

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 11, 2018

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**THE FOURTH WEEK OF GREAT LENT BEGINS TOMORROW.**

**THIS SUNDAY IS THE VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS.** If you'd like to donate toward the flowers, please speak with **Tim Rucho**.

**THIS WEEK'S PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY, ON Wednesday, March 14th will be at St. Mary's Assumption on Salisbury St.** Each Liturgy starts 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 SATURDAY, March 17th, 9:00 am to noon.** **Questions?** talk to **Betty Anderson (508-756-4848)** or **Chris Toda, 508-832-6271.** Please let us know if you'll be available. **Remember: There's a job for everyone!**

**BAKING ORDERS FOR EASTER** need to be in by **Sunday, March 18th.** If you have family or friends who would like pitas, pastry, or pastry platters for the holiday, please make sure we get the or-

**GREETERS TEAM 2:**  
ARTIC GAVALA AND V. GERALD BELBA

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW B:**  
KARADIMITRIOU/KALPIDO FAMILY

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



### THE THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

#### THE VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS

**APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 4:14-16; 5:1-6 ☩ GOSPEL: MARK 8:34-38; 9:1  
TONE 7 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 7**

ders in time! Any questions, **please contact Betty Anderson or Chris Toda.** You can find the Baking Order Forms at the candle stand.

**THE 2018 ARCHDIOCESE ALMANAC** is available at the candles. Donation \$10.00.

**AN ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING** day is set for **Saturday, March 24th.** If you're able and willing to help, please speak with **Gerry Belba.**

**THE IOCC** has prepared a resource a booklet for Great Lent: **"Service as Almsgiving"** that offers six weekly Lenten reflections, written by IOCC board members past and present. Available on-line at: [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org).

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

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

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by **Carol Soter** in memory of her son **Gary Michael Soter.**

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**St. Spyridon Greek Ladies Philoptochos** will be hosting a **coffee social** for Holy Trinity residents on Thursday, March 15, 2:00pm.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Wed, March 14 | PreSanctified Lit at St. Mary 6pm       |
| Sat, Mar 17   | Pita Baking, 9am - noon                 |
| Sun, March 18 | Pascha Baking Orders Deadline           |
| Wed, March 21 | PreSanctified Lit at Sts. Anargyroi 6pm |
| Sat, March 24 | e-Recycling, 9am - 2pm                  |
| Wed, Mar 28   | PreSanctified Lit at St. Nicholas 6pm   |
| Sun, April 1  | Palm Sunday (Western Easter)            |
| Sat, April 7  | Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon    |
| 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](mailto:FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG) ♦ WEB: [WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG](http://WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG)**

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

Holy Trinity has job openings for Staff Nurses (RN/LPN), CNA's, Unit Manager, as well as Dietary Aides. For a full detailed description of job requirements and responsibilities, go to the Holy Trinity website at: [www.htnr.net/employment-opportunities](http://www.htnr.net/employment-opportunities), or contact Michele Williamson at: mwilliamson@htnr.net, or call 508-852-1000, ext. 218.



## NAMEDAYS

### March 3

*Henricus, the hermit martyr in Norway*

Eric Lolo  
Erik Mayer

### March 9

*The Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste*  
Mircea Nedelcu

### March 17

*St. Alexios the Man of God*

Alex John Johnson  
Alex Leo Toda

*St. Patrick, Enlightener of Ireland*

Padraic Donnchadh Peterson  
Patricia Thanas

### March 25

*The Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos*

V. Gerald Belba  
Lea Christo  
Mary Anna Dymek  
Vangjush Lolo  
Evan Sparages  
Evan Stamoulis  
Lynne Tonna  
Evans Tsoules



## THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

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.

## A LENTEN PRAYER

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

TODAY, CHRIST JESUS, like David, we again ask you to forgive us all our sins, but especially those against the virtue of love. Forgive us for so often failing to love our neighbor, by disdainful of our peers and resentfully resisting those who have any authority over us, by defaming our brothers and sisters as arrogant while elevating ourselves as models of humility, and by failing to love them and care for them while demanding unreasonable attentions for ourselves. Forgive us, O Lord, for our constant readiness to notice their every fault and failing while minimizing our own. Pardon us all of these, O Christ, and the countless other ways we sin against love, ways we cannot even remember. During these lenten days, turn us around and make of us true lovers, lest we find ourselves rejected from the paschal banquet.

For you, O Christ, deserve all glory, honor, and worship, together with your eternal Father, and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



## THE HEAVENLY LITURGY

**W**E'VE NOW reached the third and mid-point Sunday of Great Lent. We are asked to pause and reflect on our Lord's Precious Cross. The Epistle lesson it taken from the Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-5:6. St. Paul continues his reflection on Jesus as the high priest who presents our case before the Throne of God. There are two major points that he highlights in this reading. The first is that Jesus is like us in every respect, except for sin, and so he can thoroughly identify with our struggles, and as such present our case before God sympathetically. The second is that because of Jesus and his sacrifice, we can have more confidence before God than would have previously been possible.

St. Paul says that, "We have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God" (v. 14). There is a subtle reference to Moses in this verse; a contrast made between Moses who was prevented from entering the Promised Land because of his sin in Sinai, with Jesus who was permitted to "pass through the heavens" because of his faithfulness. Hebrews is constantly drawing our attention to the possibilities present in the Old Covenant, and now realized in the New.

"For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (v. 15). When St. Paul speaks of the ability of Jesus as high priest to "sympathize with our weaknesses" he is not just referring to the fact that he is human like us; he is also saying that unlike the high priests of the Jerusalem Temple, he lived the life of a common person, not insulated from the real worries and concerns of daily existence. He also says that in every respect Jesus was tempted as we are, but without sin. There is a nuance to the Greek verb tense "has been tempted" that doesn't come across in English. It means that he was tempted not just once or only on a particular occasion, but continually. Jesus was

tempted all the time to do this or that, in the same way we are; only he did not succumb. He experienced the allure, but he resisted. In short, he can relate to our struggle. More importantly, we can gain courage from his example. He shows us that it is possible to weather the storm of temptations.

St. Paul says that we can, "With confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (v. 16). Christ's example and position before God gives us access to God.

This is an idea that we might find hard to relate to in our more egalitarian society. We are a democratic society and consider access to power a right, not a privilege. Of course, we know that even in America some people are more equal than others, yet we see this as an abomination of the fundamental egalitarian principle. And so, in order to appreciate what our Lord Jesus did, we need to do some reality-checking. Each of us, from the highest to the lowest, will find ourselves in serious need of help at some time in our life, especially before God. Unfortunately, we usually realize this only when we've hit bottom.

The image of the heavenly temple and God's throne that St. Paul gives us is much closer to our actual circumstance. If we honestly examine our hearts and our actions, we will quickly realize that we have no way to access God's grace on our own. Most of us are like that poor man in the parable who shows up at the wedding dressed inappropriately (cf. Matthew 22:12). The king had him arrested, cuffed, and thrown into the outer darkness. This, brothers and sisters, is our plight without Jesus. He's the one who lends us proper attire so that we can confidently approach God's throne of mercy.

We Orthodox understand the Eucharistic celebration, the Divine Liturgy, as actually being in the presence of God, before his heavenly throne. The celebrant, usually our parish priest, is the

living icon of our Lord, who is Himself the *only* true celebrant. Jesus continually presents Himself before His Father, for our sake. In the Divine Liturgy we are healed of our wounds and changed by grace. Jesus intercedes, presenting Himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

Listen to how St. Paul explains it: "Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'; as he says also in another place, 'You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek'" (5:1-6).

Next week I will speak more of Melchizedek. Today, I would like us to reflect on this glimpse that St. Paul gives of the Heavenly Liturgy. St. John in his Revelation (chapter 4) gives us a similar picture of the continual worship taking place in Heaven. Our Eucharist celebration is an image, an icon, of this Liturgy. In the Liturgy, just before the Lord's Prayer, we thank our loving God for the fact that the gifts of bread and wine we offered have been received "at His holy, heavenly, and spiritual altar as an offering of spiritual fragrance," and ask that he "may in return send upon us divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit." It is the heavenly Altar before almighty God to which the prayer is referring.

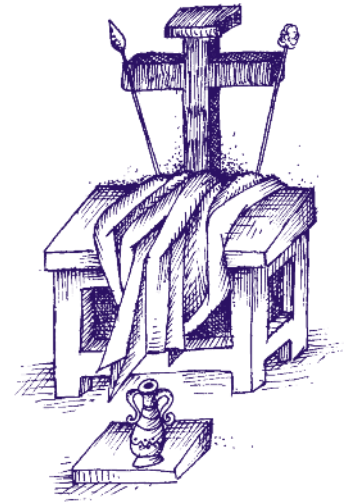
Next Sunday, when we wake up and are thinking about being late for Liturgy, or even skipping it entirely, let us recall this image of the Heavenly Liturgy, and, hopefully, reconsider.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

## EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

**THE THIRD SUNDAY (THE SUNDAY OF THE CROSS).** On this day the service of Mattins concludes with the solemn veneration of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross; the ceremonies are closely parallel to those at the feasts of the Exaltation of the Cross (14 September) and the Procession of the Cross (1 August). The veneration of the Cross on this third Sunday in Lent prepares us for the commemoration of the Crucifixion which is soon to follow in Holy Week, and at the same time it reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ: as the Synaxarion at Mattins

says, ‘Through the forty-day Fast, we too are in a way crucified, dying to the passions’. The dominant note on this Sunday, as on the two Sundays preceding, is one of joy and triumph. In the Canon at Mattins, the irmoi are the same as at Easter midnight, ‘This is the day of Resurrection ...’, and the troparia are in part a paraphrase of the Paschal Canon by St. John of Damascus. No separation is made between Christ’s death and His Resurrection, but the Cross is regarded as an emblem of victory and Calvary is seen in the light of the Empty Tomb.



### 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  
Sts. Anagroi
- Wednesday, March 28, 2018  
St. Nicholas

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.

### DONATIONS FOR HOLY WEEK

*General donations in any amount to defray the cost of decorations for the Paschal Feast are most appreciated. Some specific needs are:*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Flowers for Palm Sunday Icon .....     | \$50.00  |
| Palms .....                            | \$100.00 |
| Flowers for Bridegroom Icon .....      | \$50.00  |
| Holy Thursday Gospel Candles .....     | \$60.00  |
| Wreaths for Cross (Great Friday) ..... | \$75.00  |
| (Resurrection) .....                   | \$75.00  |
| Resurrection Icon .....                | \$50.00  |
| Bay Leaves for Holy Saturday .....     | \$100.00 |
| 1 Gallon of Olive Oil .....            | \$25.00  |
| ½ lb Incense .....                     | \$40.00  |
| Priest’s Paschal Candle .....          | \$50.00  |
| Rose Oil for Epitaphion .....          | \$25.00  |
| —————                                  |          |
| Flowers for Epitaphion .....           | \$600.00 |
| Decorations/Plants for Pascha .....    | \$400.00 |
| Easter Candy/Gifts for Children .....  | \$100.00 |

*Please see Betty Anderson to make a donation*