

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

APRIL 1, 2018

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE FULL PASCHA SCHEDULE and announcements may be found attached to this Bulletin or as a separate sheet at the candles.

REMEMBER TO PICK UP YOUR HOLIDAY PITA AND PASTRY ORDERS. Any questions or pick-up arrangements, see **Betty Anderson**.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **next Saturday, April 7th, 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**.

ARCHBISHOP NICOLAE'S PASTORAL LETTER at Pascha is available in English and Romanian at the candles.

THE GREAT FRIDAY CHILDREN'S RETREAT for the younger children will be held on **Friday, April 6th starting at 12:30 pm, and concluding with a celebration of Great Vespers at 2:00 pm.** Older children and teens are also welcome. There are many ways each can



THE ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM
EPISTLE: PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9 ☩ GOSPEL: JOHN 12:1-18
(EVERYTHING ACCORDING TO THE FEAST)

help. A sign-up sheet will be posted at the candle stand. Besides assisting with the children's lessons and activities, assistance is needed with snacks (no lunch) and other logistics. For additional information and offers to assist, **please contact Valarie Stamoulis**.

DONATIONS FOR MIDNIGHT PASCHAL MEAL are needed. Please see Presvytera Maria if you would like to contribute and assist with preparing and serving the meal. Please join with your fellow parishioners to celebrate the Resurrection and break-the-fast together. Everyone's welcomed!

ments and have fun. Holy Trinity makes an effort to find or to create volunteer opportunities to match a person's interest. **Become a part of the volunteer team and make a difference!** Contact Serena at: 508-852-1000, ext. 350, or email shields@htnr.net. **"You cannot change the world, but you can change someone's world."**

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/employ-

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

HOLY TRINITY IS LOOKING FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS! Share your talents and experience! While helping others, you will make new friends, learn new things and have a choice of assign-

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sun, April 1 Palm Sunday (Western Easter)
- April 1-8 HOLY WEEK, Check full schedule
- Sat, April 7 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
- Sun, April 8 GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA
- Sat, April 14 e-Recycling, 9am - 2pm
- Fri, April 20 Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm

GREETERS TEAM 5:

DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW A:

MARGARITE LANDRY
CHRISTINE MASTERJOHN

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

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



ment-opportunities, or contact Michele Williamson at: mwilliamson@htnr.net, or call 508-852-1000, ext. 218.

NAMEDAYS

April 1

The Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem

Elodie Lauren Killick
 Florence Rucho
 Florica Tonna

April 5

The Holy Martyrs Victor and Victorin

Victor Ioan Nedelescu
 Victoria Wilder

April 11

St. Calinic of Cernica

Calin Galeriu

April 13

The Life-giving Fountain

Zoica Nedelcu
 Zoitza Tsongalis

April 15

The Holy Apostle Thomas

Thomas Cavanaugh
 Thomas Chachi
 Thomas Fitzpatrick
 Robert T. Sedares
 Thomas R. Sedares
 Thomas Spataro

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

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

GLORY TO YOU, O LORD, for letting us live to enjoy the beautiful morning that celebrates the triumphal entry of your Son into Jerusalem. As we add our own hosannas to those of the people who welcomed him, number us among those who hymn you forever. Give us all we need to live in a way that is pleasing to you. Take pity on those whom your own hands fashioned and for love of whom your Son sojourned on this earth. Bring a loving peace and unity to your churches, disturbed by so many divisions and contrary opinions. Grant us all remission of our sins, and, by the prayers of the Theotokos and all your saints, enable us to offer you this morning worship with attention and true devotion.

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

THE LORD IS NEAR

WE ARE ENTERING JERUSALEM WITH THE LORD TODAY. It is Palm Sunday. For everyone except Jesus, this is a climatic event. I say everyone except Jesus because no one else except he understands what will eventually take place. In last Sunday's Gospel lesson we heard the disciples continue to be oblivious to the true nature of our Lord's presence on earth. They will continue to not understand until after the Resurrection.

The Epistle lesson for today is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:4-9. This is a remarkably beautiful letter on many levels. It is gentle, poetic and generous. Paul has an affection for this community, and this community has been generous and affectionate toward him. On a number of occasions they have sent him assistance when he was in need. He says that he is writing this letter from prison; many think this was when he was imprisoned in Ephesus. Regardless from which prison he was writing, the important point is that St. Paul doesn't offer advice out of intellectual speculation. He speaks from the experience of suffering, and this gives his words power.

Listen to what he writes from prison: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (v. 5-6).

In this one sentence he twice tells the Philippians to "Rejoice." He is suffering and the Philippians are themselves suffering, but he nonetheless tells them to rejoice. I heard someone say that the difference between happiness and joy is that happiness means doing what you want, and joy is doing what God wants. Everyone around us (and, this everyone includes ourselves), is searching for happiness by fulfilling their own desires. We are living through a time when we are

able to see what the "happiness" that fulfilling our desires produces. Many of us are suffering because of it, while others continue to profit on the suffering of others. It is not a pretty sight. Moreover, no one seems very happy. That we are living to see this terrible principle at work is in one sense a gift from God. If we take the lesson offered, it will be for our salvation.

Never forget: what God wants for us is what we want for ourselves — in the middle of the night, when we wake up in a cold sweat and regret every evil thing that we've ever done. When we realize our weaknesses and beg God to help us, and then get a glimpse of our true selves. What God wants for us is joy, a joy based not in material things that pass away, but grounded in the very depths of our being, body and soul.

After telling them to "rejoice," St. Paul tells them to: "Let [their] gentleness be known to everyone" (v. 5). This one word "gentleness" is translated as "good sense" (in the *Jerusalem Bible*), and also "forbearance" (in the *Revised Standard* and *King James* versions). Translation can be a tricky business, and while each of these meanings can work well here, we can see even in this small example how much depends on the spiritual insight of the translator.

St. John of the Ladder writes that the antidote to the sin of anger is gentleness. From what we know of the Philippian community, they were guided by good sense, they practiced forbearance, and so St. Paul tells them to let people see how good and gentle they were, as encouragement and inspiration for others; to show others how to quell the fires of anger through gentleness.

The next verse is possibly why this reading was chosen for today. St. Paul bolsters the Philippians by reminding them: "The Lord is near" (v. 5). He surely was referring to his eager hope that the Lord would be returning very soon, but there is another sense to his

phrase that we pick up in verse 6: "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." God is near to us when we pray. God hears and knows our thoughts and needs even before we ask.

God is also near to us in a particular way today, as he enters Jerusalem. We share the joy of seeing him, even as we contemplate the pain he will endure in the coming days. But, through his suffering he will draw nearer to us still.

If we pray and trust, St. Paul says, "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (v. 7). One of the great mysteries of the Life in Christ is how God gives us the ability to reconcile and make coherent the joys as well as the tribulations of this life. The world looks for logic. By taking up our cross and following Christ we find the understanding that surpasses logic. We find God's peace.

"Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you" (v. 8-9).

It is when we *do* what is right and good that we find God. It is when we *do* what God asks of us, that we find ourselves. Resist the temptation to over-analyze. It keeps you from doing what you're supposed to do.

During the coming week we will see the Lord do "what he's supposed to do." He will say many things, but as the time for "doing" draws closer, he will say less and less. Instead, he allows his actions to speak. We should take our lesson from him, and do likewise.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA