

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 25, 2018

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

GREAT LENT began this past Monday. Tomorrow marks the start of the second week of Lent.

TODAY IS THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY. We're asking the children of the Parish to process with Icons toward the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. The adults can hold theirs high from the pew. **We ask that parents bring their children's icons to Church** to make the procession even more meaningful for them.

READ HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN NICOLAE'S REFLECTION on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Copies available at the candles.

PRESVYTERA MARIA has been invited to speak at **Sts. Anargyroi, Marlborough**, by the Enosis-Philoptochos this **Sunday, February 25th** at 3:00 pm. She will be talking about her responsibilities as the Child Advocate of the Commonwealth and her work on behalf of especially children in need. The conversation is open to all.

THE IOCC has prepared a resource a booklet for Great Lent: "**Service as Almsgiving**" that offers six weekly

GREETERS TEAM 5:
DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

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

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY ☩ **FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT**
APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 11:24-26; 32-40 ☩ **GOSPEL: JOHN 1:43-51**
(JESUS CALLS PHILIP AND NATHANAE)
TONE 5 ☩ **MATINS GOSPEL 5**

Lenten reflections, written by IOCC board members past and present. Available on-line at: www.iocc.org.

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY this **Wednesday, February 28th** will be at **St. George Cathedral on Anna St.** Each Liturgy will start at 6:00 pm. Check out the full schedule in the Bulletin. There is a "pot-luck" Lenten meal after the service. **ALSO**, persons wishing to receive Holy Communion should prepare themselves in the usual manner, including fasting from at least noon.

A PITA BAKING Session will be held, **THIS COMING SATURDAY, March 3rd, 9:00 am to noon.** **Questions?** talk to **Betty Anderson (508-756-4848)** or **Chris Toda, 508-832-6271.** Also, let us know if you'll be available. **Remember: There's a job for everyone!**

FOOD PANTRY. Help is

needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **next Saturday, March 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.**

VESPERS AND CONFESSION will be held **each Saturday evening at 5:00 pm during Great Lent.** Fr. Nick will be

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, Feb 19	GREAT LENT BEGAN
Sat, Feb 24	Pita Dough Rolling, 9am - noon
Wed, Feb 28	PreSanctified Lit at St. George 6pm
Sat, March 3	Pita Baking, 9am - noon Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
Wed, March 7	PreSanctified Lit at St. Nicholas 6pm
Wed, March 14	PreSanctified Lit at St. Mary 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

available for confession each week after Vespers, and before Vespers by appointment (e-mail Fr. Nick)

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED for the coming weeks. Please speak with Presvytera Maria if you would like to sponsor one.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **the Gity family** in memory of **David Gity**, fallen asleep two years.

COMMUNITY NEWS

ST. MARY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH in Shrewsbury is holding its Annual **Lenten Fish Fry on Friday, March 9**. Dinner will be served from 4:00pm to 8:00pm in the Parish Hall (Main St, Shrewsbury). **Information:** www.StMarysFishFry.com.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

A PROFILE IN COURAGE. Read the incredible story of a former Holy Trinity resident, who is a member of St. Mary's Assumption Albanian Orthodox Church in Worcester MA. See the whole story on Holy Trinity's website: www.htnr.net. Look for: ***A Profile in Courage and Persistence.***

ST. SPYRIDON GOYA will be visiting the residents of Holy Trinity on Tuesday February 27th, at 6:30pm to play bingo with them. The residents always look forward to their visits!



THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

O Lord and master of my life! Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness, of ambition and vain talk!

Instead, give me the spirit of prudence and humility, of patience and charity.

Yes, my king and Lord, let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others: For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

NAMEDAYS

February 22

The Holy Martyr Anthousa and her 12 Servants

Anthi Elefteriou

February 24

St. Theodore of Tyre

Theodore Belba
Theodora Collins
Theodhoraq Lolo
Teodor Nedelcu
Theodore Peter Tonna
Theodore Russell Tonna
Derek Wilder



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

GLORY TO YOU, O Father, for sending us your only Son to be our salvation! Glory to you, O Christ, for dying on the cross to give us life! Glory to you, O Holy Spirit, for initiating and perfecting the mystery of our salvation! We again ask you to bring our lenten observances to fruition. Enable us to internalize our external practices, and convert us to the truth in spite of us, showing us how to think and live correctly. Help us to hold onto confidence and endurance, so that, by doing your will, we may reap the rewards you promise. And, as we rejoice in this season of grace, enable us to remain focused on the paschal mysteries, so that our joy may be completed by seeing them fulfilled in our lives.

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

I SAW YOU UNDER THE FIG TREE

ON THIS first Sunday of Lent we remember that event in ad 843 when the veneration of the holy images was again allowed and the 120-year civil war over their role ended. The ad 843 restoration of icons was an affirmation of the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council held in ad 787. Since that time the proper place and use of holy images in our worship and devotion has been defined in such a way that all understand that icons are not idols; we worship God alone, not images.

At first glance today's Gospel reading (John 1:43-51) would seem to have little to do with the veneration of icons. It is the story of the Apostle Nathanael's call and confession, and the Evangelist John appropriately places it at the very start of his Gospel.

Jesus is assembling his disciples. The day before Jesus' encounter with Nathanael, two disciples of John the Baptist were standing next to him as Jesus passed by. John said to them: "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36) They immediately followed him. One of these was Andrew who then went and got his brother Simon Peter, and brought him to meet Jesus.

The next day Jesus found Philip and said to him, very simply: "Follow me" (1:43). And he did. Then he went to find his friend Nathanael and told him: "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth" (1:45).

Philip knew Nathanael to be a careful and — as St. John Chrysostom describes him — exact man. He was expecting a skeptical response that's why he cited Moses and the prophets. Nathanael didn't disappoint, but even in his back-handed response — "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" — he showed his reluctance to offend by not directly contradicting Philip.

When they came toward Jesus, the Lord said: "Here is truly an Israelite in



whom there is no deceit!" (1:47) Nathanael wanted to know how Jesus knew him. He tells him: "I saw you under the fig tree, before Philip called you" (1:48).

We don't know what Nathanael was doing or thinking while alone under the fig tree. Some speculate that he was praying, perhaps even asking God to hasten the Messiah's coming. It doesn't really matter. The point is that it was deeply private. Only Nathanael and God knew. However, when he heard Jesus' words Nathanael knew that he had access to his heart. Jesus *knew* Nathanael.

This is why Nathanael responded with a solemn confession: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (1:49) Nathanael's declaration is similar to Peter's — "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16) — but contrasts with his in one significant way. While the words are almost the same, each understands Jesus differently. Peter's confession springs from his having lived and traveled with Jesus, his having witnessed miracles and wonders. He declares Jesus to be God. Nathanael marvels and rejoices at the Lord's words, but sees him as a man, the King of Israel.

This becomes evident in the differ-

ent ways the Lord responded to each. To Peter he said: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). And to Nathanael he said: "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these" (John 1:50). Here is where we can return to the subject of the holy icons.

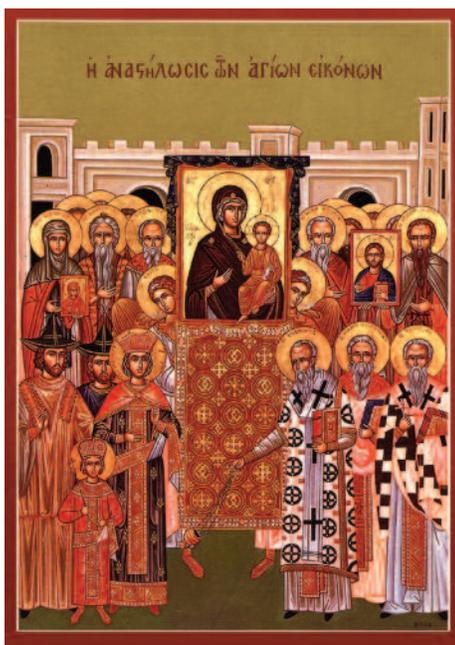
The heart of the iconoclasts' argument was that images were warping the understanding of who Christ was and is: the Son of the living God. By the ways in which many were using the images, they were distorting the true significance of Christ's coming. They were stuck on material representations.

The response of the icon supporters was that the image was just that: a representation. The language used to distinguish the "original" from the "copy" became official doctrine: we *worship* God only, while we only *venerate* saints and images. The Church saw then, as it sees now, the vital need to affirm the actual physical incarnation of the Son of God in the human we know as Jesus of Nazareth. At the same time, we also need to affirm that God is totally beyond any kind of physical representation. Put another way, Nathanael's witness springs from an outward experience, a miracle. Peter's declaration reveals the Lord's very nature.

One favorite way the Lord chose to describe himself was "the Son of Man," a reference to a vision the Prophet Daniel had of the Messiah (Daniel 7:13). In this phrase the Lord captures his dual nature: God and human; the Mediator between us and heaven. If the icons are truly windows that allow us to peer into heaven, we should treasure them and venerate them, even as we long to be in that place they reveal to us.

— FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

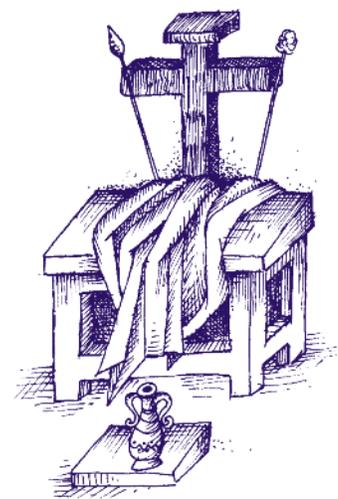


THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY. The sense of joy and thanksgiving, already evident on the Saturday of St. Theodore, is still more apparent on the first Sunday in Lent, when we celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy. On this day the Church commemorates the final ending of the Iconoclast controversy and the definitive restoration of the holy ikons to the churches by the Empress Theodora, acting as regent for her young son Michael III. This took place on the first Sunday in Lent, 11 March 843. There is, however, not only a historical link between the first Sunday and the restoration of the ikons but also, as in the case of St. Theodore, a spiritual affinity. If Orthodoxy triumphed in the epoch of the Iconoclast controversy, this was because so many of the faithful were prepared to undergo exile, torture, and even death, for the sake of the truth. The Feast of Orthodoxy is above all a celebration in honour of the martyrs and confessors who struggled and suffered for the faith: hence its appropriateness for the season of Lent, when we are striving to imitate

the martyrs by means of our ascetic self-denial. The fixing of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday is therefore much more than the result of some chance historical conjunction.

The Triodion gives the text of a special ‘Office of Orthodoxy’, which is held at the end of Mattins or, more commonly, at the end of the Divine Liturgy on this Sunday. The Office celebrates not only the restoration of the holy ikons but, more generally, the victory of the true faith over all heresies and errors. A procession is made with the holy ikons, and after this extracts are read from the synodical decree of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787). Then sixty anathemas are pronounced against various heretics dating from the third to the fourteenth century; ‘Eternal Memory’ is sung in honour of the emperors, patriarchs and fathers who defended the Orthodox faith; and ‘Many Years’ is proclaimed in honour of our present rulers and bishops. Unfortunately in many parts of the Orthodox Church today this impressive service has fallen into disuse; elsewhere it is performed in a greatly abbreviated form.

Before the Triumph of Orthodoxy came to be celebrated on the first Sunday, there was on this day a commemoration of Moses, Aaron, Samuel and the prophets. Traces of this more ancient observance can still be seen in the choice of Epistle reading at the Liturgy (Hebrews 11:24–6, 32–40), and in the Alleluia verse appointed before the Gospel: ‘Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His Name’.



PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES

2018

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

St. Spyridon

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

St. George

Wednesday, March 7, 2018

St. Nicholas

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

St. Mary

Wednesday, March 21, 2018

St. Nicholas

Wednesday, March 28, 2018

Sts. Anagyroï

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest ‘pot-luck’ lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others.