

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JULY 28, 2019

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL is coming up next week (August 5-7). **PARENTS, WE NEED SOLID NUMBERS!** Please be sure to talk to or e-mail Valarie Stamoulis and confirm: valarie.stamoulis@gmail.com; cell: 617-803-3798.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **next Saturday, August 3rd, 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.** **ALSO,** the Pantry needs your **plastic and paper bags.** Please bring them to Church with you.

THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL at **St. Michael's in Southbridge** will be held **THIS** Sunday, July 28th. Plan on attending!

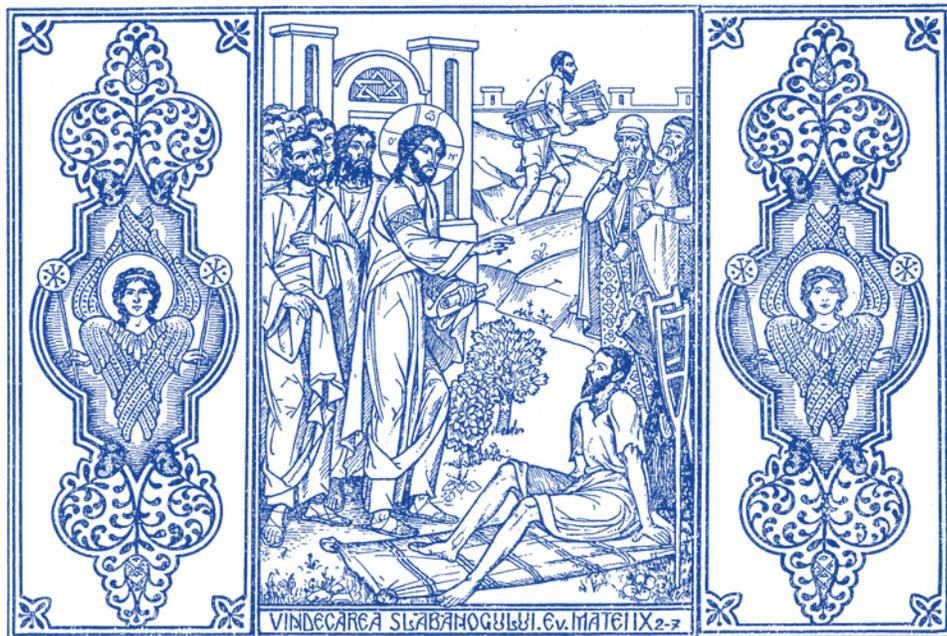
GOT A QUESTION? Fr. Nick is looking for **Summer Sermon Topics.** Perhaps you've wondered what a particular practice or prayer means? Or how it developed? There's no question too small. If you've been wondering, be assured oth-

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 SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: ROMANS 12:6-14 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 9:1-8

(JESUS HEALS THE PARALYTIC OF CAPERNAUM)

TONE 5 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 6

ers 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.

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

WE'VE COMMISSIONED A PROSKINITARION

for the Relics and Icon of St. Nicholas that our parish received from the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Italy through His Grace Bishop Siluan, and Fr. Daniel Ene. Fr. Nicolae Simion of Wakefield is sculpting this wood-carved Icon stand which we hope to be ready for the Feastday. The cost is \$3,000 and we are asking for donations to cover the cost. If you have any questions,

and/or would like to donate toward it, speak with Fr. Nick or Tim.

AN ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING day is set for **Saturday, August 17th.** This is an opportunity for our parish to help our local community while helping the environment. If you're able and willing to help, please

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sun, July 28 St. Michael Sbdge, Annual Festival
- Thurs, Aug 1 Dormition Fast Begins
Supplication Service, 6:30 PM
- Sat, Aug 3 Staff Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON
- Aug 5-7 Vacation Church School
- Tues, Aug 6 Transfiguration, Lit - Marlboro 8:30 AM
Supplication Service, 6:30 PM
- Thurs, Aug 8 Supplication Service, 6:30 PM
- Tues, Aug 13 Supplication Service, 6:30 PM
- Wed, Aug 14 Dormition Vespers, St. Mary's 6:00 PM
- Thurs, Aug 15 Dormition Lit, St. Mary's - 8:00 AM
- Fri, Aug 16 Mustard Seed Meal, 5 PM

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

Speak with **Gerry Belba**.

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

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.

AUGUST LENTEN SERVICES

Dormition Fast Period (Aug 1-15)

- ◆ **Supplication Service** to the Theotokos at St. Nick's, Thursday, August 1, 6:30 PM
- ◆ **Divine Liturgy** for Transfiguration at St. Anargyroi, Tuesday, August 6, 8:30 AM
- ◆ **Supplication Service** to the Theotokos at St. Nick's, Tuesday, August 6, 6:30 PM
- ◆ **Supplication Service** to the Theotokos at St. Nick's, Thursday, August 8, 6:30 PM
- ◆ **Supplication Service** to the Theotokos at St. Nick's, Tuesday, August 13, 6:30 PM
- ◆ **Dormition Vespers** — St. Mary's, Wednesday, August 14, 6:00 PM
- ◆ **Divine Liturgy** at St. St. Mary's, Thursday, August 15, 8:00 am

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

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 (12 hours) activities, must be flexible and able to work every other weekend. Call Dana Spinney, Activities Director, 508-852-1000

Holy Trinity will be hosting a presentation regarding **Home Health Care Benefits for Veterans. Wednesday, August 7th, 2019** at 5:45pm.

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

August 8

The Holy New

Martyr Triandaphyllos

Rose Armida Salerno

August 15

The Falling Asleep of the Most Holy Theotokos

Maria Blanchard

Mary Cocaine

Maria Dumitriu

Monika Maria Durmillari

Maria Kalpidou

Maria Prelipcean

Nancy Maria Tsongalis

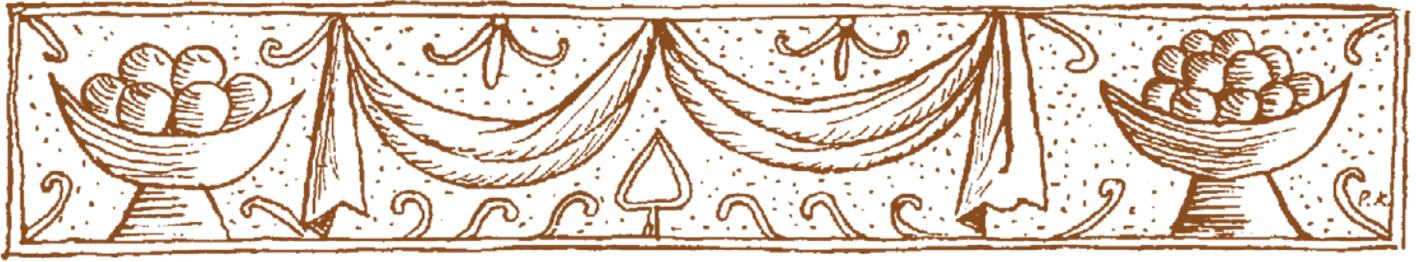
Marietta Zaruha

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

PREVENT us, Lord and Father, from being unmindful of you. Make us more and more sensitive to your presence, always growing in consciousness of you and your commandments. Inspire us to live correctly, filled with love for you and our neighbor. Let us be sensitive to your inspirations and give us always the right response to them and the strength to carry them out.

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.



LET OUR LOVE BE GENUINE

This is the sixth Sunday after Pentecost. In today's reading, Romans 12:6-14, St. Paul moves the discussion from Law and Faith, to how our faith in Jesus the Messiah impacts and changes our life. Up until now he had been presenting a very detailed and systematic explanation as to why the Law of the Old Covenant needed to give way to God's Grace that we receive by our faith in Jesus Christ — the New Covenant. He wants us to focus on this new relationship with God, and explains the implications for how we should live our lives.

"We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us" (v. 6). We are not all the same; each of us has been given a particular charism. One of the greatest challenges we have in life is to recognize and understand the particular gifts given us. The second challenge is to then fully develop these gifts.

As a way of transitioning from his discussion of the Law, St. Paul offers us this vivid image. He tells us: "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [or reasonable] worship" (v. 12:1). You will remember that the central aspect of Old Testament worship was the sacrificing of animals. St. Paul says that our worship of God should now be us sacrificing ourselves, as a living sacrifice. Our sacrifice is the deliberate development of the gifts given us. And different from the animals which were dumb beasts, we offer up our bodies knowingly, with our mind and in our

heart.

He then offers practical expressions of the gifts to which he is referring, as well as how we should use them. If it is "prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness." (v. 6-8)

The first thing that we should notice is that these gifts given us are not for ourselves; they are for service to others. The second is that it is not simply the *doing* of a thing that matters; what is more important is *how* it is done.

St. Paul mentions seven gifts, but unlike when he writes to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12:28ff), here he doesn't place them in an hierarchical order. Moreover, he mentions gifts in Romans that he doesn't refer to in his letter to the Corinthians, and vice versa. There are innumerable gifts of the Spirit. Let's look at the ones he presents here.

"Prophecy, in proportion to faith." We could also call this "inspired preaching." It sometimes may involve predicting the future, as in Acts 11:27-28, but usually it is meant to inspire and exhort the listeners. "In proportion to faith" has a few meanings. The most important is that what the prophet says should correspond to the Faith, the belief held in common, but also to the personal faith of the listeners. It should build them up, not confuse or misdirect them.

"Ministry, in ministering." The Greek word used here is "diakonia;" this

is where the title 'deacon' originates. In this context it means ministry in the sense of service. It refers to those persons responsible for distributing material aid. For most of the Church's history deacons were primarily responsible for the administration of the material goods of the Church, especially aid to those in need. The Liturgical aspect was secondary.

"The teacher, in teaching." Teacher and teaching was and is a gift distinct from prophecy, preaching, or administration. We see this clearly in our Church today. Those responsible for instruction of both children and adults play a vital role in building up the Body.

"The exhorter, in exhortation." Here St. Paul refers to what we would call the 'spiritual father or mother.' This is the person with great spiritual maturity and wisdom who encourages people as they struggle to do God's will. We see these people in every parish, held up as examples of what God calls us to.

"The giver, in generosity." This is the person of means who exercises his or her generosity gently and abundantly. His or her gift is one of philanthropy, distributing private wealth with love.

"The leader, in diligence." This refers to the persons who head the community. They are to exercise this gift conscientiously. It is a difficult job.

"The compassionate, in cheerfulness." This is the person who does acts of charity, of kindness. Too often we do such things grudgingly, out of a sense of duty. St. Paul reminds us to do these acts

not only with a smile on our face, but also from our heart. The smile is just as important than the deed.

Then St. Paul sums it up in an almost staccato-like manner: “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor (v. 9-10).

We should never ‘fake’ our love. Sometimes we may have to ‘work at it;’ but the final objective should be for it to be real. St. Paul says that we should hate evil. Actually the word is closer to abhor than hate. Evil destroys. We destroy evil through goodness. Even as we abhor the evil we need to cling to what is good.

He says we should love one another. The Greek word is ‘philadelphia’: love like brothers and sisters. We need to treat each other as family — a healthy Christian family.

He continues with, “outdo one another in showing honor.” This could also be translated, “As far as honor goes, esteem the other more highly.” The greatest danger we face is our own pride. Love each other. Always put the other before you. Think no more of yourself than you do your brother and sister. This is the greatest of spiritual gifts.

He then says (because he know what we might get a little ‘tired’ at this point), “Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord” (v. 11). Notice how at each point St. Paul draws us to a higher goal. He doesn’t simply say: “give;” but “with generosity;” nor “lead;” but do it “with diligence;” nor “be compassionate;” but do it “with cheerfulness;” nor “honor;” but “prefer one another;” nor “love;” but do it “genuinely;” nor refrain from “evil” things, but “abhor” it; nor hold to “what is good,” but “cling” to it; nor “love one another,” but to do it “as if you were brother and sister;” nor be zealous, but be so without flagging, that is without backsliding; nor have the “Spirit,” but have it “fervently,”

that is, be burning and awake.

The simple truth is that if one practices these virtues that St. Paul speaks of, the Holy Spirit will be drawn to us. And if the Holy Spirit is drawn toward us, all of these things will become easy for us to embody. “Serving the Lord” is akin to serving our brother and sister. It is the primary way in which we draw closer to God.

He then tells us to do three things that are at the center of the spiritual life. “Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer” (v. 12). When God sends us the answer to our prayers, or when He sends us the good things that we recognize, we should rejoice. These are given us as signs of hope to encourage us. When we suffer difficulties — “tribulations” — we simply need to trust in God; be patient. God sends us hopeful signs to encourage us to be patient and trusting. Finally, we need to be constant. Our love of God should not depend on this thing or that. We need to love God in the same way we love others; even though someone we love may disappoint us, we continue to love them. Our disappointment in God is often because we cannot see or understand God’s love for us. While it may be difficult, we need to be even more consistent in our love and devotion as a result.

The Lord, through St. Paul’s teachings, leads us to a still higher plane. “Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality” (v. 13). Recognizing the needs of others, without them asking for help, is a great gift. Not only do we have to simply ‘distribute’ what we have, but we should share it. This means biting into our own income. To drive home the point he says, “practice hospitality.” Hospitality was an ancient virtue. It is even more important as a Christian virtue. It is still even more important in our day and age. To welcome the stranger into our midsts, even to our

home, is to welcome Christ Himself. There was no greater sin in the ancient world than to refuse a stranger. It is even a more grievous Christian sin. We are all strangers. We need to welcome one another.

Finally, as a way of summarizing all that he has said, St. Paul tells us: “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them” (v. 14). This is the final step. If we can learn to bless our enemies — those who inflict pain on us — then we will have ‘graduated’ from being simply a ‘good’ person, to a true Christian.

If you would like to look at this developmentally, we move from being a child, where the whole world revolves around us, to an adolescent where we only have eyes for our ‘true love’ and/or caught in various forms of narcissism.

If ‘true’ love moves to a full love then marriage may ensue. Marriage leads to children, and children require a ‘coming out’ of ourselves. We can no longer live in the closed circle of either our own ego or the simple love of one person over another. Children require us to come out of any closed circle.

The final circle from which God asks us to emerge is the circle of those familiar to us; those with whom we feel comfortable. St. Paul instructs us how to build the personal bonds that will strengthen us. He tells us, “Bless those who persecute you.” And then, he wants to make sure that we understand exactly what he is saying so he says: “bless and do not curse them.”

God draws us from love of family and friends, to friends and siblings in the faith, to love of our enemies. We were God’s enemies and He loved and died for us. He asks us to do the same with others, if we love Him.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA