

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 10, 2019

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**GREAT LENT** begins tomorrow, March 11th.

**THE WEDNESDAY PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES** will begin on Wednesday, March 13th. We'll be rotating the celebration of this Lenten Liturgy among our sister Orthodox Churches in the area. Plan on attending these services. Set aside your Wednesday evenings and use this as one way to spiritually prepare for Pascha. Each Liturgy will start at 6:00 pm. Check out the full schedule in the Bulletin. There is a "pot-luck" Lenten meal after the service. The first PreSanctified Liturgy will be held at **St. Spyridon Cathedral**.

**BRING YOUR FAVORITE ICON TO CHURCH NEXT SUNDAY!** Sunday March 17th is the Sunday of Orthodoxy. We're asking the children of the Parish to process with Icons toward the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. The adults can hold theirs high from the pew. **We ask that parents bring their children's icons to Church** to make the procession even more meaningful for them.

**VESPERS AND CONFESSION** will be held **each Saturday evening at 5:00 pm during Great Lent**. Fr. Nick will be available for confession each week after Vespers, and before Vespers by appoint-

**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**



### CHEESE-FARE SUNDAY

**SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS — THE CASTING OUT OF ADAM & EVE FROM PARADISE**  
APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 13:11-14:4 ⊕ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:14-21  
TONE 8 ⊕ MATINS GOSPEL 8

ment (e-mail Fr. Nick).

**PITA BAKING.** There will be a **Pita Baking Session, Thursday, March 28th, 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!**

**THE NEW PARISH COUNCIL** for the 2019-2020 biennial term was elected at the General Assembly held last Sunday, March 3rd. The members are:

V. Gerald Belba  
George Demake  
Thomas Fitzpatrick  
Margarite Landry  
Timothy Rucho  
Dimitri Saffron  
Deborah Sedares  
Christopher Seith  
Evan Stamoulis  
Christine Toda

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by the **Carol Soter** in memory of her son **Gary Michael Soter** fallen asleep thirty five years.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**TODAY IS MISSION SUNDAY.** What better way to approach our journey toward Pascha than to pray for and support the Church's mission to share the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ with the world! **On March 10th** please say a prayer for Orthodox Missions and

### DATES TO REMEMBER

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  
Thurs, Mar 28 Pita Baking, 9 AM-NOON  
Sat, March 30 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON  
Sun, April 21 Palm Sunday (Western Easter)  
Sun, April 28 GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

Orthodox Missionaries serving around the world, consider volunteering to serve as part of an Orthodox Mission Team, and support this eternal work of the Church with a gift to the Mission Center. **For more information or to get involved, visit the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) website:** [www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org), e-mail: [missions@ocmc.org](mailto:missions@ocmc.org), or call 1-877-463-6784.

**Notre Dame Academy** (Catholic, college prep school for young women) is holding an Open House for prospective students, 5th through 8th grades on Sunday March 24th. **Questions?** [www.nda-worc.org](http://www.nda-worc.org).

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

***I scream, you scream we all scream for ice cream!*** Come join the residents **Thursday March 14th at 2:00PM for an Ice Cream Social!**

A local church music group called the ***Sunshine Girls*** from the Methodist Church in Worcester will be performing some of their original songs, come join the residents on Thursday, March 14th at 2:00PM ***Families are always welcomed!***

**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:** ➤ **MMQ Nurse:** If you are interested in working in a non profit, team centered environment, who pride ourselves on high quality care, then this may be the right position for you. ***Experience is required.*** Please contact: **Jerry Shaffer, the Administrator of Holy Trinity, at 508-852-1000.**

➤ **RECEPTIONIST** (per diem). Must have computer knowledge. **Contact Malka Sebag,** e-mail [MSebag@htnr.net](mailto:MSebag@htnr.net)

## A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**A**t times, O forgiving Lord, it is difficult not to harbor grudges when we have been offended by treacherous speech and hurt by words that bruise our pride. We desire to rid ourselves of such feelings, but our own powers are not up to the task. Nor would we want, in any case, to rely solely on our own strength. You yourself must give us what we need to purify our minds and hearts, to dispel all these negative sentiments, lest we perish for breeding and nurturing them.

For blest and glorified is your most honorable and magnificent name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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.

## NAMEDAYS

**February 22**

***The Holy Martyr Anthousa and her 12 Servants***  
Anthi Eleftheriou

**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!**

## LIVE HONORABLY, AS IN THE DAY

**T**OMORROW we begin Great Lent. The Scripture readings chosen for this Forgiveness Sunday are meant to give us some guidance as we set out. In the Gospel of Matthew (6:14-21) the Lord tells us to forgive one another, as well as to fast with joy and in secret. In the selection we read from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (13:11-14:4) we also receive some sound advice on the proper way to approach the Fast. As a way to steel the resolve of the Roman Christians, he reminds them of the sleep and darkness from which they have emerged, and the day of salvation that draws every closer. He also counsels them not to judge how and what people eat — this is an echo from last week's reading from First Corinthians.

One of the powerful themes during Lent, especially at both the beginning and end, is the Lord's return — His Second Coming. Not only did we hear of this in the last Sunday's Gospel lesson, but the same subject was also present in all of the weekday readings during the past two weeks. Many of these same readings, as well as others on the Lord's Coming, will be read during Holy Week.

As Christians we experience and live the reality of the Kingdom on two levels. The first is in the changed reality we now live because Jesus our Savior has come. St. Paul reminds the Romans of this in the first part of today's reading. The second level is the expectation of the Lord's coming-again. We await the great day of judgment when the Lord will come in glory. Then everything and everyone will be sorted out. This is the Judgment spoken of in last week's Gospel reading.

When we hear words like 'sleep' and 'waking' or 'night' and 'day', these are used as a metaphor to give us a way to understand a deeper spiritual reality: our movement from captivity by evil, to freedom in Christ. So, St. Paul tells the Romans: "You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers;

the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light" (v. 11-12). The early Christians (including St. Paul) believed that the Lord would be coming again soon. In addition, everyone in these communities was a convert to faith in Jesus Christ. Both the darkness they had left and the day drawing near were very palpable to them. It is hard to feel this same immediacy for us who have grown up with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, part of our objective during Lent is to heighten and deepen within us the experiences of which St. Paul speaks.

St. Paul next turns to how we should actually live here and now: "Let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (v. 13-14). It would be easy to interpret these lines as St. Paul being 'prudish,' but this is not the case. St. John Chrysostom says that St. Paul is not speaking against normal partying, drinking, socializing or conjugal relations. He is warning us against the excesses of these that lead us to pervert our true human nature — our nature in Christ.

The Fast is meant as a time for us to regain our sense of who we are and what we are called to be. To "live honorably as in the day" is to embrace our true selves — who God created us to be and to which He calls us again.

The second theme in this week's reading concerns judgment: that is, forming opinions about and criticizing others. He uses the same categories of 'weak' and 'strong' as he did when writing to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 8:8ff). This suggests that the matter of whether or not a Christian could or should eat food offered to idols was being discussed in Churches throughout the ancient world. While today we might not face the question of food offered to pagan gods, we do have the

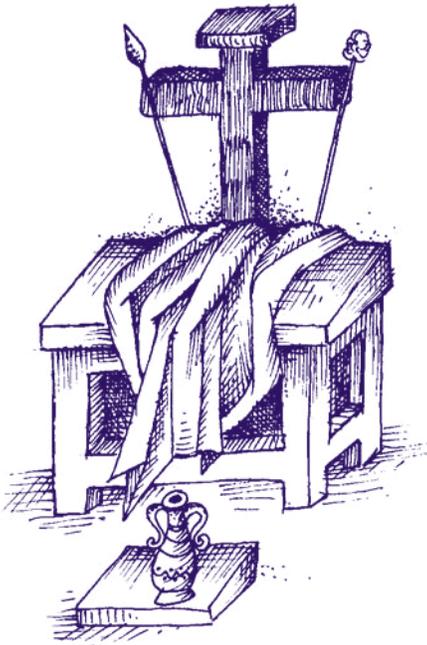
Church's fasting rules that present a similar spiritual challenge.

St. Paul says: "Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand" (v. 14:1-4).

The first thing that strikes us is that the 'weak' are eating vegetables, and the 'strong' are eating freely. Our fasting rules are the absolute inverse: the strong are those who abstain and the weak are eating freely. Fasting is an important spiritual discipline, but it is our own personal discipline. We fast not because God needs our fasting, but rather because we need to change our focus from our stomach and desires, to the deeper reality of our love for God and His love for us. When we are tied down to the things of earth, it is hard to ascend toward Heaven.

Because fasting requires us to be disciplined, it is very easy to fall into the sin of pride. We may feel our fasting deserves some recognition, by God and others. We can feel we are better than those who do not fast, or, do not fast rigorously. But, "who are you to pass judgment on servants of another?" Our fasting is our own, something private between us and God. Our good works are our own, a secret between us and God. Our prayer is our own, the quiet conversation we have with our Lord. But, may each of us grow together during this time of the Fast, and so be worthy, together with all our brothers and sisters, to see the Light of Christ's Resurrection.

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 17, 2019

Sts. Anagyro

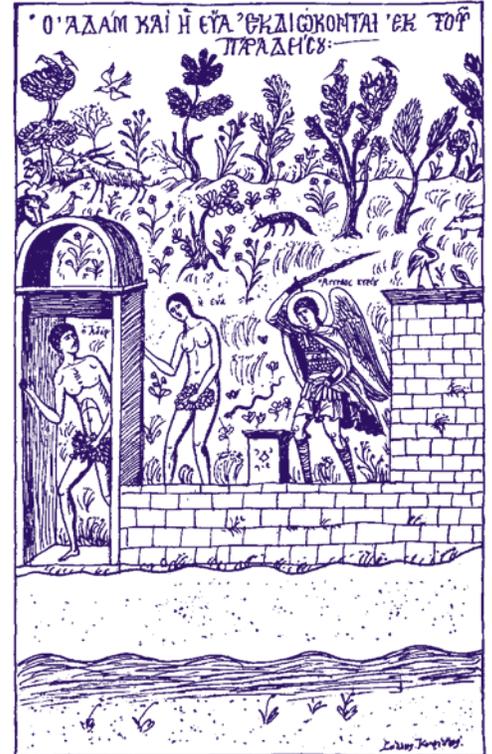
Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest 'pot-luck' lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something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

## EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

**THE SUNDAY BEFORE LENT.** The last of the preparatory Sundays has two themes: it commemorates Adam's expulsion from Paradise, and it is also the Sunday of Forgiveness. There are obvious reasons why these two things should be brought to our attention as we stand on the threshold of the Great Fast. One of the primary images in the Triodion is that of the return to Paradise. Lent is a time when we weep with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But Lent is also a time when we are preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ's death and rising, which has reopened Paradise to us once more (Luke 23:43). So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise:

O precious Paradise, unsurpassed in beauty,  
Tabernacle built by God, unending gladness and delight,  
Glory of the righteous, joy of the prophets, and dwelling of the saints,  
With the sound of thy leaves pray to the Maker of all:  
May He open unto me the gates which I closed by my transgression,  
And may He count me worthy to partake of the Tree of Life  
And of the joy which was mine when I dwelt in thee before.

Note how the Triodion speaks here not of 'Adam' but of 'me': 'May He open unto me the gates which I closed'. Here, as throughout the Triodion, the events of sacred history are not treated as happenings in the distant past or future, but as experiences undergone by me here and now within the dimension of sacred time.



The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Matthew 6:14-21) and in the special ceremony of mutual forgiveness at the end of Vespers on Sunday evening. Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. As the commemoration of the ascetic saints on the previous Saturday has just made clear to us, we do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family. Our asceticism and fasting should not separate us from our fellow men but link us to them with ever stronger bonds. The Lenten ascetic is called to be a person for others.

