

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN NOVEMBER 25, 2018

THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR
KATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

WE ARE IN THE NATIVITY FAST.

Let us use this time to withdraw from the noise of the "Christmas Season," in order to reflect on the great mystery of Emmanuel: God-with-us!

THE ANNUAL WINTER COAT DRIVE organized by our Orthodox Food Pantry is underway. We're looking for **coats, hats, scarves and gloves clean and in good condition.** Lisa Mielnicki will be collecting them. TODAY, November 25th is the deadline.

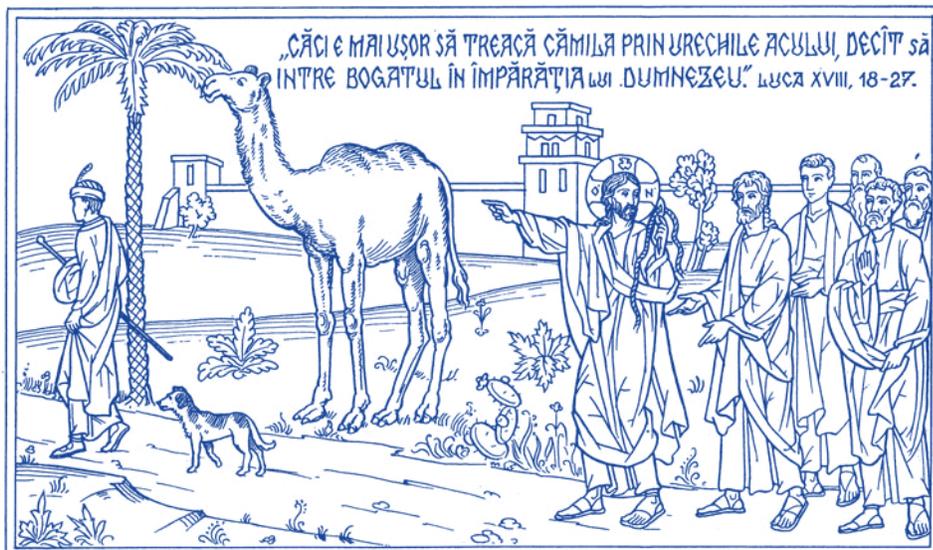
FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **this Saturday, December 1st, from 9 am - noon.** About 4 people are needed. Likewise, donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with **Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola.**

CHRISTMAS CARD GREETINGS ARE DUE. Be included in our annual **Community Christmas Card!** Forms are available at the Candles

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 THIRTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: COLOSSIANS 3:12-16 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 18:18-27

(THE RICH RULER & KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS)

tone 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 4

THE ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP APPEAL has been sent out. As parishioners we are all called to be stewards of St. Nicholas Church. Our church relies upon the offering of time, talents and treasure from each of us. We ask that you prayerfully consider an offering of time, talents and treasure to sustain our beloved church for the glory of God.

THE FEASTDAY RAFFLE TICKETS have been mailed. We still need our own parishioners to promote the Raffle by selling tickets and/or following up with those who got them by mail. **Questions? Tom Fitzpatrick** for tickets and ways to help: Tom.l.fitzpatrick1006@gmail.com or 508-887-1896 **OR George Demake:** gdemake@charter.net or 774-535-2821.

LAST SUNDAY WAS IOCC SUNDAY — A Day of Sharing. The International Orthodox Christian Charities is **the** major charitable arm of the Orthodox Church. Based in the United States, it brings re-

lief to people in need throughout the world. **To donate go to the website: www.iocc.org, or call: (877) 803 IOCC (4622).**

THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELPED WITH THE ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING event yesterday. The team coordinated by **Gerry Belba, and included: George Belba, Tom Fitzpatrick, and Chris Seith.** Thank you!

TODAY WE CELEBRATE A MEMORIAL for the servants of God **Christy Belba**, fallen asleep two years and his wife **Dhoxia Belba**, fallen asleep thirty four years. **May their memory be eternal!**

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wed, Nov 14 Christmas Fast began
Sat, Dec 1 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9 AM-NOON
Tue, Dec 5 Vespers for St. Nicholas 7:00 PM
Wed, Dec 6 Liturgy for St. Nicholas, 10:00 AM
Sun, Dec 9 Feastday Celebration
Fri, Dec 21 Mustard Seed Meal, 5:00 PM
Tue, Dec 25 Nativity of the Lord

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of the Americas

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the **Belba Family** in memory of Christy and Doxa.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

HOLY TRINITY is kicking off its **Annual Appeal**, and a couple of representatives will be making a short presentation to the parish on **TODAY, Sunday, November 25th**. They will also be available during coffee hour to answer any questions. Next year is the 25th Anniversary of Holy Trinity's opening and we're getting ready for that celebration as well!

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR HOLY TRINITY RESIDENTS. Each year Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehab gives the Orthodox community the opportunity to **provide Christmas Gifts for the facility's residents**. Our Parish is responsible for providing some of these gifts. You will be asked to purchase and wrap the gift, and bring it to the Church, Sunday, December 16th. **Eleanor Sedares (508-753-3106)** is coordinating this effort for our parish and can offer suggestions if you need ideas of what to get.

MOMENT TO MOMENT: The Alzheimer's Caregiver Journey, is a presentation that Holy Trinity is sponsoring on **Tuesday, December 4th from 3:00-4:00 pm** at Holy Trinity. Learn new communication skills, how to cope with personality changes, and how to manage the impact upon the family. You'll learn how to take better care of yourself as well. **This is open to all!** Contact **Christie Sullivan** for questions: 508-852-1000, and please RSVP.

WISH-LIST ITEM: Holy Trinity is looking for donations of **artist canvas panels 8x10**. Cash donations are also welcomed. If you're able and willing to help, please **contact: Dana Spinney**, Activities Director, at 508-852-1000 or e-mail: dspinney@htnr.net

There will be a **HOLIDAY MUSIC CONCERT with JOANNE HINES** on **Friday, December 7th** at 2:00 pm. **ALSO**, St. Peter's Church choir will perform **Hispanic Christmas Carols** on **Sunday, December 2nd** at 2:00 pm. Everyone is invited!

COMMUNITY NEWS

A RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE will be hosted by **St. Spyridon Cathedral** on **Saturday, December 1st** from 9AM to 3PM. If you'd to donate some blood, you can schedule a time by accessing the link: www.redcrossblood.org/give.html?drive-results?zipSponsor=saintspyridon (*Find the hyperlink in the e-Bulletin*)

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

LORD, OUR GOD: our Thanksgiving celebration makes us reflect on the riches of life. All too often, we take them for granted! We presume — if we really think about it at all! — that what we are and have is somehow all our own doing. As we prepare for the coming feast, help us to reach a better understanding of how things really are. Enable our minds and hearts to find inspiration and renewal by pondering the marvels life affords us at every turn. Show us how to receive everything and, indeed, every moment of life, as a gift. Cleanse our minds and hearts of the cynical and perverse desire to believe we simply have a right to everything that comes our way. Show us, rather, how indebted we are to everyone, beginning with you, and in all things lead us to yourself.

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



NAMEDAYS

November 16

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew

Scott Matthew Belba
Matthew Robert Clem
Matthew Collins
Matthew Soter

November 25

The Great-martyr Katherine of Alexandria

Katina Vanthia Christo
Katina Cocavessis
Kathy Lynn Evangelos
Kathryn Eleanor Sedares
Katina Spataro
Katherine Stamoulis
Emily Katherine Valoras

November 30

The Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called

Andrew Cavanaugh
Andrew John Demake
Andrew Opio
Andrew Tanacea

AND, BE THANKFUL

THIS is the thirtieth Sunday after Pentecost. The Epistle Lesson is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:12-16. The Church at Colossae was not founded by St. Paul, but by Epaphras one of his disciples. While St. Paul was pleased with the general progress of the community, he was concerned that influences from a number of native pagan beliefs and Judaism were having a distorting effect on the Gospel preached to them. They were becoming syncretistic. This tendency toward syncretism is a problem in our own time as well. We can see the phenomenon at work particularly in "New Age" thinking that takes a little of this and a little of that and blends them into a not so very coherent set of beliefs. St. Paul was warning the Colossians against drifting in this direction.

In this letter St. Paul urges the Colossians to shape themselves in the image of Christ. He calls them to remember their new status, "as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved." He tells them to clothe themselves with "heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience." (v. 12) He instructs them on what it means to be a Christian, a follower of Christ. We are not simply to have kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, but these must be *heartfelt*. Our behavior toward one another should go beyond outer forms and social convention; it should spring from the deepest recesses of our being.

He wants them to be conscious of their goal: to be like our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. "Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." (v. 13) We are to support one another. We are to put up with one another. When tested or offended we are to forgive one another "just as the Lord has forgiven you." St. Paul is telling us to transform ourselves by the power given us by the Holy Spirit.

He then says to them, "Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." (v. 14) It is possible to have these virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and even patience without having love. Love is what makes these other actions real and complete. Without love they will lack the substance necessary for them to withstand time. Love is the glue that "binds" our virtuous act with our deeper intention. It makes us whole.

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body." (v. 15) The word "rule" could also be translated as "umpire," (even though it might sound a little awkward). What St. Paul means is that as an emotion love can sometimes be an unsteady gauge. Just observe the various ways 'love' is used and misused in our common speech. When we are wrestling with difficult questions, when all of our thoughts and emotions are engaged, we need to let Christ's peace be the arbiter. It serves as a stabilizing influence. While we might go back and forth, Christ's peace remains a steady guide. It rules over all the pettiness or spite we might feel. If we allow Christ's peace to arbitrate our emotions, we become one with Him. We become one with the Body to which we were called.

"And be thankful." (v. 15) St. Paul makes this a stand-alone statement. Like "love, which binds everything together," thankfulness is a state of being that changes us. It is the perspective that reinterprets all of our experiences.

When we thank someone for what they've given us or done for us, our words and sentiments should direct us to transcend the gift in order to focus on the giver. While a kind act can never be thought of as small or inconsequential, we also know that the one who offers it is far more important than what was given. When we are thankful we move from focusing on ourself to focusing

on the giver. We are drawn out of ourself to *see* the other. This is the essence of thankfulness.

We might say "thank you" to other people a thousand times a day, and rightfully so; but the deeper question is: do we really *mean* it? Are we employing the words "thank you" as simple social convention, or are they actually a reflection of our inner disposition? Striving to make our sentiments truly heartfelt points us to the goal to which St. Paul is directing us: "be thankful."

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God." (v. 16) St. Paul uses another word in this verse very much like "thankful." He tells the Colossians and us to teach and admonish one another in wisdom and "with gratitude."

Gratitude and thankfulness have a similar root meaning: joy or pleasure. When we are truly grateful or thankful we also have a joy deep inside us. We take pleasure in the act of kindness shown us. More importantly, we take joy in the one who gives us this. When we are thankful the joy changes us.

St. Paul tells the Thessalonians: "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18) We know we have grown in Christ when our thankfulness is not conditioned on external events. It is easy to give thanks when things are going relatively well. It is another matter to give thanks when things seem to be going badly. Can we still open a voice of praise to God even when the wind is blowing against us?

Brothers and sisters, as we celebrate our national day of Thanksgiving, let us reflect on the true nature of thanksgiving, and be grateful always and in every circumstance.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA