

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN OCTOBER 13, 2019

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

PITA BAKING sessions are scheduled for **THIS Thursday, October 17TH**, and **Saturday, October 26TH**, at **9:00 AM**. All help welcomed and needed. **Questions?** See Chris Toda or Betty Anderson.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES are in session. **Every child is welcomed!** If you have questions, please contact Valarie Stamoulis (617-803-3798). And please be mindful of the classes. Children can be easily distracted.

FAMILY APPLE PICKING: We, along with Sts. Anargyoi, are organizing a trip to Tougas Farm in Northborough for **Friday, October 18TH**. This is a time-honored New England tradition, and great family fun. **Questions?** Valarie Stamoulis (617-803-3798).

CONGRATULATIONS! to Iliana & Sean Fahey on the birth of their son: **Matthew Sean Fahey** on Monday, October 7th. He's weighing in at 6 lbs 14 oz and is already 19¼ inches. He now joins his sisters Katherine and Amelia into the family fray. God grant them all **Many Years!**

70TH ANNIVERSARY
THE MAIN RECEPTION for the Anniversary celebration will be **Saturday, December 7, from 3-7 PM** here at the

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 TWENTY FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: TITUS 3:8-15 ☩ **GOSPEL: LUKE 8:5-15 (PARABLE OF THE SOWER AND THE SEED)**
THE SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE 7TH ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL
TONE 8 ☩ **MATINS GOSPEL 6**

Church. This event will be an "open house" style party and feature Mediterranean food stations, a live jazz trio, and holiday cheer! The donation is \$25 per person and reservations sheets will be available soon.

A 70TH ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM BOOKLET is being prepared to mark this celebration. **Everyone's help is needed** to solicit greetings and acknowledgments from friends and family. Please note, the Program Book is in lieu of our Annual Raffle and Christmas Card this year, so we are **depending on this one major fundraising effort!** Solicitation sheets are available at Church and will be mailed soon!

THANKSGIVING BAKE SALE & LUNCHEON

A HOLIDAY MARKET PLACE will once again be a part of our annual Thanksgiving Bake Sale and Luncheon

on **Saturday, November 23rd**. We are seeking **Vendors from outside our community and Parishioners who may have a craft to sell** to rent table space at a cost of **\$25 per table**. If you or a vendor you know is interested in participating, please contact **Tim Rucho**.

ALSO, A GIFT BASKET RAFFLE will be part of the Holiday Marketplace. We are seeking **CASH donations (preferably) or collections of NEW complimentary items** to be assembled into gift baskets. We need **all donations by Nov. 3RD** to have time to prepare. For more information, contact **Tim Rucho**.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Thurs, Oct 17 Pita Baking, 9AM-NOON
Fri, Oct 18 Family Apple Picking, 4-5:30PM
Sat, Oct 26 Pita Baking, 9AM-NOON
Sat, Nov 2 Staff Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON
Sat, Nov 16 e-Recycling, 9AM-2PM
Sat, Nov 23 Holiday Bake Sale, Luncheon, and Marketplace, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
December 7-8 70TH Anniversary celebration

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

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 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.

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

Holy Trinity **Thanksgiving Food Drive for the Orthodox Food Pantry**, October 14th – November 14th. **All donations are greatly appreciated!**

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 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.

ICON STAND ARRIVES

THE PROSKYNETARION designed to house the Icon and relics of our Patron Saint Nicholas arrived this week! It is really beautiful. (Check out the photograph.) People have been very generous in donating. We still need around \$750 to cover the whole cost. If you'd like to help with this please see Fr. Nick.



COMMUNITY NEWS

DON'T FORGET YOUR FLU SHOT!

Every year in the U.S. seasonal flu causes thousands of hospital admissions and deaths. Getting an annual flu vaccine is the best protection. Please remember to get yours soon!

NAMEDAYS

October 7

The Holy Martyr Sergius in Syria

Sergis Eleftheriou

Sergiou Eleftheriou

October 18

The Holy Apostle & Evangelist Luke

Fr. Luke Veronis

October 20

The Great-martyr Artemius of Antioch

Artemie Gavala

Artemis Gouvelis

October 26

The Holy Great-martyr Dimitrios of Thessalonika

Dimitri Soterios Apostola

Dimitri Daniel Christo

James L. Christo

James Demake

Dhimitri Disho

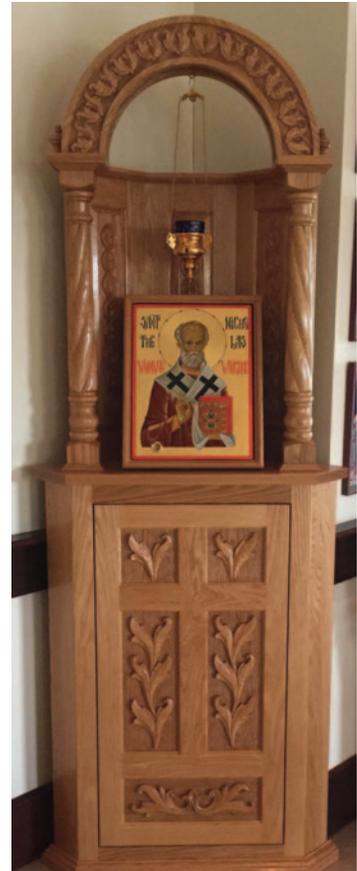
Dimitri Michael Saffron

James Seferi

James Evan Stamoulis

James Trakadas

James Vlamis



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

LORD GOD, eternal Father: Give us the justice that will make us flourish like the palm tree; give us also the goodness that will enable us to grow before you like the cedar of Lebanon. Help us to avoid senseless controversy, to eschew judging, censoring, and criticizing, and to resist being enslaved to our own opinions. Planted in your courts, O Lord, may we grow by abandoning ourselves to your perfect will.

By the 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.

AVOID STUPID CONTROVERSIES

THE Epistle lesson this week is related to the commemoration of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the second held in Nicæa, in 787AD. This was the Council that addressed the issue of the proper role of icons in the Church and in worship. The selection today is from St. Paul's letter to his disciple and co-worker Titus (3:8-15). In it he addresses some of the finer points of pastoring a community, especially an early Christian one that is still influenced by many pagan enticements.

We read today from the very last verses of that Letter. St. Paul, after giving Titus his advice on how to guide the community in a Christian way, tells him: "I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men" (v. 8). St. Paul is a man of action. He believes the principles of faith are meant to be put into practice. This is equally true of many of the spiritual fathers of the Church. They believed that by practicing acts of charity and good works, a person is able to integrate their faith into their very being. It is not enough for someone to have good intentions in their head; they also need to act on these same intentions with their hands.

He warns Titus to "avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile" (v. 9.) This isn't to say that Titus himself was prone to such controversies, but rather that itinerant preachers were stirring up things everywhere. People in local communities, informed or ignorant, would form camps and tear each other apart. This is St. Paul's concern.

He tells Titus: "As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned" (v. 10-11).

The word translated as "factious" is, in the original Greek, "αἰρετικὸν" —

"heretical." (This word didn't assume the specific theological meaning we understand today until a few hundred years after St. Paul.) The Greek root of the word "heretical" literally means, "to choose;" that is to say, to single out one particular point and emphasize it to the exclusion of other points of view or understandings. Thus, a "heretic" turns their one central point into the whole truth. Many persons who the Church considers to be heretics were not entirely wrong. The problem was that the one point they clung to and emphasized changed the full meaning of the truth. In effect, their one point became their whole truth. The Church has always had a wider understanding of truth, not wanting to reduce it to singular idea.

St. Paul calls this "factious" person "perverted and sinful." Even without discussing St. Paul's understanding or intent of that word in the context of the early Church, we can see his point very easily in the way much public discourse happens today in the shouting matches on TV, radio and in the public square. No doubt much of this is theatre, contrived for effect; but increasingly it is not. The factious person uses ideas and language to push people to extremes. The part is presented as the whole. In contrast, the truly thoughtful person tries to keep all perspectives in balance.

This does not mean there are no principles we should not defend; of course there are! It is the "stupid controversies" and "dissensions" that St. Paul asks us to avoid; "quarrels" that are "unprofitable and futile." These last two words are key to understanding where and how someone should stand on a question of principle. Will the dispute ultimately build up the Body of Christ, or will it finally be unprofitable and futile? Understanding this difference is what makes one person a saint and another a heretic. It calls for discernment.

Discernment is first and foremost a spiritual gift. It is the ability to distinguish between the various thoughts that enter our mind and to recognize those

that come from God and those that are from the devil. As such, the person with discernment can understand both the short and long term consequences of a thought or an action. Like all spiritual gifts, God gives discernment to a person of prayer. We all need God's help so that He might guide us toward people of true discernment to whom we should listen and from whom we can learn.

In St. Paul's last few lines to Titus, we gain insight into how he was so successful in establishing Churches throughout the Roman world. St. Paul had sent Titus to Crete to bring order to the Church there. He tells him he will "send Artemas or Tychicus" to Crete to replace him and then he would like Titus to come to Nicopolis to join him there (v. 12). He asks him to "speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way;" to "see that they lack nothing" (v. 13). We suppose that these two, about whom St. Paul speaks in other letters, had brought this message to Titus. After they leave Crete they will visit other Churches.

Then he offers Titus a final piece of advice: "Let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful" (v. 14). While much has been made of St. Paul's principle of justification by faith, not by works (Romans 3:25ff), we see here, as in other places, the emphasis on how our faith should take concrete form, in ministering to those in need.

He reminds us that ultimately the Church is composed of communities of faithful people who love one another. He says: "All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all" (v. 15). And so this is how it should always be, one community embracing another in the love of Christ.