

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 26, 2017

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

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

THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION is this **Saturday, March 25th**. Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 am, with Matins preceding at 9:00 am.

PITA BAKING. There will be a **Pita Baking Session, THIS Friday, March 24th, 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!**

AN E-RECYCLING DAY will be held on **THIS 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: vgbelba@msn.com.

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY this **Wednesday, March 29th** will be at **Sts. Anargyroi in Marlborough**. We are alternating the last two PreSanctified Liturgies with Sts. Anargyroi. (We are hosting the April 5th PreSanctified.) in Marlboro. The same schedule applies.

GREETERS TEAM 4:

DIMITRI SAFFRON AND SEAN FAHEY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW B:

KARADIMITRIOU/KALPIDO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

St. John of Sinai, Author of The Ladder of Divine Ascent

APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 6:13-20 ☩ GOSPEL: MARK 9:17-32

(HEALING OF THE EPILEPTIC BOY)

TONE 7 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 7

Each Liturgy will start at 6:00 pm. 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.

If there is interest, we will **car pool from our Church** leaving at 5:15. Please let Fr. Nick or Tim know if you are able to drive or if you would like to join the carpool.

PLACE YOUR HOLIDAY PITA AND PASTRY ORDERS

NOW! Reach out to your family and friends to let them know that they may place orders for delivery for Easter/Pascha (April 16). Pick up an order form at the candle stand. All orders must be received by Sunday, April 2. We are baking to order so do not assume that there will be "extra" pita and pastry for sale.

Orders may also be placed with Betty Anderson or Chris Toda.

A CHURCH CLEANING session will be held on **Monday morning, April 3rd**, from 9:00am—noon. Christine Masterjohn is coordinating. Please let her know if you are available to help!

VESPERS AND CONFESSION will be held **each Saturday evening at 5:00 pm**

DATES TO REMEMBER

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 2	Easter Baking Orders Due
Mon, April 3	Church Cleaning, 9 am
Wed, April 5	PreSanctified Lit - St. Nicholas 6:00 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

during Great Lent. Fr. Nick will be available for confession each week after Vespers, and before Vespers by appointment (e-mail Fr. Nick).

GLEN LAMOUREUX was received into the Holy Orthodox Church this past Sunday. *We wish for him and his wife Gabriela all of God's blessings, and Many Years!*

ISABELLA ROSE PEÑA, daughter of **Alexis George and José Peña**, was baptized this past Sunday. Her Godparents are **Michael Prizio and Sarah Blanchard**. May God bless the newly illumined Isabella, her parents and godparents, and grant them all *Many Years!*

RANDOLPH 'RANDY' SAMARA fell asleep in the Lord this past Tuesday. Our deepest sympathies are with **his wife Janice and his whole family**. His funeral will be on **Monday, March 27th at 10:00 am at St. George Cathedral**. Mercadante Funeral Home is directing arrangements. *May Randy's memory be eternal!*

WE OBSERVE A 40-DAY MEMORIAL TODAY for the servant of God **Marjeta Kristo**. *May the Lord rest her soul among the just!*

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the **Glen & Gabriela Lamoureux** in honor of Glen's reception into the Orthodox Church, and **Kristo family** in memory of Marjeta.

COMMUNITY NEWS

PSALTIKON, a Byzantine Choir of 9 professional male voices, will be offering a concert of Byzantine Chant: *"Six Days Before the Passover,"* **Thursday, March 30 at 7:00pm at St. Spyridon Cathedral** on Russell St. Sponsored by the Hellenic Arts of Worcester, the concert is free and open to the public. More info: www.psaltikon.org

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

As part of **West Boylston Senior Center's Life Long Learning Class Series** hosted by Holy Trinity, Father Nicholas Apostola of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Shrewsbury will present a lecture on: *Orthodox and Catholic Christians: How do we understand each other?* The class will take place on **Tuesday, March 28, 1:00 pm** at the West Boylston Senior Center, 127 Hartwell St., West Boylston, MA. **Questions?** Serena Shields, Dir. of Community Relations, 508-852-1000, / email shields@htnr.net.

Holy Trinity has job openings for a **Director of Finance** and in Nursing for a **Unit Manager**. Contact Michelle Williamson, Dir. 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 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.

NAMEDAYS

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



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

ETERNAL LORD AND MASTER:
By the inscrutable mystery of your divine wisdom, your only Son suffered for us, giving us an example to follow. He had done no wrong and there had been no perjury in his mouth. Though he was insulted, he did not retaliate with insults; though he was tortured, he made no threats, but placed his trust in you, his Father. When he was dying on the cross, he bore our faults in his own body. Therefore, master we entreat you: Let his wounds heal us, so that we may die to every form of wrongdoing and live for you alone.

For you deserve all glory, honor, and worship, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

PROMISES GIVEN AND KEPT

THIS FOURTH SUNDAY of Great Lent brings us closer to our spiritual goal: the light of our Lord's Resurrection. Today's Apostolic reading is taken from the Letter to the Hebrews, 6:13-20. There are two aspects of this passage that I would like to concentrate on. The first is Melchizedek, who he is, the nature of his priesthood, and how he figures into the prophecy of the coming Messiah. The second is God's promise to Abraham, how he kept it and what this promise means for us.

I have always been fascinated by Melchizedek. Before I was even able to really consider who he was and why St. Paul wrote about him so extensively, I just loved his name. It means "king of justice", but without knowing that, I thought it sounded exotic and made me want to find out more about him.

The reality is that there is very little written about him in the Bible. The only place where he actually appears is in Genesis. Here is what is recorded: "After [Abram's] return from the defeat of Chedor-laomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything." (Genesis 14:17-20)

From these three verses a whole understanding of how the Messiah's coming would change the nature of our relationship with God was developed and written about in the Jewish community. St. Paul's description in the seventh chapter of Hebrews follows the commonly held beliefs of rabbis and Jewish scholars compiled in the Talmud (the accepted commentary on the Jewish Scripture).

The first thing that they understood

is that the Messiah is to be eternal king and priest. Because Melchizedek appeared "out of nowhere" and then "disappears", without father and mother, they saw this as a sign of the eternal Messiah.

The next insight taken from these verses is that Melchizedek is superior to Abram (later to be Abraham). After his victory against the kings who were in and around Jerusalem, Abram offers tithes (a tenth) to Melchizedek. This means that he recognized him as a priest of "God Most High." This action would later be interpreted in the Talmud and by St. Paul as recognizing the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek. Christian writers saw the offering of bread and wine as a foreshadowing of the Eucharist.

Melchizedek is the king of Salem, which later became known as Jerusalem. "Salem" means peace. So, Melchizedek is the King of Peace (another title of the Messiah). In addition, through Melchizedek's encounter with Abraham, it is clear that God decided Jerusalem would be the center of His earthly presence among us long before the descendants of Abraham return from their captivity in Egypt.

Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek has a mystical quality to it. At this point in Abraham's story he has just begun his journey of faith. God Most High has chosen him, but Abram does not know how to respond. Some Church fathers say it is Christ Himself who is appearing to Abram in the person of Melchizedek, in the same way He appeared to Moses in burning bush. Often, when we need God the most He appears to us, in a mystical guise, to help us and direct us.

This leads me to the second point I would like to talk about from today's reading: God's promise, His word. St. Paul speaks of "God's oath" as immutable; not able to be altered or changed. He uses the human example of giving an oath as a way to remove doubt

during a dispute. We are asked to give an oath when testifying at a trial or in other official circumstances as a way to demonstrate that we speak the absolute truth. Our word is our bond. If we lie we are imprisoned. God promised many things to Abraham, and St. Paul says that because he couldn't swear by anything greater, he swore by Himself. This means God wanted to secure His promise in such a way that Abram would believe him.

Yet still, Abram needed more assurance of the promise. He wanted to know with some certainty that what God had told him, had promised to him, would indeed come to pass. God promised him a grand legacy, yet he had no heir, no son or daughter. He asked God for a sign.

God told him to look to the heavens, to the night sky, and said that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars he saw. Unfortunately, because of modern nighttime "light pollution" very few of us get to see the night sky in all of its brilliance, but Abram did. "And he believed the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6) He saw the myriad of stars in the heavens and believed the truth of God's word.

Because of his faith and as a sign of it, God gave Abram a new name: Abraham, and Sarai his wife: Sarah. He chose them, well beyond childbearing years, to found a new people: Israel. From this nation the Savior was born.

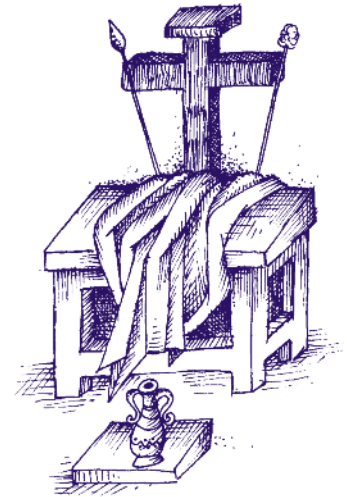
So many signs have been given to us, not only in Biblical times, but also here and now. We pray to God and He hears us. We ask for His help and He gives it. The world is full of suffering and pain; we will not escape this, at least not in this life. However, the Lord gives us the proof of His promise in the suffering of His Son, and His rising from the dead. In Jesus the promise is fulfilled. Everything we endure is not without purpose. God's word is true.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT. On this day is commemorated *St. John Climacus*, abbot of Sinai (sixth–seventh century), who is assigned a special Sunday in Lent because, by virtue of his writings and his own life, he forms a pattern of the true Christian ascetic. St. John is the author of *The Ladder of Paradise*, one of the spiritual texts

appointed to be read in church during Lent. His memorial, like that of St. Theodore, has been transferred to the movable from the fixed calendar, where he is remembered on 30 March. The first Canon at Mattins on this Sunday is based on the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–5): the repentant Christian is likened to the man who fell among thieves.



PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES

2017

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.

DONATIONS FOR HOLY WEEK

General donations in any amount to defray the cost of decorations for the Paschal Feast are most appreciated. Some specific needs are:

Flowers for Palm Sunday Icon	\$50.00
Palms	\$100.00
Flowers for Bridegroom Icon	\$50.00
Holy Thursday Gospel Candles	\$60.00
Wreaths for Cross (Great Friday)	\$50.00
(Resurrection)	\$100.00
Resurrection Icon	\$50.00
Bay Leaves for Holy Saturday	\$100.00
1 Gallon of Olive Oil	\$25.00
½ lb Incense	\$40.00
Priest's Paschal Candle	\$50.00
Rose Oil for Epitaphion	\$25.00
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Flowers for Epitaphion	\$500.00
Decorations for Pascha	\$350.00

Please see Lillian Chachi or Betty Anderson to make a donation