

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN SEPTEMBER 10, 2017

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, September 11th at 6:30 pm.** Parish Council Members, please let George Demake know if you are unable to attend.

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH SCHOOL and our Youth are a central part of our parish. We need you! If you are interested in teaching or assisting with Church School this year and/or working with the Youth of our parish on activities and programs geared to them, please see **Valarie Stamoulis** or **Preoteasa Maria.** The first day of Church School is **Sunday, September 24th. Every child is welcomed!** **PARENTS:** please complete the **REGISTRATION FORM** found at the candle stand. If you would like more information, speak with Valarie or Preoteasa Maria. Providing vibrant and meaningful opportunities for our Youth to learn about their Orthodox Faith and traditions, and work and play together is key to ensuring that our Orthodox Faith and the community of St. Nicholas remains vital for generations to come.

THE FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS is **THIS**

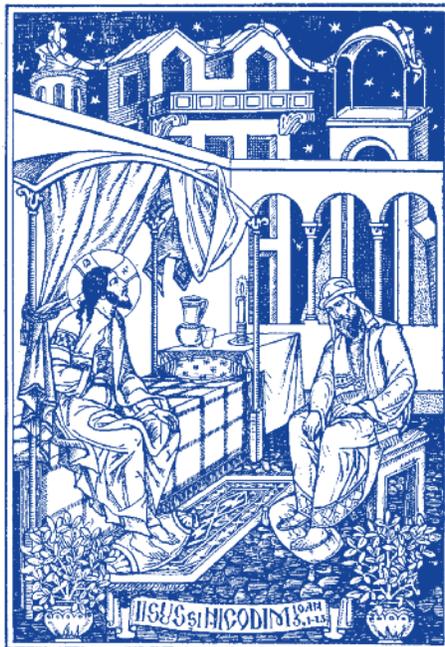
GREETERS TEAM 1:

V. GERALD BELBA & MARGARITE LANDRY

COFFEE HOUR CREW D:

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

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE CROSS
APOSTOLIC READING: GALATIANS 6:11-18



GOSPEL: JOHN 3:11-17

(JESUS SPEAKS WITH NIKODIMOS)

TONE 5  MATINS GOSPEL: 3

Thursday, September 14th. We will celebrate the Feast with our sister parish of **Sts. Anargyroi IN MARLBOROUGH.** Liturgy at **10:00am** with Matins preceding.

THANKS TO THE PITA BAKERS who baked this past Thursday. There is another **Pita Baking Session, Saturday, September 23th, 9:00 am.** 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!**

DONATIONS FOR HURRICANE RELIEF may be directed to the International Orthodox Christian Charities at: **www.iocc.org.** We are collecting donations and will forward them to the IOCC. The

IOCC is one of the top ranked relief organizations in the world, especially noted for its low overhead, directing most of the donations toward those in need. Help those who are suffering through our Orthodox Christian relief organization!

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish last Saturday. 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 October 7th.

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED for the coming months. If you would like to sponsor a Coffee Hour please speak with **Presvytera Maria.**

TODAY WE CELEBRATE A MEMORIAL for the members of the **Kalpidou/Karadimitriou family:** Forty days for **Maria Albani,** Maria Kalpidou's grandmother; her father, **Dimitris Kalpidis,** fallen asleep 10 years; and **Nitsa Papaoikonomou,** fallen asleep 12 years Kosmas Karadimitriou's mother. **May the Lord rest them with the just!**

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the **Karadimitriou/Kalpidou family** in memory of their departed loved-ones.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Mon, Sept 11 Parish Council, 6:30 pm
- Thurs, Sept 14 Lit for Elevation of Cross, 10 am
Sts Anargyroi, Marlboro *Strict Fast Day*
- Tues, Sept 19 Holy Trinity Gen Assembly, 7:00 pm
- Sat, Sept 23 Pita Baking, 9:00 am
- Sun, Sept 24 Religious Ed Classes begin
- Sat, Oct 7 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
e-Recycling, 9am-2pm
- Thurs, Oct 19 Holy Trinity Wine & Food Fest

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

COMMUNITY NEWS

STS. 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 holytrinity.ma.goarch.org/festival

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

The **General Assembly for the Eastern Orthodox Management Corp. (EOMC)**, which operates Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will be held on **Tuesday, September 19, 2017 at 7:00 pm** at Holy Trinity, 300 Barber Ave., Worcester, MA. This meeting is open to CEOC parish members and all are encouraged to attend.

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

September 5

St. Elizabeth,

mother of St. John the Baptist

Elizabeth Anderson

Elizabeth Grace Cavanaugh

Elizabeth Florica Galeriu

Lisa Mielnicki

Karen Elizabeth Wilder

The Holy Prophet Zachariah,
father of St. John the Baptist

Zachary Spataro

September 8

The Nativity of the

Most Holy Theotokos

Presvytera Maria Mossaides

September 9

The Holy Ancestors of God

Joachim and Anna

Ann Marie Clem

Anna Maria Collins

Ann Trakadas

September 14

The Exaltation of the

Precious and Lifegiving Cross

Stavri Tanacea

September 17

The Holy Martyr Sophia of Rome

Sofia Apostol

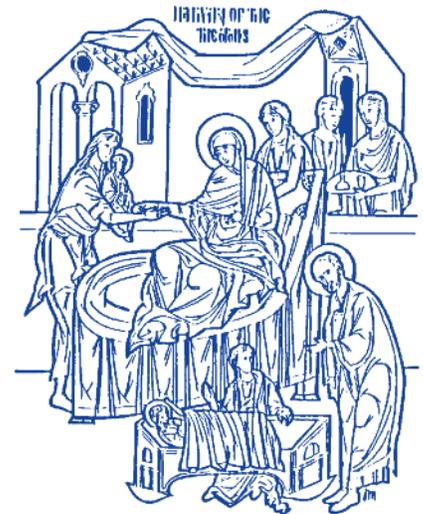
Sophia Amyra Apostola

Carol Fotos

The Holy Martyr Faith,

Daughter of St. Sophia

Faith Mayer



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

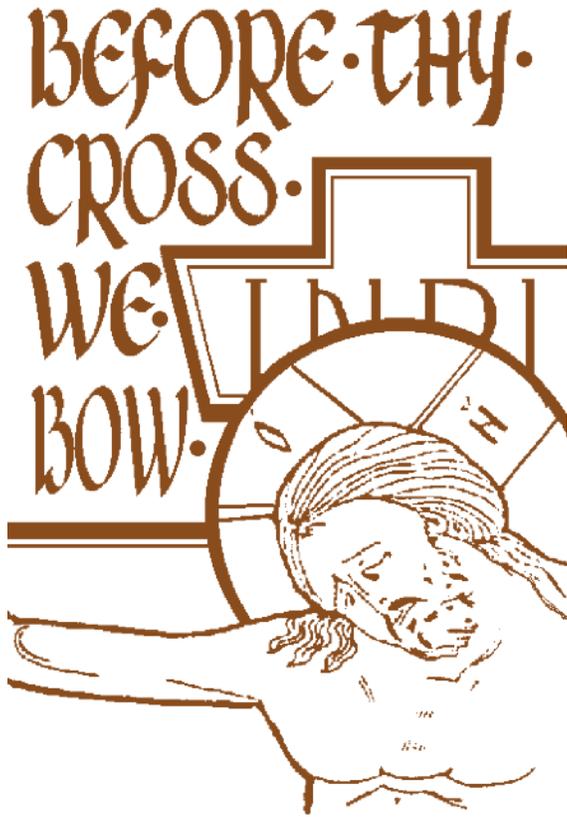
LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O LORD, OUR GOD: We give thanks to you and praise you for all the wonders you have accomplished for us. We ask you to consider not our failings but the virtue of the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. From the womb was she chosen, like Jeremiah; and, like Samuel, she was conceived through prayer and offered to you. In body, mind, and spirit, she was resplendent with purity and holiness. Grant that we, too, may attain a guilelessness like hers, serving you every day of our lives as you deserve.

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



LIFTED UP UPON THE CROSS



THIS Sunday we prepare ourselves for the coming Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross, celebrated on September 14th. The Gospel lesson is from St. John's (3:13-17). It is part of his account of a discussion our Lord had with a Pharisee named Nikodemus. Nikodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling Council of the Jewish nation at that time. He, along with Joseph of Arimathea, would be among the ones to bury Jesus after his Crucifixion.

Nikodemus came to Jesus one night to talk to him and explore what Jesus was saying. He came at night because while he perceived Jesus to be a "teacher who has come from God" (v. 2), he was a prominent member of the nation, but did not yet truly understand who our Lord was. In this whole passage that runs from John 3:1 through 3:21, we hear

Jesus speak to him about the newness of God's Kingdom. He says we must be "born again" (v. 3). As he leads Nikodemus into a deeper understanding of God's mystery he contrasts what it is to be born from earth, and to be born from above, to be "born of the Spirit" (v. 8). And in this way, Jesus gently reveals to him who He actually is. This is where today's Gospel lesson begins.

Jesus says to him: "No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man" (v. 14). Then, in a way that will only become clear to Nikodemus after Jesus' Resurrection, He speaks of His Crucifixion and the power it

will have to change and save the world. "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life" (v. 14-15).

The reference here is to an incident in the desert where the people of Israel, after their liberation from Pharaoh and Egypt became dissatisfied with their situation, complained against God and Moses (Numbers 21:5-9). God in response sent fiery serpents that bit the people. Many died. Repenting, the people came to Moses and asked him to pray to the Lord that this curse be taken away. The Lord told Moses to make an image of a serpent out of bronze and to lift it high on his staff. Anyone who had been bitten, if they looked upon the bronze serpent, would live.

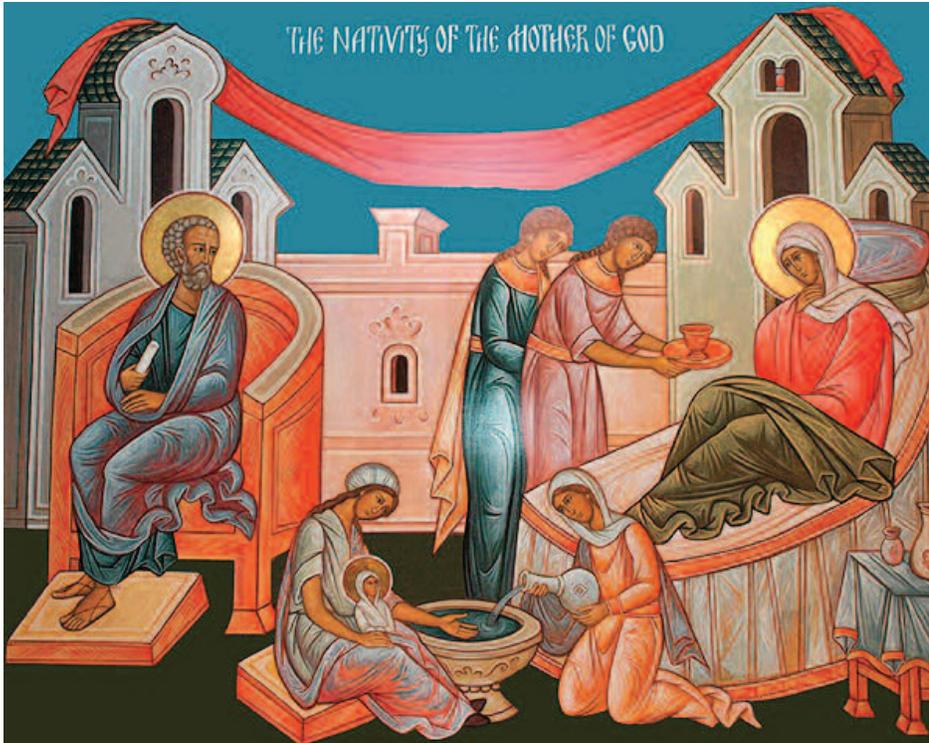
This might seem a rather obscure ref-

erence, even for those who have studied the Scriptures, but here is the point. Jesus tells Nikodemus that this incident in the desert is a prefiguring, a "type," of the Crucifixion. God had sent the serpents as punishment for the people's complaining and ingratitude. Then God tells Moses to use the very instrument of His punishment (the image of the serpent) as the means for healing and redemption. Jesus' self-sacrifice on the Cross, uses the very curse that had befallen humanity because of Adam and Eve's sin, namely death, and transforms in as the means for our salvation. If we look up with faith at the Lord hanging on the wood of the Cross, we too will be healed and live.

This Gospel lesson ends with a hopeful and prophetic set of passages, the most famous of which is: "for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (v. 16). As we contemplate the words of the Lord, we begin to understand *why* God sent His Son. It is so that we can learn, through his example, his life, how to love God, and how to love one another. When we begin to feel the power of his sacrifice for us, then we will be able to perceive the real significance of this event when the Precious was found, unearthed and lifted up for all to see.

God does not want us to die, but to live—forever. He does not consider "sin" the final word; "repentance" is. He offers us the remedy of the Cross, just as He did the "serpent" in the desert, as a way toward eternal life.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary: The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of humanity.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of humankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since St Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcome the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Sts Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Sts Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feasts at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but

the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

St Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. St Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained to extreme old age and prepared themselves by virtuous life for a sublime calling: to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God, and of them would be born a most blessed daughter Mary, through Whom would come the Salvation of all the World.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all humankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate ... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion.