

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN SEPTEMBER 9, 2018

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS is Saturday, September 8th. Liturgy will be celebrated at 9:30 am.

FR. NICK WILL CONCLUDE HIS SPEAKING ON THE DIVINE LITURGY THIS SUNDAY. If you have any questions please get them to him before Liturgy: e-mail: FrNick@StNicholasChurch.org.

AN ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING day is set also for Saturday, September 15th. This is an opportunity for our parish to serve our local community while caring for the environment. If you're able and willing to help, please speak with **Gerry Belba**.

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish last Saturday. 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 October 6th.

GREETERS TEAM 2:

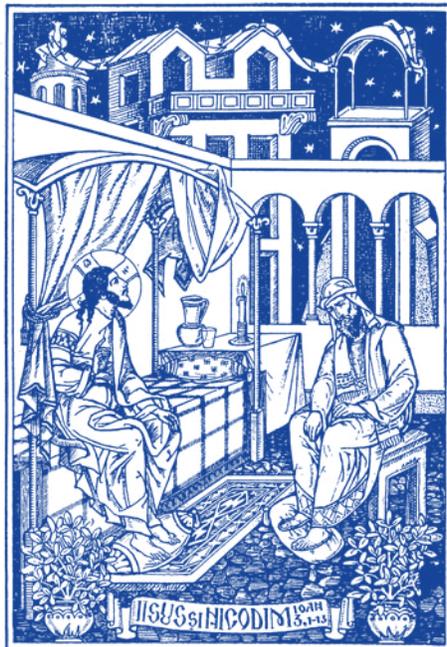
ARTIC GAVALA AND V. GERALD BELBA

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:

HELP NEEDED

PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE CROSS
APOSTOLIC READING: GALATIANS 6:11-18



GOSPEL: JOHN 3:11-17

(JESUS SPEAKS WITH NIKODIMOS)

TONE 6 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 4

start on the Street

PASTRY CONCESSION AT "START ON THE STREET:" Sunday, September 16th. We'll be selling our boxed pastries and promoting our pitas, and holiday platters. Help is needed on:

- **Thursday, September 13th**, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm for packaging.
- **Sunday, September 16th**, 11:00 am - 6:00 pm, teams to staff our Concession. It's a small space (only 2 people needed for any shift). Shift commitments are to 2-3 hours.
- **Sunday, September 16th**, at 7:00 am to transport and set up. At 6:00 pm, to

breakdown and transport. **George De-make** is coordinating. See him if you're able to help.

Betty Anderson and Chris Toda are coordinating the staffing schedule. Check with them if you're able to help and/or would like more information.

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH SCHOOL and our Youth are a central part of our parish. We need you! If you are interested in teaching or assisting with Church School this year and/or working with the Youth of our parish on activities and programs geared to them, please see **Valarie Stamoulis**. The first day of Church School is **Sunday, October 7th. Every child is welcomed!** **PAR-ENTS:** please complete the REGISTRATION FORM found at the candle stand. If you would like more information, speak with Valarie. Providing vibrant and meaningful opportunities for our Youth to learn about their Orthodox Faith and traditions, and work and play together is key to ensuring that our Orthodox Faith and the community of St. Nicholas remains vital for generations to come.

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS are needed in the coming weeks. If you and your family would like to sponsor one, please check the Calendar and speak with Presvytera Maria.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sat, Sept 8 Nativity of Theotokos, Liturgy 9:30 am
- Fri, Sept 14 Elevation of Holy Cross, Liturgy 9:30 am
- Sat, Sept 15 e-Recycling, 9 am-2 pm
- Sun, Sept 16 stART on Street booth
- Tues, Sept 18 Holy Trinity General Assembly, 7 pm
- Sat, Oct 6 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
- Sun, Oct 7 Religious Ed Classes begin
- Fri, Oct 19 Mustard Seed Meal, 5:00 pm

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of the Americas

PARISH FESTIVALS

STS CONSTANTINE & HELEN IN WEBSTER, will be holding its annual Greek Festival, Saturday and Sunday, September 8-9. More information: schwebster.org

HOLY TRINITY, FITCHBURG is holding their Annual Greek Festival, Friday-Saturday, **September 14-15**. For more information: www.holytrinity.ma.goarch.org

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

The General Assembly for the Eastern Orthodox Management Corp. (EOMC), which operates Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will be held on **Tuesday, September 18, 2018 at 7:00 pm at Holy Trinity**, 300 Barber Ave., Worcester, MA. This meeting is open to CEOC parish members and all are encouraged to attend. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to review the organization's financial and operational performance the previous year, progress with new initiatives, results of annual Fundraising efforts, and to provide the supporting community with the opportunity to learn of the organization's strategic direction. In addition, the election for new Board Members, including Clergy, will also be held, and CEOC appointed Directors are also announced at this time. **Anyone interested in becoming an EOMC Board Member should feel free to contact:** Stephen Fotos, President of EOMC at: 508-667-8870, or the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Basil Tolos at: 978-345-4036. For other information, please call Carol Fotos at: 508-713-7577, or Jerry Shaffer at: 508-852-1000. Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

DIVINE LITURGY is celebrated every Wednesday morning at 9:30am. And please always keep Holy Trinity Nursing Home, it's staff, directors, residents, and

NAMEDAYS

September 5

St. Elizabeth the mother of St. John the Baptist

Elizabeth Anderson
Elizabeth Grace Cavanaugh
Elizabeth Florica Galeriu
Lisa Mielnicki
Karen Elizabeth Wilder

The Holy Prophet Zachariah, father of St. John

Zachary Spataro

September 8

The Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos

Maria Apostola Mossaides

September 9

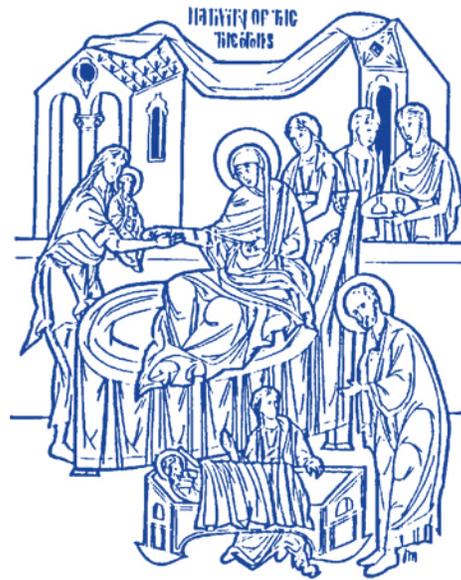
The Holy Ancestors of God Joachim and Anna

Ann Marie Clem
Anna Maria Collins
Ann Trakadas



families in your payers. And remember: you can always visit!

NEVER FORGET: 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.



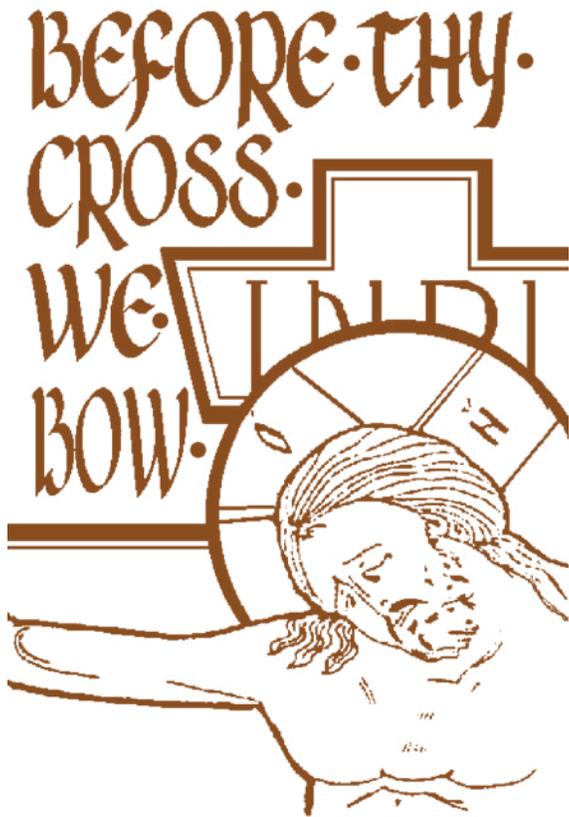
A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O LORD, OUR GOD: We give thanks to you and praise you for all the wonders you have accomplished for us. We ask you to consider not our failings but the virtue of the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. From the womb was she chosen, like Jeremiah; and, like Samuel, she was conceived through prayer and offered to you. In body, mind, and spirit, she was resplendent with purity and holiness. Grant that we, too, may attain a guilelessness like hers, serving you every day of our lives as you deserve.

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

LIFTED UP UPON THE CROSS



THIS Sunday we prepare ourselves for the coming Feast of the Exaltation (Elevation) of the Precious Cross, celebrated on September 14th. The Gospel lesson is from St. John (3:13-17). It is part of his account of a discussion our Lord had with a Pharisee named Nikodemus. Nikodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling Council of the Jewish nation at that time. He, along with Joseph of Arimathea, would be among the ones to bury Jesus after his Crucifixion.

Nikodemus came to Jesus one night to talk to him and explore what Jesus was teaching. He came at night because while he perceived Jesus to be a “teacher who has come from God” (v. 2), he, Nikodemus, was not just a prominent citizen of the nation, but was a member of the ruling council. He was struggling to understand who our Lord was.

In this whole passage that runs from

John 3:1 through 3:21, we hear Jesus speak to him about the newness of God’s Kingdom. He says we must be “born again” (v. 3). Nikodemus is confused, but Jesus guides him into a deeper understanding of God’s mystery. He contrasts what it is to be born from earth, that is, to be born into this present existence, with what it is to be born from above, to be “born of the Spirit” (v. 8). Jesus gently reveals to him who He actually is. This is where today’s Gospel lesson begins.

Jesus says to him: “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man” (v. 14). Then, in a way that will only become clear to

Nikodemus after Jesus’ Resurrection, He speaks of His Crucifixion and the power it will have to change and save the world. “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life” (v. 14-15).

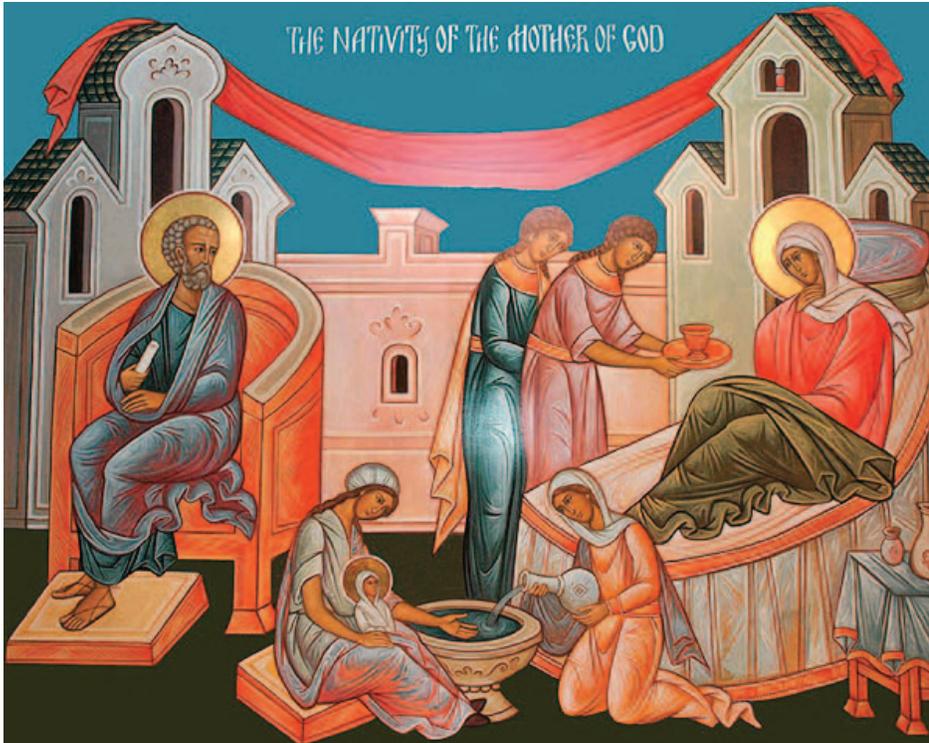
The reference here is to an incident in the desert when the children of Israel, after their liberation from Pharaoh and Egypt, became dissatisfied with their situation, and complained against God and Moses (cf. Numbers 21:5-9). God in response sent fiery serpents that bit the people. Many died. Repenting, the people came to Moses and asked him to pray to the Lord that this curse be taken away. The Lord told Moses to make an image of a serpent out of bronze and to lift it high on his staff. Anyone who had been bitten, if they looked upon the bronze serpent, would live.

This might seem a rather obscure reference, even for those who have studied the Scriptures, but here is the point. Jesus tells Nikodemus that this incident in the desert is a prefiguring, a “type,” of the Crucifixion. God had sent the serpents as punishment for the people’s complaining and ingratitude. Then God tells Moses to use the very instrument of His punishment (the image of the serpent) as the means for healing and redemption. Jesus’ self-sacrifice on the Cross uses the very curse that had befallen humanity because of Adam and Eve’s sin, namely death, and transforms in as the means for our salvation. Jesus’ sacrifice of his own life on the Cross, becomes for all of humanity the path to redemption. If we look up with faith at the Lord hanging on the wood of the Cross, we too will be healed and live.

This Gospel lesson ends with a hopeful and prophetic set of passages, the most famous of which is: “for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but might have eternal life” (v. 16). When we contemplate these words of the Lord, we can begin to understand *why* God sent His Son. It is so that we can learn, through his example, his life, how to love God, and how to love one another. When we begin to feel the power of his sacrifice for us, then we will be able to perceive the real significance of this event when the Precious Cross was found, unearthed, and lifted up for all to see.

God does not want us to die, but to live — forever. He does not consider “sin” the final word; “repentance” is. He offers us the remedy of the Cross, just as He offered the image of the serpent in the desert, as the way toward eternal life.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary (September 8th): The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of humanity.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of humankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our

Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since St Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcome the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Sts Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Sts Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feastdays at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim

brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

St Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. St Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained to extreme old age and prepared themselves by virtuous life for a sublime calling: to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God, and of them would be born a most blessed daughter Mary, through Whom would come the Salvation of all the World.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all humankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate ... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion.