

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JULY 21, 2019

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

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.

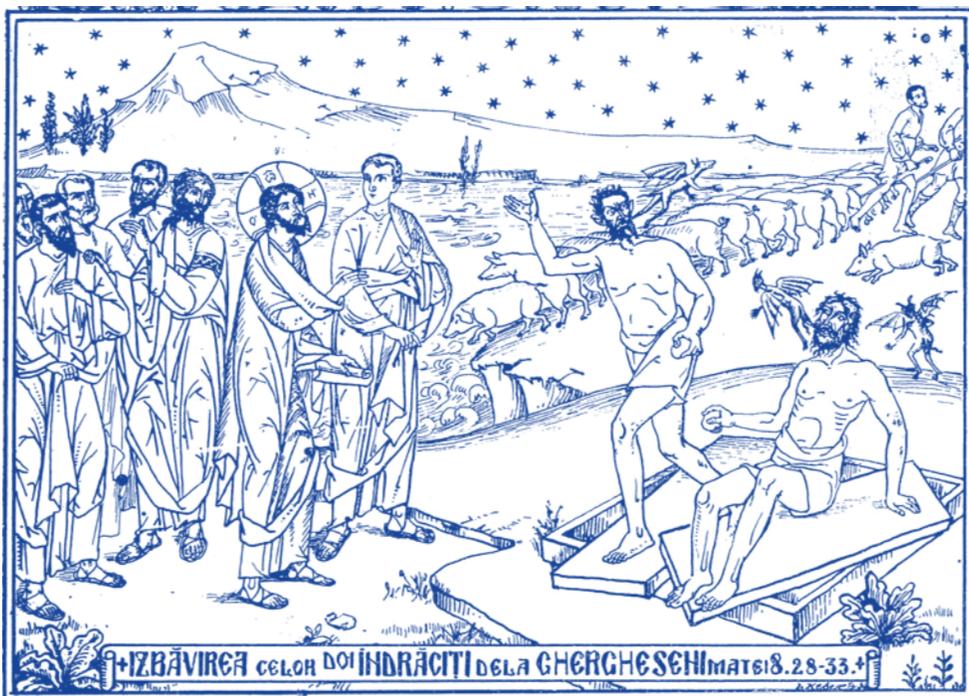
GOT A QUESTION? Fr. Nick is looking for **Summer Sermon Topics**. Perhaps you've wondered what a particular practice or prayer means? Or how it developed? There's no question too small. If you've been wondering, be assured others have as well. **Send your questions or ideas along to him** at: FrNick@StNicholasChurch.org,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

GREETERS TEAM 3:
SEAN FAHEY AND MARGARITE LANDRY

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

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 10:1-10 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 8:28-9:1

(JESUS HEALS THE GADARENE DEMONIACS)

TONE 4 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 5

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.

UPCOMING

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

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.

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

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 16	Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

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

Holy Trinity provides a comprehensive **rehabilitation program of Physical, Occupational and Speech/Language Therapies**. Call 508-852-1000 for more information.

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 on Tuesday, July 23rd at 11:30 am for a **Cookout!**

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

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

July 17

The Holy Great Martyr Marina (Margareta) of Antioch in Pisidia
Margarite Landry

July 20

The Holy Prophet Elijah
Elias James Christo
Irli Ilie Durmillari
Louis Evan Stamoulis

July 24

The Holy Great Martyr Christina
Christine Masterjohn

July 27

The Holy Great-martyr and Healer Panteleimon
Peter Mountzouris



THE HOLY GREAT PROPHET ELIAS (ELIJAH) July 20th

Elias of great fame was from Thisbe or Thesbe, a town of Galaad (Gilead), beyond the Jordan. He was of priestly lineage, a man of a solitary and ascetical character, clothed in a mantle of sheep skin, and girded about his loins with a leathern belt. His name is interpreted as "Yah is my God." His zeal for the glory of God was compared to fire, and his speech for teaching and rebuke was likened unto a burning lamp.

He sternly reprov'd the impiety and lawlessness of Ahab and his wife Jezebel. He shut up heaven by means of prayer, and it did not rain for three years and six months. Ravens brought him food for his need when, at God's command, he was hiding by the torrent of Horrath.

He multiplied the little flour and oil of the poor widow of Sarephtha of Sidon, who had given him hospitality in her home, and when her son died, he raised him up. He brought down fire from Heaven upon Mount Carmel, and it burned up the sacrifice offered to God before all the people of Israel, that they might know the truth. At the torrent of Kisson, he slew 450 false prophets and

priests who worshiped idols and led the people astray. He received food wondrously at the hand of an Angel, and being strengthened by this food he walked for forty days and forty nights.

He beheld God on Mount Horeb, as far as this is possible for human nature. He foretold the destruction of the house of Ahab, and the death of his son Ohozias. He divided the flow of the Jordan, and he and his disciple Elisseus passed through as it were on dry land; and finally, while speaking with him, Elias was suddenly snatched away by a fiery chariot in the year 895 BC, and he ascended into heaven, where God most certainly translated him alive, as He did Enoch (Gen. 5:24; IV Kings 2: 11). The Prophet Elias appeared with Moses on Mount Tabor to speak with our Lord when He was transfigured before His disciples.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

LORD, OUR SOVEREIGN GOD: Let us acquire the treasure of love, for it is a grace that only your unspeakable generosity can provide. Let us understand that it is not only an act, but a state of the will, an attitude of the mind and heart, whereby we wish nothing but the very best for all others. In so doing, enable us also to perceive that emotions, the feelings we have for those we love, while all well and good, are not love, though they very frequently accompany it. Help us, Lord, to understand a little more of life.

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

CONFESS WITH YOUR LIPS AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART

THIS is the fifth Sunday after Pentecost. In today's reading from his Letter to the Romans (10:1-10) St. Paul speaks about two radically different ways of looking at salvation. Should we understand salvation as following rules and regulations? Or, more comprehensively, as the correct way of living?

He opens this passage by revealing the deep longing he has for his own people. He says that his heart's deepest desire is that the Jewish people might be saved (v. 1). He recognizes that "they have a zeal for God," but he feels that it is not enlightened, even misguided (v. 2). Having misunderstood and even ignored the way God works, they tried to do it their own way, by their own power (v. 3). Trying to fulfill the Law by human effort alone, they have been unable to achieve the goal. Moreover, they have ignored the Messiah who Himself was the perfection of the Law. "For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" (v. 4).

There are inherent risks when trying to follow the law, any law, but even more so God's Law. Those who are 'law abiding' can become self-righteous, thinking that by following this or that provision or stricture of the law they are better than other people. Then there are those who either follow the minimum provisions of the law, or try to find loopholes by interpreting the law literally. These are the "connivers." In either case the true spirit of the law is hardly observed, and may even be subverted.

You don't need to look very far beyond family dynamics to see how this actually plays out. A parent lays down a particular rule for the children. One child simply does what's been asked, while another breaks the rule, usually with some excuse. There are often "shades of gray," but the squabbling around who did and did not do what was asked usually leaves one punished and the other feeling vindicated. But, has either of them really fulfilled the

true end of what the parent was asking? Was the parent's objective simply about getting the children to following rules, or was there a higher purpose? As a parent, I often walked away from this kind of situation feeling like I failed.

God's Law is infinitely more complex and thorough. When you read the provisions of the Law in the Pentateuch (the first five Books of the Old Testament) you quickly gain an appreciation of both the comprehensive nature of the Law, as well as the difficulty, if not impossibility, of fulfilling it.

Christ, the Messiah, fulfilled the Law in what he did and who he is. This is what St. Paul means when he says that "Christ is the end of the law." Christ is the 'end' in two ways. First, he is the completion of the Law — this is what the Lord means when he says, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). And, in fulfilling the Law, the Lord also brings the Law to an end. It has served its purpose.

St. Paul wants us to understand that the Law is life-giving, and that faith in Christ Jesus makes fulfilling the Law, in the truest sense, attainable. St. Paul paraphrases in verse 5 what God said to Moses concerning the Law that God had given to Israel: "You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 18:5).

But St. Paul also wants us to understand that God assists us in doing His will, so he also reminds us of what Moses said to the Children of Israel just before he died, in order to encourage them. "Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get

it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe" (Exodus 30:11-14).

St. Paul takes Moses' words and re-frames them — telling us — how, with faith in Christ, we receive the ability to do God's will as a gift. "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does [the righteousness that comes from faith] say? 'The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart'" (v. 6-8). What both Moses and St. Paul are emphasizing is the way in which God makes Himself completely accessible to us.

When he says "Who will ascend into heaven?" he means, God has already become incarnate for us. When he says, "Who will descend into the abyss?" he means, Jesus our Christ has already destroyed the power of death. We shouldn't worry about these things even in the deepest recesses of our heart. God is always near to us. Jesus is always near to us. He is on our lips and in our hearts.

By drawing ourselves closer to God through Jesus, we allow the Holy Spirit to write the Law on our hearts. It isn't a matter of 'following' the Law; it is a matter of embodying the Law. It becomes our way of life, a part of who we are.

St. Paul finishes this section with what was a Baptismal confession of faith in the early Church. "Confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Furthermore he explains, "one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved" (v. 9-10).

In this way, when we believe in Him, God's Word becomes a part of us: written on our hearts and expressed in every word we speak.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA