

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JULY 8, 2018

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

AN ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING day is set for **Saturday, July 28th**. This is an opportunity for our parish to help our local community while helping the environment. If you're able and willing to help, please speak with **Gerry Belba**.

The latest issue of the Archdiocesan quarterly **CREDINȚA / THE FAITH** is available at the candles. **Pick one up and take it home!**

QUESTIONS FOR SUNDAY SERMONS. Fr. Nick's sermons for the summer will focus on the Divine Liturgy. If you have any questions about the Liturgy — why we do what we do — please write them down and either hand them in or e-mail him at: FrNick@StNicholasChurch.org.

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 August 4th.

GREETERS TEAM 3:
EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:
HELP NEEDED
PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 12:6-14 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 9:1-8

(JESUS HEALS THE PARALYTIC OF CAPERNAUM)

TONE 5 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 6

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.

WE CELEBRATE TWO MEMORIALS TODAY:

For the servant of God **Mary Tsoules**, fallen asleep 40-days;

And, for the servant of God, **Corneliu Teguiani**, cousin to Nina and George Galica, also fallen asleep 40-days.

May our Good and Loving Lord rest their souls among the righteous!

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the **Tsoules and Galica families** in memory of their departed loved ones.

COMMUNITY NEWS

ST. MICHAEL SOUTHBRIDGE ANNUAL FESTIVAL will be held on **Sunday, July 29th** on the parish grounds. Food, music, dancing, and kids' games. www.stmichaelorthodox.com

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

REHAB AT HOLY TRINITY: A story of Courage and Persistence. Read how **Nijazi Sadiku** endured the loss of both of his feet, and with the help of the Holy

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, July 7 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
Sat, July 28 e-Recycling, 9am-2pm
Sun, July 29 St. Michael Southbridge Festival
Aug 6-8 Vacation Church School
Fri, Aug 17 Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

Trinity Rehab team learned to walk again. Go to: <https://www.htnr.net/a-profile-in-courage-and-persistenc> to view a TV3 news report, and read the whole story.

DIVINE LITURGY is celebrated every Wednesday morning at 9:30am. Everyone is welcome. Come and spend some time with the residents; they would really appreciate it!

REMEMBER: Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is an Orthodox Charity and relies on your donations to continue its mission of providing the best care possible.



NAMEDAYS

July 7

The Holy Martyr Kyriaki

Kyri Sedares

July 11

The Blessed Olga, Princess of Russia

Olga Lolo

July 12

St. Veronica, the woman healed by our Lord Jesus

Veronica Pandaru

July 17

The Holy Great Martyr Marina (Margareta) of Antioch in Pisidia

Margarite Landry

July 20

The Holy Prophet Elijah

Elias James Christo

Irli Ilie Durmillari

Louis Evan Stamoulis

July 24

The Holy Great Martyr Christina

Christine Masterjohn

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

OUR tongue, Lord, is a two-edged sword! And we simply cannot refrain from gossiping, from backbiting, from spreading rumors and betraying confidences, from planting seeds of suspicion and doubt, and from all other sorts of verbal evil. Help us put an end to all the poison that slides off our lips, and show us how to seek out goodness and peace, pursuing them with all our hearts.

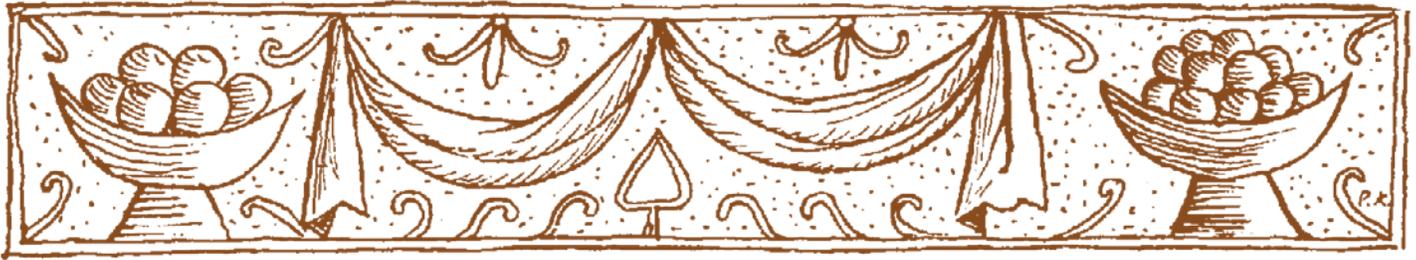
For you are a merciful and loving God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



ST. OLGA
PRINCESS OF RUSSIA
JULY 11TH

The Saint Olga, renowned for her wisdom and sobriety, in her youth became the wife of Igor, Great Prince of Kiev, who ruled during the tenth century. After her husband's death, she herself ruled capably, and was finally moved to accept the Faith of Christ. She traveled to Constantinople to receive Holy Baptism. The Emperor, seeing her outward beauty and inward greatness, asked her to marry him. She said she could not do this before she was baptized; she furthermore asked him to be her Godfather at the font, which he agreed to do. After she was baptized (receiving the name of Helen), the Emperor repeated his proposal of marriage. She answered that now he was her father, through holy Baptism, and that not even among the heathen was it heard of a man marrying his daughter. Gracefully accepting to be outwitted by her, he sent her back to her land with priests and sacred texts and holy icons. Although her son Svyatoslav remained a pagan, she planted the seed of faith in her grandson Vladimir. She reposed in peace in 969.





LET OUR LOVE BE GENUINE

This is the sixth Sunday after Pentecost. In today's reading — Romans 12:6-14 — St. Paul moves the discussion from Law and Faith, to how our faith in Jesus the Messiah impacts and changes our life. Up until now he had been presenting a very detailed and systematic explanation as to why the Law of the Old Covenant needed to give way to God's Grace that we receive by our faith in Jesus Christ — the New Covenant. He wants us to focus on this new relationship with God and the implications it has on how we will live.

"We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us." (v. 6) We are not all the same; each of us has been given a particular charism. One of the greatest challenges we have in life is to recognize and understand the particular gifts given us. The second challenge is to fully develop these gifts.

As a way of transitioning from his discussion of the Law, St. Paul offers us this vivid image. He tells us: "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [or reasonable] worship." (v. 12:1) You will remember that the central aspect of Old Testament worship was the sacrificing of animals. St. Paul says that our worship of God should be us sacrificing ourselves, as a living sacrifice. Our sacrifice is the deliberate development of the gifts given us. And different from the animals which were dumb beasts, we offer up our bodies knowingly, with our mind and in our heart.

He then offers practical expressions

of the gifts about which he is talking, as well as how we should use them. If it is "prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness." (v. 6-8)

The first thing that we should notice is that these gifts given us are not for ourselves; they are for service to others. The second is that it is not simply the *doing* of a thing that matters; what is more important is *how* it is done.

St. Paul mentions seven gifts, but unlike when he writes to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12:28ff), here he doesn't place them in an hierarchical order. Moreover, he mentions gifts in Romans that he doesn't refer to in his letter to the Corinthians, and vice versa. There are innumerable gifts of the Spirit. Let's look at the ones he presents here.

"Prophecy, in proportion to faith." We could also call this "inspired preaching." It sometimes may involve predicting the future as in Acts 11:27-28, but usually it is meant to inspire and exhort the listeners. "In proportion to faith" has a few meanings. The most important is that what the prophet says should correspond to the Faith, the belief held in common, but also to the personal faith of the listeners. It should build them up, not confuse or misdirect them.

"Ministry, in ministering." The Greek word used here is "diakonia;" this is where the title 'deacon' originates. In this context it means ministry in the

sense of service. It refers to those persons responsible for distributing material aid. For most of the Church's history deacons were primarily responsible for the administration of the material goods of the Church, especially aid to those in need. The Liturgical aspect was secondary.

"The teacher, in teaching." Teacher and teaching was and is a gift distinct from prophecy, preaching, or administration. We see this clearly in our Church today. Those responsible for instruction of both children and adults play a vital role in building up the Body.

"The exhorter, in exhortation." Here St. Paul refers to what we would call the 'spiritual father or mother.' This is the person with great spiritual maturity and wisdom who encourages people as they struggle to do God's will. We see these people in every parish, held up as examples of what God calls us to.

"The giver, in generosity." This is the person of means who exercises his or her generosity gently and abundantly. His or her gift is one of philanthropy, distributing private wealth with love.

"The leader, in diligence." This refers to the person who heads the community. He is to exercise this gift conscientiously. It is a difficult job.

"The compassionate, in cheerfulness." This is the person who does acts of charity, of kindness. Too often we do such things grudgingly, out of a sense of duty. St. Paul reminds us to do these acts not only with a smile on our face, but also from our heart. The smile is just as

important than the deed.

Then St. Paul sums it up in an almost staccato-like manner: “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. (v. 9-10)

We should never ‘fake’ our love. Sometimes we may have to ‘work at it;’ but the final objective should be for it to be real. St. Paul says that we should hate evil. Actually the word is closer to abhor than hate. Evil destroys. We destroy evil through goodness. Even as we abhor the evil we need to cling to what is good.

He says we should love one another. The Greek word is ‘philadelphia;’ love like brothers and sisters. We need to treat each other as a family — a healthy Christian family.

He continues with, “outdo one another in showing honor.” This could also be translated, “As far as honor goes, esteem the other more highly.” The greatest danger we face is our own pride. Love each other. Always put the other before us. Think no more of ourselves than we do our brother and sister. This is the greatest of spiritual gifts.

He then says (because he knows what we might get a little ‘tired’ at this point), “Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord.” (v. 11) Notice how at each point St. Paul draws us to a higher goal. He doesn’t simply say: “give;” but “with generosity;” nor “lead;” but do it “with diligence;” nor “be compassionate;” but do it “with cheerfulness;” nor “honor;” but “prefer one another;” nor “love;” but do it “genuinely;” nor refrain from “evil” things, but “abhor” it; nor hold to “what is good;” but “cling” to it; nor “love one another;” but to do it “as if you were brother and sister;” nor be zealous, but be so without flagging, that is without backsliding; nor have the “Spirit;” but have it “fervently;” that is, be burning and awake.

The simple truth is that if one practices these virtues that St. Paul speaks of, the Holy Spirit will be drawn to us. And if the Holy Spirit is drawn toward us, all of these things will become easy for us to embody. “Serving the Lord” is akin to serving our brother and sister. It is the primary way in which we draw closer to God.

He then tells us to do three things that are at the center of the spiritual life. “Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.” (v. 12) When God sends us the answer to our prayers, or when He sends us the good things that we recognize, we should rejoice. These are given us as signs of hope to encourage us. When we suffer difficulties — “tribulations” — we simply need to trust in God; be patient. God sends us hopeful signs to encourage us to be patient and trusting. Finally, we need to be constant. Our love of God should not depend on this thing or that. We need to love God in the same way we love others; even though someone we love may disappoint us, we continue to love them. Our disappointment in God is often because we cannot see or understand God’s love for us. While it might be difficult, we need to be even more consistent in our love and devotion as a result.

The Lord, through St. Paul’s teachings, leads us to a still higher plane. “Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.” (v. 13) Recognizing the needs of others, without them asking for help, is a great gift. Not only do we have to simply ‘distribute’ what we have but to share it. This means biting into our own income. To drive home the point he says, “practice hospitality.” Hospitality was an ancient virtue. It is even more important as a Christian virtue. It is still even more important in our day and age. To welcome the stranger into our midsts, even to our

home, is to welcome Christ Himself. There was no greater sin in the ancient world than to refuse a stranger. It is even a more grievous Christian sin. We are all strangers. We need to welcome one another.

Finally, as a way of summarizing all that he has said, St. Paul tells us: “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.” (v. 14) This is the final step. If we can learn to bless our enemies — those who inflict pain on us — then we will have ‘graduated’ from being simply a ‘good’ person, to a true Christian.

If you would like to look at this developmentally, we move from being a child, where the whole world revolves around us, to an adolescent where we only have eyes for our ‘true love;’ caught in various forms of narcissism.

If ‘true’ love moves to a full love then marriage may ensue. Marriage leads to children, and children require a ‘coming out’ of ourselves. We can no longer live in the closed circle of either our own ego or the simple love of one person over another. Children require us to come out of any closed circle.

The final circle from which God asks us to emerge is the circle of those familiar to us; those with whom we feel comfortable. St. Paul instructs us how to build the personal bonds that will strengthen us. He tells us, “Bless those who persecute you.” And then, he wants to make sure that we understand exactly what he is saying so he says: “bless and do not curse them.”

God draws us from love of family and friends, to friends and siblings in the faith, to love of our enemies. We were God’s enemies and He loved and died for us. He asks us to do the same with others, if we love Him.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA