

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN DECEMBER 1, 2019

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**WE ARE IN THE NATIVITY FAST.** Let us use this time to withdraw from the noise of the "Christmas Season," in order to reflect on the great mystery of Emmanuel: God-with-us!

### FEASTDAY AND 70TH ANNIVERSARY SCHEDULE

Our *Parish Feastday and 70th Anniversary Celebration* is this coming week.

- **On Thursday, December 5,** we will celebrate **Great Vespers at 7:00 PM.** As is the custom, we will welcome many clergy and faithful from neighboring Orthodox parishes. Please make every effort to attend this beautiful service.
- **On Friday, December 6 at 9:30 AM,** we will celebrate the **Divine Liturgy for the Feast.** (Matins at 8:30 AM.)
- **On Saturday, December 7, from 3-7 PM,** in celebration of the 70th Anniversary, we will be holding an "open house" style party, featuring: Mediterranean food stations, a live jazz trio, and holiday cheer! The donation is \$25 per person. **Reservations are due TODAY, December 1st.**
- **On Sunday, December 8, Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 AM,** pre-

#### GREETERS TEAM 2:

DAN MANESCU AND CHRIS SEITH

#### COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP: HELP NEEDED

PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



### THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: 2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-10 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25:14-30

(PARABLE OF THE TALENTS)

TONE 7 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 2

ceded by Matins at 9 AM. His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae will be prime Celebrant.

- After the Divine Liturgy we will "Burn the Mortgage" as a way to conclude our Anniversary celebration!

**THIS IS AN HISTORIC MOMENT** in the life of our Parish. Let's set aside time to celebrate it together!

**THE PARISH COUNCIL** will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, December 2ND at 6:30PM.** Parish Council Members, please let George Demake know if you are unable to attend.

**OUR CHILDREN & YOUTH CHRISTMAS PROGRAM** will be held on Sunday, December 22nd. Preparation and rehearsal will occur during Religious Ed on Sundays: Dec 1, Dec 8, and Dec 15 at 10am. All of those who are interested please attend on these Sundays. Questions? see Valarie

Stamoulis: 617-803-3798.

**THE 2020 CHURCH CALENDARS** are here, in both English and Romanian. Pick them up at the candles. Please consider a small donation to cover the costs.

**OUR DEEPEST THANKS** who labored these past weeks and even months making our **Holiday Bake Sale, Luncheon and Marketplace Luncheon** a great success. Not only is it a great fundraiser for our parish, it is even more a community building event for our Church family. **God bless each and every one of you!**

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, Dec 1	Pageant Rehearsal
Mon, Dec 2	Parish Council Meeting, 6:30 PM
Thurs, Dec 5	St Nicholas Great Vespers, 7:00 PM
Fri, Dec 6	St. Nicholas Feast, Liturgy 9:30 AM
Sat, Dec 7	Staff Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON
December 7-8	70TH Anniversary celebration
Sun, Dec 8	Pageant Rehearsal
Sun, Dec 15	Pageant Rehearsal
Fri, Dec 20	Mustard Seed Meal, 5:00 PM
Sun, Dec 22	Children & Youth Christmas Program
Wed, Dec 25	Nativity of the Lord

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

**FOOD PANTRY.** Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **NEXT Saturday, December 7TH, 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**.

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by **Sofia Apostol**.

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

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

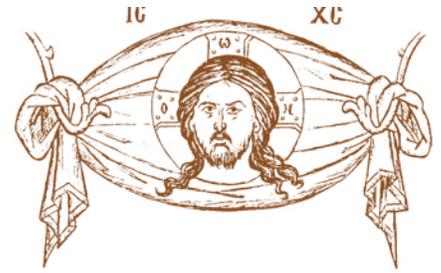
Visit **Holy Trinity's** website [www.htnr.net](http://www.htnr.net) to view the November Newsletter, and click "**Newsletter**" on the homepage.

On behalf of **Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center**, we would like to thank you for your donation to the **25TH Anniversary celebration.** Your contribution, and the contributions of others like you, will go a long way to supporting our mission.

**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).



## NAMEDAYS

**November 25**

***The Great-martyr Katherine***

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

**December 4**

***The Great-martyr Barbara and St. John of Damascus***

Barbara Jean Grniet

**December 6**

***St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lychia***

Nicole Soumela Apostola  
Rev. Nicholas Apostola  
Nicholas Belishta  
Nicholas Charalambides  
Robert A. Clem  
Nikolla Endriko  
Nicholas Ermilio  
Nicholas John Johnson  
Nicole Amelia Karadimitriou  
Nicholas Mazanitis  
Nicolae Nace  
Metropolitan Nicolae  
Rev. Fr. Nicolae Simion  
Nicholas George Soter  
Nicholas Tonna  
Nicole Marta Trakadas  
Nicholas Valoras  
Nicholas Peter Zekos

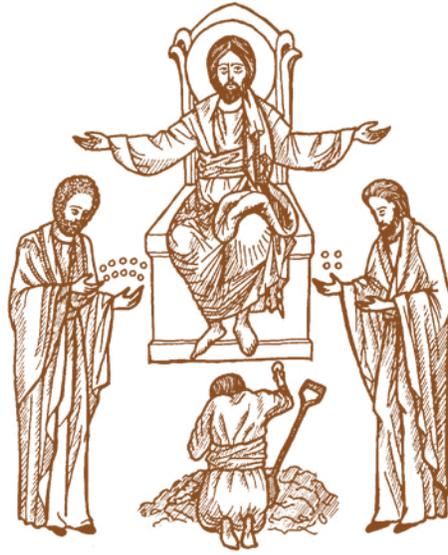
## HOW ARE THE INVESTMENTS DOING?

**T**HIS week's Gospel reading is the Parable of the Talents, found in the Gospel according to St. Matthew (25:14-30). While it is part of the regular cycle of Sunday readings, we do not hear this parable as frequently as some others, since the order of the cycle depends on how early or late Pascha falls. However, it does feature prominently in the Gospel reading for Holy and Great Tuesday, as well as in the hymns of Holy Week. St. Matthew places it within a series of parables and other teachings that, as he recounts, the Lord delivers in the Temple in the days following his Entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) and leading up to his arrest and sacrifice on the Cross.

Each of the Evangelists organized their telling of our Lord's teachings in a way that they saw as most effective. We shouldn't necessarily read the Gospel accounts as strictly chronological, yet they generally do follow the order and timeline of our Lord's time on this earth.

In the days following his entry into Jerusalem, the Lord was teaching particularly of the end-times and God's coming judgment. This is why St. Matthew placed this series of the Lord's powerful parables and teachings concerning these events at this point in his Gospel. Jesus was preparing his followers for what they were about to witness: the coming of God's Reign. The crowd didn't understand what he was really saying. The disciples themselves couldn't comprehend it. Only when he was raised from the dead would they begin to see, at least some of them.

Given this, it becomes easier to understand what Jesus meant when he said to the Sanhedrin: "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me" (Matthew 26:55). He was



there, in the Temple, openly teaching. They could have arrested him at any time, but rather they chose to seize him in the middle of the night.

So, it's important to keep this background information in mind when studying this Parable. In those first days before his arrest he was saying many similar things in the Temple, each equally as forceful.

The first thing that might strike us about this particular Parable is the insight it gives us into the nature of the judgment that will happen when the Lord comes again, this time to settle the final accounts.

A second thing that might strike us is how often the Lord uses the image of money when speaking of spiritual matters. He often spoke of sin and "what we owe God," in terms that focused on the pocketbook. For example, in the Lord's Prayer we say, according to the usual translation, "forgive us our trespasses (sins)..." But there is another rendition (in St. Luke's Gospel) where instead of "sins" Jesus says "debts," as in money debt. People knew he wasn't talking about money, but nonetheless, the image stuck. They remembered it.

Now this parable itself is rather simple and straight-forward. A certain man was setting out on a journey and entrusts his fortune to his servants (slaves) for them to manage in his absence. He gives one five talents, another two, and another one.

Just to explain, a talent, in Jesus' time, was a weight-measure used for payment. As you might surmise, given the context, a talent's weight was an enormous sum of money. For example, an Attic talent of silver was the value of nine man-years of skilled work. During the Peloponnesian War, an Attic talent was the amount of silver that would pay a month's wages of a trireme crew of 200 men. Hellenistic mercenaries were commonly paid one drachma per day for military service. There were 6,000 drachmae in an Attic talent. Do the math! This Master was entrusting his slaves with a fortune.

You might be interested to know that the way we currently use the word "talent" evolved directly from the Parable itself. The meaning of the word when Jesus used it and the Evangelists wrote it was solely as a weight and monetary measurement. However, because of the way it was used in the Gospel parable, the word slowly — it took over 1,300 years — acquired an additional meaning, in the ways we currently use it as "gift" or "aptitude." Clearly, the resulting play-on-words is useful. Money can become a talent of gifts. The talents we have can become a source of money. They are entrusted to us as means to an end. But neither talents nor money are ends in themselves; at least they shouldn't be. They're meant for a greater purpose. As we meditate on this Parable it causes us to understand God's gifts in an entirely different way. We're expected to be productive with the talents given us. And, we will be held to account for our

stewardship of them in the judgment.

Each of the Master's servants had been entrusted with a sum according to his ability. Upon the Master's return (here, we are to understand this return as the Lord's Second Coming), he requires an accounting of what each had done with what he'd been entrusted. The first two say they've double their portfolio. The third hid it in the ground, literally. The Master rewards the first two and is furious with the third. He says: "You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth" (v. 26-30).

You might rightly ask, "For keeping his investment intact? He at least didn't lose any of it!" And here is the terrifying message of this Parable. This servant is punished not for doing anything bad,

but rather for not doing what he could have, what he should have.

When the Lord comes again he will be requiring of us a "return" on his investment in us. This is the where the play-on-words takes on special meaning. The Lord has given each of us "talents." What are we doing with them? How are we using them? Have they been invested selfishly or cowardly? Or, have they been invested with a view toward profiting our neighbor? Toward doing God's work in the world? These will be the questions asked of us.

I was studying theology the first time I really *heard* this Parable. It was Great Tuesday morning. I was at Liturgy at Holy Cross in Brookline. It was a dark and gray morning, cold and rainy. The Gospel reading from St. Matthew was of parables and prophecies of the end-times and the Judgment, this parable of the talents was among them. The Lord was relating the destruction of the world and the accounting that awaits each of us at his Judgment Seat. I left the Chapel shaken. I never forgot the experience or the message. Neither should any of us. We should always strive to make sure our ears can hear and our eyes can see.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

## A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**B**LEST BE YOUR NAME, O LORD, NOW AND FOREVER-MORE! From the rising of the sun to its setting, praised be your holy name! And to whom, O Lord our God, shall we offer our grateful praise, if not to you? You are the first and foremost benefactor of our lives. You are the one who bestowed on us all the good that we are and have. You gave us the riches of this world, and in unspeakable wisdom and insight, you revealed to us the mystery of your unfathomable will. Therefore, Lord, as we rejoice now, during these days of our annual thanksgiving celebration, grant that we may always perceive and appreciate the wonders of your creation and accept them from your hand as we should, conscious of your goodness, responsive to your love, and humbled by your generosity.

By the grace and mercy 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.

