

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JUNE 10, 2018

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL is **THIS Friday, June 15th**. We'll need help cooking and serving. **Prep** help needed on Thursday (3 persons). **Prep** help needed (2 persons), noon Friday. **Serving** help needed (5 persons), 5:30pm Friday. **We grateful to Joanne Prizio and her family for sponsoring this month's meal.** If you'd like to help, please talk to Fr. Nick.

CONGRATULATIONS TO NICK JOHNSON who has been drafted by the Chicago White Sox in the 21st round in the MLB Draft. He's headed for rookie baseball camp to start his career. **Our best wishes and prayers are with him.**

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY to the family of **Mary Tsoules**, who fell asleep in the Lord this past Monday, June 4th. Mary is the sister of **Evans Tsoules**. **May our good and loving Lord rest her soul with the righteous!**

THE APOSTLES' FAST began on June 4th and concludes with the Feast of Ss. Peter and Paul on June 29th.

THANKS TO THE E-RECYCLING TEAM. Gerry Belba, together with George Belba, Tom Fitzpatrick and Dean Valoras staffed the e-Recycling event this past Saturday. **God bless them!**

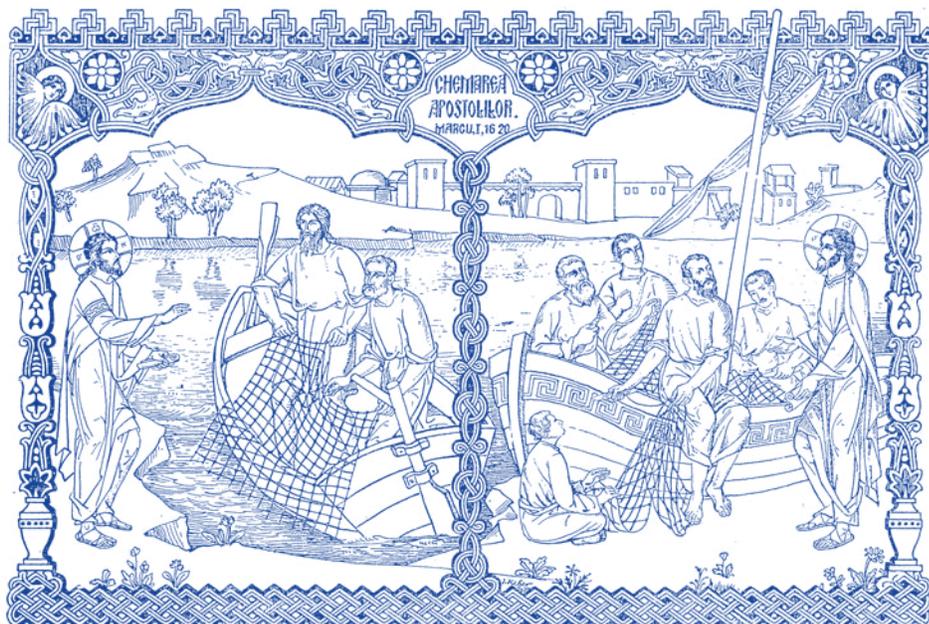
GREETERS TEAM 5:

DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:

NEED HELP! PICK UP A CUP! WIPE A TABLE!

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA AND ROMANIA

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 2:10-16 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 4:18-20

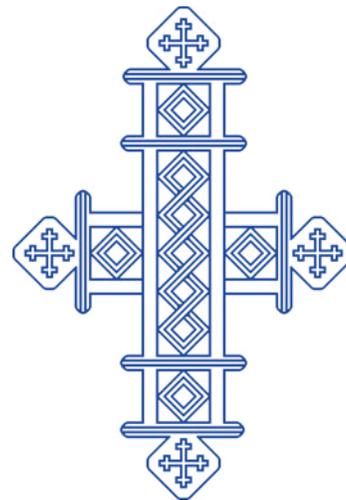
tone 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES

will start its summer break next **Sunday, June 17th**. We'll close this year's session with a prayer at the end of Liturgy.

NO LITURGY on Sunday, July 1st. Fr. Nick will be attending the Archdiocesan Congress in Chicago. Please plan on attending Liturgy at one of our sister parishes.

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED! We have no sponsors for the next weeks. Please speak with or contact **Presvytera Maria** if you and your family would like to sponsor one.



HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center & Holy Trinity Hospice are Orthodox Charities and rely on your donations to continue the mission of providing the best care possible.

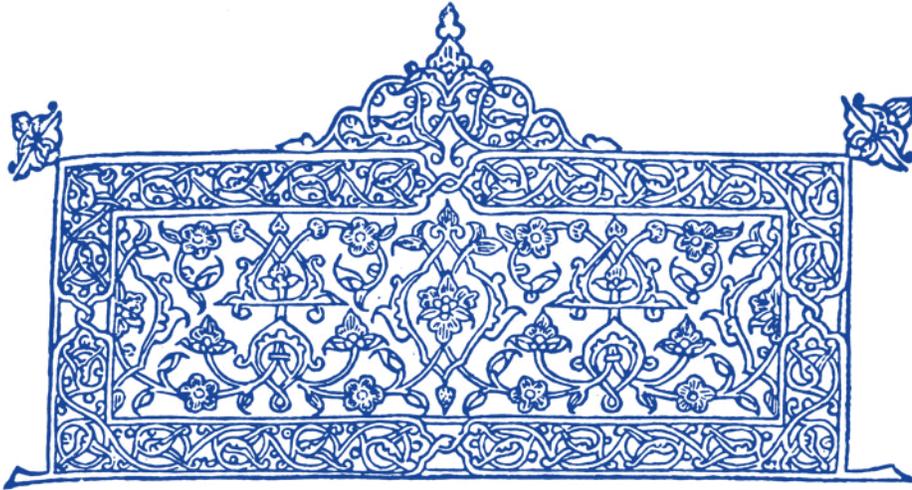
DATES TO REMEMBER

- Mon, June 4 Apostles' Fast Began
- Fri, June 15 Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm
- Sun, June 17 Last Sunday of Religious Ed
- Sun, July 1 NO LITURGY, Archdiocesan Congress
- Sat, July 7 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
- Sun, July 29 St. Michael Southbridge Festival
- Aug 6-8 Vacation Church School

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas



2018 GRADUATES

*“He has filled them with the spirit of God,
with skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft.”*
(Exodus 35:31)

We want to acknowledge members of our Church community who are celebrating a graduation and recognize their achievement.

HIGH SCHOOL

Rose Salerno is graduated from Tahanto Regional High School and will attend the University of New Hampshire in the fall.

Youssef Soliman is graduated from Westborough High School and will attend Tufts University in the fall.

COLLEGE

Elias Christo is graduated from Roger Williams University with a Bachelor of Science in architecture, and a minor in Business Management. He will be working in the field and attending graduate school in Bristol, RI.

Peter Tsongalis is graduated from Virginia Tech, *magna cum laude*, with a Bachelor of Science in computer engineering. He will be working for a software firm in Raleigh, NC.

May our loving Lord continue to bless their efforts and grant them a long life, health, prosperity, and many, many years!

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

ALMIGHTY, EVERLASTING GOD, who commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves: As we honor the memory of all your saints, do not ignore the love they hold for us. Rather, when they plead for our salvation before your throne, send down upon us your generous mercy. In your love for us, and for their sake, fill us with awe and reverence for you, so that always aware of the magnificence of your divine glory, we may serve you without guile, strengthened in all things by our hope in your promises. Be pleased to accept our hymns of praise as we join these holy men and women, and all your creatures, in glorifying your wondrous name.

For all the powers of heaven praise you, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



LISTENING TO OUR CONSCIENCE

THIS Sunday we begin reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans. In the New Testament this Letter appears right after Acts and is the first of all of the Apostolic Letters. While not a comprehensive presentation of St. Paul's theology, it represents a very systematic approach to his thinking. Unlike most of his other Letters — which were usually addressed to Churches that he had either founded or ministered — St. Paul was writing to a Church that he did not know personally. In one sense this Letter was his way of introducing himself to that community.

In this selection from Romans (2:10-16), for the Second Sunday after Pentecost, St. Paul takes up the question of how people come to know to do "good" — in other words, to do God's will. He asks: Do people do good because God has given us, (or rather the Jews) the Law? Or, is it because there is something innate in us that guides us? He tells the Romans: "glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality" (v. 10-11). From the outset he wants us to understand that all people have the capacity to do good and God is not partial to any person. God is concerned about what a person does, not his or her blood line.

Throughout his writings St. Paul contrasts the differences between Jew and Gentile, even as he tries to show how God's true intention is to harmonize Jew and Gentile into one people. For the faithful Jew, adherence to the Law was and is the path of salvation. However, we shouldn't understand "Law" too narrowly. While there is no doubt that prescriptions of the Law were intended to be followed as rules and regulations usually are, it is more helpful to think of the Law as a way of life; rules for living the way God intends us to live. In Jewish theology, to hear the Law and know it is to have an advantage over other people. St. Paul wanted to chal-

lenge this way of thinking.

He says, "All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified" (v. 12-13). Here St. Paul echoes St. James when he says: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). In another place we hear St. Paul say, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Ephesians 2:8-10). His point in Ephesians, as well as here in Romans, is that faith in our Lord Jesus Christ leads us to be the kind of persons that God intended us to be from the beginning; and, that we are innately predisposed toward this faith, this life.

This innate sense of right and wrong is what later came to be called "the natural law." The Ten Commandments, given by God to Moses and through him to the Children of Israel (Exodus 21:1-17), are the primary example of the harmony between God's Law and what we are guided toward by our conscience. The Commandments that form the heart of the Law are also found, in one way or another, in the basic code of conduct in every human society throughout history.

This is what St. Paul means when he says: "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them" (v. 14-15). He is referring to the innate and basic sense we have of

what it means to be a good person.

The first thing a person who wishes to pursue the "good life" does is to engage their conscience; to actively listen to what their heart is telling them. Most of us usually find two obstacles in our way to fully engaging our conscience. The first is that we have become deaf to the voice of our hearts. The second is that our conscience is so encrusted with sin that it is very hard to even find it.

The Fathers use an image to help us understand the problem. They liken the conscience to a mirror. For most of us this mirror is caked over with the soot of sin. How can it reflect God's light? This is why, we are told, that the first step on the path of repentance is to clean the mirror of our conscience from the layered soot of sin. Slowly, we will find that it will reflect God's light to illumine our way.

St. Paul emphasizes the doing of good because it is an objective way for us to see that our conscience is leading us down the right path. Ideas floating in our heads look different to us once we put our hand to the task. This interplay, this back and forth, between our desire to do good and our actual deeds is the scrubbing action that cleanses our conscience. The cleaner our heart the more reliable a voice it will be to lead us closer toward the good.

St. Paul leaves us with these ominous words to contemplate. In speaking of the Day of Judgment he says that it is our "conscience [that] bears witness," and that our "conflicting thoughts" will accuse or perhaps excuse us "on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus." (v. 16) These words should prod us on, in our spiritual journey.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA