

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JANUARY 27, 2019

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**THANKS TO THE PITA DOUGH ROLLERS.** It's that time again! We did so well with our sales for the holidays that we've depleted our inventory. So, we've start to schedule baking sessions. Yesterday was the first for this new year. **THANKS FOR ALL THE HELP!** If you like to help — no experience necessary — let **Chris Toda** know and she'll put you on the notice list. Contact her at: [thetodas@msn.com](mailto:thetodas@msn.com), or 508-832-6271.

**FOOD PANTRY.** Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **next Saturday, February 2nd, 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.**

**THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY** is underway. If you have a specific date and time that is more convenient, please contact Fr. Nick by e-mail ([frnick@stnicholaschurch.org](mailto:frnick@stnicholaschurch.org)) or on his cell: 508-335-7378.

**PLEASE BRING IN YOUR EMPTY HOLY WATER BOTTLES.** If you have

**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 THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: 1 TIMOTHY 1:15-17 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 18:35-43

(JESUS HEALS THE BLIND MAN OF JERICHO)

tone 2 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 2

empty bottles, please bring them with you to Church.

**A NEW PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE ELECTED THIS YEAR.** Please consider offering a stewardship of your time in this important ministry. We also are asking for people to serve on other Parish committees, if you would like to focus your efforts in just one area. However you'd like to serve, please speak with **George Demake or Fr. Nick.**

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

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by the **Sedares family** in memory of **Elizabeth Elias and Margaret Gikas. May their memory be eternal!**

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**SEASONAL CRAFTING** with the students of **Claremont Academy** (postponed because of the storm) will be held **this Sunday, January 27th, at 2:00 PM.** **ALSO,** there will be a music concert with **Paul Bonneau on Wednesday, January 30th at 2:00 p.m. Families and friends are always invited!**

**THE JANUARY ISSUE** of the Holy Trinity **Times** is available for download. Go to: [www.htnr.net](http://www.htnr.net) and click on the "January Newsletter" button. At the same time, subscribe to our e-mail list. And don't forget to 'like' Holy Trinity on Facebook and Twitter.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, Jan 26	Pita Dough Rolling, 9AM-NOON
Sat, Feb 2	Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON
Fri, Feb 15	Mustard Seed Meal, 5PM
Sat, March 2	Saturday of Souls, Lit 10AM
Sun, March 3	Meatfare Sunday
Sun, March 10	Cheesfare Sunday
Mon, March 11	Great Lent Begins
Sun, April 28	Great and Holy Pascha

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

**REMEMBER TO RESPOND TO THE TREASURE GENERATIONS** appeal. Donate directly by phone or through our website: [www.htnr.net/donate](http://www.htnr.net/donate). *Help make Holy Trinity the kind of place we know every home should be.*

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

## NAMEDAYS

**January 17**

***St. Anthony the Great***

Anthony Theodore Christo  
Scott Anthony Maynard  
Anthony Rucho  
Tony Nicholas Trakadas

**January 18**

***St. Athanasios Patriarch of Alexandria***

Thanas Lolo  
Arthur Peterson

**January 22**

***The Holy Apostle Timothy***

Rev. Fr. Timothy Lowe  
Timothy Rucho

**January 25**

***St. Gregory the Theologian***

Rev. Fr. Gregory N. Christakos  
Dr. Gregory Tsongalis

**January 28**

***St. Ephraim the Syrian***

Rev. Fr. Ephraim Peters



SYNAXIS OF  
THE THREE HIERARCHS:  
BASIL THE GREAT,  
GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN, &  
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM  
JANUARY 30

This common feast of these three teachers was instituted a little before the year 1100, during the reign of the Emperor Alexis I Comnenus, because of a dispute and strife that arose among the notable and virtuous men of that time. Some of them preferred Basil, while others preferred Gregory, and yet others preferred John Chrysostom, quarreling among themselves over which of the three was the greatest. Furthermore, each party, in order to distinguish itself from the others, assumed the name of its preferred Saint; hence, they called themselves Basilians, Gregorians, or Johannites.

Desiring to bring an end to the contention, the three Saints appeared together to the saintly John Mavropous, a monk who had been ordained Bishop of Euchaita, a city of Asia Minor, they revealed to him that the glory they have at the throne of God is equal, and told him to compose a common service for the

three of them, which he did with great skill and beauty. Saint John of Euchaita (celebrated Oct. 5) is also the composer of the Canon to the Guardian Angel, the Protector of a Man's Life. In his old age, he retired from his episcopal see and again took up the monastic life in a monastery in Constantinople. He reposed during the reign of the aforementioned Emperor Alexis Comnenus (1081-1118).



### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**LORD, TEACHER OF HUMILITY:**  
Deflate our puffed up hearts and remove all arrogance from our bearing lest we succumb to thinking we really are something to be proud of. Imbue us with true humility. Grant us victory over all temptations to arrogance and unhealthy pride, and enable us to adhere strictly to what is good, rejecting every hint of perversity and idolatry in our lives. Bring us to worship you alone, in spirit and in truth, that we may attain the depth of life you desire for us.

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

# I AM THE CHIEF SINNER

**T**HE Epistle lesson for this thirty-first Sunday after Pentecost is taken from St. Paul's first Letter to his disciple Timothy: 1:15-17. This letter, along with second Timothy and Titus form a unique group: pastoral letters addressed to particular persons, heads of Churches. In them St. Paul takes up the challenges of local church leaders as he sets an overarching direction for the whole early Church.

The three verses of today's reading are not so much addressed to Timothy as they are a moment of self-reflection on St. Paul's part. In these and the few preceding verses, he looks back on his former life — what he characterized as zealous but totally misdirected — and the degree to which God, in His mercy, had completely transformed it.

In verse 15 he gives us a statement that lies at the heart of the Christian proclamation: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He says that this saying "is sure and worthy of full acceptance." In other words, we can rely on it and trust that it is true; we shouldn't doubt it.

One reason St. Paul states this so categorically is that, in spite of the fact that many people did accept these words as Good News, many others did not. While this shouldn't surprise us, since we often experience the same reaction today, there is an important difference between St. Paul's time and ours. People of the Roman world had a better sense of what sin is than we do today. It isn't that they were more moral than us — anyone who has read a history of the Roman Empire can testify to that; it is that even while they were sinning they could more readily recognize it as such. We have a harder time.

One rule of sin is that it is always easier to recognize it in someone else than in yourself. Another rule is that sin reflects a violation of relationships: between us and God, between us and our loved ones, between us and people we

don't even know; and finally between our true selves and the mask that we put on to fool ourselves.

St. Paul sets us on the right trajectory for understanding sin with what he says at the end of this verse. After telling us that Jesus has come to save sinners, he adds: "of whom I am the foremost." This whole verse is part of the prayer we say before Communion attributed to St. John Chrysostom. It begins: "I believe and confess that you are the Christ the Son of the living God ..." We come to recognize ourselves as the "chief sinner" as we recite the prayer.

While logic tells us we all can't be the "chief sinner," St. Paul's assertion isn't about logic, it's about point of view. We stop looking at the speck in the eye of another and concentrate on the log lodged in our own (cf. Matthew 7:3ff). By speaking of his own sins, St. Paul provides us both an example to follow, and gives us the courage to embrace the "sure and worthy" news that God loves us. He says as much to Timothy in verse 16. His argument is that if we could see how God poured His mercy on Paul, after all of the things he had done against God and His Christ, then we would gain the strength to accept God's mercy and forgiveness for ourselves.

It is probably harder for modern people to accept the second rule of sin, that sin is a violation of relationships. In spite of the deep aloneness and isolation so many people feel, it remains difficult to break out of our narcissistic shell and truly engage those around us; to allow them and their needs to be more important to us than our own. Our airwaves are populated by endless talk shows on building relationships; innumerable books and articles are written on the subject; millions upon millions of people open Facebook accounts, each one "friending" hundreds of people. Yet, the pain of our aloneness grows. The root cause is the hard shell of our egos that prevents us from truly engaging those

around us. We live virtual lives. We text the person sitting next to us rather than looking into their eyes. We crave experiences rather than relationships. This is the heart of sin.

God did not send us an ambassador. He came Himself. He didn't ask anything of us, except our love. In fact, He gave us His love without waiting for our response. St. Paul says He did this, dying for us, while we were still His enemies (cf. Romans 5:10). It would be a sin not to love God in return.

We make a great deal about people who put themselves in harm's way for the sake of a friend or even a stranger. Police and firefighters do this all the time. Soldiers do this defending their nation. We call them heroes, and rightly so. These are people who in one instant will forget about themselves and completely give of themselves for the sake of the other. They crack open their shell of narcissism and become vulnerable, even to death.

Each of us can do the same. We don't necessarily have to die, except to ourselves, but we can take responsibility for our own actions, rather than blame someone else. We can hold our tongues while listening to someone with whom we disagree. We can suffer through painful moments in our relationships, hoping to bridge the gap that separates. We can be faithful, loyal and honest, even when others are duplicitous. We can love the ones around us more than we love ourselves. All of this is possible when we realize that we are the "chief sinner," and God loves us.

"To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen" (v. 17).

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA