

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN APRIL 14, 2019

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

GREAT LENT: Tomorrow marks the start of the sixth and last week of Lent.

THE FULL PASCHA SCHEDULE may be found attached to the Bulletin or separately at the candles.

THE WEDNESDAY PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY this week will be held at Sts. Anargyroi in Marlborough at 6:00 PM. Fr. Nicholas will be celebrating. Please plan on attending as part of your Lenten journey.

OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL is **THIS Friday, April 19th**. We'll need help cooking and serving. **Prep** help needed (2 persons), Thursday noon. **Prep** help needed (3 persons), 1PM Friday. **Serving** help needed (5 persons), 5:30PM Friday. **We have been blessed with a donor who wishes, as the Gospel says, to give in secret.** If you'd like to help, or add to the Mustard Seed fund, please talk to Fr. Nick.

PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON. Please join us for our annual Palm Sunday Luncheon following the Divine Liturgy next Sunday, April 21st. The meal is being sponsored by the **Mazanitis Family**. We are asking for a **free-will offering that will help support the work of our parish.**

GREETERS TEAM 3:
TOM FITZPATRICK AND EVANS TSOULES

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

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT — ST. MARY OF EGYPT

APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 9:11-14

GOSPEL: MARK 10:32-45 (REQUEST OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE)

TONE 5 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 2

BAKING ORDERS FOR EASTER should be in. If you have any questions, see Betty Anderson or Chris Toda.

CONGRATULATIONS to **Tracie and Christo Spyrou** on the birth of their son: **Noah Vasil** on April 10th (9 lbs, 2 oz, 18.9"). **May God grant them many years!**

VESPERS AND CONFESSION is 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).

A MEMORIAL is celebrated today for the **brother of Ileana Nace, Victor.** **May his memory be eternal!**

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Mrs. Nace** in memory of her brother.

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HOLY TRINITY NEWS

There will be a **Greek Luncheon on Thursday, April 18th at 11:30 pm**, sponsored by St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral. As always, families and friends are invited!

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wed, April 17 PreSanctified Lit - Sts. Anargyroi 6 PM
Fri, April 19 Mustard Seed Meal, 5:30 pm
Sun, April 21 Palm Sunday (Western Easter)
April 21-28 HOLY WEEK, Check full schedule
Sun, April 28 GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA
Sat, May 4 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas



ST. MARY OF EGYPT

Without stain was God's image preserved in you, O holy mother, Mary, for you took up your cross and followed the Lord. By word and example you taught us to live in the spirit while still in the flesh, so that, now, you rejoice with the angels of heaven.

BE AN ADVOCATE FOR THE IMPORTANT WORK OF HOLY TRINITY! Massachusetts Nursing Homes provide a core state service to frail elders and disabled individuals who can no longer be cared for safely at home. Log on to: www.macall-tocare.org to learn about the challenges facing nursing home care in our state and the ways that you can help to protect resident care and support funding for our dedicated caregivers.

MAKE SURE TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER for updates on events and activities happening at Holy Trinity.

SEND AN E-CARD to your loved one and put a smile on their face!!! Visit our website at www.htnr.net/e-cards and submit a message and it will be hand-

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O YOU WHO ARE SERENITY AND PEACEFULNESS ITSELF, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: When the cares and labors of another day are over, we come to you with our evening prayers. We stand before you and reflect on the day that has passed, and we pray that, by your grace, this lenten season will make a difference in our lives. Do not permit us to be consumed with thoughts of the past or of the future, but teach us to live always in the present. Take our attention off things that perish, and focus our mind's eye on you and the things that last forever. Enable us to attain a share of the peace that only you can give, so that we may one day join the saints in the paschal celebrations of the world to come.

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

written and delivered daily! *The little things in life make the biggest difference to someone!*

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

April 5

The Holy Martyrs Victor and Victorin

Victor Ioan Nedelescu
Victoria Wilder

April 21

The Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem

Elodie Lauren Killick
Florence Rucho
Florica Tonna

The Holy Martyr Alexandra the Queen

Alexandra Costin
Alexandra Dymek
Alexis George
Alexandra Mentis
Sandra Nedelescu
Casie Soter

April 23 (celebrated Mon., April 29)

The Holy Great-martyr George the Wonderworker

George Belba
George M. Bourisk
George Demake
Gjergji Disho
Gheorghe O. Galica
George Grniet
George Krassopoulos
Gheorghina Shaheen
George Symock
George Tonna
George James Trakadas

April 25

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark

Rev. Fr. Mark Doku
Mark Soter
Mark Stamoulis

April 28

Great & Holy Pascha

Anastasia Girgis

April 30

The Holy Apostle James, brother of John the Evangelist

James Collins

THE HEAVENLY LITURGY

WITH THE FIFTH SUNDAY of Great Lent the Church, through Scriptural readings and hymns, is preparing us to participate in the cornerstone of our faith: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe that his death is no ordinary death, rather Jesus, innocent and blameless in every respect, consciously and freely offers to take on himself our sin and the resulting consequences of our disobedience: suffering and death. He transforms all of this pain and evil, by responding to the fury meted out upon him not in kind, but will love. His sacrifice emptied evil of the power by which we are held captive. And so, we are offered a new way of life.

Today's Gospel lesson from Mark (10:32-45) tells us of the conversation Jesus had with his disciples in which he directly tells them that he will not only be condemned to death, but that he will rise again three days later. The Apostolic reading is from the Letter to the Hebrews (9:11-14) where St. Paul speaks of the animal sacrifices offered under the Old Law, and how this practice was designed to prepare us to be able to understand and appreciate Jesus' sacrifice.

Sacrifice is a basic part of who we are as human beings. If we love we know about sacrifice. Parents constantly sacrifice for their children. Lovers repeatedly sacrifice themselves demonstrating their love. If we injure or offend someone, we try to find a way to repair what we've done, and it always involves a sacrifice.

Most early religions involved sacrifice of living things to their gods in order to repair and restore their relationship. Sometimes these offerings were acts of thanksgiving — sacrifices of food for a bountiful harvest. Sometimes these were sin offerings and could involve animals and even human beings. God's Covenant with His people, the children of Israel, required such sacrifices, all except human ones. Animals

and plants were regularly offered. The Jerusalem Temple was the primary, if not only, place where these offerings were made.

In our modern urban society most of us have had very little experience with slaughtering an animal. The language of blood and offering of blood seems at best an abstraction. (We'd more than likely rather not think about it at all, in real terms.) The Scriptures, however, are full of this language. The Eucharist, the primary Christian celebration, centers on partaking of the Body and Blood of our Lord. I am sure that most of us have questioned, at least on one occasion, what could possibly be meant by so graphic an image.

Blood is the source of life. The Hebrews believed that being the source of life it was also a sign of the divine within us. This shouldn't be difficult to understand. When we describe someone who has had a mortal wound, we say that "the life is draining out of them." We speak of "the life that courses through our veins." If we are composed mainly of water, most of that water is in the form of blood.

Blood does at least two things in our bodies. It brings the nutrients, including oxygen, to every part of our body that allows our cells to grow and be maintained. It also takes away the waste. It is the medium for feeding and cleansing our body.

When an animal was sacrificed, especially when the animal was sacrificed on the Day of Atonement, its blood was used to purify and sanctify, not unlike the way in which we use Holy Water. The High Priest, when he offered this sacrifice, offered a double sacrifice: one for himself and his family, and the other for the people of Israel. The New Testament refers to Jesus as the High Priest, but unlike other high priests, Jesus had no need for the first sacrifice; he was and is pure. However, we are the ones who

need the second sacrifice. Jesus becomes this sacrifice for us. This is the text of today's reading:

"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (Hebrews 9:11-14)

It is important to remember that the author of Hebrews is speaking of a Heavenly altar. The earthly temple is modeled on the one in Heaven. In this earthly temple only the High Priest could enter the inner sanctuary, the Holy Place, and just once a year, and only after he had purified himself with a sacrifice. Jesus has no need of this purification. Rather, because he offers himself as the sacrifice, he carries within himself the purifying blood. He is the sacrifice. During the Liturgy in a prayer addressed to Christ, the priest says to Christ: "you are the offerer and the offered, the one who receives and is distributed." This poetic phrase captures the mystery of Jesus' self-sacrifice.

God comes to us in the person of Jesus the Christ, the Word of God. Out of love for us, He offers himself up as the one to be sacrificed. He is both High Priest and Sacrificial Offering.

While not exactly the same, there is an example I can offer that might help illustrate this mystery. During the Communist persecutions, there were people, priests, who knew they were going to be



DRINK YE ALL OF IT

killed for Christ the next day. As is our rule, Liturgies are celebrated on consecrated altars in which the relics of saints (usually martyrs) have been placed. Knowing that they themselves would be sacrificed as martyrs shortly, these men celebrated the Liturgy on themselves. They offered Christ's sacrifice on the altar of their soon-to-be sacrificed bodies.

We no longer offer animals or other humans; those were meant as a preparation for Christ's unique sacrifice. His sacrifice put an end to it. Instead our Lord gave us the sacrifice of bread and wine, the unbloody sacrifice. These he changes, through the Holy Spirit, into his Body and his Blood. When we partake of the life-giving Body and Blood of our Lord, we are redeemed and reconciled to God the Father through Jesus' sacrifice. We are purified and changed.

Moses constructed the earthly Tabernacle after the image given him by God (Exodus 25). When we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, the Eucharist, we

participate in the one Sacrifice of the Son of God. Just as Moses' Tabernacle was made according to the image of the Heavenly Tabernacle, so it is with us when we enter into the Divine Liturgy. We celebrated here on earth the model, the icon, of the Heavenly Liturgy where God's Name is continually proclaimed.

It may be difficult for us to envision this Heavenly Liturgy, a place where Christ is enthroned, and the angels and saints unceasingly glorify God, but it exists. If God should so grace us, we might even catch a glimpse of this Heavenly Liturgy during the celebration of the Eucharist in our own parish. If our hearts are pure we will be given this foretaste of God's promise.

During the coming Paschal celebration, when we are given the opportunity to contemplate Jesus' suffering and sacrifice, let us ask God to give us this vision of the Heavenly Liturgy. At the same time, we should remember the people who out of love continually sacrifice themselves for us. They may be relatives or friends, but they may also be people whom we do not know, who serve us out of duty and love for all.

We should also ask our Lord to strengthen us for the trials and sacrifices that are asked of us. Love requires sacrifice. If we love, especially as Christ loves, we will be asked to show it.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



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!

Instead, give me the spirit of prudence and humility, of patience and charity.

Yes, 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.

EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT. This corresponds closely to the preceding Sunday: just as the fourth Sunday is dedicated to St. John Climacus, the model of ascetics, so the fifth celebrates St. Mary of Egypt, the model of penitents. Like that of St. John Climacus, her feast has been transferred from the fixed calendar, where she is commemorated on 1 April. Her life, recounted by St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem—it is read, as we have mentioned, on Thursday in the fifth week—sets before us a true verbal ikon of the essence of repentance. In her youth St. Mary lived in a dis-

solute and sinful way at Alexandria. Drawn by curiosity, she journeyed with some pilgrims to Jerusalem, arriving in time for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. But when she tried to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with the others, an invisible force thrust her back at the threshold. This happened three or four times. Brought to sudden contrition by this strange experience, she prayed all night with tears to the Mother of God, and next morning she found to her joy that she could enter the church without difficulty. After venerating the Cross, she left Jerusalem on that same day, made



her way over the Jordan, and settled as a solitary in a remote region of the desert. Here for forty-seven years she remained, hidden from the world, until she was eventually found by the ascetic St. Zosimas, who was able to give her Holy Communion shortly before her death. Some modern writers have questioned the historical accuracy of St. Sophronios' narrative, but there is in itself nothing impossible about such a story. In the year 1890 the Greek priest Joachim Spetsieris found a woman hermit in the desert beyond the Jordan, living almost exactly as St. Mary must have done.

On this Sunday the first Canon at Mattins is based on the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31): like the parable of the Good Samaritan on the previous Sunday, this is applied symbolically to the repentant Christian.



DONATIONS FOR HOLY WEEK

General donations in any amount to defray the cost of decorations for the Paschal Feast are most appreciated. Some specific needs are:

Flowers for Palm Sunday Icon	\$50.00
Palms	\$100.00
Flowers for Bridegroom Icon	\$50.00
Holy Thursday Gospel Candles	\$60.00
Wreaths for Cross (Great Friday)	\$75.00
(Resurrection)	\$75.00
Resurrection Icon	\$50.00
Bay Leaves for Holy Saturday	\$100.00
1 Gallon of Olive Oil	\$25.00
½ lb Incense	\$40.00
Priest's Paschal Candle	\$50.00
Rose Oil for Epitaphion	\$25.00
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Flowers for Epitaphion	\$600.00
Decorations/Plants for Pascha	\$400.00
Easter Candy/Gifts for Children	\$100.00

Please see Betty Anderson to make a donation