

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN FEBRUARY 3, 2019

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

PITA DOUGH ROLLING. We've schedule a session for Saturday, February 9th. We need 12-15 people, so that the work is evenly distributed and we can finish with prep and clean-up in 3 hours. No experience necessary. There's a job for everyone. If you'd like to participate, contact Chris Toda at: thetodas@msn.com, or 508-832-6271.

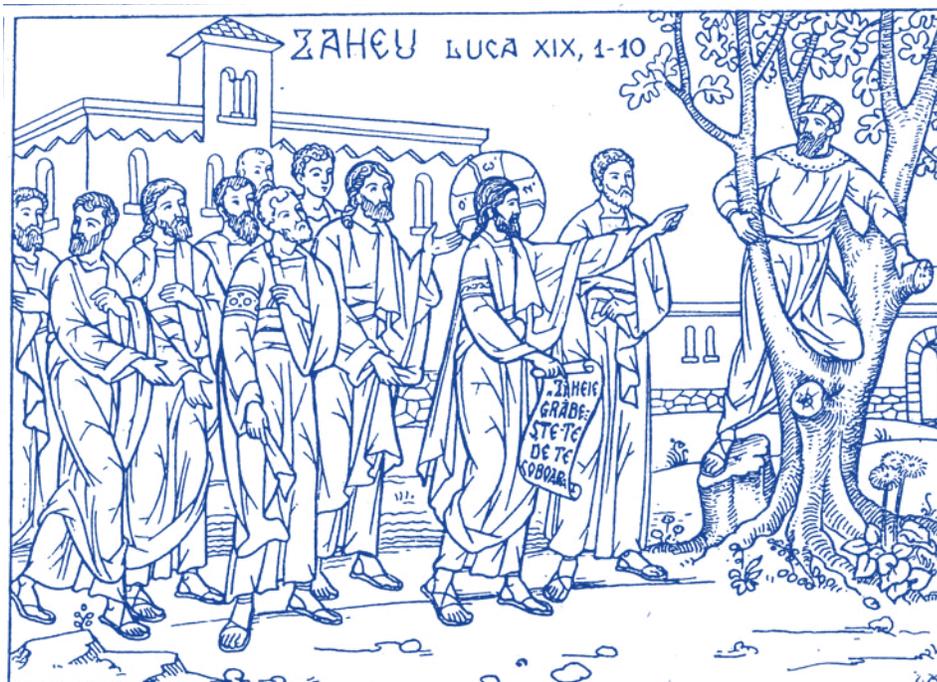
OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL is Friday, February 15th. We'll need help cooking and serving. **Prep** help needed (3 persons), **NOON** Thursday. **Prep** help needed (3 persons), **NOON** Friday. **Serving** help needed (5 persons), 5:30 PM Friday. **We are also looking for donors to cover the cost of the meal—around \$400.00 for the 200 meals we usually serve.** If you'd like to help, please talk to Fr. Nick.

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 March 2nd.

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 THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: 1 TIMOTHY 4:9-15 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 19:1-10

(THE CONVERSION OF ZACCHAEUS)

TONE 3 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 3

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) or on his cell: 508-335-7378.

PLEASE BRING IN YOUR EMPTY HOLY WATER BOTTLES. If you have 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 De-make** or **Fr. Nick**.

The latest issue of the Arch-

diocesan quarterly **CREDINȚA / THE FAITH** is available at the candles. **Pick one up and take it home!**

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Florence Rucho** in memory of her mother **Sophie George**. **May her memory be eternal!**

BABY SITTING OPPORTUNITY. A parishioner is looking for a person to

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, Feb 9 Pita Dough Rolling, 9AM-NOON
 Fri, Feb 15 Mustard Seed Meal, 5PM
 Sun, Feb 17 Publican & Pharisee. Triodion begins
 Week of Feb 17 No Fasting
 Sat, March 2 Saturday of Souls, Lit 10AM
 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON
 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

watch her child on Wednesday evenings during March and April. If interested, see Fr. Nick.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

JOIN THE RESIDENTS FOR A SUPER BOWL party. **This Sunday**, February 3rd at 2:00 PM.

There will be a **COFFEE SOCIAL** on **Thursday, February 7th** at 2:00 PM, sponsored by St. Mary's Albanian Orthodox Church. *As always, families and friends are invited!*

HOLY TRINITY PROVIDES: short-term rehab, long-term care, hospice and respite service. Services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, nutritional therapy, IV therapy and wound care management. There are: recreational activities, weekly Liturgy, on sight beauty salon and home style dining.

THE JANUARY ISSUE of the Holy Trinity *Times* is available for download. Go to: 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.

REMEMBER TO RESPOND TO THE TREASURE GENERATIONS appeal. Donate directly by phone or through our website: 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.



ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN
JANUARY 28TH

Saint Ephraim was born in Nisibis of Mesopotamia some time about the year 306, and in his youth was the disciple of Saint James, Bishop of Nisibis, one of the 318 Fathers at the First Ecumenical Council. Ephraim lived in Nisibis, practicing a severe ascetical life and increasing in holiness, until 363, the year in which Julian the Apostate was slain in his war against the Persians, and his successor Jovian surrendered Nisibis to them. Ephraim then made his dwelling in Edessa, where he found many heresies to do battle with. He waged an especial war against Bardaisan; this gnostic had written many hymns propagating his errors, which by their sweet melodies became popular and enticed souls away from the truth. Saint Ephraim, having received from God a singular gift of eloquence, turned Bardaisan's own weapon against him, and wrote a multitude of hymns to be chanted by choirs of women, which set forth the true doctrines, refuted heretical error, and praised the contests of the Martyrs.

Of the multitude of sermons, commentaries, and hymns that Saint Ephraim wrote, many were translated into Greek in his own lifetime. Sozomen says that Ephraim "Surpassed the most

approved writers of Greece," observing that the Greek writings, when translated into other tongues, lose most of their original beauty, but Ephraim's works "are no less admired when read in Greek than when read in Syriac" (Eccl. Hist., Book 111, 16). Saint Ephraim was ordained deacon, some say by Saint Basil the Great, whom Sozomen said "was a great admirer of Ephraim, and was astonished at his erudition." Saint Ephraim was the first to make the poetic expression of hymnody and song a vehicle of Orthodox theological teachings, constituting it an integral part of the Church's worship; he may rightly be called the first and greatest hymnographer of the Church, who set the pattern for these who followed him, especially Saint Romanos the Melodist. Because of this he is called the "Harp of the Holy Spirit." Jerome says that his writings were read in some churches after the reading of the Scriptures, and adds that once he read a Greek translation of one of Ephraim's works, "and recognized, even in translation, the incisive power of his lofty genius" (De vir. ill., ch. CXV).

Shortly before the end of his life, a famine broke out in Edessa, and Saint Ephraim left his cell to rebuke the rich for not sharing their goods with the poor. The rich answered that they knew no one to whom they could entrust their goods. Ephraim asked them, "What do you think of me?" When they confessed their reverence for him, he offered to distribute their alms, to which they agreed. He himself cared with his own hands for many of the sick from the famine, and so crowned his life with mercy and love for neighbor. Saint Ephraim reposed in peace, according to some in the year 373, according to others, 379.

LET NO ONE DESPISE YOUR YOUTH

THE liturgical cycle is now directing us toward preparation for Great Lent and Pascha. This Sunday's Gospel reading tells the story of the repentance of Zacchæus the tax collector. The Epistle reading is from St. Paul's first letter to Timothy, 4:9-15. St. Paul's Pastoral Letters — First and Second Timothy, and Titus — were addressed personally to the leader of a local church. He offered them advice on how to deal with organizational and pastoral matters within their communities. When writing to Timothy, he especially spoke of the qualifications for holding leadership positions within the Church; how the local bishop or presbyter, and deacons should comport themselves for the well-being of the community. These letters are often cited during ordinations.

Even though the advice is directed primarily toward those with spiritual responsibilities in the community, much of the advice still can be helpful to each of us. The reading begins with this affirmation: "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe." (v. 9-10) St. Paul is speaking especially of the difficulties of ministry. Keep in mind all of the sufferings that Paul and the other Apostles endured: imprisonment, floggings, exile, shipwreck. Many met a terrible death. They were abused even by members of their own communities. It is out of this experience that St. Paul urges Timothy to maintain his focus. "We toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God." The impulse to preach the Gospel is not grounded in human ambition and pride. It is based on the hope and faith we have in God, and the desire to share this hope with others.

God is "Savior of all people, especially of those who believe." This is a beautiful expression of a proper Christian attitude to evangelism. It embodies both God's desire that "everyone be

saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4), and the particular comfort those have who answer God's call, having faith and trust in Him.

St. Paul tells Timothy: "Command and teach these things." (v. 11) St. John Chrysostom offers a helpful explanation of why St. Paul says both "command and teach." He observes that depending on the circumstance a person in authority, such as a bishop or presbyter, or a parent or teacher, might have to 'command,' that is, to be unequivocal or directive. In other cases teaching is required. If you do one when you should do the other, you'll look silly. For example, when there is a clear moral imperative — 'don't take that, it doesn't belong to you' — teaching is not the appropriate stance. An authoritative voice is required. In other circumstances, when the issue is a matter of subtle choices, or where a person is inexperienced or ill-informed, shouting a command would not only be inappropriate, but probably offensive and hurtful. Gentle words of instruction are what is called for in this situation.

St. Paul is giving this advice to Timothy because he was relatively young for the responsibility that had been laid on him. Timothy was about thirty five when St. Paul was writing to him. He had been with St. Paul since he was around seventeen. They had a long relationship. So, he tells him, "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." (v. 12) He isn't saying that Timothy is not capable, or 'up to the job.' Just that he should recognize that some people might be uncomfortable because of his relative youth. A little later on, in Chapter 5, he offers him specific advice on how to relate to persons older and younger than he, both men and women. In this particular verse he focuses on the central aspect: Timothy's own behavior. He tells Timothy that he needs to be the example. This

is good advice for every bishop and presbyter. It is also good advice for each one of us. If we presume to teach or lead, we need first and foremost to show how it is done through our own life: our words, but especially our deeds, actions and thoughts.

"Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching." (v. 13) The early Christian communities were organized much like the Jewish synagogues out of which they grew. As part of their service, in addition to the eucharist, there were readings of scripture, preaching (that is, an explanation of the scripture), and teaching (namely, the practical application). We do much the same today.

"Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you" (v. 14). In St. Paul's time ordination was by an Apostle, but the council of presbyters (elders/priests) consented by laying their hands on the candidate, along with the Apostle. By "prophetic utterance" St. Paul is referring to those spiritually gifted persons who pointed out the unique and charismatic qualities of Timothy himself. Paul doesn't want Timothy to forget the gifts God has given him.

"Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress." (v. 15) One of the ways that we can see God at work in the world is in the progress each of us makes in the spiritual life. When we practice what we have been taught and devote ourselves to the life in Christ, not only do we ourselves benefit, but we also encourage others. They see the change in us and grow in hope.

This is St. Paul's advice to Timothy. It is good advice for us as well.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE

This feast, celebrated on February 2, is known in the Orthodox Church as The Presentation of Christ in the Temple. Another name for the feast is The Meeting of our Lord. Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians call the feast, The Purification of the Holy Virgin. About 450 AD in Jerusalem, people began the custom of holding lighted candles during the Divine Liturgy of this feast day. Therefore, some churches in the West refer to this holy day as Candlemas. The Feast of the Presentation concludes the observances related to the Nativity of Christ, a period that opened on November 15 with the beginning of the Nativity fast.

The story of the Presentation is told in Luke 2:22-29. Mary and Joseph were faithful Jews and observed their religious customs. An important custom was for the couple to take their first-born son to the Temple. The baby was taken to the Temple forty days after his birth and was dedicated to God. In addition, if the parents were wealthy, they were to bring a lamb and a young pigeon or a turtle dove to be offered as a sacrifice at the Temple. The custom provided that if the parents were poor, they were to offer two pigeons or two turtle doves for the sacrifice.

When Jesus was forty days old, Mary and Joseph took Him to the Temple in Jerusalem. They were not wealthy, so they took two turtle doves with them to offer as a sacrifice at the Temple. As they arrived at the Temple, Mary and Joseph were met by a very old man named Simeon. He was a holy man and was noted as a very intelligent scholar. Simeon spent much time studying about the prophets of Israel. It was during his studies that he learned of the coming of the Messiah. The Jewish people were waiting for the Messiah to

come and deliver Israel from their conquerors. From that time on, Simeon spent his time praying for the Messiah to come. He spent many years in prayer. Finally, while Simeon was praying he heard the voice of God. God promised Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah.

Simeon and Christ

Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. When Simeon saw Jesus, he took the baby in his arms and blessed the Lord and said:

“Lord, now let Your servant go in peace according to Your promise, because my eyes have seen Your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory to your people Israel.”

Also, in the Temple was Anna the Prophetess. She had been a widow for many years. Anna was about eighty-four years old and spent her time in the Temple worshiping, fasting, and praying. When she saw the Christ Child she praised God and spoke of him to all who were awaiting the Messiah.

After Jesus was presented in the Temple, the family returned to Galilee to the town of Nazareth. The Bible tells us that Jesus grew and became strong, and was filled with wisdom.



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

WHEN all the difficulties and troubles of life seem to overpower us at once, Lord, come quickly to our aid and give us the wisdom and strength we need to deal with it all. From on high, reach down and seize us, as it were, pulling us out of the depths of our problems and difficulties and rescuing us in your love. Do not forget us, but help us always.

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