

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

JANUARY 21, 2018

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY CONTINUES. If there is a specific time that is more convenient for you, please e-mail or call (508-335-7378) Fr. Nick to arrange it.

The latest issue of the Metropolitan quarterly **CREDINȚA / THE FAITH** is available at the candles. *Pick one up and take it home!*

PITAS AVAILABLE. There are a pitas available for purchase. If you're interest please speak with Betty Anderson.

WE CELEBRATE A MEMORIAL TODAY for the servant of God **Margaret (Maggie) Gikas**, fallen asleep one year. *May our loving Lord rest her soul where the just repose!*

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Maggie's family** in her memory.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity has RN, LPN and CNA job opportunities on all shifts. For more information, call Michelle Williamson at (508) 852-1000, ext. 218 or e-mail: mwilliamson@htnr.net. You may also stop by Holy Trinity and fill out an application.

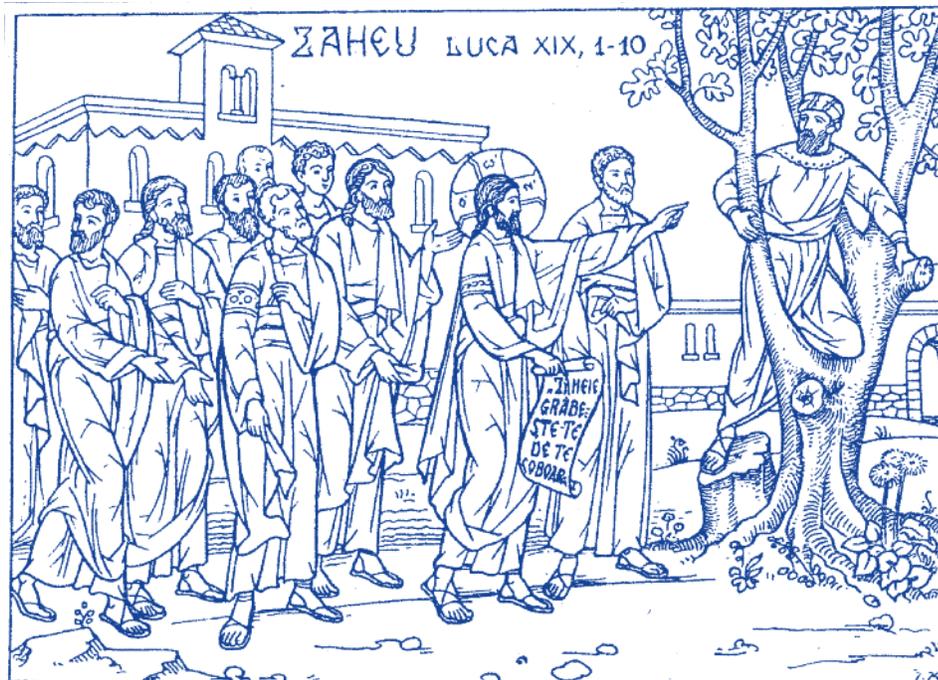
GREETERS TEAM 5:

DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:

HELP NEEDED.
PLEASE LEND A HAND!

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ST. MAXIMOS THE CONFESSOR

APOSTOLIC READING: 1 TIMOTHY 4:9-15 ☩ **GOSPEL: LUKE 19:1-10**

(THE CONVERSION OF ZACCHÆUS)

TONE 8 ☩ **MATINS GOSPEL 11**

HOLY TRINITY has revamped its website. It's packed with information in a very attractive format. Check it out at: www.htnr.net. And while you're there, take a look at the newly designed Newsletter, by clicking on the "**Monthly Newsletter**" button.

REMEMBER: Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is an Orthodox Charity and relies on your donations to continue its mission of providing the best care possible.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sun, Jan 28 Publican & Pharisee. Triodion begins
- Week of Jan 28 No Fasting
- Sat, Feb 3 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
- Sat, Feb 10 Saturday of the Souls, Liturgy 10am
- Sun, Feb 11 Meatfare Sunday
- Sun, Feb 18 Cheesefare Sunday; Sun of Forgiveness
- Mon, Feb 19 Great Lent begins
- Sun, April 1 Palm Sunday (Western Easter)
- Sun, April 8 Great and Holy Pascha



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

ST. MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR

JANUARY 21

Our venerable and God-bearing Father Maximus the Confessor (ca. 580-662) was an Orthodox Christian monk and ascetical writer known especially for his courageous fight against the heresy of Monothelitism. His feast days in the Church are celebrated on January 21 and, for the translation of his relics, on August 13.

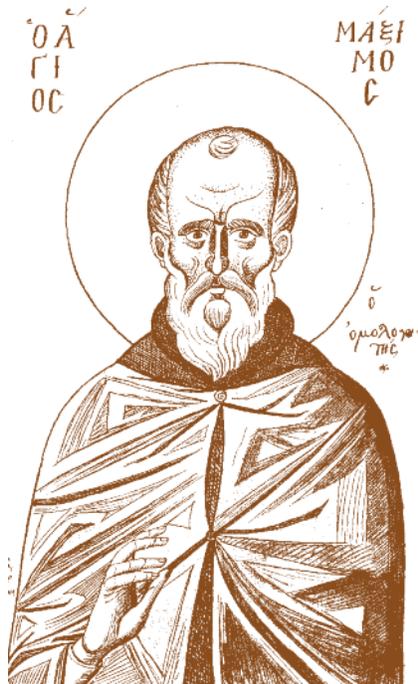
He was born in the region of Constantinople, was well educated, and spent some time in government service before becoming a monk, having been a member of the old Byzantine aristocracy and holding the post of Imperial Secretary under Emperor Heraclius. Around 614, he became a monk (later abbot) at the monastery of Chrysopolis. During the Persian invasion of the Empire (614), he fled to Africa.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

OUR eyes are forever roaming about, Lord, preoccupied with the actions and possessions of others, leading us constantly to comparing ourselves with them in ways that can only lead to jealousy, envy, and resentment. Give us the grace to cease this senseless and futile concern with others by minding our own affairs.

For you are a good and loving God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



From about 640 on, he became the determined opponent of Monothelitism, the heretical teaching that Jesus Christ had only one will. In this, he followed the example of St. Sophronius of Jerusalem, who was the first to combat this heresy starting in 634.

Maximus supported the Orthodoxy of Rome on this matter and is said to have exclaimed: "I have the faith of the Latins, but the language of the Greeks." He argued for Dyothelitism, the Orthodox teaching that Jesus Christ possessed two wills (one divine and one human), rather than the one will posited by Monothelitism.

After Pyrrhus, the temporarily deposed Monothelite Patriarch of Constantinople, had declared his defeat in a dispute at Carthage (645), Maximus obtained the heresy's condemnation at several local synods in Africa, and also worked to have it condemned at the Lateran Council of 649. He was brought to Constantinople in 653, pressured to adhere to the Typos of Emperor Constans II. Refusing to do so, he was exiled to Thrace. (Pope St. Martin of Rome was tried around the same time in Constan-

tinople, and thus deposed and exiled to Crimea.)

In 661 Maximus again was brought to the imperial capital and questioned; while there, he had his tongue uprooted and his right hand cut off (to prevent him from preaching or writing the true faith), and then was again exiled to the Caucasus, but died shortly thereafter.

Ultimately, Maximus was exonerated by the Sixth Ecumenical Council and recognized as a Father of the Church.

He left many writings (some of which are collected in the *Philokalia*) that are still widely read today; some are doctrinal, but many more describe the contemplative life and offer spiritual advice. He also wrote widely on liturgical and exegetical subjects. His theological work was later continued by St. Simeon the New Theologian and by St. Gregory Palamas.

NAMEDAYS

January 17

St. Anthony the Great

Anthony Theodore Christo
Scott Anthony Maynard
Anthony Rucho
Tony Nicholas Trakadas

January 18

St. Athanasios

Patriarch of Alexandria

Thanas Lolo
Arthur Peterson

January 22

The Holy Apostle Timothy

Rev. Fr. Timothy Lowe
Timothy Rucho

January 25

St. Gregory the Theologian

Rev. Fr. Gregory Christakos
Dr. Gregory Tsongalis

January 28

St. Ephraim the Syrian

Rev. Fr. Ephraim Peters

TODAY SALVATION HAS COME TO THIS HOUSE

THIS week's Gospel reading is the story of the conversion of Zacchæus, the Tax Collector (Luke 19:1-10). This encounter takes place in Jericho, following on the healing of the Blind Man (Luke 18:35-43) which occurred just on the outskirts of the city as Jesus was making his way into Jericho. Although the Evangelist Luke doesn't say so explicitly, it would be fair to assume that Zacchæus had heard of the miracle and was curious, like so many others, to see this Jesus.

St. Luke tells us a few things about Zacchæus. He's a chief tax collector and he's rich (v. 2). From what we know about how tax collectors operated in those days, we might correctly infer that at least some of his wealth was ill-gotten gain. He also tells us that he is short (v. 3). As Jesus is walking into Jericho, crowd begins to form and people are struggling to get a glimpse of him. Because of the crowd it is difficult for Zacchæus to see Jesus as he passes, so he climbs a sycamore tree. Sycamore trees have short, fat trunks and branches that spread broad and wide, making it relatively easy for someone to climb up and gain an advantage of a few feet. Nonetheless, it must have been something to see — a prominent official climbing a tree, like a child.

When Jesus gets to where Zacchæus is he says to him: "Zacchæus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today" (v. 5). Zacchæus is overwhelmed. He hurries down and welcomes him with joy. People in the crowd began to grumble complaining that Jesus was going to Zacchæus' house, the house of a sinner, but Zacchæus isn't cowered. He turns to Jesus and says, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay



back four times as much" (v. 8).

St. John Chrysostom draws our attention to the way in which Zacchæus expresses his repentance. Chrysostom says that it isn't enough to simply restore what was stolen, but reparations are a necessary part of making amends. In this case Zacchæus says that he will pay back four times as much. Chrysostom uses this example to challenge us. He asks, if when we bring our sins before God asking for forgiveness, do we follow the example of Zacchæus? Do we offer to repay our debt four times as much?

Chrysostom presents another interesting analogy. He observes that when someone hosts an important guest the first impulse is to clean and redecorate and fill their houses with fine and even luxuriant furnishings. Zacchæus, Chrysostom says, "decorates" his house with this profound act of repentance.

When we bless a new home, the service prescribed uses this very same Gospel reading, illustrating what it means to ask Christ to come into our house. The prayer says: "O Lord, who

condescended to enter under the roof of Zacchæus, bringing salvation to him and his whole house ... keep safe from harm those who dwell here ..."

In a prayer written by St. John Chrysostom read when preparing for Holy Communion we say, "O Lord my God, I know that I am not worthy that you should come under the roof of the house of my soul, for all is desolate and fallen in ruins ..." In these moving words, that bring to mind the faith of the Centurion (Matthew 8:8), we can also find the image of Zacchæus, and his act of repentance. We are offered his example for us to model and follow.

When Jesus sees Zacchæus' repentance, he says, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham" (v. 9). Some early Fathers speculated from the way in which Jesus said this, that Zacchæus might have been a Gentile. Others say that the Lord is clarifying what makes each of us a true son or daughter of Abraham: faith in the Living God. Whichever is the actual case, it is love of God and our repentance that makes us true children of Abraham.

Zacchæus followed Jesus until the day he died. He was ordained Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine by the Apostle Peter. Later, during one of the persecutions of the late first century, he suffered martyrdom. The story of Zacchæus' great act of repentance comes alive for us each time we read it in Holy Scriptures, and especially when we put his example into practice in our own lives.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA