

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 24, 2019

THE FORE-FEAST OF THE  
ANNUNCIATION

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**GREAT LENT:** Tomorrow marks the start of the third week of Lent.

**TOMORROW, MARCH 25TH, IS THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION.** We will celebrate the Feast with our sister parish of St. Mary's Assumption on Salisbury Street. **Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:00AM.**

**HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN NICOLAE** will be celebrating Liturgy next Sunday, March 31st, with us. Please plan on coming at the start of the Liturgy. His Eminence will also be administering the oath to the newly elected Parish Council.

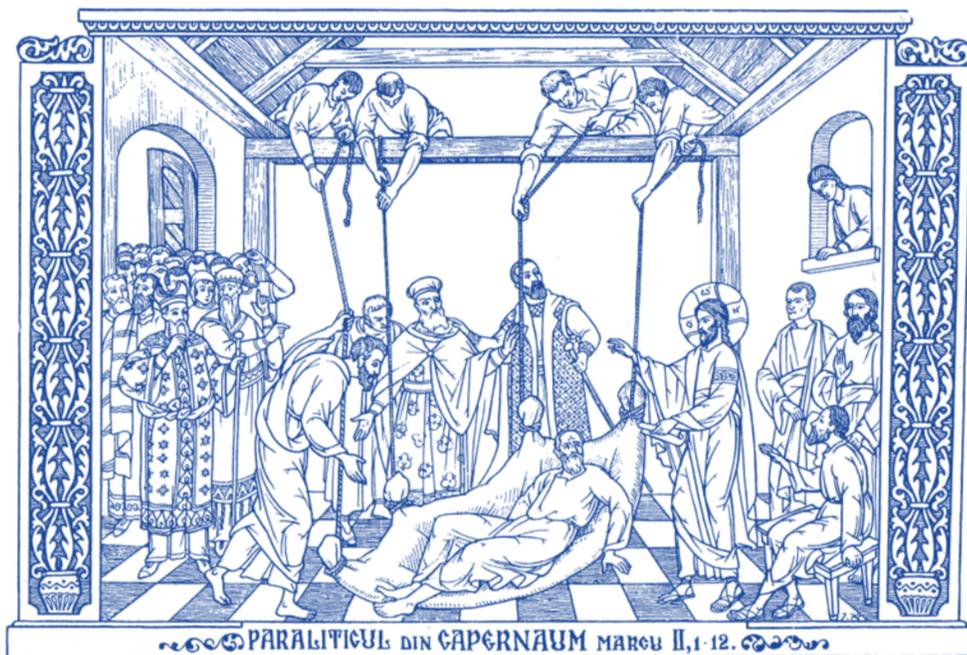
**DONATIONS ARE WELCOMED** toward the flowers that will adorn the Precious Cross next Sunday. **Please see Tim Rucho.**

**THE WEDNESDAY PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY** this week will be held at St. Mary's Assumption at 6:00 PM. Plan on attending these services. Set aside your Wednesday evenings and use this as one way to prepare for Pascha. The full schedule is below.

**GREETERS TEAM 5:**  
DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

**COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:**  
**HELP NEEDED**  
PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



### THE SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 1:10-2:3 ✠ GOSPEL: MARK 2:1-12  
(JESUS HEALS THE PARALYTIC IN CAPERNAUM ✠ ST. GREGORY PALAMAS)  
TONE 2 ✠ MATINS GOSPEL 10

**FOOD PANTRY.** Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **this Saturday, March 30th, 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.**

**VESPERS AND CONFESION** 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 appointment (e-mail Fr. Nick).

**PITA BAKING.** There will be a **Pita Baking Session, this 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!**

**BAKING ORDERS FOR EASTER** need to be in by **next Sunday.** If you have family or friends who would like pitas, pastry, or pastry platters for the holiday, please make sure you get the orders in on time! **Any questions, please contact Chris Toda.**

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, March 11	GREAT LENT BEGAN
Mon, Mar 25	Annunciation Lit at St. Mary 9 AM
Wed, Mar 27	PreSanctified Lit - St. Mary 6 PM
Thurs, Mar 28	Pita Baking, 9 AM-NOON
Sat, March 30	Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON Vespers/Confession, 5 PM
Sun, March 31	Visit of Metropolitan Nicolae
Wed, April 3	PreSanctified Lit - St. George 6 PM
Sat, April 6	Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON Vespers/Confession, 5 PM
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

**A MEMORIAL** will be celebrated today for the servant of God, **Randolph 'Randy' Samara**, fallen asleep two years. *May the Lord rest his soul with the righteous!*

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by **Janice Samara and family** in memory of her husband **Randy**.

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**HOLY TRINITY RECEIVED A DEFICIENCY FREE SURVEY ON FRIDAY, MARCH 15!** This current survey, conducted annually by the Dept. of Public Health, was the most stringent and difficult it has ever been. The DPH Inspectors deemed Holy Trinity's staff to have no areas in need of improvement. ***Congratulations to the staff for such a phenomenal achievement!*** The residents are extremely happy to call Holy Trinity their home and the parishioners of every church should be proud to be associated with such a wonderful facility.

Come join the residents **Sunday, March 24th at 2:00PM** for a fun afternoon of bowling with the Claremont Academy Students!

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

## A LENTEN PRAYER

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**O**LORD AND MASTER OF OUR LIVES: Educate us, your ignorant servants, during these lenten days, by letting your wisdom enlighten our minds and hearts. Make us alert, lest the deceits of this world seduce us. Teach us how to distinguish between substance and appearance, how to discern what is of the Holy Spirit and what is not. Do not leave us to fight the enemy of our life by ourselves, for he is constantly striving to silence the word of life within us. Rather, be with us today, and every day, through your loving mercy.

For you are good and full of love for us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## NAMEDAYS

### 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

### March 25

#### *The Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos*

V. Gerald Belba  
Lea Christo  
Mary Anna Dymek  
Vangjush Lolo  
Evan Stamoulis  
Lynne Tonna  
Evans Tsoules

## 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.

# CAN WE NEGLECT SO GREAT A SALVATION?

**D**URING LENT THE APOSTOLIC READINGS are taken largely from the Letter to the Hebrews. The overarching theme of Hebrews is that Jesus, God's Son, has become the High Priest of the New Covenant at the heavenly altar. God's new sanctuary is not on earth, but above. The Old Law is superseded by the New. The ritual of animal sacrifices has given way to the spiritual sacrifice, through the Self-Sacrifice of Jesus. By reading and studying this Letter we are given deeper insights into the way in which God had been leading humanity, and especially His chosen people, to understand the new relationship with Him to which we all are called.

Today's reading begins at Hebrews 1:10 and ends at 2:3. The theme in the first chapter is to remind the reader who this Jesus is. He is not an angel or other created being; he is the "Son, whom [God] appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world." (v. 2) It seems that the community to which this Letter is addressed were back-sliding in their faith in Jesus. Most scholars think this was a community of Jewish converts. Some even think the audience might have been a community of priests of the Old Covenant. The writer of this Letter wants to remind them that this Jesus "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power," (v. 3) that is to say: he is God.

I need to say a word about the authorship of Hebrews. Even from the first Christian centuries people who studied the Bible noticed differences in style and vocabulary between Letters we know St. Paul wrote and the Letter to the Hebrews. Various reasons were offered. St. Clement believed that he had written it in Hebrew and then had St. Luke translate it into Greek. Origen believed that the thinking was St. Paul's, but the hand probably belonged to one of his disciples. This does not diminish the author-

ity of the Letter — God forbid! Rather, it simply highlights the distinct challenges that the Letter to the Hebrews presents for us modern readers. The other Letters of St. Paul are primarily pastoral, even while being replete with deep theology and profound spirituality. Hebrews has this same level of theology and spirituality while taking up the question of Old Testament worship and how it changed with the self-sacrifice of the Son of God. For our purposes here, we will assume that St. Paul is the author.

In the first chapter St. Paul cites a number of Old Testament texts that were generally assumed to refer to the Messiah. The way he uses these verses have the form of hymns and poems that were written to describe the enthronement of kings in the ancient Near East, especially when these kings declared themselves to also be gods. St. Paul is telling the Hebrews that Jesus is not just a man, nor is he an angel. All created things, human or angelic, are mutable and changeable. The Son is not. So when he speaks of the Son as sitting down "at the right hand of the Majesty on high," (v. 3) he is emphasizing that Jesus has "become as much superior to the angels as the name [i.e. God's Son] he has obtained is more excellent than theirs." (v. 4)

St. Paul has taken the verses that begin today's reading (v. 10-12) from Psalm 102: "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end." The Psalmist directs these words to God. St. Paul uses them to describe Jesus, the eternal Son of God.

To emphasize this, he reminds us of the words of Psalm 110: "But to which of the angels has he ever said, 'Sit at my

right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet'?" (v. 13)

The angels are the servants of the Son. "Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" (v. 14) Notice, they are sent not only to serve the Son, but they are also "sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation." This means us. God has sent us prophets and angels. Now he sends us His Son.

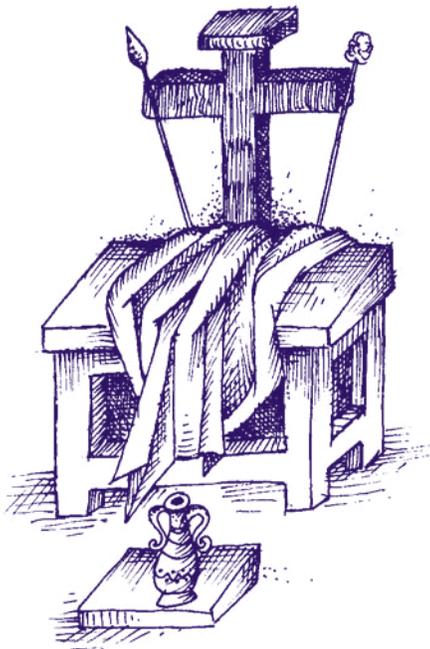
"Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty, how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him." (v. 2:1-3)

Brothers and sisters, this is our central challenge: to pay attention! How many times do we hear in the Liturgy, "Let us be attentive!?" This is just a polite way of saying: "Pay Attention!" St. Paul reminds us of punishments meted out to those who ignored the angels. Implicit is the consequences that await us if we ignore the Son of God who lived among us.

"Can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" God is not rescuing us from famine and fire, sword and invasion. He is saving us from death. He is offering us eternal life.

God spoke to us directly — in and through His Son. We know this because those who saw him and lived with him told us; they testified to it not only in word, but also with their very lives. Throughout the centuries the truth of his word and their testimony has enlivened countless believers. May God give us the strength of will to pay attention, and not to neglect our salvation.

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

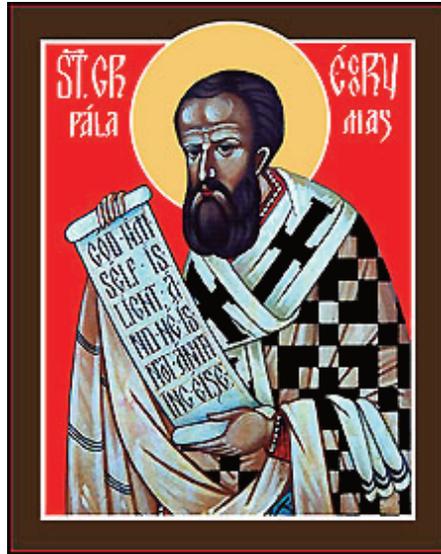
Wednesday, April 10, 2019

St. Nicholas

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Sts. Anagyroi

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.



## ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

This divine Father, who was from Asia Minor, was from childhood reared in the royal court of Constantinople, where he was instructed in both religious and secular wisdom. Later, while still a youth, he left the imperial court and struggled in asceticism on Mount Athos, and in the Skete at Beroea. He spent some time in Thessalonica being treated for an illness that came from his harsh manner of life. He was present in Constantinople at the Council that was convened in 1341 against Barlaam of Calabria, and at the Council of 1347 against Acindynus, who was of like mind with Barlaam; Barlaam and Acindynus claimed that the grace of God is created. At both these Councils, the Saint contended courageously for the true dogmas of the Church of Christ, teaching in particular that divine grace is not created, but is the uncreated energies of God which are poured forth throughout creation: otherwise it would be impossible, if grace were created, for man to have genuine communion with the uncreated God. In 1347 he was appointed Metropolitan of Thessalonica. He tended his flock in an apostolic man-

## EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

*THE SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT.* Since 1368 this Sunday has been dedicated to the memory of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica (1296–1359). This commemoration forms a continuation of the feast celebrated on the previous Sunday: St. Gregory's victory over Barlaam, Akindynos and the other heretics of his time is seen as a renewed Triumph of Orthodoxy. In the earlier period there was on this day a commemoration of the Great Martyr Polycarp of Smyrna (+ c. 155), whose feast was transferred from the fixed calendar (23 February). This commemoration, like that of St. Theodore, underlined the connection between Lenten asceticism and the martyr's vocation. The second Sunday also takes up the theme of the Prodigal Son as a model of repentance, with the first of the two Canons at Mattins being devoted to this parable.



ner for some twelve years, and wrote many books and treatises on the most exalted doctrines of our Faith; and having lived for a total of sixty-three years, he reposed in the Lord in 1359.