

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JUNE 30, 2019

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

GOT A QUESTION? Fr. Nick is looking for **Summer Sermon Topics**. Perhaps you've wondered what a particular practice or prayer means? Or how it developed? There's no question too small. If you've been wondering, be assured others have as well. **Send your questions or ideas along to him** at: FrNick@StNicholasChurch.org, or write it down and give it to him on Sunday.

A BIG THANKS to the youth of our parish for sponsoring the **Ice Creme Sundae Social** last Sunday to benefit **IOCC**. We realize around \$400.00. Also, a note of appreciation to **Deb Sedares** and **Valarie Stamoulis** for their help.

THANKS TO THE DOUGH ROLLERS! They worked yesterday and Saturday, June 8th to do the first step in the Pita-baking process. If you'd like to participate, contact Chris Toda at: thetodas@msn.com, or 508-832-6271.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS YOUR PLASTIC BAGS. Our Orthodox Food Pantry is in serious need of plastic shopping bags used to package food given to the visitors every Saturday. (They could use paper bags as well.) Please gather up your supply of extra bags and bring

GREETERS TEAM 4:
V. GERALD BELBA & ROSE SALERNO

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:
HELP NEEDED

PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA AND ROMANIA

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 2:10-16 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 4:18-20

tone 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 2

them to Church. The Food Pantry volunteers from our parish will get them to the Pantry located at St. Spyridon Cathedral. **God Bless You!**

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS are needed for the coming weeks. Please speak with Presvytera Maria if you are interested in sponsoring one.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by Raul and Gianina-Maria Zecheru. May God bless them.

UPCOMING PARENTS PLEASE TAKE NOTE! Vacation Church School this summer will be August 5-7. We will again be holding it in conjunction with

Sts. Anargyroi in Marlborough. Please keep these date in mind when scheduling other summer activities for your children. Questions? see or e-mail: Valarie Stamoulis:

valarie.stamoulis@gmail.com; cell: 617-803-3798.

70TH ANNIVERSARY

SAVE THE DATE: The weekend of December 7 – 8, 2019 our Parish Feast Day will have special significance as we celebrate our 70th Anniversary as a church community.

A few people are needed to serve on a committee to plan for the 70th Anniversary Festivities. Please speak with Tim if you have it in your heart to help plan that celebration.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, June 29 Feast of Ss. Peter and Paul
Pita Dough Rolling, 9AM-NOON
Sun, July 28 St. Michael Sbdge, Annual Festival
Aug 5-7 Vacation Church School

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850
E-MAIL: FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG ♦ WEB: WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG

A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

TODAY, LORD, as we celebrate the memory of all your saints, help us to learn from them: Show us how to be compassionate and kind to one another. Show us how to be generous to all, just as you have been generous to us in Christ, for, like all your holy ones, we, too, must be like him. Inspire us with love, then, and make our love like that of your Christ when he gave himself for us as a fragrant sacrifice.

For you are one to have mercy on us and save us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



THE FEAST OF Ss PETER & PAUL

JUNE 29

O leaders of the apostles and teachers of the world, entreat the master of all to grant peace to the world, and to us his great mercy.

What prison has not held you? What church has not heard you? Damascus is elated with you, O holy Paul, and Rome boasts about receiving your blood, but Tarsus shows even greater joy and love in honoring the memory of your youth. So now, Peter, rock of faith, and you, O Paul, glory of the universe, come forth together from Rome and make us stand firm.

Into eternal rest and the enjoyment of your heavenly delights, O Lord, you have welcomed those steadfast and divinely inspired leaders of your disciples. And you accepted their labors and sufferings in preference to any offering, O you who alone know what is in the heart of man.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

THE LATEST ISSUE of the *Holy Trinity Times* is available for download. Click the link: www.htnr.net to view it.

SAVE THE DATE for Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center **25TH Anniversary Dinner Dance Celebration on Saturday, August 24, 2019** at St. George Cathedral, 30 Anna St., Worcester.

Contributions at work, visit Holy Trinity to see our newly landscaped front entrance!!!

We will have **Board Member Elections in September**, if anyone is interested in serving on the Board of Holy Trinity please contact **Carol Fotos** at carol.fotos.47@gmail.com

HOLY TRINITY is a non-profit skilled nursing and rehabilitation center and a project of the Council of Orthodox Churches of Central MA. Please keep Holy Trinity in your prayers and in your charitable plans. Contributions to the Treasured Generations Annual Fund can be made at www.htnr.net and volunteers are welcome to be a part of Holy Trinity by contacting: **Dana Spinney**, Activities Director, at 508-852-1000 or e-mail: dspinney@htnr.net

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.



NAMEDAYS

June 23

The Sunday of All the Saints

Amalia Polymeros

June 27

The Holy Myrrh-bearer Joanna

Joanne V. Prizio

June 29

The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

Patrick Disho

Petraq Dragoti

Paul Dymek

Petrika Lolo

Paul Soter

Peter Toda

Peter Demetri Tsongalis

LISTENING TO OUR CONSCIENCE

THIS Sunday we begin reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans. In the New Testament this Letter appears right after Acts and is the first of all of the Apostolic Letters. While not a comprehensive presentation of St. Paul's theology, it represents a very systematic approach to his thinking. Unlike most of his other Letters — which were usually addressed to Churches that he had either founded or ministered — St. Paul was writing to a Church that he did not know personally. In one sense this Letter was his way of introducing himself to that community.

In this selection from Romans (2:10-16), for the Second Sunday after Pentecost, St. Paul takes up the question of how people come to know to do "good" — in other words, to do God's will. He asks: Do people do good because God has given us, (or specifically the Jews) the Law? Or, is it because there is something innate in us that guides us? He tells the Romans: "glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality" (v. 10-11). From the outset he wants us to understand that all people have the capacity to do good and God is not partial to any person. God is concerned about what a person does, not his or her blood line.

Throughout his writings St. Paul contrasts the differences between Jew and Gentile, even as he tries to show how God's true intention is to harmonize Jew and Gentile into one people. For the faithful Jew, adherence to the Law was and is the path of salvation. However, we shouldn't understand "Law" too narrowly. While there is no doubt that prescriptions of the Law were intended to be followed as rules and regulations usually are, it is more helpful to think of the Law as a way of life; rules for living the way God intends us to live. In Jewish theology, to hear the Law and know it is to have an advantage over other people. St. Paul wanted to chal-

lenge this way of thinking.

He says, "All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified" (v. 12-13). Here St. Paul echoes St. James when he says: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). In another place we hear St. Paul say, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Ephesians 2:8-10). His point in Ephesians, as well as here in Romans, is that faith in our Lord Jesus Christ leads us to be the kind of persons that God intended us to be from the beginning; and, that we are innately predisposed toward this faith, this life.

This innate sense of right and wrong is what later came to be called "the natural law." The Ten Commandments, given by God to Moses and through him to the Children of Israel (Exodus 21:1-17), are the primary example of the harmony between God's Law and what we are guided toward by our conscience. The Commandments that form the heart of the Law are also found, in one way or another, in the basic code of conduct in every human society throughout history.

This is what St. Paul means when he says: "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them" (v. 14-15). He is referring to the innate and basic sense we have of

what it means to be a good person.

The first thing a person who wishes to pursue the "good life" does is to engage their conscience; to actively listen to what their heart is telling them. Most of us usually find two obstacles in our way to fully engaging our conscience. The first is that we have become deaf to the voice of our hearts. The second is that our conscience is so encrusted with sin that it is very hard to even find it.

The Fathers use an image to help us understand the problem. They liken the conscience to a mirror. For most of us this mirror is caked over with the soot of sin. How can it reflect God's light? This is why, we are told, that the first step on the path of repentance is to clean the mirror of our conscience from the layered soot of sin. Slowly, we will find that it will reflect God's light to illumine our way.

St. Paul emphasizes the doing of good because it is an objective way for us to see that our conscience is leading us down the right path. Ideas floating in our heads look different to us once we put our hand to the task. This interplay, this back and forth, between our desire to do good and our actual deeds is the scrubbing action that cleanses our conscience. The cleaner our heart the more reliable a voice it will be to lead us closer toward the good.

St. Paul leaves us with these ominous words to contemplate. In speaking of the Day of Judgment he says that it is our "conscience [that] bears witness," and that our "conflicting thoughts" will accuse or perhaps excuse us "on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus." (v. 16) These words should prod us on, should motivate us, in our spiritual journey.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA