

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN AUGUST 6, 2017

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE DORMITION FAST in preparation for the Feast of the Falling-Asleep of the Theotokos began on August 1st, and continues through Tuesday, August 15th. This is an important time for us to reflect on the example of love and sacrifice the Lord's Mother gives us. **We will celebrate special services** Monday and Thursday of this coming week, and Great Vespers and Liturgy on Monday and Tuesday of next week, at St. Mary's Albanian Orthodox Church. See the detailed list below in this Bulletin.

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL BEGINS TOMORROW! We will be holding Vacation Church School on **August 7-9** in conjunction with Sts. Anargyroi in Marlborough. **PARENTS**, make sure Valarie know if your kid(s) will be participating. **Questions?** see or e-mail: Valarie Stamoulis (valarie.stamoulis@gmail.com); cell: 617-803-3798.

THANKS TO THE BAKERS! They've been rolling dough for the past few Saturdays. The first step in our Pita Baking. An heroic effort for which we are all grateful.

ALSO! THIS COMING SATURDAY, August 12th, from 9:00 am to noon,

GREETERS TEAM 1:
V. GERALD BELBA AND MARGARITE LANDRY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW C:
PRIZIO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



**THE FEAST OF THE
TRANSFIGURATION OF THE SAVIOR**
THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
APOSTOLIC READING: 2 PETER 1:10-19
GOSPEL: MATTHEW 17:1-9
EVERYTHING ACCORDING TO THE FEAST

we'll be **BAKING PITAS!** 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!**

OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL is **Friday, August 18th**. We'll need help cooking and serving. This month's meal is sponsored by Janice Samara and family in memory of Randy Samara. God bless them! If you or your family would like to sponsor a future meal, or a portion thereof, the cost of the meal — around \$400.00 for the 200 meals we usually serve, please talk to Fr. Nick. We're also always excited about people who'd like to help out in the holy task.

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 September 2nd.

FR. NICK IS STILL TAKING QUESTIONS FOR SUMMER SERMONS. This is your chance to ask the question you've always wondered about. **There are forms at the candles or you may e-mail your suggestion to him.**

THIS SUNDAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Ornela Belishta**.

UP-COMING

CALLING ALL VENDORS!!! A HOLIDAY MARKET PLACE will once again be a part of our annual **Thanksgiving Bake Sale and Luncheon on Saturday, November 18th**. We are seeking Vendors to rent table space at a cost of \$25 per table. We would like to include a variety of vendors and ensure there is no duplication of products or services. **If you or a vendor you know is interested in participating, please complete the registration form and return it to the Church.** For more information, **contact Tim Rucho.**

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Aug 1-15 Dormition Fast
- Sat, Aug 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
- Pita Dough Rolling, 9am-noon
- Aug 7-9 Vacation Church School
- Mon, Aug 7 Supplication Service, 6:00 pm
- Thurs, Aug 10 Supplication Service, 6:00 pm
- Sat, Aug 12 Pita Baking, 9am-noon
- Mon, Aug 14 Dormition Vespers at St. Mary's 6:00pm
- Tues, Aug 15 Dormition Lit at St. Mary's 9:00am
- Fri, Aug 18 Mustard Seed Meal, 5:00 pm

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

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O MASTER AND MAKER OF ALL THAT IS, whether visible or hidden from our sight: We give you thanks for transforming our frail human nature and all creation with the transfiguration of your Son on the mountain. Of old, you fashioned us in your own image and likeness, but this beauty was soon obscured by sin. Now as we celebrate the mystery of this feast, change our hearts for the good, that we may praise you with the rest of your creatures all the days of our life.

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

COMMUNITY NEWS

STS ANARGYROI PARISH IN MARLBOROUGH will be holding its annual **Greek Festival, Labor Day weekend** (Saturday through Monday). For more information check their website: <http://stsanargyroi.org/>

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 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: www.htnr.net/blog/



THE HOLY MACCABEES

AUGUST 1ST

The names of the Holy Maccabees are Abim, Anthony, Guria, Eleazar, Eusebona, Achim, and Marcellus. They were Jews by race and exact keepers of the Laws of the Fathers. They lived during the reign of Antiochus, who was surnamed Epiphanes ("Illustrious"), the King of Syria and an implacable enemy of the Jews. Having subjugated their whole nation and done many evil things to them, not sparing to assail the most sacred matters of their Faith, he constrained them, among other things, to

partake of swine's flesh, which was forbidden by the Law. Then these pious youths, on being apprehended together with their mother and their teacher, were constrained to set at nought the Law, and were subjected to unspeakable tortures: wrackings, the breaking of their bones, the flaying of their flesh, fire, dismemberment, and such things as only a tyrant's mind and a bestial soul is able to contrive. But when they had endured all things courageously and showed in deed that the mind is sovereign over the passions and is able to conquer them if it so desires, they gloriously ended their lives in torments, surrendering their life for the sake of the observance of the divine Law.

The first to die was their teacher Eleazar, then all the brethren in the order of their age. As for their wondrous mother Solomone, "filled with a courageous spirit, and stirring up her womanish thoughts with a manly wrath" (II Macc. 7:21), she was present at her children's triumph over the tyrant, strengthening them in their struggle for the sake of their Faith, and enduring stout-heartedly their sufferings for the sake of their hope in the Lord. After her last and youngest son had been perfected in martyrdom, when she was about to be seized to be put to death, she cast herself into the fire that they might not touch her, and was thus deemed worthy of a blessed end together with her sons, in the year 168 before Christ.

The martyric death of the Maccabee brothers inspired Judas Maccabeus, and he led a revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. With God's help, he gained the victory, and then purified the Temple at Jerusalem. He also threw down the altars which the pagans had set up in the streets. All these events are related in the Second Book of Maccabees (Ch. 8-10).

AUGUST LITURGICAL CYCLE

Dormition Fast Period (Aug 1-15)

- ◆ **Supplication Service** to the Theotokos at St. Nick's, Monday, August 7, 6:00 pm
- ◆ **Supplication Service** to the Theotokos at St. Nick's, Thursday, August 10, 6:00 pm
- ◆ **Dormition Vespers** at St. Mary's, Monday, August 14, 6:00 pm
- ◆ **Divine Liturgy** at St. Mary's, Tuesday, August 15, 9:00 am

WHICH TRANSFIGURATION?

AUGUST SIXTH. is a remarkable day in human history. It is the day on the Christian calendar when we remember the Transfiguration of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. You will remember that Christ, pre-figuring His Resurrection, took three disciples — Peter, James, and John — and ascended Mount Tabor. There the Savior was transfigured, covered with light. The disciples threw themselves down on the ground, unable to gaze upon the brightness of His garment. Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Him about His upcoming Crucifixion and Resurrection. They were all engulfed in an ethereal cloud. And a voice came from the Father testifying to His Son. It was a tremendous sight.

August 6th is also another anniversary. It is the day on which the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. A transfiguration in its own right. The light was so bright that no one could gaze upon it. But there were no prophets speaking with the God-man. No voice from the Father. No ethereal cloud. (The mushroom cloud that engulfed Hiroshima was far from



THE TRANSFIGURATION

ethereal.) And, no gentle Christ lifting His disciples from the ground after the vision. Only death and destruction as far as the eye could see. Only a poison which continues to mutate living things until this day. Indeed, both were transfigurations: the first was from God, the other was from man. Each gives us an indication as to the consequences of our choices.

In some ways these two transfigurations represent two different world views. There is the world view of faith, which is essentially God-centered. It looks at humanity and all of creation as God's handiwork. In this world view everything comes from God and leads back to Him.

Then there is the scientific/technological world-view which is basically human-centered, or perhaps more aptly put, materialist-centered. The scientist dissects and reassembles according to his or her design, or rather, the design that one might see in the thing itself. Re-

ardless, there is little or no place for wonder or mystery. More importantly, there is no limit, no bounds beyond which the scientist will not travel. While this might be an extreme presentation of the positions, nonetheless it *is* helpful to look at the naked argument. When persons are pressed they fall back on the fundamental premise of their assumptions.

Of course, there need not be a conflict between faith and science. Many scientists and theologians are working hard to bridge the apparent divide. The God who created us also created our mind and our logical faculties. In exploring and adapting our environment, we glorify Him — that is, if we are interested in glorifying Him. But mostly, when we behave as fallen humans, we are interested in glorifying ourselves and we often use our science and technology to this end. When we construct, when we explore, when we exploit, we extol this as a testimony to 'human ingenuity,' 'human creativity,' and 'human resourcefulness.' There is little if any understanding that our human endeavor might be, or at least should be, part of God's plan — or, might even be opposed to it.

St. Maximos the Confessor says, "The passion of pride arises from two kinds of ignorance, and when these two kinds of ignorance unite together, they form a single confused state of mind. For a man is proud only if he is ignorant both of divine help and of human weakness. Therefore pride is a lack of knowledge both in the divine and in the human spheres. For the denial of two true premises results in a single false affirmation." While this observation of St. Maximos is certainly applicable to almost every aspect of human life, it has a special significance in our current context.

As our technological capabilities expand at a rate almost totally incompre-

NAMEDAYS

August 8

*The Holy New Martyr
Triandaphyllos*

Rose Armida Salerno

August 15

*The Falling Asleep of the Most Holy
Theotokos*

Maria Blanchard
Mary Cocaine
Maria Dumitriu
Monika Maria Durmillari
Maria Kalpidou
Maria Prelipcean
Nancy Maria Tsongalis
Mary Tsoules
Marietta Zaruha

hensible to the human mind, there is no evidence yet that we, as a society, are aware of, or are taking into consideration, either divine help or human weakness. Rather we continue to view ourselves as essentially limitless. What was the reaction to the horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Was it repentance and a turning away from the evil we had created? No! Ashamed by our deed we sought to delude ourselves by creating the 'atoms for peace' program. By building nuclear power plants, and other 'peaceful' uses for the atom, we thought we could cover our nakedness like Adam and Eve in the Garden. But as we have come to find out; this solution has turned out to be as great a monster as atomic weapons themselves.

"Today," cries one of the hymns of the Transfiguration, "Christ on Mount Tabor has changed the darkened nature of Adam, and filling it with brightness He has made it godlike." The true Transfiguration is the transfiguration of our nature. It is a change from what we were and are, into what we can become — into the likeness of Christ. It is concerned with an internal transformation. Another hymn says: "Shining forth with the light of the virtues, let us set foot on the holy mountain that we may gaze upon the divine Transfiguration of the Lord." The light of the Transfiguration is an internal light. Its source is the virtuous life which reflects the divine light. Christ possesses this light by nature; we have the ability to possess it by grace — that is, by how much we reflect Him.

We have greater power available to us than the split atom. We have the power to be gods. But we are like Adam and Eve. We want to possess this power on our own. We want to be something we are not. St. Maximos says: "Self-esteem is the replacing of a purpose which accords with God by another purpose which is contrary to the divine. For a man full of self-esteem pursues virtue not for God's glory but for his own." Adam and Eve were full of "Self-esteem" as they challenged God. And so are we as we continually challenge God by the



arrogance of our undisciplined technology.

But surely, (one says to one's self), God created us with the intelligence to do these things! God also created us with the intelligence not to do some things. We have the freedom to do anything. God has given us this. We have freedom even to destroy ourselves. Yet, no one would assert that this was within God's plan for us. The nature and shape of the freedom God has given us is that He wants us to be like Him, but only if it's founded our own free will, our own free choice. He will not stop us even when we choose badly. But, neither will he grant us eternal life if we do.

The enormous complexities of this subject can not be fully pursued in this short reflection. However, there is one thing I would like for you to ponder. The nuclear issue, environment pollution, genetic research, global warming, and so many other problems arising from modern scientific and technological advances cannot, in the final analysis, be left to the scientists, technicians, or politicians to decide alone. These are deeply spiritual issues and we should understand that the spiritual dilemmas arise because there is a lack of communion with the living God. It is through communion with Him that we will be able to find the answers.

Three Mile Island (1979) sits as a heap of radioactive poison which our

technology is incapable of rectifying. Chernobyl (1986) remains a no-man's zone of radioactive wasteland. No one knows how we will deal with the Japanese nuclear catastrophe (2011). We search in vain for a home for our nuclear waste because no one wants it in their backyard. And, all the while, people ignore the warming planet even as glaciers melt and huge icebergs fall off the Antarctic shelf.

How can one begin to number other environmental disasters? Do you remember the chemical/oil disasters like the famous Love Canal (1976) evacuation, or the Exxon Valdez (1986) oil spill, and the Deepwater Horizon (2010) oil breach. Have you forgotten the close-to-home catastrophe of General Electric's pollution of the Housatonic River, and the next-to impossibility of correcting it. These and other countless other evidences of the failure of our arrogance before God threaten to destroy us. More tragically, these will affect and effect our grandchildren when we are all long dead.

And yet, these sign-posts that could lead us back to repentance go largely unheeded. Moreover, there are people who arrogantly deny the evidence of both science and their own eyes.

The choice before us is clear. Either we choose the uncreated light of the Transfiguration available to us through our faith in Jesus Christ our Savior, or we choose the created light of our atomic bombs. Both alter nature irrevocably. One way is in accord with God's will, and will lead us to the goodness God intends. The other springing from the self-delusion of our pride leading to suicide.

"Come, let us ascend into the mountain of the Lord," sings a hymn of the Transfiguration, "even to the house of our God, and behold the glory of His Transfiguration, glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father. Let us receive light from His Light, and with uplifted spirits let us forever sing the praises of the con-substantial Trinity."