

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 18, 2018

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

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

DR. LEWIS PATSAVOS, Professor of Canon Law Emeritus at Holy Cross, will be worshipping with us today and will offer the homily. It is always a joy to listen to the spiritual wisdom he shares.

BAKING ORDERS FOR EASTER need to be in by **TODAY, 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 orders in time! Any questions, please contact **Betty Anderson** or **Chris Toda**. You can find the Baking Order Forms at the candle stand.

THIS WEEK'S PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY, on Wednesday, March 21st, will be at **Sts. Anargyroi in Marlborough**. 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 24th, 9:00 am to noon**. **Questions?** talk to **Betty Anderson (508-756-4848)** or **Chris**

GREETERS TEAM 3:
EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:
PLEASE HELP CLEAN UP

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

St. John of Sinai, Author of The Ladder of Divine Ascent

APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 6:13-20 ☩ **GOSPEL: MARK 9:17-32**

(Healing of the Epileptic Boy)

TONE 8 ☩ **MATINS GOSPEL 8**

Toda, 508-832-6271. Please let us know if you'll be available. **Remember: There's a job for everyone!**

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.

VESPERS AND CONFESSION 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)

A MEMORIAL will be celebrated today for the servant of God, **Randolph 'Randy' Samara**, fallen asleep one year. *May the Lord rest his soul with the righteous!*

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is

sponsored by **Janice Samara and family** in memory of her husband **Randy**.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity has job openings for Cooks (10-20 hrs/wk), **Staff Nurses** (RN/LPN), **CNA's**, and **Unit Manager**. For a full detailed description of job requirements and responsibilities, go to the website at: www.htnr.net/employment-opportunities, or contact **Michele Williamson** at: mwilliamson@htnr.net, or call 508-852-1000, ext. 218.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, March 18 Pascha Baking Orders Deadline
Wed, March 21 PreSanctified Lit at Sts. Anargyroi 6pm
Sat, March 24 Pita Baking, 9am - noon
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
Sat, April 14 e-Recycling, 9am - 2pm

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850

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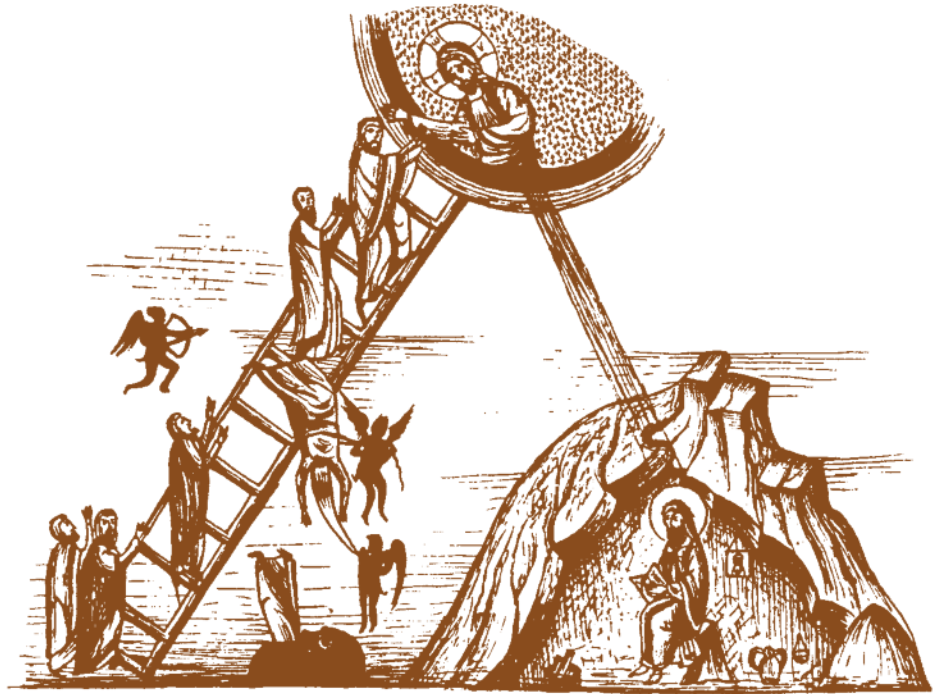
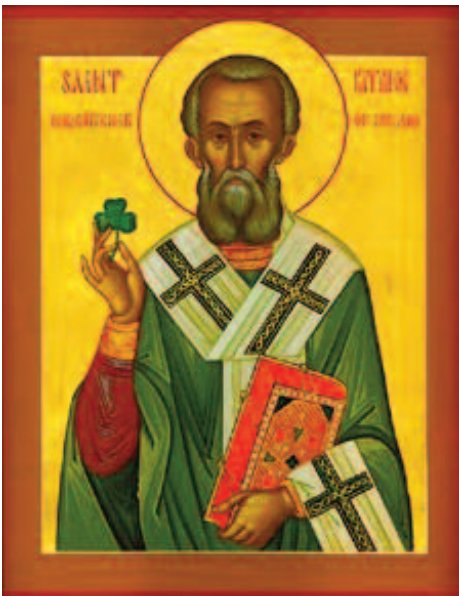
A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

ETERNAL LORD AND MASTER:
By the inscrutable mystery of your divine wisdom, your only Son suffered for us, giving us an example to follow. He had done no wrong and there had been no perjury in his mouth. Though he was insulted, he did not retaliate with insults; though he was tortured, he made no threats, but placed his trust in you, his Father. When he was dying on the cross, he bore our faults in his own body. Therefore, master we entreat you: Let his wounds heal us, so that we may die to every form of wrongdoing and live for you alone.

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



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

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

PROMISES GIVEN AND KEPT

THIS FOURTH SUNDAY of Great Lent brings us closer to our spiritual goal: the light of our Lord's Resurrection. Today's Apostolic reading is taken from the Letter to the Hebrews, 6:13-20. There are two aspects of this passage that I would like to concentrate on. The first is Melchizedek: who he is, the nature of his priesthood, and how he figures into the prophecy of the coming Messiah. The second is God's promise to Abraham, how he kept it and what this promise means for us.

I have always been fascinated by Melchizedek. Before I was even able to really consider who he was and why St. Paul wrote about him so extensively, I just loved his name. It means "king of justice", but without knowing that, I thought it sounded exotic and made me want to find out more about him.

The reality is that there is very little written about him in the Bible. The only place where he actually appears is in Genesis. Here is what is recorded: "After [Abram's] return from the defeat of Chedor-laomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him a tenth of everything." (Genesis 14:17-20)

From these three verses a whole understanding of how the Messiah's coming would change the nature of our relationship with God was developed and written about in the Jewish community. St. Paul's description in the 7th chapter of Hebrews follows the commonly held beliefs of rabbis and Jewish scholars compiled in the Talmud (the accepted commentary on the Jewish Scripture).

The first thing that they understood is that the Messiah is to be eternal king

and priest. Because Melchizedek appeared "out of nowhere" and then "disappears," without father and mother, they saw this as a sign of the eternal Messiah.

The next insight taken from these verses is that Melchizedek is superior to Abram (later to be Abraham). After his victory against the kings who were in and around Jerusalem, Abram offers tithes (a tenth) to Melchizedek. This means that he recognized him as a priest of "God Most High." This action would later be interpreted in the Talmud and by St. Paul as recognizing the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek. Christian writers saw the offering of bread and wine as a foreshadowing of the Eucharist.

Melchizedek is the king of Salem, which later became known as Jerusalem. "Salem" means peace. So, Melchizedek is the King of Peace (another title of the Messiah). In addition, through Melchizedek's encounter with Abraham, it is clear that God decided Jerusalem would be the center of His earthly presence among us long before the descendants of Abraham return from their captivity in Egypt.

Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek has a mystical quality to it. At this point in Abraham's story he has just begun his journey of faith. God Most High has chosen him, but Abram does not know how to respond. Some Church fathers say it is Christ Himself who is appearing to Abram in the person of Melchizedek, in the same way He appeared to Moses in burning bush. Often, when we need God the most He appears to us, in a mystical guise, to help us and direct us.

This leads me to the second point I would like to highlight from today's reading: God's promise, His word. St. Paul speaks of "God's oath" as immutable — not able to be altered or changed. He uses the human example of giving an oath as a way to remove doubt during a dispute. We are asked to give

an oath when testifying at a trial or in other official circumstances as a way to demonstrate that we speak the absolute truth. Our word is our bond. If we lie we are imprisoned. God promised many things to Abraham, and St. Paul says that because he couldn't swear by anything greater, he swore by Himself. This means God wanted to secure His promise in such a way that Abram would believe him.

Yet still, Abram needed more assurance of the promise. He wanted to know with some certainty that what God had told him, had promised to him, would indeed come to pass. God promised him a grand legacy, yet he had no heir, no son or daughter. He asked God for a sign.

God told him to look to the heavens, to the night sky, and said that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars he saw. Unfortunately, because of modern nighttime "light pollution" very few of us get to see the night sky in all of its brilliance, but Abram did. "And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6) He saw the myriad of stars in the heavens and believed the truth of God's word.

Because of his faith and as a sign of it, God gave Abram a new name: Abraham, and Sarai his wife: Sarah. He chose them, well beyond childbearing years, to found a new people: Israel. From this nation the Savior was born.

So many signs have been given to us, not only in Biblical times, but also here and now. We pray to God and He hears us. We ask for His help and He gives it. The world is full of suffering and pain; we will not escape this, at least not in this life. However, the Lord gives us the proof of His promise in the suffering of His Son, and His rising from the dead. In Jesus the promise is fulfilled. Everything we endure is not without purpose. God's word is true.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT. On this day is commemorated *St. John Climacus*, abbot of Sinai (sixth–seventh century), who is assigned a special Sunday in Lent because, by virtue of his writings and his own life, he forms a pattern of the true Christian ascetic. St. John is the author of *The Ladder of Paradise*, one of the spiritual texts appointed to be read in church dur-

ing Lent. His memorial, like that of St. Theodore, has been transferred to the movable from the fixed calendar, where he is remembered on 30 March. The first Canon at Mattins on this Sunday is based on the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–5): the repentant Christian is likened to the man who fell among thieves.

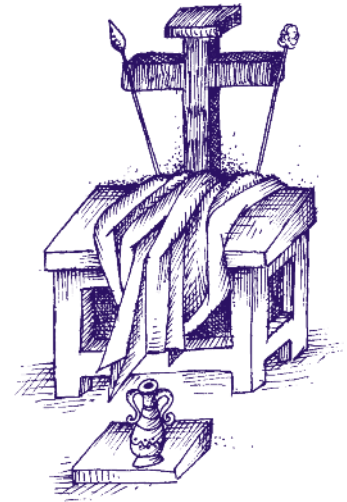


DONATIONS FOR HOLY WEEK

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
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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



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.