

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN NOVEMBER 17, 2019

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE CHRISTMAS FAST began this past Friday, November 15th. **FASTING IS THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS!** In addition to fasting from food, you may want to consider fasting from shopping as well — or at least choosing when and how much to shop. Don't shop on Thanksgiving. Use it as a family day. Don't shop on Sundays. Instead, relax with your friends. We *can* do things that will feed our souls, while perhaps striking a note for a saner society as well.

OUR HOLIDAY BAKE SALE, LUNCHEON & MARKETPLACE will be held **NEXT Saturday, November 23RD**. Please look at the detailed announcements below.

THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELPED WITH THE ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING event yesterday. The team coordinated by Gerry Belba, and included: George Belba, and Chris Seith. Thank you!

IOCC SUNDAY — A DAY OF SHARING, NOVEMBER 24TH. The International Orthodox Christian Charities is *the* major charitable arm of the Orthodox Church. Based in the United States, it brings relief to people in need throughout the

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 TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: EPHESIANS 5:8-19 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 12:16-21

(THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL)

TONE 5 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 11

world. To donate go to the website: www.iocc.org, or call: (877) 803 IOCC (4622).

TODAY WE CELEBRATE A MEMORIAL for the servant of God, Nikolaq Zhaka, fallen asleep 2 years. *May his memory be eternal!*

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the Zhaka family, in memory of Niko.

70TH ANNIVERSARY

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

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR HOLY TRINITY RESIDENTS. Each year Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehab gives the Orthodox community the opportunity to

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Fri, Nov 15 Nativity Fast Begins
- Sat, Nov 16 e-Recycling, 9AM-2PM
- Sat, Nov 23 Holiday Bake Sale, Luncheon, and Marketplace, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- Sun, Nov 24 Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service, 7 PM
- Thurs, Nov 28 Thanksgiving Day
- Sat, Dec 7 Staff Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON
- December 7-8 70TH Anniversary celebration

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

provide Christmas Gifts for the facility's residents. Our Parish is responsible for providing around 20 of these gifts. You will be asked to purchase and wrap the gift, and bring it to the Church, Sunday, December 8th. **Eleanor Sedares (508-753-3106)** is coordinating this effort for our parish and can offer suggestions if you need ideas of what to get. There's also a sign-up sheet at the candles.

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.

COMMUNITY NEWS

AN ECUMENICAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE, sponsored by the Shrewsbury Clergy will be held, **Sunday, November 24th, at 7:00 pm.** At Wellspring Methodist and Trinity Episcopal, 440 Main St., Shrewsbury. A wonderful way to begin our Thanksgiving celebrations.

9TH ANNUAL TURKEY TROT – Thanksgiving morning Thursday, **November 28th At 8:00 am** join fellow runners, walkers and trotters for the Turkey Trot for the Memory. It's a 5 mile run or a 2 mile walk all to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's disease. This wonderful Shrewsbury tradition is the perfect way to start your holiday. Registration is available online at

www.turkeytrotforthememory.org. Questions please email jamesheald71@gmail.com or jlizotte2@gmail.com.



NAMEDAYS

November 14

The Holy All-praised Apostle Philip

Philip Favata
Philip Rucho
Phillip Sedares

November 16

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew

Scott Matthew Belba
Matthew Robert Clem
Matthew Collins
Matthew Soter

November 25

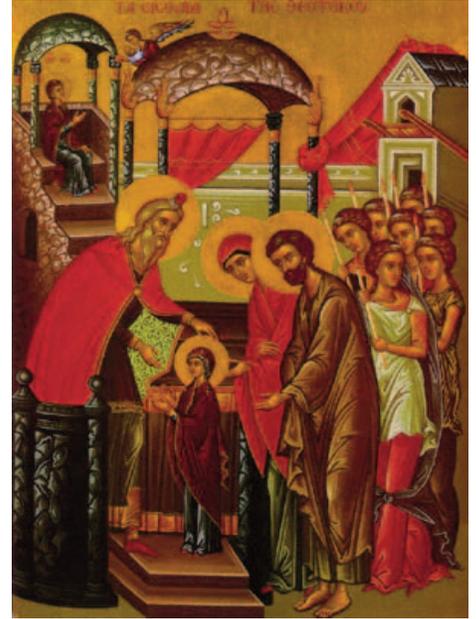
The Great-martyr Katherine of Alexandria

Katina Vanthia Christo
Katina Cocavessis
Kathy Lynn Evangelos
Kathryn Eleanor Sedares
Katina Spataro
Katherine Stamoulis
Emily Katherine Valoras

November 30

The Holy Apostle Andrew

Andrew John Demake
Andrew Opio
Andrew Tanacea



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

ALMIGHTY, ALL-LOVING God: This evening, as we celebrate the entry of the holy virgin into the temple, we ponder your Son's promise to come with you and dwell in the temple of our hearts if we love you. Grant us, then, the strength and understanding we need to love you as we should. Let your love for us, in turn, teach us how to be saintly and religious, patient and gentle, and constantly ready to serve you in our brothers and sisters, so that our love for you will be ever more perfect. We ask this of you by the prayers of the Theotokos, whose festival we joyfully celebrate.

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

WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

THIS is the twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost. The Epistle Lesson is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 5:8-19. The section we read last week was concerned about the unity of the Church — what we would normally think of as the parish. St. Paul now directs our attention to the importance of our behavior; how we should live the faith we say we have in Jesus our Lord.

St. Paul is very straight-forward on how he wants the Ephesians to reflect on their behavior. He wants them to think about what their lives were like before accepting Christ, and what their lives are like now that they have accepted Him. He says, “for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord” (v. 8-10). St. Paul uses an image that is as clear to us as it was to the Ephesians: the spiritual struggle is between the forces of darkness and the forces of light. The difference between darkness and light is like the difference between evil and good. St. Paul isn't being a “dualist.” (Dualists taught that everything could be seen in the stark contrast between black and white.) Yet, he is saying that those who follow God, who follow Jesus, need to distinguish themselves by their way of life. There is a choice in front of us. All we need to do is open our soul's eye to see it. Often the choices are as clear as day is from night.

He caps this verse with the comment: “try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.” Discovering for ourselves what it is that would please the Lord is a helpful guiding principle as we grow spiritually. Light and darkness are only metaphors for the creative tension within our psyche — our soul — as we strive to discern God's will for us. Each of us struggles *not* to do things we know will be detrimental to us and others, even as we aim to do things that we feel will bring us closer to God. The back

and forth of it is the essence of what it means to grow spiritually, to grow in the Life in Christ.

St. Paul offers us very concrete advice on how to measure our growth. “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light” (v. 11-13).

Sunlight disinfects. Some say it's better than Clorox. Hanging clothes out in the sun to dry is not only environmentally wise, it has the additional benefit of purifying on the microbial level. The metaphor of light as a disinfectant points us to a deeper spiritual reality. God's light burns away our sins and purifies us. When acts of sin and evil are exposed to the light they lose their allure as well as their power. When a person's sins are made known publicly, the glamour of their lives quickly evaporates in the light of day.

“Therefore it is said, ‘Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light’” (v. 14). Sleep is another way of speaking about deadness to spiritual reality. We have suffered a great world-wide economic crisis, yet many still seem to be asleep to its root causes: personal selfishness, greed beyond conception, and desire to live beyond not only our own means, but even our planet's ability to sustain us. When the Scripture speaks of ‘sleep’ and ‘death’ we should think about the deeper spiritual truth that God wants us to understand. When we are awake we are conscious to the things around us and better able to understand their consequences.

This is why St. Paul tells the Ephesians: “Look carefully ... how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil” (v. 15-16). The days were not any more or less evil in St. Paul's time than in ours. Each of us is equally vulnerable

to the dangers of our particular time and needs to try to be ‘wise.’ Do we walk carefully? Do we make the best use of our time? Do we seek out what is pleasing to the Lord? Keeping Judgment Day in front of us will help us focus our attention, if we chose to reflect on it often enough.

“Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (v. 17). When we succumb to temptation, we forget our high calling. Again, our human struggle is a constant back-and-forth in our minds and hearts. It is part of being alive. We face a thousand choices a day, and must remember each has a moral consequence. We may be tempted to cut corners or even sin outright, but when we think about things in the light of day, we realize that doing God's will is really what we ourselves want. It is the foolishness of sinful temptation that keeps us away from truly becoming ourselves.

Finally, St. Paul warns us, “do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit” (v. 18). There was a practice among some of the Mystery cults in his time to become ‘high’ not by God's Spirit, but by other kinds of more earthly spirits. We must always strive to be filled with the Holy Spirit, truly loving one another and “addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all [our] heart” (v. 19).

Faith should be embodied in the way we live. It is not that good deeds justify us before God, but they *will* make us God's children. The way we treat one another, those who love us as well as those who hate us and wish us harm, is the way the world will know that we follow our Lord, Jesus Christ, crucified and risen!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



HOLIDAY BAKE SALE, LUNCHEON & MARKETPLACE

**Saturday, November 23
9:00 am - 3:00 pm**

BAKE SALE & LUNCHEON

- **We are asking for donations of home baked goods to sell.** We need to know in advance what you are bringing, and it must be brought to the church by Thursday November 21st. People will be there all day Thursday.
- **We also need volunteers to help on Thursday, and Friday November 21-22 with set up and packaging of items for sale,** and with staffing on Saturday, Nov 23. If you have questions please contact: Chris Toda (thetodas@msn.com) or Betty Anderson (bettya16@verizon.net).
- **There is a sign up sheet** on the bulletin board and at the candle stand for donations and for volunteers to help with set up and with the sale.

PITA & PASTRY HOLIDAY ORDER DEADLINES

- **Help is needed with the ongoing baking effort** with pitas and pastries here at the Church and also with packaging pastries — For specifics, see **Chris Toda** (thetodas@msn.com) and **Betty Anderson** (Bettya16@verizon.net)
- **We need everyone's to help to sell our pastries and pitas** to our family, friends, coworkers, and anyone else you can think of — for more information, see **Betty Anderson.**
- **Thanksgiving Orders** need to be in by **November 3rd**, for pick-up Sat/Sun November 23 & 24.
- **Christmas Orders** must be in by **December 1st**, for pick-up Sat/Sun December 21 & 22. We are only able

to make a certain quantity of pitas and pastries. To ensure that we will be able to fill your orders do not wait until the last minute to get your orders in. ***Absolutely no orders will be accepted after the order deadline.***

- **You may download fliers** using the links in the e-mail Bulletin or pick up hard copies here.

HOLIDAY MARKET PLACE:

- **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.**
- **WE WILL HAVE A TABLE OF VINTAGE AND UNIQUE JEWELRY** for sale at the Marketplace. We are seeking donations of jewelry to sell. Contact Lisa Meilnicki with any questions. All proceeds will benefit the Church.

GIFT BASKET RAFFLE:

- **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.