

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

MAY 6, 2018

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9am to noon. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola. Our next Saturday is July 7th.

CONGRATULATIONS to the newly baptized **Logan George Oster**, parents Frank and Anastasia (Sedares) Oster, brothers Thomas and Caulin, and sponsor Amanda Sedares. *May God bless them with many years!*

AN "E-WASTE RECYCLING DAY" will be held on **Saturday, June 2nd, from 9-2 here at the Church.** You can get rid of unwanted electronic appliances at a minimal cost and help protect the environment. **A few folks are needed to help** direct traffic into and out of the church parking lot. Please see Gerry Belba during coffee hour if you can help.

PITAS AND PASTRIES are available for purchase! Talk to **Betty Anderson or Chris Toda.**

GREETERS TEAM 5:
DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

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

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA

THE SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

APOSTOLIC READING: ACTS 11:19-30 ☩ GOSPEL: JOHN 4:5-42

TONE 4 - MATINS GOSPEL 7

LOOKING FOR THIS YEAR'S HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE GRADUATES

in our Parish so they can be recognized. If you know of a soon-to-be graduate, please inform Fr. Nick or Tim Rucho.

ROYA IS ORGANIZING THE 4TH ANNUAL HERITAGE TRIP TO ROMANIA.

The trip sponsored by our Archdiocese's Youth Organization is for youth and young adults who wish to get in touch with their roots and (re)discover their Romanian heritage. Links to all of the details can be found in the on-line eBulletin, or by asking Fr. Nick.

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL DATES HAVE BEEN SET.

St. Nicholas along with Sts. Anargyroi will be holding our annual Children's summer retreat, for ages K-8, on August 6-8. **PAR-ENTS!** Please note the dates and plan

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sat, May 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
- Thurs, May 17 The Lord's Ascension
- Sat, May 26 Saturday of Souls
- Sun, May 27 Pentecost
- Mon, May 28 Memorial Day
- Sat, June 2 e-Recycling 9am - 2pm
- Fri-Sat, Jun 1-3 Grecian Festival
- Mon, June 4 Apostles' Fast Begins
- Aug 6-8 Vacation Church School

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

your children's summer activities accordingly. Scheduling details will follow. **Questions?** Talk to Valarie Stamoulis.

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED for the next weeks. Please speak with or contact **Presvytera Maria** if you and your family would like to sponsor one.

A MEMORIAL IS CELEBRATED TODAY for the servant of God **Florica Handra**, the mother of Florentina Rus, fallen asleep three years. *May our good and loving Lord rest her among the saints!*

NAMEDAYS

May 1

The Holy Prophet Jeremiah

Jeromy Grniet

May 5

The Great Martyr Irene of Thessalonica

Irene Mountzouris

Irene Tsoules

May 21

The Holy Equals to the Apostles Constantine and Helen

Constantine Apostol

Elaine Apostola

Konstantin Charalambides

Presvytera Eleni Christakos

Amalia Helene Collins

Hannah Constance Datz

Dina Entwistle

Iliana Victoria Fahey

Elena Galeriu

Ileana A Nace

Rev. Fr. Dean Paleologos

Constanța Papit

Eleni Polymeros

Elena Prelipcean

Elaine Rocheford

Dina K. Salerno

Eleanor Sedares

Elaine Tanacea

Dean Valoras

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Florence Rucho**, in memory of her husband **Vasil Rucho**, fallen asleep seven years. And also, **Florentina Rus**, in memory of her mother **Florica Handra**.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

HOLY TRINITY is organizing a **Dementia Support Group** for family members and friends of loved ones affected by dementia. **Interested?** Contact **Ann Marie LeBoeuf**, Director of Nursing at 508-852-100 or e-mail: amleboeuf@htnr.net.

THE SPRING ISSUE of the **Holy Trinity Newsletter** is available. Go to the website: www.htnr.net and click on the "DOWNLOAD OUR NEWSLETTER" button.

HOLY TRINITY IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS! Share your talents and experience! While helping others, you will make new friends, learn new things, have a choice of assignments, and fun. Holy Trinity will find or 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, or e-mail shields@htnr.net.

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

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O SKILLFUL AND INGENIOUS ARTISAN OF LIFE: On this glorious day of celebration, we come before you to thank you for raising your Son from death to the glory of new life at your right. As we celebrate his victory over death, we beseech you to remove the burdens that weigh heavily on our hearts. Dry our tears, and clothe us in the vesture of immortality, in that raiment that reflects the light of your glory. Today, as we stand here before you, prepare us for the joy of the eternal kingdom by directing our lives along the path of righteousness. Finally, at the end of our days, let us — together with all our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters, our teachers, and all those who have gone before us — receive the incorruptible crown in the fellowship of the kingdom on high.

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



YOU WORSHIP WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW

WE LIVE IN A UNIQUE TIME IN HUMAN HISTORY. I'm not speaking of the technological marvels, nor of their ecological and environmental effects. I do not mean the social and political changes that began three hundred years ago and are still shaping and shaking nations and people everywhere. Rather, for the first time in our history the real spiritual debate is not between one conception of God over another; it is between people who believe and those who don't. I'm not referring solely to atheists — people who see natural materialist causes behind the existence of the universe. I'm thinking about the person who believes there's something out there, but can't really define it. The one who says, "I'm spiritual, but not religious." This is the real debate today; between people of faith, and those who could consider themselves, skeptical.

Our world is engaged in scores of conflicts that most people would consider to be caused by religious differences. How often do we hear: "Religion causes so much hatred and killing"? Never mind that when one peels back the layers of slogans and stereotypes, there are usually very predictable motives behind the conflicts: poverty, power-grabbing, and social manipulation. By another name: sin.

Yet, when we read a headline about another suicide bombing we are very likely to blame religion in general, even while we know that fanatics, not saints, are pushing people to hate. Lumping all of religion into one group steers people with some sense of the divine toward a group that is made up of mushy and fuzzy spirituality, lacking focus and discipline. Instead of a real search for God, we often settle for a warm feeling expressed by a Hallmark Card moment.

Today's Gospel reading addresses this phenomenon. St. John tells us of Jesus' encounter with a woman when he and his disciples were traveling through Samaria on their way back to Galilee (John 4:1-42). He started what we today

would call an "interfaith dialogue." Jews and Samaritans did not speak with one another. Jews considered the Samaritans to be apostates (worse than heretics). Nonetheless, Jesus asks her for a drink of water and the dialogue between them ensues. [It's an interesting passage and worth reading, but I lack the space to retell it here. Please read it.] For our purpose, know that there was as much animus between Jews and Samaritans then, as there presently is between any two groups of warring people in the Middle East. Needless to say everyone — the woman, the disciples and the villagers — were all surprised that Jesus had engaged her in a conversation.

Once the initial shock that Jesus would talk to her waned, she began to engage him in a discussion about their religious differences. They exchanged points of view, as we might today, but finally he says to her: "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:22-24). While not wanting to diminish her basic faith, the Lord also wanted to set the record straight.

Consider what the Lord says to her: "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews." When people speak of their spirituality using "warm and fuzzy" terms, they are in effect worshipping the God whom they do not know. They'll admit this outright. They will be unable to specify exactly what they believe. That's what they mean by, "I'm spiritual, not religious."

We shouldn't be surprised that people have a generally undefined notion of God. We Orthodox Christians believe God hard-wired us with a desire to know him. Human beings innately know there is a God and begin search-

ing for Him. Sociologists say there has never been a human society that was not religious in one way or another.

However, this general longing for God is not enough. To fully appreciate who God is and who we are, He needs to tell us. Hence: "We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews."

God chose a particular people, a particular tribe, to which to reveal Himself. He could have chosen any tribe. And through these very ordinary people, as saintly and sinful as any other, He slowly taught the way to godliness. God is a god of self-revelation. Without that revelation we would be caught up in endless Hallmark moments; warm and fuzzy sentiments that lead nowhere. Or, profound philosophical arguments that leave us spiritually empty.

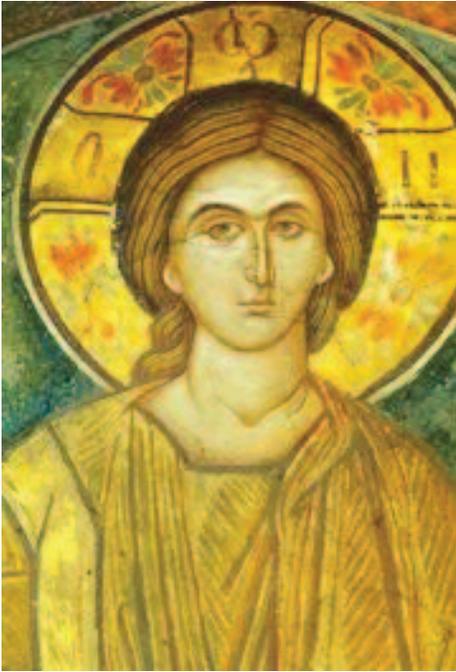
God loves us and wants us to have a real relationship with Him. He sent us His Son in order to help us understand this. When the Samaritan woman Photini begins engaging in superficial theological argumentation, Jesus immediately brings her back to reality: "Go and get your husband and come back!" Of course, even though she's had five husbands, the man she's living with now is not her husband. God isn't interested in clever arguments. He wants us to be humble and real when we talk to Him, just as He is humble and real when He loves us.

It is impossible for us to love a god who is a "warm and fuzzy" feeling. It is like being married to a sentiment, not a person. It's in our head, not our being. We need to worship what we know.

To know God is the ultimate goal in life. It gives meaning to our existence. People can live without food and water more easily than they can live without meaning. If we find ourselves adrift in our current epoch, it is because "warm and fuzzy" is finally insufficient.

Christ is indeed Risen!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



THE FEAST OF MID-PENTECOST

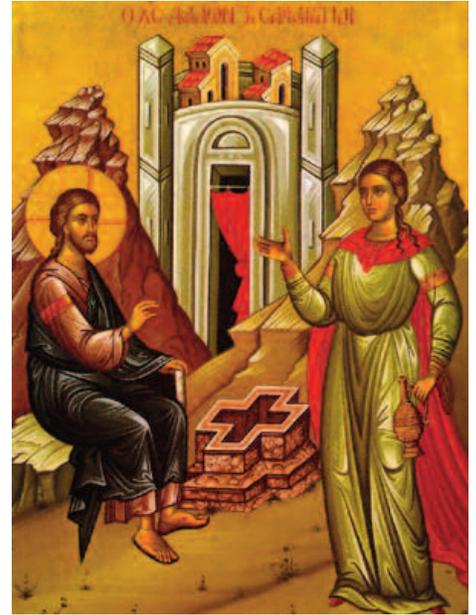
After the Saviour had miraculously healed the paralytic, the Hebrews, especially the Pharisees and Scribes, were moved with envy and persecuted Him, and sought to slay Him, using the excuse that He did not keep the Sabbath, since He worked miracles on that day. Jesus then departed to Galilee. About the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles, He went up again to the Temple and taught. The people, marveling at the wisdom of His words, said, "How knows this man letters, having never learned?" But Christ first reproached their unbelief and lawlessness, then proved to them by the Law that they sought to slay Him unjustly, supposedly as a despiser of the Law. Therefore, since the things spoken by Christ in the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles are related to the Sunday of the Paralytic that just passed,



and since we reached the midpoint of the fifty days between Pascha and Pentecost, the Church appointed this feast to tie the two great feasts into one. Therefore today's feast is called Mid-Pentecost.

It should be noted that there were three great Jewish feasts: the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Passover was celebrated on the 15th of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish calendar, which coincides with our March. This feast commemorated that day on which the Hebrews were commanded to eat the lamb in the evening and anoint the doors of their houses with its blood. Then, having escaped bondage and death at the hands of the Egyptians, they passed through the Red Sea to come to the Promised Land. It is also called "the Feast of Unleavened Bread," because they ate unleavened bread for seven days. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the Passover, first of all, because the Hebrews had reached Mount Sinai after leaving Egypt, and there received the Law from God; secondly, it was celebrated to commemorate their entry into the Promised Land, where also they ate bread, after having been fed with manna forty years in the desert. Finally, they also celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles

from the 15th to the 22nd of "the seventh month," which corresponds to our September. During this time, they live in booths made of branches in commemoration of the forty years they spent in the desert, living in tabernacles, that is, tents (Ex. 12:10-20; Lev. 23).



ABOUT THE WELL

One of the most ancient cities of the Promised Land was Shechem, also called Sikima, located at the foot of Mount Gerazim. There the Israelites had heard the blessings in the days of Moses and Jesus of Navi. Near to this town, Jacob, who had come from Mesopotamia in the nineteenth century before Christ, bought a piece of land where there was a well. This well, preserved even until the time of Christ, was known as Jacob's Well. Later, before he died in Egypt, he left that piece of land as a special inheritance to his son Joseph (Gen. 49:22). This town, before it was taken into possession by Samaria, was also the leading city of the kingdom of the ten tribes. In the time of the Romans it was called Neapolis, and at present Nablus. It was the first city in Canaan visited by the Patriarch Abraham. Here also, Jesus of Navi (Joshua) addressed the tribes of Israel for the last time. Almost three hundred years later, all Israel assembled there to make Roboam (Rehoboam) king.