

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

## JANUARY 28, 2018

### THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY IS WRAPPING-UP.** If Fr. Nick hasn't already contacted you, please e-mail or call (508-335-7378) him to arrange a time for next week.

**FOOD PANTRY.** Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **next Saturday, February 3rd, from 9 am - noon.** About 4 people are needed. Likewise, donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with **Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola.**

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 TWO MEMORIALS TODAY.** For the servant of God **Sofia Gubavu**, fallen asleep forty days, the mother of Carolina Ionete. And for the servant of God, **Sotir Richard Seferi**,

**GREETERS TEAM 1:**  
GERALD BELBA AND MARGARITE LANDRY

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP TEAM D:**  
ILIANA & SEAN FAHEY,  
DIMITRI SAFFRON & MACLYNN TROJAN  
CHRISTOS & SPIRO SPYROU

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



### THE THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*THE TRIODION BEGINS*

*ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN*

EPISTLE: 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-15 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 18:10-14  
(THE PARABLE OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE)

TONE 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 1

fallen asleep one year. **May our loving Lord rest their souls where the just repose!**

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by **Carolina Ionete** in memory of her mother

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**Holy Trinity has an opening for an Activities Director. There are also job opportunities on all shift for RNs, LPNs and CNAs.** More information: call Michelle Williamson at (508) 852-1000, ext. 218 or e-mail: [mwilliamson@htnr.net](mailto:mwilliamson@htnr.net). Or, stop by Holy Trinity and fill out an application.

**HOLY TRINITY** has revamped its website. It's packed with information in an attrac-

tive format. Check it out at: [www.htnr.net](http://www.htnr.net). And, while you're there, click 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
Fri, Feb 16	Mustard Seed, 5 pm
Sun, Feb 18	Cheesefare Sunday; Sun of Forgiveness
Mon, Feb 19	Great Lent begins
Wed, Feb 21	PreSanctified Lit at St. Mary's 6pm
Sun, April 1	Palm Sunday (Western Easter)
Sun, April 8	Great and Holy Pascha

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*A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas*

## NAMEDAYS

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



### THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR IN THE TEMPLE FEBRUARY 2ND

#### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**T**HOUGH WE constantly provoke you, Lord God, in your boundless mercy you never abandon us. In your own mysterious ways, you ease the burdens of our life, giving us the strength to bear them, and you answer us, again in your own way, when we cry out to you in distress. Still, though we seldom hear or understand your response, by faith we try to remember that you are there and that you hear us. Teach us to live as you wish us to, and, in your loving kindness, increase and confirm our faith.

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

**W**hen the most pure Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary's forty days of purification had been fulfilled, she took her first-born Son to Jerusalem on this, the fortieth day after His birth, that she might present Him in the temple according to the Law of Moses, which teaches that every first-born male child be dedicated to God, and also that she might offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons, as required by the Law (Luke 2:22-24; Exod. 13:2; Lev. 12:6-8). On this same day, a just and devout man, the greatly aged Symeon, was also present in the temple, being guided by the Holy Spirit. For a long time, this man had been awaiting the salvation of God, and he had been informed by divine revelation that he would not die until he beheld the Lord's Christ. Thus, when he beheld Him at that time and took Him up into his aged arms, he gave glory to God, singing: "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, ..." And he confessed that he would close his eyes joyfully, since he had seen the Light of revelation for the

#### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**O**GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: When your divine Son was brought into the temple, carried along with the offerings to be sacrificed, the blessed Simeon received him from the arms of his mother. The elder's joy, however, was tempered by apprehension, for, with the eyes of the spirit, he saw the powers of heaven in attendance, glorifying the infant saviour with great awe and reverence. Just as the divinity of your Son did not consume the elder, do not let it consume us, either, though we deserve it for our indifferent, careless, and fickle way of living. Rather, as we prepare for the night that quickly approaches, grant us forgiveness of our sins, and let peace and tranquillity restore our tired souls and bodies.

By the grace and mercy and love 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.



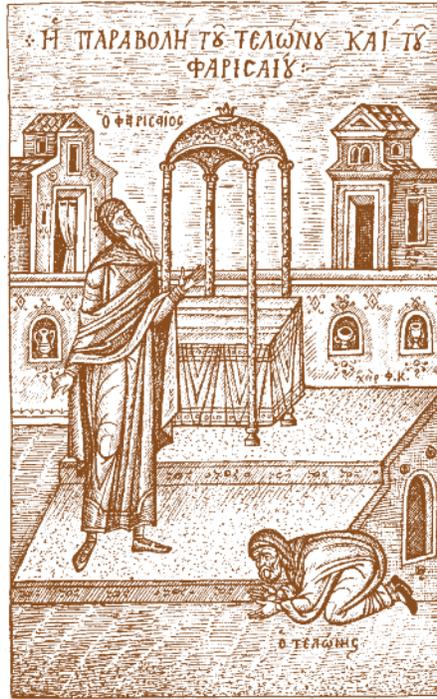
nations and the Glory of Israel (Luke 2:25-32). From ancient times, the Holy Church has retained this tradition of the churching of the mother and new-born child on the fortieth day and of the reading of prayers of purification.

# GOD, BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER!

**T**HIS week we begin the Triodion Period. The Triodion is the Church's hymnbook for the Lenten season. From now until Pascha we will read and sing from it to supplement the hymns typically sung in Vespers and Matins. The Gospel lesson for this first Sunday of the Triodion is Jesus' parable of the Publican (tax collector) and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14). It is a story showing us the innermost thoughts swirling in the hearts and minds of these two people. It is a story of truth and self-deception. It is a story intended to prepare us for the season of repentance.

At its core it is a very simple story. The Lord tells us that "two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector" (v. 10). The Pharisee prayed in the usual manner: he lifted his eyes and hands toward Heaven and then began to recount his good works. He prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income" (v. 11-12). By contrast, the tax collector didn't even lift his head up. Bowing low he prayed, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (v. 13) Jesus tells those listening that it was the tax collector who was justified in the eyes of God, not the Pharisee. No doubt that when he said this the Lord shocked those who heard him.

On one level the Pharisee was telling the truth. He did try to the best of his ability to follow the Law, that is, the rules of pious behavior outlined by Moses. However the Lord is asking his listeners to go beyond external behavior; he wants people to look to the heart of the matter, to look into their own hearts. This is the meaning of "all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted" (v. 14). We always stand on spiritual quicksand when we think that we are better than we actually are.



This story is a parable. It is designed to paint the picture not with subtle, but rather, with strong lines so that we might more easily understand the meaning. We recognize that the Pharisee is exhibiting a certain kind of pridefulness and the tax collector a particular form of humility. The challenge for us is to recognize both of these characteristics in ourselves. How might we avoid the pride of the one while cultivating the humility of the other?

As only St. John Chrysostom could observe, he says that in a way the tax collector is not humbling himself, but rather simply acknowledging the truth. He is stating the facts. He is honestly assessing himself. He recognizes his sin. The first step toward understanding humility is a deep, perhaps even brutally honest assessment of yourself. No delusions, no illusions, and no excuses. It is a very difficult thing to do.

St. John Chrysostom offers us something else to consider. He says that if someone calls us "names" we shouldn't react at all. On some level and in some way the accusation is more than

likely true. This may in fact be the very reason we react. We recognize a certain truth in it, and are embarrassed.

Of course this honest assessment works both ways. It is false humility not to acknowledge the gifts that we have and the good that we do. Sinners we may be, but we are not wholly without redeeming qualities. What the Pharisee said was not a lie. He did fast. He did tithe. His problem was that he compared himself to other people, and in so doing he felt as though he were better than they. Yet, to recognize that we have a particular gift, or to feel good about the fact that we've helped someone is, if we are careful, a way to grow further in goodness and holiness. But, to brag about a gift we have, or some good we've done, is self-serving and prideful. We understand this best when we see it displayed in someone else. The real challenge is to see it in ourselves.

Of course there is another dimension to consider, namely the source of our gifts. If we are gifted at something — say as a superb athlete, clever in business, or able to sing like an angel — are we truly responsible for that gift? Are we really to be credited? Or, is it but an example of the many things God has given us, a talent that we improve upon? If we do good, help the poor, visit the sick, should we broadcast it about, even to ourselves? Or, should we quietly rejoice in the power given us by God to assist another?

As we prepare ourselves for our Lenten journey toward Pascha, our first task is to make this sort of spiritual self-assessment; to look into our hearts, honestly; to acknowledge our strengths and our failings; and finally, to have the courage to make this simple prayer to our Heavenly Father: God, be merciful to me a sinner!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA