

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN SEPTEMBER 22, 2019

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

A **PITA BAKING** session is scheduled for Saturday, September 21st, 9:00 AM. We're also planning a session for October 5th. All help welcomed and needed. **Questions?** See Chris Toda. **ALSO**, thanks to the bakers for their hard work!

### THE LORD'S PRAYER, REVISITED.

A number of parishioners asked that Fr. Nick take up some questions they have from his summer sermons on the Lord's Prayer. **If you have questions** you'd like him to address, please write them down or e-mail him. He'll address them in his sermons in the coming weeks.

**DONATIONS FOR HURRICANE RELIEF** may be directed to the International Orthodox Christian Charities at: [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org). The IOCC is one of the top ranked relief organizations in the world, especially noted for its low overhead, directing most of the donations toward those in need. Help those who are suffering through our Orthodox Christian relief organization!

**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.

**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 EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**APOSTOLIC READING: 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-11** ☩ **GOSPEL: LUKE 5:1-11**  
*(THE MIRACULOUS CATCH)*  
**TONE 5** ☩ **MATINS GOSPEL: 3**

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.

**COFFEE HOUR THIS SUNDAY** is sponsored by **Dimitri and Maclynn Saffron**.

## RELIGIOUS ED

**ST NICHOLAS CHURCH SCHOOL** and our Youth are a central part of our parish. We need you! If you are interested in teaching or assisting with Church School this year and/or working with the Youth of our parish on activities and programs geared to them, please see **Valarie Stamoulis**. The first day of Church School is **Sunday, October 6th**. Every child is welcomed! **PARENTS:** please complete the **REGISTRA-**

**TION FORM** found at the candle stand. If you would like more information, speak with Valarie. Providing vibrant and meaningful opportunities for our Youth to learn about their Orthodox Faith and traditions, and work and play together is key to ensuring that our Orthodox Faith and the community of St. Nicholas remains vital for generations to come.

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center's **25th Anniversary Dinner Dance Celebration** will be held on **Saturday, November 9, 2019**. For more information, you may start by picking up

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, Sept 21 Pita Baking  
 Sat, Oct 5 Staff Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON  
 Pita Baking, 9AM-NOON  
 Sun, Oct 6 First Day of Religious Education  
 Sat, Nov 23 Holiday Bake Sale  
 December 7-8 70TH Anniversary celebration

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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,

**O**UR FEEBLE MINDS, LORD, cannot even begin to grasp your greatness, your divinity — or anything about you! The magnificence of your glory and might, the tenderness of your love and mercy, and all the rest that we think we know about you really miss the mark! Besides this, we do not even really know what ‘praising’ you means! Yet, grant that, in any case, we may praise you because you deserve it, because you have told us to do so, and because we wish to obey you always and everywhere.

For you deserve all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

the *Anniversary Flyer*, the *Dinner Reservation Form*, and the *Program Book Ad Form* found at the candles. If you'd like to purchase tickets or have more questions talk to: **Deb Sedares** (Dsedares@pinehills.com) from our Parish, or at Holy Trinity: **Kristina Mironidis** (kmironidis@htnr.net) at 508-852-1000.

**THE LATEST ISSUE** of the *Holy Trinity Times* is available at [www.htnr.net](http://www.htnr.net).

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

**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.

**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](http://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](mailto:dspinney@htnr.net).

### OUR TIME AND GOD'S TIME

Time is a precious thing. Unlike almost anything else in our lives we cannot make more of it, no matter how hard we try. God gives us the gift of the Liturgy as a small window into His eternity. We might chuckle a little when we think about how it is that we schedule an event that is “outside of time,” at a very specific time. Nevertheless, for our parish the Liturgy normally begins, every Sunday, at 10:00AM. And we normally conclude our celebration by 11:30AM.

Some of us, perhaps remembering the long services of our youth, have adopted the very bad habit of coming into Liturgy late; some later than others. However, at St. Nicholas we keep a rather punctual schedule. You can expect (give or take 5 minutes):

- 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy Begins
- 10:20 AM Epistle/Gospel Lessons
- 10:40 AM Great Entrance
- 11:00 AM Holy Communion
- 11:30 AM Dismissal



### NAMEDAYS

**September 17**

***The Holy Martyr Faith, Daughter of St. Sophia***

Faith Mayer

***The Holy Martyr Sophia of Rome***

Sofia Apostol

Sophia Amyra Apostola

Carol Fotos

# SOW BOUNTIFULLY, REAP BOUNTIFULLY

**F**OLLOWING the Feast of the Precious Cross, we begin a new cycle of Scriptural readings in our Sunday Worship. The Gospel lessons are taken from St. Luke and the Epistle readings from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. The Ecclesiastical Year begins in September (as does the Jewish New Year), and in so many ways September is a more appropriate time for new beginnings than the icy days of January. Children start the new school year. The crisp days of fall invigorate us for hard work after the lazy days of summer. So, we begin anew studying God's saving words for us.

Today's reading is 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. St. Paul is writing to the Corinthians to inspire them to contribute to the fund he is raising from the newly formed Gentile Churches. The purpose is to offer a gift to the needy brothers and sisters in Jerusalem and all of Palestine. The Holy Land was never a very wealthy place. During the time of St. Paul's missions a great famine had broken out over the whole region. Everyone there was in great need. St. Paul saw a gift from these newly formed communities to the brethren there as a way to tighten the bond between Christian believers, especially between Jewish and Gentile Christians. This is the background for today's reading.

Even though his words were written with a very specific intent, St. Paul has left generations of Christians a number of important guidelines to live by when considering giving and generosity. This section begins, "The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (v. 6). The first thing we might notice is that he uses an agricultural (organic) image, not a monetary one. He speaks of sowing and reaping, not of investing and return on investment, although this could be inferred. He wants us first to enter into the relationship of the farmer with the land, and then the farmer, his land, and God

(and of course, the rhythm of nature and weather). In many ways it is not unlike the calculation an investor makes in a start-up company or in the stock market. But as anyone who has planted a crop (even a backyard garden) knows, the variables of nature are much harder to predict than those of the marketplace. One plants a crop with faith and many prayers, while all the time hoping. It is the same whenever we give something to charity, perhaps to someone we know who is in need; it requires from us hope, faith and trust in God that what we give will bear fruit.

Also, sowing bountifully requires a certain amount of boldness and courage. The one who sows "sparingly," even if she or he has faith, is expressing a reserve or reticence when asked to put that faith into practice. Sowing bountifully calls us to really put our complete faith in God. We're giving up a part of our own resources.

At the same time, no one forces us. St. Paul tells us, "Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (v. 7). Most of the modern translations use the word "mind" as the place where this decision is made, but the Greek word St. Paul uses is "heart." For St. Paul and the Church Fathers it is the heart that is the center of spiritual discernment, the noetic faculty. Today we think of the heart as the center of emotion and passion — the opposite of rational decision-making — so in this way the translation makes sense, but still something is lost. Our decision to sow bountifully and cheerfully is not just a rational calculation. It is a decision that is shaped and tempered by our trust in God. It should be a spiritually wise decision.

We all have fears when we give away some portion of our possessions. For this reason, St. Paul addresses these fears directly: "And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have

enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever' (Psalm 112:9)" (v. 8-9). If a person grounds their decision to be generous simply in his or her mind, the rational part will say, "the more you give, the less you will have for yourself." St. Paul is telling them and us to trust in God's generosity. He is saying that the rational calculus is not the whole story; that generosity, not selfishness, is the fundamental principle at work in creation. God's rules are different than what might seem to be true on the surface. God's rules require faith and trust in Him in order to become evident.

"He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness" (v. 10). God wants us to understand the correlation between material generosity and a spiritual harvest. He wants us to recognize how He sustains us in every way, and that the way to repay Him is by helping others who need our help. This is the real economic principle, a principle that rarely shows up on the nightly 'Business Report.'

We take as our comfort and inspiration this blessing that St. Paul bestows on us: "You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" (v. 11). When we are generous we not only provide material relief to the person in need, we also strengthen their hope and faith in God. We are the instruments of God's mercy. He gives to each of us the means and the power to act, comfort, and gladden those around us. Let us use this gift, not sparingly, but bountifully; not grudgingly, but cheerfully. So that together we might thank and glorify our Heavenly Father who loves us.