

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 3, 2019

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**THE ANNUAL PARISH GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL BE HELD TODAY, SUNDAY MARCH 3RD.**

**PITA BAKING.** There will be a Pita Baking Session, Thursday, March 7th, 9:00 AM to NOON. Please mark your calendars. **Questions?** talk to **Chris Toda, 508-832-6271.** Also, let her know if you'll be coming. **Remember: There's a job for everyone!**

**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. **We are looking for people to help in this worthwhile ministry!** If you'd like to help or more information, please speak with Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola. Our next Saturday is March 30th and then April 6th.

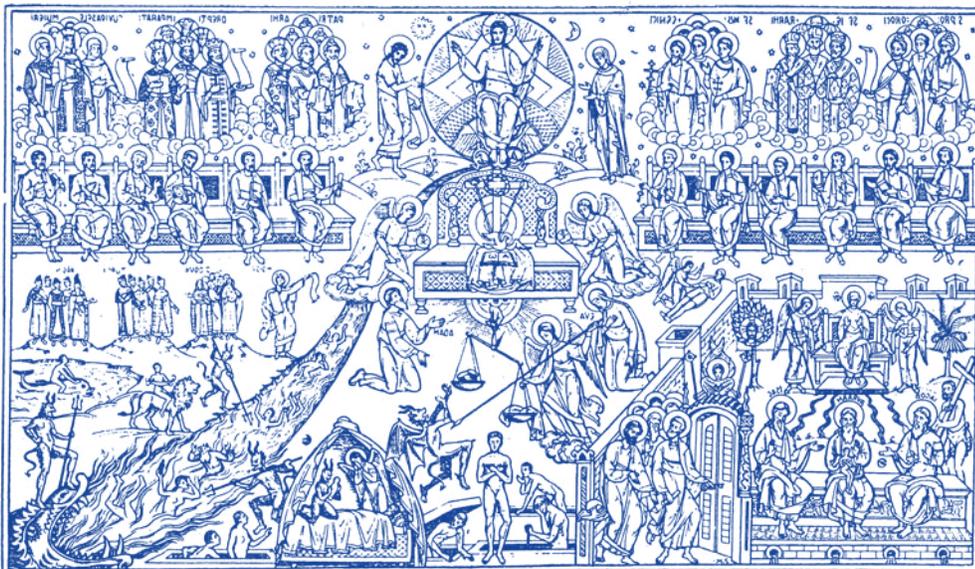
**WE CELEBRATE A MEMORIAL TODAY** for **Zoica Neledcu**, sister of Nicholas Charalambides, fallen asleep 40-days. **May her memory be eternal!**

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by the **Nedelcu family** in memory of **Zoica.**

**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 FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT — MEATFARE SUNDAY

APOSTOLIC READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 8:8-9:2 ⊕ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25:31-46  
TONE 7 ⊕ MATINS GOSPEL 7

## UP-COMING

**THE PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY SCHEDULE** is posted a little farther down. Please make note of the dates and places. The first PreSanctified Liturgy will be held at **St. Spyridon Cathedral on Wednesday, March 13th.**

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Come join the residents and enjoy a **DANCE PERFORMANCE** with Margaret Ottiano on March 5th at 2:45 pm. There will be a **COFFEE SOCIAL** on Thursday March 7th at 2:00 pm, sponsored by St. Mary's Albanian Orthodox Church. **As always, families and friends are invited!**

**SEND AN E-CARD** to your loved one and put a smile on their face! Visit our website at [www.htnr.net/e-cards](http://www.htnr.net/e-cards) and submit a message. It will be handwritten and delivered daily to Residents. Little things in can make a big difference.

**JOB OPENINGS:** ► Holy Trinity has an opening for the **DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES.** Among the responsibilities/qualifications are: extensive HR experience, preferably in healthcare; recruiting staff; resolving staff disputes; and payroll. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact: **Jerry Shaffer, the Administrator of Holy Trinity, at 508-852-1000.**

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, March 3	Meatfare Sunday General Assembly, after Liturgy
Thurs, Mar 7	Pita Baking, 9 AM-NOON
Sun, March 10	Cheesefare Sunday
Mon, March 11	GREAT LENT BEGINS
Wed, March 13	PreSanctified Lit - St. Spyridon 6 PM
Wed, Mar 20	PreSanctified Lit - St. Nicholas 6 PM
Sat, March 30	Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON
Sun, April 28	Great and Holy Pascha

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850

E-MAIL: [FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG](mailto:FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG) ♦ WEB: [WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG](http://WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG)

A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

► **RECEPTIONIST** (per diem). Must have computer knowledge. **Contact Malka Sebag**, e-mail MSebag@htnr.net or call 508-852-1000.

► **SKILLED NURSING FACILITY BILLER:** Prepares bills, knowledge of Medicare, Medicaid, billing experience. Please contact Jerry Shaffer, the Administrator of Holy Trinity, at 508-852-1000.

**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.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**ST. MARY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH** in Shrewsbury is holding its Annual **Lenten Fish Fry on Friday, March 8th**. Dinner will be served from 4:00PM to 8:00PM in the Parish Hall (Main St, Shrewsbury). **Information:** [www.StMarysFishFry.com](http://www.StMarysFishFry.com).

### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**O** MERCIFUL FATHER: You have enabled us to live through another day by your ineffable goodness. As daylight fades into darkness, we pray, once more, that you will send us your unfailing light, our Lord Jesus Christ. Let his brilliance bring meaning to our lenten passage. Enlighten our minds and hearts, so that the observance of these days will not be empty ritual but the renewal of our lives. Therefore, as we struggle to win greater control of the body, let us also be renewed in spirit.

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



### THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

**O** Lord and master of my life! Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness, of ambition and vain talk!

**I**nstead, give me the spirit of prudence and humility, of patience and charity.

**Y**es, my king and Lord, let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others: For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

## NAMEDAYS

**February 22**

*The Holy Martyr Anthousa and her 12 Servants*

Anthi Elefteriou

**March 3**

*Henricus, the hermit martyr in Norway*

Eric Lolo

Erik Mayer

**March 9**

*The Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste*

Mircea Nedelcu

**March 16**

*St. Theodore of Tyre*

Theodore Belba

Theodora Collins

Theodhoraq Lolo

Teodor Nedelcu

Theodore Peter Tonna

Theodore Russell Tonna

Derek Wilder

**March 17**

*St. Alexios the Man of God*

Alex John Johnson

Alex Leo Toda

*St. Patrick, Enlightener of Ireland*

Patricia Mountzouris

Padraic Donnchadh Peterson

Patricia Thanas

### BAKING STATISTICS

**During 2018  
St. Nick's Kitchen  
baked and sold:**

**374 Pitas**

**161 Platters**

**2475 Baklava**

**2450 Kourabia**

**3943 Kouralakia**

**55 Breads**

**WOW!**

# FOOD WILL NOT COMMEND US BEFORE GOD

**T**HIS is the third and last preparatory week before Great Lent — the Sunday of the Last Judgment, also known as Meatfare (since we refrain from eating meat beginning the next day). The Epistle lesson is taken from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, 8:8-9:2. In this section St. Paul takes up the question of eating meat that has been offered to idols. He gives us two important principles that flow out of his understanding of what happens when a person accepts Christ and is incorporated into Him. The first is that we become free from servitude to the Law, to the world and to the Evil One. The second is that in Christian morality, charity (*agapé*) is a law above everything else.

St. Paul is answering a question addressed to him by the Corinthian community. They wanted to know if it were permissible for a Christian to eat meat that had been offered in sacrifice to a pagan god; and, if so, in which circumstances? This was a complicated issue. Usually, only a small portion of an animal was actually used as the sacrificial offering. The rest remained the property of the priests of the temple. This is how they supported themselves. As you might imagine there was a great deal remaining and this was sold to the butchers for purchase in the marketplace. You could never be certain if the meat you were buying had been offered to a pagan god.

There was another problem, one having to do with social relations. Very often a Christian would be invited by family or friends to some important event, like a birthday or a marriage — a family festival. These could be held in the pagan temple where there were special rooms available for such occasions. The food offered there had been given in sacrifice to the pagan god. Even if these events were held at home, the meat certainly had been offered in sacrifice. For a person of conscience this

presented a real dilemma. For a recent convert from paganism, this represented a severe temptation, a kind of back-tracking. For a Jewish convert, to eat meat sacrificed to a pagan god was unthinkable; Jews would have died before they would ever do such a thing. We Orthodox Christians face similar dilemmas. We are often invited to events and celebrations that fall on fasting days; this happens especially during the Christmas holiday season. While not necessarily as severe a matter of conscience as in the pagan world, we too are presented with the choice of either breaking the fast or offending our host. This is the issue the Corinthians have asked St. Paul to address.

Here it would be helpful if we read the entire section, from verses 8:8-13: "Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall."

The two questions around food ("fasting") have to do with our own *understanding* of 'food' in our greater relationship with God, and with our brother's or sister's *sensibility* regarding the same question. Food itself is absolutely neutral. God is not interested in what we eat; or in St. Paul's phrase: "Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do." In a very deep sense the fasting rules we follow are arbitrary.

To adopt total vegetarianism certainly makes sense, but this will not put us in a better stance before God. What puts us in a better position before God is the quality of our heart, not our stomach.

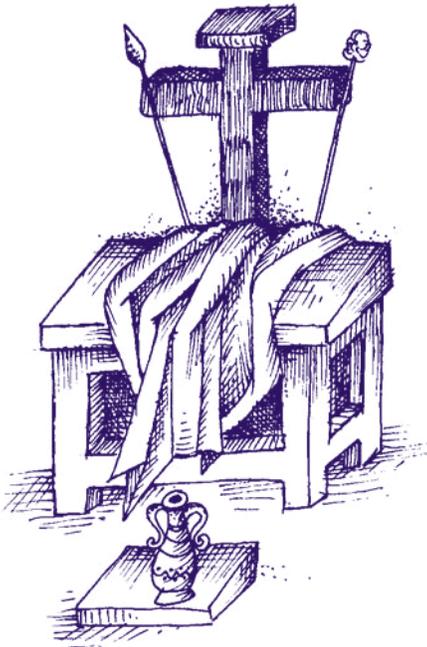
So, St. Paul tells the Corinthians, do you think you have a superior 'knowledge' such that you can eat idol-meat? You are destroying your fellow Christian who is 'weaker' and sees your license as a scandal; or, sees your license as a temptation.

If I knew my brother or sister were an alcoholic and that by drinking in front of them I would tempt them back to drink — even though I thought that I could regulate my own drinking — would my drinking in front of them be acceptable? Do I not have an obligation toward them? Is it not *agapé* love that is required of me?

St. Paul tells the Corinthians: "if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall." It is not only God that we need to be concerned with when we fast, it is also our brother and sister. We are 'fasting' together. We are struggling and striving together. We are each supporting one another. The old Latin saying obtains here especially well: *Unus Christianus, nullus Christianus* — One Christian, No Christian. We cannot be an individual Christian; we are Christians together, in community.

The holy fathers and mothers of our Church have given us the gift of the Fast. We are to use it for our own discipline, self-control, and spiritual progress. We are also to use it for the benefit of our brothers and sisters. Let not our zeal scandalize them. But also, let not our own weaknesses lessen our resolve to strive toward holiness and communion with God.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



## PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES

2019

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

St. Spyridon

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

St. Nicholas

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

St. Mary

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

St. George

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

St. Nicholas

Wednesday, April 7, 2019

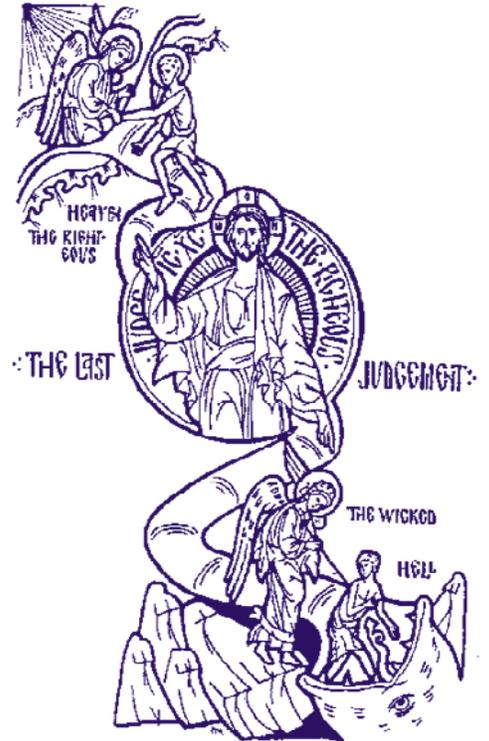
Sts. Anagyro

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest 'pot-luck' lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others.

## EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

**THE SATURDAY BEFORE THE SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.** On the day before the Sunday of the Last Judgment, and in close connection with the theme of this Sunday, there is a universal commemoration of the dead 'from all the ages'. (There are further commemorations of the dead on the second, third and fourth Saturdays in Lent.) Before we call to mind the Second Coming of Christ in the services on Sunday, we commend to God all those departed before us, who are now awaiting the Last Judgment. In the texts for this Saturday there is a strong sense of the continuing bond of mutual love that links together all the members of the Church, whether alive or dead. For those who believe in the risen Christ, death does not constitute an impassable barrier, since all are alive in Him; the departed are still our brethren, members of the same family with us, and so we are conscious of the need to pray insistently on their behalf.

**THE SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.** The Sunday of the Last Judgment (Gospel reading: Matthew 25:31-46). The two past Sundays spoke to us of God's patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as *our judge*. 'Behold the goodness and severity of God' (Rom. 11:22). Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the End comes. In the words of the Great Canon:



The end draws near, my soul, the end draws near;

Yet thou dost not care or make ready.

The time grows short, rise up: the Judge is at the door.

The days of our life pass swiftly, as a dream, as a flower.

This Sunday sets before us the 'eschatological' dimension of Lent: the Great Fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Saviour, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come. (This is a theme that will be taken up in the first three days of Holy Week.) Nor is the judgment merely in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts towards others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgment on ourselves.