

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN AUGUST 13, 2017

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS is this Tuesday. It is the Feastday of our sister parish of St. Mary's Assumption on Salisbury St, and we'll be celebrating together with them. Great Vespers is Monday at 6:00 pm and Divine Liturgy on Tuesday at 9:00 am.

OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL IS THIS Friday, August 18th. We'll need help cooking and serving. We'll be prepping on Thursday from noon until 2:00 pm and on Friday, from 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm. Also, we need help to serve the meal at 5:30 pm at the Mustard Seed. 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. Any questions, please talk to Fr. Nick. We're always excited when we have people who'd like to help out in the holy task.

THANKS TO THE VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STUDENTS! We'll have pictures and

GREETERS TEAM 2:

ARTIC GAVALA AND CĂLIN GALERIU

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW D:

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

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE LEAVE-TAKING OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

APOSTOLIC READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:9-16 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 17:14-23
(JESUS CURES THE EPILEPTIC BOY)
TONE 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 10

more info next week, but it was a great time. There were over 20 children participating! **God bless them all!**

THANKS TO THE BAKERS! They've been rolling dough and now they're baking the pitas for the fall events. An heroic effort for which we are all grateful. **Questions?** talk to Chris Toda, 508-832-6271, if you'd like to help. **Remember: There's a job for everyone!**

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.**

WE HAVE A NUMBER OF MEMORIALS THIS SUNDAY.

☩ **Lambi & Meropi Saro Belba;**

- ☩ **Marjeta Kristo** (daughter of Dimi-traq and Vasilika Lolo), 6 months;
- ☩ **Peter Rougas**, 6 years;
- ☩ **Elizabeth (Elsa) Kalaitzis** (relative of Spiro and Christina Kelly), 3 years.

May our good and loving Lord rest their souls with the righteous!

THIS SUNDAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **the family members of those whose Memorial we keep today.**

DATES TO REMEMBER

- 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
- Tues, Aug 29 Beheading of John the Baptist
Strict Fast Day
- Sat, Sept 2 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

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**.



COMMUNITY NEWS

ST. 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/>

ST. MICHAEL IN SOUTHBRIDGE will be holding its **10th Annual Romanian Golf Open on Saturday, September 23rd**. For more information and/or to register, call Luke Yanka at 508-958-4144 or e-mail: lsyanka@yahoo.com.

ST. CONSTANTINE AND HELEN IN WEBSTER is holding its annual **Greek Festival on Saturday, September 9, 11:00-9:00pm and Sunday, September 10, 11:00am-5:00pm**. More information can be found at www.schwebster.org.

HOLY TRINITY IN FITCHBURG is holding its **Greek Festival, Friday/Saturday, September 15th and 16th**. Rain or Shine. The Church is at: 1319 Main St, Fitchburg. For info: 978-342-1216 or holyltrinity.ma.goarch.org/festival

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/

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

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

BLESSED ARE YOU, LORD GOD of tenderness and mercy, for the gift of this new day and for bringing to us the fulness of grace in the person of your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. These days fill us with special joy and confidence because of the Theotokos, whose dormition we celebrate. As we set out, once again, to work out our salvation with the help of your Christ, give us all we need to serve you in our brothers and sisters, not only during this coming day, but throughout our lives. And let the holy virgin's prayers for us be a pledge of our eternal salvation.

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

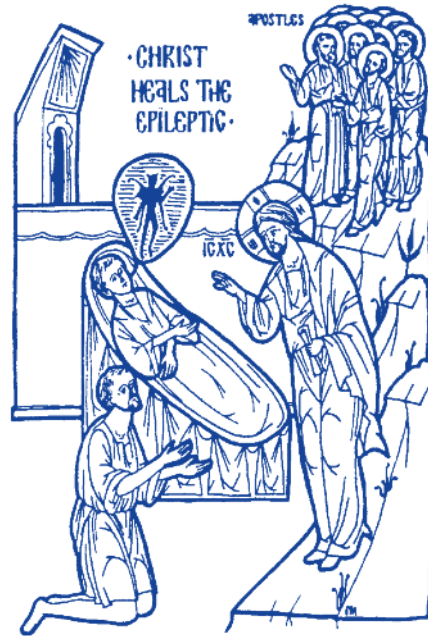
FAITH AS TINY AS A MUSTARD SEED

THE Gospel reading for this tenth Sunday after Pentecost is the healing of the epileptic boy (Matthew 17:14-23). St. Matthew tells us that this healing happened as the Lord and his disciples were coming down from the mountain where He had been transfigured. There was a crowd there waiting, and a man came up to him begging him to heal his son. A dramatic moment, and there are many players. There are the father and his son; the disciples; the demons; and, of course, the crowd. For each, this encounter provokes a dilemma. For some it is a crisis, of faith. The father of the boy, the disciples, and even the members of the crowd will find the nature and depth of their faith tested. For the demons it will point out that their time of reckoning is at hand.

From the way the boy's father approaches Jesus it is clear that he was not a faithful man. He had come to Jesus out of desperation, not necessarily with the conviction that the Lord could do what he needed. He had first brought the child to the disciples, but when they were unable to cast out the demon he decided to seek out the "higher source."

Jesus rebukes the father, but he doesn't do it directly. Rather, he addresses the rebuke more generally to all those present, saying: "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you?" (v. 17) The truth is that even after seeing so many of the signs and wonders he has worked, it is not just the father, but the crowds gathered around him who still have a hard time believing. Finally, he says to the father: "Bring him here to me."

The Evangelist Mark adds a few more details to this story. He says that when the spirit saw Jesus he convulsed the boy (Mark 9:20). Even if the boy's father did not know who Jesus was and what he could do, the demon did. Jesus then asked the boy's father how long he had been afflicted with this condition; to which the father replies "from child-



hood." He then adds: "If you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us" (Mark 9:22).

Jesus immediately turns his question around telling him: "If you are able! — All things can be done for the one who believes" (Mark 9:23). Again, St. Mark records the father as saying: "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Confronted with his own doubt and consumed with love for his child, the father at last comes to a sense of what it means to believe. He needed to learn to believe in and ask for God's help especially when his trust was weakest.

What Jesus is saying to the man (and, to us as well) is that if we trust, God will work even greater things. But still, he does not wait for the father's faith, or that of the disciples; rather, in his compassion for the boy he heals him directly and immediately.

The disciples' dilemma is different. The Lord had given them "authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness" (Matthew 10:1). After everyone had left, they came to Jesus privately asking why they could not cast out this spirit. They were probably anxious and afraid they had lost the grace that had been entrusted to them. Even Peter,

James and John, who had seen the Lord transfigured in all his glory on Mount Tabor, were shaken (Matthew 17:1-8). Jesus gives them a similar answer to that which he gave the boy's father: "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith as a grain of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (v. 20). And then he adds: "But this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting" (v. 21).

Having given them this great power to heal, the Lord now instructs them on principles that support this power, this gift. He says that genuine faith, even as small as a mustard seed, has limitless power. But, this faith has to be strengthened, nurtured, and supported by prayer and fasting. Prayer brings us into God's presence and teaches us to listen to Him. Fasting helps us to distance ourselves from the excesses of this physical existence, making us lighter, and more spiritual.

Just a couple of words about the demons or evil spirits. The Biblical worldview sees the struggle between good and evil, sickness and health as a cosmic battle between God and those who pretend to be god. We have a scientific worldview, but I would hasten to add this doesn't mean that the ancient world was without science, far from it. But, they saw evil and good in personal terms. If you've ever struggled with a debilitating illness, physical or psychological, I'm sure that there were times that you felt that there was a malevolent force behind your suffering.

However, we are not abandoned in our struggles. God is always with us. Each of us has the capacity to believe. God gave us this 'mustard seed' when He created us. The key to faith is trust. Trust is the fertile soil in which the seed of faith is planted, and it will grow into a magnificent and glorious tree.