will be attractive to others and lead them to turn to you with greater lasting interest and desire.

For you are a God of beauty, goodness, and truth, and for this we praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



### THE TWENTY NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: COLOSSIANS 3:4-11 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 17:12-19

(JESUS HEALS THE 10 LEPEERS)

tone 5 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 8

**PITA BAKING IS STARTING.** There will be a **Dough Rolling Session**, next **Saturday, January 21st, 9:00 am to noon**, and a **Pita Baking Session**, **Saturday, February 11th, 9:00 am to noon**. Please mark your calendars. **Questions?** talk to **Chris Toda, 508-832-6271**. Also, let her know if you'll be coming. **Remember: There's a job for everyone!**

**A NEW PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE ELECTED IN JANUARY**, (the two-year term of the Parish Council expires this year). Please consider offering a stewardship of your time in this important ministry. We also are asking for people to serve on other Parish committees, if you would like to focus your efforts in just one area. However you'd like to serve, please speak with **Fr. Nick**.

**A MEMORIAL SERVICE** is celebrated today for the servant of God, **Elizabeth Elias**, fallen asleep 10 years in the Lord. **May our loving Lord**

**GREETERS TEAM 3:**  
EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW D:**  
ILIANA & SEAN FAHEY,  
DIMITRI SAFFRON,  
CHRISTOS & SPIRO SPYROU

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**

*rest her with the saints!*

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored in memory of **Elizabeth Elias** by her sister, **Eleanor Sedares**.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, Jan 21 Pita Dough Rolling, 9am-noon  
Sat, Feb 4 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry  
Fri, Feb 10 Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm  
Sat, Feb 11 Pita Baking, 9am-noon  
Sat, Feb 18 Saturday of Souls, Lit 10am  
Sun, Feb 19 Meatfare Sunday  
Sun, Feb 26 Cheesfare Sunday  
Mon, Feb 27 Great Lent Begins  
Sun, April 16 Great and Holy Pascha

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

## NAMEDAYS

### January 6

#### *The Holy Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*

Francis Polymeros  
Jordan Sparages

### January 7

#### *The Holy Prophet and Forerunner John the Baptist*

Rev. Fr. John Daly  
Nita Dumitriu  
John Ermilio  
Sean Fahey  
Ian Mayer  
John David Thoren

### January 12

#### *St. Tatiana the Martyr of Rome*

Tatiana Sofia Karadimitriou

### January 17

#### *St. Anthony the Great*

Anthony Theodore Christo  
Scott Anthony Maynard  
Anthony Rucho  
Tony Nicholas Trakadas

### January 18

#### *St. Athanasios of Alexandria*

Thanas Lolo  
Arthur Peterson

### January 22

#### *The Holy Apostle Timothy*

Rev. Fr. Timothy Lowe  
Timothy Rucho

### January 25

#### *St. Gregory the Theologian*

Rev. Fr. Gregory Christakos  
Dr. Gregory Tsongalis

### January 28

#### *St. Ephraim the Syrian*

Rev. Fr. Ephraim Peters



ST. ITA

#### THE HERMITESS OF KILLEEDY

JANUARY 15

Saint Ita, “the Foster Mother of the Irish Saints,” was born in the fifth century. She, like many of the Irish saints, was of the nobility. Her parents were devout Christians who lived in County Waterford. She founded a school and convent at Killeedy (Cille Ide) which still bears her name near Newcastle West in Co. Limerick. A holy well still marks the site of her church.

When she decided to settle in Killeedy, a local chieftain offered her a grant of land for the support of the convent. Saint Ita accepted four icons, which she cultivated. The convent became known as a training ground for young boys, many of whom became famous churchmen. She received Saint Brendan the Voyager (May 16) when he was only a year old, and kept him until he was six. She also cared for her nephew Saint Mochaemhoch (March 13) in his infancy.

Many people sought her spiritual counsels, and she also seems to have practiced medicine to some degree. Her life was spent in repentance and asceticism.

Saint Ita once told Saint Brendan that the three things most displeasing to God are: A face that hates mankind, a will that clings to the love of evil, and placing one’s entire trust in riches (Compare Proverbs 6:16-19).

The three things most pleasing to God are: The firm belief of a pure heart in God, the simple religious life, and liberality with charity.

Saint Ita fell asleep in the Lord in 570. Her name is a popular one for Irish girls.

### IGNORANCE OF THE BIBLE ISN'T BLISS

The United States is arguably the most religious nation in the developed world, yet it is also the most religiously ignorant. Here are several statistics cited:

- 10 % of Americans polled believe that Joan of Arc was Noah’s wife
- Only one-half could name even one of the four Gospels
- 1 in 3 knew who delivered the Sermon on the Mount
- Less than half could identify the first book of the Bible
- 75 % believe the bible teaches “God helps those who help themselves.” (Ben Franklin said it.)

*Excerpted from Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know – and Doesn’t, by Stephen Prothero.*

# CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL

WITH the close of the holiday celebrations that began with the feast of the Lord's birth and ended with his baptism in the Jordan — his Epiphany, we return to the regular cycle of Scripture readings. In the weeks before Christmas the readings were taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians. This Sunday we resume reading from that Letter. The selection is: Chapter 3, verses 4-11.

To refresh your memory, Colossae was a community composed largely of Gentile converts, but also with a substantial Jewish component. Some of them were falling under the influence of gnostic teachers — what today we might call “new age” thinkers. There was a lot of syncretistic thinking and behavior, a kind of mix-and-match approach to the spiritual life. Paul wanted to address what he saw as the dangers of these tendencies straight on.

This Letter has two distinct parts. Paul starts out by addressing questions of faith. There were real doctrinal problems in the Colossian community, and he wanted to get them back on the right track. The verses we read today are the opening thoughts to the second part: how Christians should live. In order to make his point about the new life that Christ offers us, he draws on imagery and language from the Baptismal rite. He bridges his discussion of doctrine and faith to his thoughts on Christian living by reminding the Colossians of their baptism. Very probably, much of what St. Paul wrote to them was part of their catechetical instruction when they were preparing for baptism.

I should say one more thing. Often, when the portions of St. Paul's letters are read during the Liturgy, people can be left perplexed, wondering what it meant. St. Paul's Letters were meant to be read as a whole, and even studied. It may be hard to appreciate the fact that they are usually very pastoral, and even emotional, when we only hear them in

small snippets, dare I say, sound bites. This week's reading is a good example of this. He uses the images of death in the waters of Baptism and the new life in Christ which we have been given. But the selected reading only gives us the first part. We have to wait until next week to get the second. So if you don't understand the whole context, the opening verses can be a little jarring. Listen to what he says:

“Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things — anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth.” (v. 3:5-8)

If you have attended a baptism recently, you probably recognize many of these phrases from the first part of the service, the exorcisms. When we hear these words read again, it reminds us of the “old man” we left behind when we embraced Christ. Think about that moment in the baptismal service where, after having renounced Satan and joined Christ, the person who is to be baptized is led by the priest toward the font. Now listen to the next verses from today's reading:

“[Y]ou have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.” (v. 9-10) These verses echo what he wrote to the Galatians: “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (v. 3:27) We sing these words at every baptism and at every Divine Liturgy that was traditionally a day for baptisms, like Pascha, Theophany and Christmas. It is a regular reminder of our baptismal commitment and vow.

In order to emphasize this change we undergo in Christ — the “new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (v. 10) — he speaks of the disappearance of social barriers in the Christian community, such that, “there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!” (v. 11). He says something similar in Galatians: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (3:28)

Because so many people who called and call themselves Christians have behaved in discriminatory and even horrific ways toward other human beings “different” from them, it can be easy to forget that Christianity and the Church has been the greatest liberating force in human history. One doesn't need to look very hard to see how over the millennia people who were poor and marginalized were able to rise out of their situations in societies that were frozen by social position and class through the Church. As Christians we need to remember St. Paul's words and help to make our parish communities examples of the new humanity that we find in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian faith is regularly criticized as a regressive force in our modern world. All religious faith is often characterized as a source of division and even war. It is true that faith is a powerful motivating force, and sometimes people act badly, thinking it is what God wants. But we know that Christ came to restore humanity, not to destroy it. We know that we are called to renew and reshape ourselves according to the image of him who created us. Let us act on it. Each of us needs to listen to God's call and let it penetrate our hearts.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA