

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

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.

TWO CHURCH CLEANING sessions are schedule for THIS week. **Monday, September 18th at 10:30 am** AND **Friday, September 22nd at 9:00 am.** Christine Masterjohn is coördinating. **No skill needed, just a desire to clean!**

PITA BAKING. There will be a **Pita Baking Session, THIS COMING Sat-**

GREETERS TEAM 2:
ARTIC GAVALA AND V. GERALD BELBA

COFFEE HOUR CREW A:
MARGARITE LANDRY,
CHRISTINE MASTERJOHN

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



SUNDAY AFTER THE ELEVATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS

APOSTOLIC READING: GALATIANS 2:16-20 ☩ GOSPEL: MARK 8:34-9:1

(TAKING UP OUR CROSS AND FOLLOWING CHRIST)

TONE 6 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 4

urday, September 23rd, 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!**

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!

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 **Randy Samara**, fallen asleep 6 months. **May the Lord rest him with the just!**

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Janice Samara** and family in Randy's memory.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Mon, Sept 18 Church Cleaning, 10:30 am
- Tues, Sept 19 Holy Trinity Gen Assembly, 7:00 pm
- Fri, Sept 22 Church Cleaning, 9:00 am
- 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
- Fri, Oct 20 Mustard Seed Meal, 5:00 pm

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

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 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

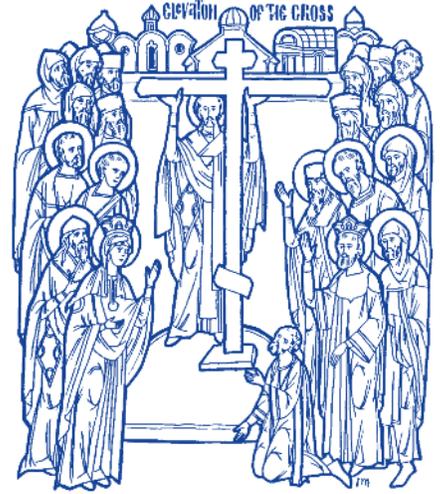
Sofia Apostol

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,

OCREATOR AND MAKER OF THIS HOUR: Another morning finds us here before you, celebrating the exaltation of the precious cross, that immortal and life-giving tree that bore the saviour's body in death. From barren wood and bitter death was that tree made, but its stark and naked limbs produced un-failing fruit and leaves that never fade. It was the very price that saved us from the law of old, a price paid not in gold or silver, but in the blood of that pure and spotless lamb. Enlighten us as we reflect on this mystery, O God and Father. Impress on our feeble minds how much we need to embrace the cross, in whose rough surface we see ourselves as we really are.

By the grace and mercy and love for us of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



HOW MUCH IS YOUR LIFE WORTH?

THE Gospel lesson for the Sunday following the Feast of the Elevation of the Precious Cross adds the personal dimension to our understanding of what it means to call ourselves Christians. The Gospel lesson for the Sunday *before* the Feast of the Cross (taken from St. John, 3:13-17) spoke of what God, in the person of Jesus Christ, was doing for us through His sacrifice on the Cross. *This* Sunday's Gospel lesson found in St. Mark (8:34-9:1) speaks to how we should respond to God's great act of love.

The passage opens with an invitation. The Lord says: "If any want to become my followers ..." (v. 34). Even when we hear what it will mean to "become a follower," we shouldn't lose sight of this first important point: the Lord is *inviting* us. He doesn't command. He doesn't threaten. He asks. He says, "if."

The rest of the verse is where we find out what it means to follow Christ. It is a real challenge and often difficult to hear. The Lord tells us that if a person decides to accept His invitation, "... let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Usually we run through the verse quickly, treating it all as a single statement, but it actually contains three separate actions. Let's take a look at each, one at a time.

What does it mean to "deny" oneself? The Lord does not mean to simply refrain from doing something that we would like to do — although this is certainly part of it. Jesus is talking about looking at ourselves in the same way we would look at another person who we do not know at all. He is asking us to give ourselves the same sort of critique and spiritual scrutiny that we might give a perfect stranger as we look at them from a distance. The original Greek word that we translate as "deny" is actually much stronger. It has a meaning



closer to "renounce" oneself than "deny."

We need to develop a certain distance from ourselves if we want to grow spiritually. For example, often we can clearly discern the issue or problem that another person is facing, while it remains unapparent to them. This is true on both the physical and spiritual planes. When a parent wants to help their child get the best education possible, they will select the tutor who will push the child to his or her limits. We know that a physical therapist can push someone with an injury beyond what they thought they were capable of. Only someone with distance and spiritual insight can push you to recognize and confront such things. We need to regulate and train ourselves like a drill sergeant would. This is what the Lord means when he says we must deny ourselves.

The second action is to take up our cross. We commonly describe some

genuine difficulty or tragedy as our "cross," and properly so, because it is certainly a burden that we carry. However, here the Lord is talking about the cross that leads to death. In the passage just before this Jesus was talking to His disciples about His impending Crucifixion, but they didn't understand him. They wanted Him to save His own life. By speaking of the cross here He is explaining to His followers what the price of discipleship is. We must be prepared to die for the Gospel. We must be prepared to die to ourselves — to our passions, our self-interest, and our will. Sometimes this will also mean our very life itself.

Finally, we are told to follow him. Even if we deny ourselves to the point of death, this alone will not "save our lives" if we do not follow Christ. Many misguided and perhaps evil people have lost themselves to a cause, even to the point of death. The self-denial and acceptance of one's cross, without following the ultimate truth, can lead to destruction. In our own day we have been afflicted with countless "suicide" terrorists who cause pain, suffering and death to innocent people, all the while considering themselves "martyrs." It is by following Christ, by learning from His example, that self-denial and the burden of the Cross find true meaning, become life-giving.

The Lord tells us to put our lives in proper and true perspective, and then to choose correctly. "What will it profit a person to gain the whole world and forfeit their life [soul]? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?" (v. 36-37) Our Lord invites us to walk the path of life; but ultimately, it remains our choice.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA