

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

MAY 21, 2017

Ss CONSTANTINE & HELEN

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

A **CHURCH-CLEANING SESSION** is set for **THIS Monday, May 22nd**, 9:00am — noon. All help is really welcomed! **Questions?** talk to **Christine Masterjohn**.

THE PARISH COUNCIL will be meeting **THIS MONDAY, May 22nd**, at **6:30 pm**. Parish Council members please let **George** know if you can't attend.

THE FEAST OF THE LORD'S ASCENSION is **Thursday, May 25th**. Fr. Nick will be celebrating Liturgy at Holy Trinity **Wednesday morning** at 9:30am (Leave-taking of Pascha). On **Thursday**, we will be celebrating the Feast with with our sister Parish of Sts Anargyroi in Marlborough. Liturgy begins at 10:00 am. Also Liturgy will be held at **St. George** on Wednesday evening at 6:00pm; and at **St. Spyridon** on Thursday at 9:30am (Matins 8:45am).

WE'RE STILL LOOKING FOR THIS YEAR'S HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE GRADUATES in our Parish so we can recognize them on their accomplishment. If you know of a soon-to-be

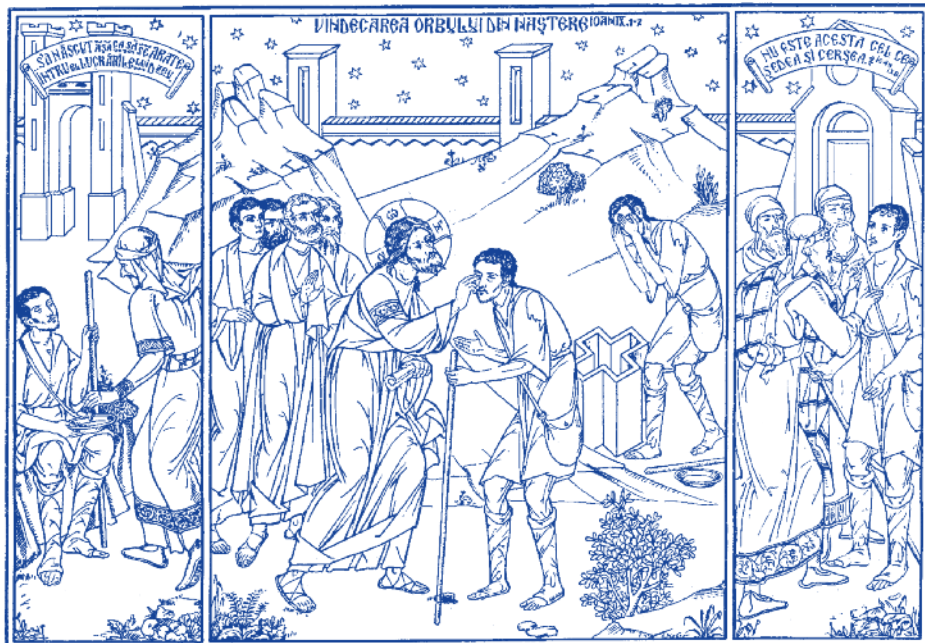
GREETERS TEAM 5:

DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW D:

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

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

APOSTOLIC READING: ACTS 16:16-34 ☩ GOSPEL: JOHN 9:1-38
TONE 5 ☩ RESURRECTION GOSPEL 8

graduate, please inform Fr. Nick or Tim Rucho.

AN ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING day is set for **Saturday, May 27th**. If you're able and willing to help, please speak with Gerry Belba.

MEMORIAL DAY is Monday, May 29th. Fr. Nick will be at Hope Cemetery from 10:00 am. The common Memorial Service will be at noon at the Altar in Hope. If you would like Fr. Nick to visit a grave in another cemetery, please contact him to make arrangements: 508-335-7378.

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS

ARE NEEDED for the next weeks. Please speak with or contact **Presvytera Maria** if you and your family would like to sponsor one.

UP-COMING

THE ALBANIAN FESTIVAL, sponsored by St. Mary's on Salisbury St., will be held **Friday-Sunday, June 2, 3, & 4**. Make plans to attend and support our sister Church!

PARENTS PLEASE TAKE NOTE! Vacation Church School this summer will be August 7-9. We will again be holding

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Mon, May 22 Church Cleaning, 9 am
- Parish Council, 6:30 pm
- Thurs, May 25 Feast of the Lord's Ascension
- Sat, May 27 e-Recycling. 9am-2pm
- Mon, May 29 Memorial Day, Hope Cemetery
- June 2, 3, & 4 Albanian Festival
- Sat, June 3 Saturday of the Dead, Lit. 10am
- Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
- Sun, June 4 Pentecost
- Aug 7-9 Vacation Church School

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas



THE WAY OF SALVATION

THIS is the sixth Sunday of Pascha. Today's Gospel lesson is the Lord's healing of the man blind from birth (John 9:1-38). In the reading from Acts (16:16-34) St. Luke tells us of the start of St. Paul's missionary work in Europe. Paul had been visiting the coastal cities of Asia Minor with Silas and Timothy. One night "a vision appeared to Paul ... a man of Macedonia was standing beseeching him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'" (Acts 16:9) And so Paul and Silas sailed to Philippi, a large city in that province.

Today's reading begins with the encounter Paul and Silas had with a slave girl while they were going toward a place outside of Philippi where the Jews usually gathered to pray on the Sabbath. She had a "spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by soothsaying." (v. 16) In the original Greek the phrase a "spirit of divination" is actually a "Pythonic spirit," referring to the snake that the god Apollo was believed to have slain at Delphi. In Apollo's temple at Delphi, a priestess of Apollo called the 'Phythius' would prophesy in the god's name there. So rather than believe this spirit as something benign, we should understand the girl as possessed.

The girl followed Paul and Silas for a number of days crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." (v. 17). Finally Paul had reached his limit and "turned and said to the spirit, 'I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out that very hour." (v. 18)

St. Paul did this for two reasons. The first was to free this poor girl from the exploitation of both the demon and her masters. The second was because the spirit meant to deceive and mislead those people who had come to believe in Jesus through Paul's and Silas' preach-

ing. Paul and the other Apostles never drew attention to themselves when they preached. Their goal was to proclaim salvation in the name of Jesus Christ. The objective of this demon was to gain credibility by correctly saying who and what these Apostles were, only then to later use this gained confidence for evil purposes. Paul knew this, and this is the reason he cast out the demon.

We can see Paul's wisdom in what happened next. Her masters, instead of believing her words that Paul and Silas were indeed "servants of the Most High God, who proclaim the way of salvation," immediately seized them and brought them before the local magistrates complaining that, "these men are Jews and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice" (v. 21-22). A riot began. The magistrates had Paul and Silas flogged and imprisoned.

During the night while Paul and Silas were singing hymns and praying in prison, an earthquake opens the jail doors and loosens the chains binding Paul and the other prisoners. The jailer woke up, thinking that everyone had escaped. He was ready to kill himself, when Paul cried out to stop him. He told him that no one had escaped. The jailer was so moved that he falls down before Paul and Silas and asks how he might be saved. Finally, he and his whole household believed and were all baptized.

There are at least three important lessons in this story. The first is that believing in Jesus Christ and proclaiming him to the world is not always popular. Sometimes it can lead to outright persecution. Paul and Silas were not doing anything wrong, yet they were seized, brought up on false charges, beaten, put in stocks, and put in prison. They were

it in conjunction with Sts. Anargyroi in Marlborough. Please keep these date in mind when schedule other summer activities for your children. **Questions?** see or e-mail: Valarie Stamoulis (valarie.stamoulis@gmail .com); cell: 617-803-3798.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

SAVE THE DATE! Holy Trinity's annual fundraiser, 11th Annual **Food and Wine Fest, Thursday, October 19, 2017.** 5:30-8:30pm at St. George Orthodox Cathedral. Watch for details to follow!

The St. Spyridon Ladies Philoptochos is hosting a **coffee social for the residents** on Thursday, May 25th at 2pm.

Latest issue of **Holy Trinity's "Guardian Angel Gazette"** is available on-line. It full of interesting information about our Nursing and Rehab Center. Check it out here: www.htnr.net/blog/

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. **Interested?** Contact **Gina Metras**, Activities Director at 508-852-1000; e-mail: gmetras@htnr.net. Or **Serena Shields**, Director of Community Relations, 508-852-1000, e-mail: shields@htnr.net.

never even given the opportunity to defend themselves.

The second lesson is that when evil things befall us we should accept them without complaint. Paul and Silas were not sitting in the prison bemoaning their fate. They were not complaining to God: “Why me? I was doing your will! Why didn’t you protect me?” Rather, they were singing hymns and praying. We should understand that we grow when tested. Sharing and witnessing to our faith is like exercising — like exercising our soul. It brings growth. We know what happens to a body that sits all day in front of the TV. It gets fat and lethargic. Exercise strengthens. Comfort weakens. God intends to strengthen us through many of the difficulties we may encounter.

The third important lesson is that we should not try to gain advantage at the expense of others. Paul and Silas were unjustly imprisoned. They could easily have used the opportunity of the earthquake to escape. What would have been the result? The jailer would have committed suicide, his children would have been orphaned, and his family disgraced. Even if Paul and Silas managed to save themselves, they would have been seen by many as in fact guilty as charged, and their preaching would have been in vain. Instead, by trusting in God and enduring their trials, the jailer and his family were saved, not only physically, but also spiritually. The truth of the Good News they preached spread throughout the whole city, even and especially to the pagans. Most importantly, Jesus was glorified.

I would like to emphasize this last point. We are living through world-wide economic and socio-political storms. Even though some people and places seem to have passed through the worst of it, many more have not. These crises are not “acts of God,” but created by people, many of whom identify them-

selves as Christians, and who thought nothing of taking advantage of opportunities without considering the consequences of their actions on others. We see this same sort of selfish behavior exercised in many different ways each and every day. Sadly, we ourselves often behave similarly. Can we learn from these catastrophes? Can we be like Paul and Silas? Can we be witnesses to “the way of salvation”? Perhaps. And if we rise to our high-calling, many will indeed be saved.

Christ is Risen!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

SWEET JESUS, OUR SAVIOUR: We who enjoy the effulgence of the sun and who delight in the luminescence of the moon give thanks to you for the gifts of light and sight. In our good fortune, most of us have never actually known the meaning of being blind, and we cannot even begin to appreciate what a life of total darkness is. You, however, know all things, so your understanding and tenderness brought you to bestow a twofold enlightenment on that poor fellow who had been deprived of sight from his mother's womb. As we commemorate his healing during this paschal season, we entreat you to preserve us from all interior blindness that we may always see reality as it is in fact, and live accordingly.

For you are the healer of our souls and bodies, Christ our God, and we give you glory, together with your eternal Father and your all-holy, good, and lifegiving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. amen.



NAMEDAYS

May 21

The Holy Equals to the Apostles Constantine and Helen

V. Rev. Fr. Dean Paleologos
Constantine Apostol
Elaine Apostola
Konstantin Charalambides
Presvytera Eleni Christakos
Amalia Helene Collins
Hannah Constance Datz
Dina Entwistle
Iliana Victoria Fahey
Elena Galeriu
Ileana A Nace
Constanta Papit
Eleni Polymeros
Elena Prelipcean
Elaine Rocheford
Dina K. Salerno
Eleanor Sedares
Elaine Tanacea
Dean Valoras