

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JULY 14, 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.

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

The latest issue of the Archdiocesan quarterly **CREDINȚA / THE FAITH** is available at the candles. **Pick one up and take it home!**

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

GREETERS TEAM 2:
DAN MANESCU AND CHRIS SEITH

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:
HELP NEEDED

PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(THE FATHERS OF THE FOURTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL)

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 6:18-23 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 8:5-13

(JESUS HEALS THE CENTURION'S SERVANT)

TONE 3 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 4

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the **Stamoulis family** in memory of their parents Louis and Katherine fallen asleep 30 and 14 years respectively. **May our loving Lord rest their souls with the righteous.**

UPCOMING

THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL at St. Michael's in Southbridge will be held on Sunday, July 28th. Mark your calendars.

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 dates 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

Sun, July 28 St. Michael Sbdge, Annual Festival
Thurs, Aug 1 Dormition Fast Begins
Sat, Aug 3 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
Aug 5-7 Vacation Church School
Fri, Aug 17 Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

AS WITH THE ISRAEL OF OLD,
So also with us, the new Israel:
We are always protesting how much
we want to glorify you, Lord God,
and praise the actions of your divine
grace. Our protests, however, are
rather flimsy. But oddly enough, the
magnificent splendour of your
majesty, when we can bring our-
selves to focus on it, never frightens
or repels us. Rather, we sense our
love and reverence for you increase.
Make us live ever conscious of your
ineffable majesty, ever ready to em-
brace the power of this mystery.

By the grace and mercies and love for
us of your only Son, with whom you
are blest, together with your all-holy,
good, and life-giving Spirit: now and
forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

NAMEDAYS

July 7

The Holy Martyr Kyriaki

Kyri Sedares

July 11

The Blessed Olga, Princess of Russia

Olga Lolo

July 12

St. Veronica,

The woman healed by our Lord Jesus

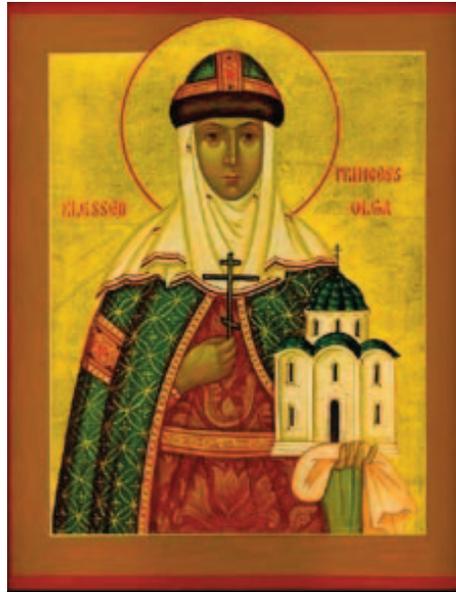
Veronica Pandaru

July 17

The Holy Great Martyr Marina

(Margareta) of Antioch in Pisidia

Margarite Landry



THE ALL-PRAISED OLGA
EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES

JULY 11

Saint Olga, renowned for her wisdom and sobriety, in her youth became the wife of Igor, Great Prince of Kiev, who ruled during the tenth century. After her husband's death, she herself ruled capably, and was finally moved to accept the Faith of Christ. She traveled to Constantinople to receive Holy Baptism. The Emperor, seeing her outward beauty and inward greatness, asked her to marry him. She said she could not do this before she was baptized; she furthermore asked him to be her Godfather at the font, which he agreed to do. After she was baptized (receiving the name of Helen), the Emperor repeated his proposal of marriage. She answered that now he was her father, through holy Baptism, and that not even among the heathen was it heard of a man marrying his daughter. Gracefully accepting to be outwitted by her, he sent her back to her land with priests and sacred texts and holy icons. Although her son Svyatoslav remained a pagan, she planted the seed of faith in her grandson Vladimir (July 15). She reposed in peace in 969.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

THE LATEST ISSUE of the *Holy Trinity Times* is available at www.htnr.net.

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. To Reserve for the Dinner Dance Event, purchase an ad in our program book and to purchase Raffle Tickets call or e-mail: kmironidis@htnr.net for more information. 508-852-1000

JOB OPENING: Part-time (8 hours) activities, must be flexible and able to work every other weekend. Call Dana Spinney, Activities Director, 508-852-1000

Come join the residents for a **bowling event Sunday, July 14, 2019** at 2:00pm.

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.

THE WAGES OF SIN

THIS is the fourth Sunday after Pentecost. In today's reading from his Letter to the Romans (6:18-23), St. Paul explains the radical transformation Baptism brings to our lives. In fact, all of Chapter 6 draws out the relationship between Baptism and our participation in the Lord's death and resurrection. He says: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (v. 6:3) [This verse is also read during the Epistle at the Baptism Service.] In dying to our old selves in Baptism, we also share in Christ's resurrected life—our new life in Christ.

The whole of the Baptismal service dramatically expresses this change in our lives. Just before the Baptismal service proper begins, the priest reads prayers of exorcism over the catechumen. He then directs the person who is to be baptized to turn toward the west (where the sun sets and is a symbol for darkness), and asks: "Do you renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his worship, and all his pride?" He repeats the question three times. Then he directs the catechumen to turn toward east (sunrise and the source of light), and asks: "Do you unite yourself with Christ?" This is probably the most important question we will ever be asked, and the answer to this question is the theme of today's Epistle lesson.

St. Paul says to the Romans, "having been set free from sin, we have become slaves of righteousness" (v. 18). He tells them that he is "speaking in human terms, because of [their] natural limitations" (v. 19). He is using an image that would be very real to those listening to his words. Slaves have masters. A slave has no life or will of his or her own; they do what their master wants. In baptism we are set free from our slavery to sin. In baptism we freely accept Jesus as our King and God. We trade being domi-

nated by sin (that rules over our lives seeking our destruction), for the true master who desires only our complete well-being. While we might think there are other choices, there really are only two.

St. Paul weaves his spiritual understanding of baptism with very real and practical examples. He says to us, "As once you surrendered yourselves as slaves to immorality and to a lawlessness which results in more lawlessness, now you have to surrender yourselves to uprightness which is to result in sanctification" (v. 19). He is talking about choices that take advantage of the fresh start that Christ gives us.

"When you were the slaves of sin, you felt no obligation to uprightness, and what did you gain from living like that? Experiences of which you are now ashamed, for that sort of behavior ends in death" (v. 20-21). It is only when we stand in the freedom that God gives us that we can look back on our previous behavior and see it for what it actually is: slavery. A life without a moral direction is a life wasted. What we thought was freedom was in fact license. This is what St. Paul means when he says (when translated more literally), "When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness" (v. 20). When the direction of our life points us toward selfishness, pleasure, and greed, we end up in a place where it is very difficult to see the ultimate consequences of our actions. We are blind to it.

We are presently living through a very difficult period, both economic and political, that has and will cause many people to suffer. Pure and simple, this is the direct result of the kind of lifestyle of which St. Paul was speaking. People tend to think of sin in dramatic terms—the blatant and obvious sins that people commit such as murder, rape, bank robbery, and the like. But the path of sin is

more subtle than that. It is in the small lie, the little thievery, and the clever belittlement. When we are on the trajectory of sin—when we are facing west—it is difficult if not impossible for us to see the full consequences of our actions. We all share in what befalls our nation and indeed the world when we feel "no obligation to uprightness." What do we gain from living like this?

St. Paul reminds us of what God's Baptismal gift to us was: "Now you are set free from sin and bound to the service of God, your gain will be sanctification and the end will be eternal life" (v. 22). Can you see the power in our choice to turn from west to east, from darkness to light? When we renounced and spat on the Devil and accepted Christ as our King and God we chose a new direction in our lives.

Of course for most of us this choice was made when we were infants, by our parents and godparents. They pledged to raise us and put on the right trajectory, on the path of righteousness. At some point, however, their promise needs to be our choice. We need to say for ourselves, "I unite myself with Christ!" The Grace given us in Baptism is neither static, nor is it magic. It is potential. Just as before our Baptism we were predisposed to a certain outlook and action, so in the free gift of God we are given the proclivity for goodness. We become members of Christ's Body and have Jesus as our guide and helper.

Finally, St. Paul sets the stakes before us in very clear and stark terms. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v. 23). The parallel here is unequal, but so is the choice before us. What we 'earn' for sin is death. What God freely offers us is life. The choice is ours.

— FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA