

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 12, 2017

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

WE ARE IN GREAT LENT. Tomorrow marks the start of the third week of Lent.

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY this Wednesday, March 15th will be at the Assumption of St. Mary on Salisbury 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.

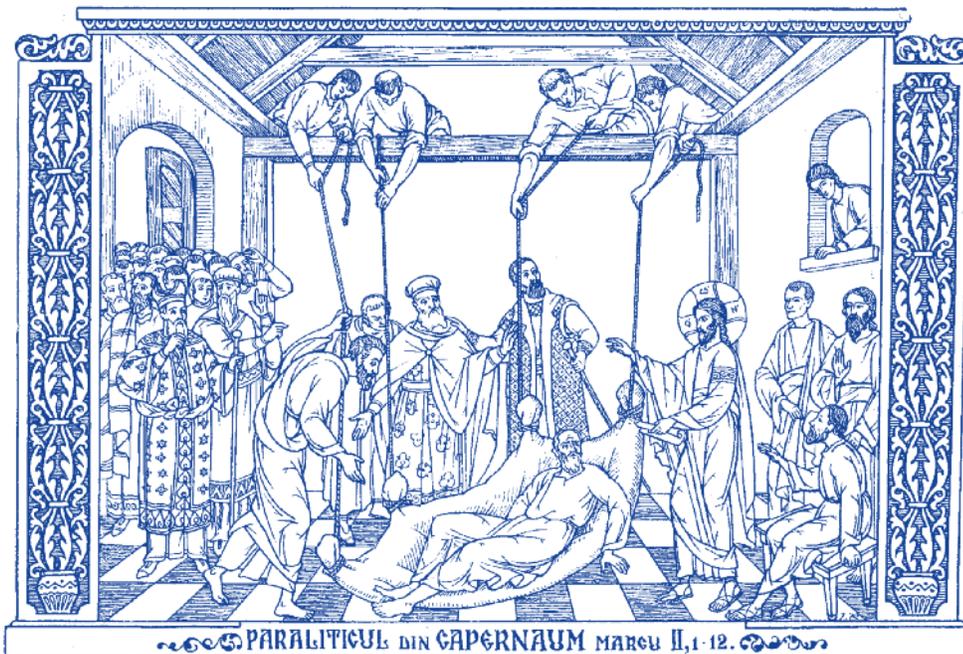
THE VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS is next Sunday, March 19th, the 3rd Sunday of Great Lent. **Donations are needed to cover the cost of the flowers that adorn the Holy Cross.** If you would like to contribute towards that, please see **Fr. Nick or Tim Rucho.**

VESPERS AND CONFESSION will be held each Saturday evening at 5:00 pm during Great Lent. Fr. Nick will be available for confession each week after Vespers, and before Vespers by appointment (e-mail Fr. Nick).

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



SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 1:10-2:1-3 ⊕ GOSPEL: MARK 2:1-12

(THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC IN CAPERNAUM)

TONE 5 ⊕ MATINS GOSPEL 5

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 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: gvgelba@msn.com.

quire 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

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity has job openings for a **Director of Finance** and in Nursing for a **Unit Manager**. Contact Michelle Williamson, Director of Human Resources, 508-852-1000, mwilliamson@htnr.net

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 in-

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Mon, Feb 27 Great Lent Began
- Sat, March 11 NO VESPERS
- Wed, March 15 PreSanctified Lit - St. Mary 6:00 pm
- Sat, March 18 Vespers/Confession 5 pm
- Wed, March 22 PreSanctified Lit - St. George 6:00 pm
- Sat, March 25 Annunciation, Lit 10am
e-Recycling, 9am-2pm
Vespers/Confession 5 pm
- Wed, March 29 PreSanctified Lit- Sts Anargyroi 6:00 pm
- Sat, April 1 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Vespers/Confession 5 pm
- Sun, April 16 GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA
- Fri, April 21 Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm

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 Metropolia of the Americas

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.

**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.

A LENTEN PRAYER

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O LORD AND MASTER OF OUR LIVES: Educate us, your ignorant servants, during these lenten days, by letting your wisdom enlighten our minds and hearts. Make us alert, lest the deceits of this world seduce us. Teach us how to distinguish between substance and appearance, how to discern what is of the Holy Spirit and what is not. Do not leave us to fight the enemy of our life by ourselves, for he is constantly striving to silence the word of life within us. Rather, be with us today, and every day, through your loving mercy.

For you are good and full of love for us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

NAMEDAYS

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

March 17

St. Alexios the Man of God

- Alex John Johnson
- Alex Leo Toda

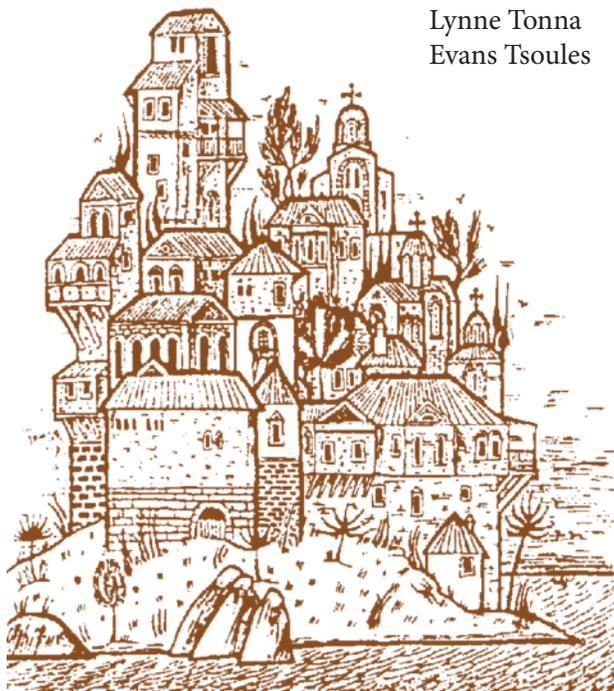
St. Patrick, Enlightener of Ireland

- Padraic Donnchadh Peterson
- Patricia Thanas

March 25

The Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos

- V. Gerald Belba
- Lea Christo
- Mary Anna Dymek
- Vangjush Lolo
- Evan Stamoulis
- Lynne Tonna
- Evans Tsoules



CAN WE NEGLECT SO GREAT A SALVATION?

DURING LENT the Apostolic readings are taken largely from the Letter to the Hebrews. The overarching theme of Hebrews is that Jesus, God's Son, has become the High Priest of the New Covenant at the heavenly altar. God's new sanctuary is not on earth, but above. The Old Law is superseded by the New. The ritual of animal sacrifices has given way to the spiritual sacrifice, through the Self-Sacrifice of Jesus. By reading and studying this Letter we are given deeper insights into the way in which God had been leading humanity, and especially His chosen people, to understand the new relationship with Him to which we are called.

Today's reading begins at Hebrews 1:10 and ends at 2:3. The theme in the first chapter is to remind the reader who this Jesus is. He is not an angel or other created being; he is the "Son, whom [God] appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world." (v. 2) It seems that the community to which this Letter is addressed were back-sliding in their faith in Jesus. Most scholars think this was a community of Jewish converts. Some even think the audience might have been a community of priests of the Old Covenant. The writer of this Letter wants to remind them that this Jesus "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power," (v. 3) that is to say: he is God.

I need to say a word about the authorship of Hebrews. Even from the first Christian centuries people who studied the Bible noticed differences in style and vocabulary between Letters we know St. Paul wrote and the Letter to the Hebrews. Various reasons were offered. St. Clement believed that he had written it in Hebrew and then had St. Luke translate it into Greek. Origen believed that the thinking was St. Paul's, but the hand probably belonged to one of his disciples. This does not diminish the authority of the Letter — God forbid! Rather,

it simply highlights the distinct challenges that the Letter to the Hebrews presents for us modern readers. The other Letters of St. Paul are primarily pastoral, even while being replete with deep theology and profound spirituality. Hebrews has this same level of theology and spirituality while taking up the question of Old Testament worship and how it changed with the self-sacrifice of the Son of God. For our purposes here, we will assume that St. Paul is the author.

In the first chapter St. Paul cites a number of Old Testament texts that were generally assumed to refer to the Messiah. The way he uses these verses have the form of hymns and poems that were written to describe the enthronement of kings in the ancient Near East, especially when these kings declared themselves to also be gods. St. Paul is telling the Hebrews that Jesus is not just a man, nor is he an angel. All created things, human or angelic are mutable and changeable. The Son is not. So when he speaks of the Son as sitting down "at the right hand of the Majesty on high," (v. 3) he is pointing out that Jesus has "become as much superior to the angels as the name [i.e. God's Son] he has obtained is more excellent than theirs." (v. 4)

The verses that begin the reading (v. 10-12) St. Paul takes from Psalm 102: "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end." The Psalmist directs these words to God. St. Paul uses them to describe Jesus, the eternal Son of God.

To emphasize this, he reminds us of the words of Psalm 110: "But to which of the angels has he ever said, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet'?" (v. 13)

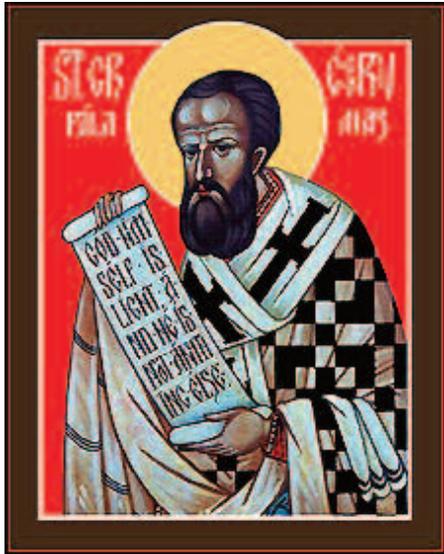
The angels are the servants of the Son. "Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" (v. 14) Notice, they are sent not only to serve the Son, but they are also "sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation." This means us. God has sent us prophets and angels. Now he sends us His Son.

"Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty, how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him." (v. 2:1-3)

Brothers and sisters, this is our central challenge, to pay attention! How many times do we hear in the Liturgy, "Let us be attentive!?" This is just a polite way of saying: "Pay Attention!" St. Paul reminds us of punishments meted out to those who ignored the angels. Implicit is the consequences that await us if we ignore the Son of God who lived among us.

"Can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" God is not rescuing us from famine and fire, sword and invasion. He is saving us from death. He is offering us eternal life.

God spoke to us directly — in and through His Son. We know this because those who saw him and lived with him told us; they testified to it not only in word, but also with their very lives. Throughout the centuries the truth of his word and their testimony has enlivened countless believers. May God give us the strength of will to pay attention, and not to neglect our salvation.



ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

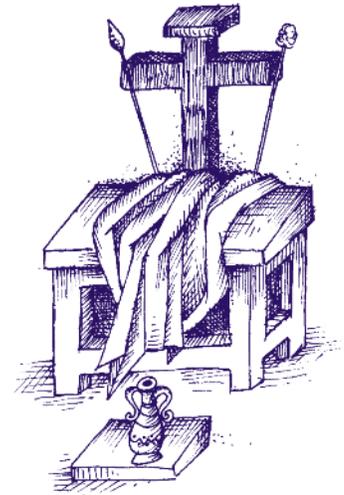
This divine Father, who was from Asia Minor, was from childhood reared in the royal court of Constantinople, where he was instructed in both religious and secular wisdom. Later, while still a youth, he left the imperial court and struggled in asceticism on Mount Athos, and in the Skete at Beroea. He spent some time in Thessalonica being treated for an illness that came from his harsh manner of life. He was present in Constantinople at the Council that was convened in 1341 against Barlaam of Calabria, and at the Council of 1347 against Acindynus, who was of like mind with Barlaam; Barlaam and Acindynus claimed that the grace of God is created. At both these Councils, the Saint contended courageously for the true dogmas of the Church of Christ, teaching in particular that divine grace is not created, but is the uncreated energies of God which are poured forth throughout creation: otherwise it would be impossible, if grace were created, for man to have genuine communion with the uncreated God. In 1347 he was appointed Metropolitan of Thessalonica. He tended his flock in an apostolic man-

EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT. Since 1368 this Sunday has been dedicated to the memory of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica (1296–1359). This commemoration forms a continuation of the feast celebrated on the previous Sunday: St. Gregory's victory over Barlaam, Akindynos and the other heretics of his time is seen as a renewed Triumph of Orthodoxy. In the earlier period there was on this day a commemoration of the Great Martyr Polycarp of Smyrna (+ c. 155), whose feast was transferred from the fixed calendar (23 February). This commemoration, like that of St. Theodore, underlined the connection between Lenten asceticism and the martyr's vocation. The second Sunday also takes up the theme of the Prodigal Son as a model of repentance, with the first of the two Canons at Mattins being devoted to this parable.



ner for some twelve years, and wrote many books and treatises on the most exalted doctrines of our Faith; and having lived for a total of sixty-three years, he reposed in the Lord in 1359.



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

Sts. 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.