

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 5, 2017

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

GREAT LENT began this past Monday. Tomorrow marks the start of the second week of Lent.

TODAY IS THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY. We're asking the children of the Parish to process with Icons toward the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. The adults can hold theirs high from the pew. **We ask that parents bring their children's icons to Church** to make the procession even more meaningful for them.

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY this **Wednesday, March 8th** will be at **St. George Cathedral on Anna St.** Each Liturgy will start at 6:00 pm. Check out the full schedule in the Bulletin. There is a "pot-luck" Lenten meal after the service. **ALSO**, persons wishing to receive Holy Communion should prepare themselves in the usual manner, including fasting from at least noon.

WE WANT TO THANK everyone who helped with set-up, clean-up, and cooking this past Wednesday evening when our Parish hosted the first of the Lenten Pre-Sanctified Liturgies. **Your generosity of time and spirit is greatly appreciated.**

GREETERS TEAM 5:
DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW C:
PRIZIO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY ☩ **FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT**
APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 11:24-26; 32-40 ☩ **GOSPEL: JOHN 1:43-51**
(JESUS CALLS PHILIP AND NATHANAE)
TONE 4 ☩ **MATINS GOSPEL 4**

THANKS TO THE BAKERS. There was a Dough Rolling Session, yesterday Saturday, March 4th. **We'll be holding more such sessions to prepare for the holiday sales. Questions?** talk to **Chris Toda, 508-832-6271. Remember: There's a job for everyone!**

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9am to noon. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola. Our next Saturday is April 1st.

VESPERS AND CONFESSION will normally be held **each Saturday evening at 5:00 pm during Great Lent.** Fr. Nick will be available for con-

fession each week after Vespers, and before Vespers by appointment (e-mail Fr. Nick). **Unfortunately, Fr. Nick will be away next Saturday, March 11th and Vespers will not be held.**

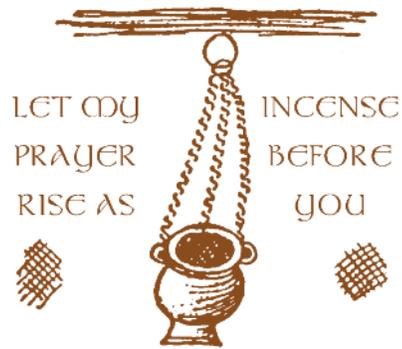
AN E-RECYCLING DAY will be held on **Saturday, March 25th, 9am-2pm.** **Gerry Belba** is coordinating. We need 2-3 people to help with traffic and the

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, Feb 27	Great Lent Began
Sat, March 4	Pita Dough Rolling, 9am-noon Staff Orthodox Food Pantry Vespers/Confession 5 pm
Wed, March 8	PreSanctified Lit - St. George 6:00 pm
Sat, March 11	NO VESPERS
Wed, March 15	PreSanctified Lit - St. Mary 6:00 pm
Sat, March 18	Vespers/Confession 5 pm
Sat, March 25	Annunciation, Lit 10am e-Recycling, 9am-2pm Vespers/Confession 5 pm
Sun, April 16	GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA
Fri, April 21	Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas



like on that day. A couple hour commitment either in the morning or afternoon would be great. **Questions?** please talk to Gerry: 508-868-1569 or e-mail: vgbelba@msn.com.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

The St. Spyridon Ladies Philotochos will be hosting a coffee social at Holy Trinity on Thursday, March 9 at 2:00pm.

Volunteering at Holy Trinity is a rewarding way you can make a difference in the lives of the residents by donating your time and talent. To inquire about volunteer opportunities, contact **Gina Metras**, Director of Activities, 508-852-1000, gmetras@htnr.net, or **Serena Shields**, Director of Community Relations, 508-852-1000, shields@htnr.net.

COMMUNITY NEWS

LEARN TO DECORATE EASTER EGGS IN THE TRADITIONAL EASTERN EUROPEAN STYLE. A four hour class will be held at Jimmy D's in Sturbridge on **Saturday April 8th**, from 9am to 1pm teaching the art of decorating Ukrainian (pysanky) eggs. The instructors have taught at The Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton. A minimum of 25 people are needed to hold the class; the tuition is \$35 per person. You need to be the age of 16 or older. **Reserve a spot before March 20th** by calling Jim Dhembe at 508-728-3855 or e-mailing: Jimdhembe@aol.com.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

GLORY TO YOU, O Father, for sending us your only Son to be our salvation! Glory to you, O Christ, for dying on the cross to give us life! Glory to you, O Holy Spirit, for initiating and perfecting the mystery of our salvation! We again ask you to bring our lenten observances to fruition. Enable us to internalize our external practices, and convert us to the truth in spite of us, showing us how to think and live correctly. Help us to hold onto confidence and endurance, so that, by doing your will, we may reap the rewards you promise. And, as we rejoice in this season of grace, enable us to remain focused on the paschal mysteries, so that our joy may be completed by seeing them fulfilled in our lives.

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



NAMEDAYS

March 3

Henricus, the hermit martyr in Norway

Eric Lolo
Erik Mayer

March 4

St. Theodore of Tyre

Theodore Belba
Theodora Collins
Theodhoraq Lolo
Teodor Nedelcu
Theodore Peter Tonna
Theodore Russell Tonna
Derek Wilder

March 9

The Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste

Mircea Nedelcu

THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

O Lord and master of my life! Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness, of ambition and vain talk!

Instead, give me the spirit of prudence and humility, of patience and charity.

Yes, my king and Lord, let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others: For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

MOSES FASTED AND SAW GOD

THE EPISTLE lesson for this first Sunday of Lent is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews (11:24-26; 32-40). In chapter eleven of Hebrews St. Paul speaks of the meaning of faith and opens with his famous definition: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) He then gives us examples of people who down through the centuries, while not seeing and realizing the promise given them by God, nevertheless continued to persevere. Some of the verses from today's reading (v. 32-40) are also read on the Sunday before Christmas to remind us of how God's promise was realized in the birth of the Messiah. We read these words again, as we begin the Fast, to remind ourselves of the faith of all of those holy people — those saints — who persevered, never faltering in that faith.

What St. Paul says in Hebrews bears directly on what we celebrate this first Sunday of Lent. We remember how after a long civil struggle, holy images — icons — were restored in the life and worship of the Church. And while the struggle centered around painted or mosaic images of our Lord, his mother, and the other saints, the issue went much deeper than a controversy over artwork. The issue was, and continues to be, how does the invisible God make Himself known in our world?

The first and most important way God is visible in the world is in each of us. We believe that every human being is created in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). I think it is not too much to say we are God's living icons, or, at the very least, we are called to be that. This verse of Genesis says that God created us in His image and likeness. Reflecting on these two words, theologians have come to see a growth dynamic between the image of God "burned" into our very being, and the day-to-day way we strive to make that image within us real and visible. The men and women we call "holy" are those who through trial and

adversity kept their faith with God. When we look at them, we see God. More importantly, when a holy person looks at us, they too see God, in spite of all of our imperfections and doubts — the ways we struggle with our faith.

Today the iconoclast struggle takes a different form. Many fellow Christians have difficulty understanding the role of saints. The most straight-forward way to understand why we honor the saints is that these holy people — some of whom we recognize and know, but vastly more whom we do not know and are known only by God — are given to us as examples and role models. In a world where celebrities are idolized and discarded, we are in serious need of people who we can trust and follow.

The beauty of the saints is that they are people like us; people created in God's image who struggled to make their likeness match God's design. Some speak to us more directly because we can recognize our own struggle in the difficulties they endured. Others we simply admire for their total commitment to God and neighbor. They reveal God in a real and actual way. They worked and work in the world, making His presence known.

In this eleventh chapter St. Paul cites many such examples of persons of faith, but he highlights two in particular: Abraham and Moses. The verses we read before Christmas featured Abraham, because he was Jesus' very-great-grandfather, through Mary. In the first three verses of today's reading St. Paul concentrates on Moses.

We begin Lent by remembering Moses first and foremost because he is a "type" or image of Christ. Both were liberators. Moses foreshadowed the freedom Christ would bring. As Moses freed the children of Israel from slavery to Pharaoh and Egypt, Jesus, our Savior, freed us from slavery to Satan and death. As Moses led his people through the waters of the Red Sea changing them from slaves to free persons, our Lord

changes us from mortal to immortal in the waters of Baptism. As Moses renounced his royal status, embracing the low-status of his people, Christ left the heights of heaven to be one with us.

This is how St. Paul puts it: "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward." (v. 24-26)

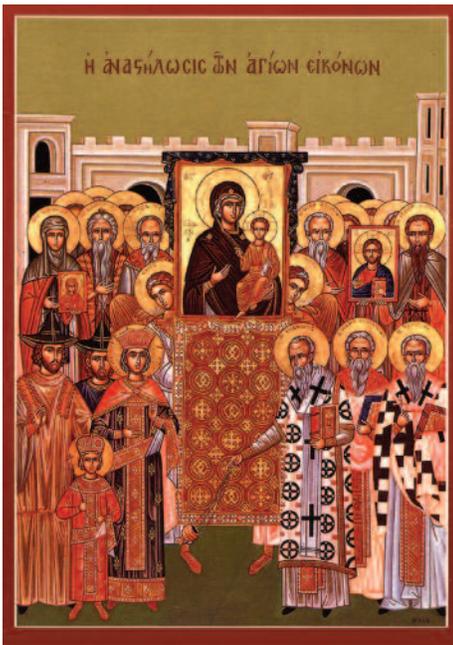
Moses renounces the comfort of Pharaoh's house, choosing to "share ill-treatment with the people of God." In Philippians St. Paul speaks of how Christ identified himself with us, his people, by emptying himself. He took on the form of a servant. Even though he was in the form of God, he did not cling to his equality with God. He became humble and obedient, even to the point of death. (cf. Philippians 2:6-8)

In Moses we see a preview of what God was planning for us in Jesus Christ. In Moses' faith we see what God intends for each one of us, if we too share his faith. But lest we think that this faith Moses had was easy for him, pick up your Bible and read the Book of Exodus. It's not long. In it you will read not only of the confrontation with Pharaoh, but also the struggles Moses had with his brother Aaron, the whining of the Israelites, and his own temptations and sins. Throughout, he persevered and was rewarded by God.

In a hymn we sang last Sunday during Matins we heard: "Moses fasted for forty days and saw God." We are encouraged to follow his example, especially during Lent, so that we too might see Christ, radiant and risen.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

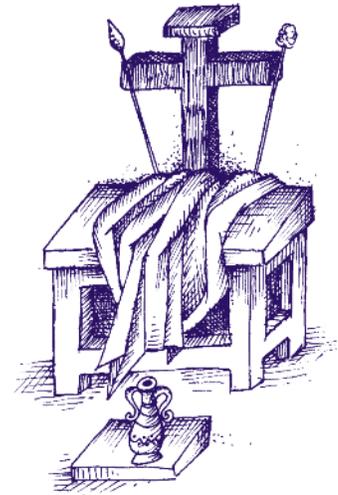


THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY. The sense of joy and thanksgiving, already evident on the Saturday of St. Theodore, is still more apparent on the first Sunday in Lent, when we celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy. On this day the Church commemorates the final ending of the Iconoclast controversy and the definitive restoration of the holy ikons to the churches by the Empress Theodora, acting as regent for her young son Michael III. This took place on the first Sunday in Lent, 11 March 843. There is, however, not only a historical link between the first Sunday and the restoration of the ikons but also, as in the case of St. Theodore, a spiritual affinity. If Orthodoxy triumphed in the epoch of the Iconoclast controversy, this was because so many of the faithful were prepared to undergo exile, torture, and even death, for the sake of the truth. The Feast of Orthodoxy is above all a celebration in honour of the martyrs and confessors who struggled and suffered for the faith: hence its appropriateness for the season of Lent, when we are striving to imitate

the martyrs by means of our ascetic self-denial. The fixing of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday is therefore much more than the result of some chance historical conjunction.

The Triodion gives the text of a special ‘Office of Orthodoxy’, which is held at the end of Mattins or, more commonly, at the end of the Divine Liturgy on this Sunday. The Office celebrates not only the restoration of the holy ikons but, more generally, the victory of the true faith over all heresies and errors. A procession is made with the holy ikons, and after this extracts are read from the synodical decree of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787). Then sixty anathemas are pronounced against various heretics dating from the third to the fourteenth century; ‘Eternal Memory’ is sung in honour of the emperors, patriarchs and fathers who defended the Orthodox faith; and ‘Many Years’ is proclaimed in honour of our present rulers and bishops. Unfortunately in many parts of the Orthodox Church today this impressive service has fallen into disuse; elsewhere it is performed in a greatly abbreviated form.

Before the Triumph of Orthodoxy came to be celebrated on the first Sunday, there was on this day a commemoration of Moses, Aaron, Samuel and the prophets. Traces of this more ancient observance can still be seen in the choice of Epistle reading at the Liturgy (Hebrews 11:24–6, 32–40), and in the Alleluia verse appointed before the Gospel: ‘Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His Name’.



PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES

2017

Wednesday, March 1, 2017

St. Nicholas Church

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

St. George Cathedral

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

St. Mary's Assumption

Wednesday, March 22, 2017

St. George Cathedral

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

Ss. Anagyroi

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

St. Nicholas Church

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest ‘pot-luck’ lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others.