

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN DECEMBER 8, 2019

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**THIS IS AN HISTORIC TIME** in the life of our parish. We are celebrating 70 years since the founding, the burning of the mortgage on this phase of our building program, and especially the Feast-day of our Patron: St. Nicholas. **We have so much to be grateful for. Let's give thanks to God!**

**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!

**OUR CHILDREN & YOUTH CHRISTMAS PROGRAM** will be held on **Sunday, December 22nd**. Preparation and rehearsal will occur during **Religious Ed on Sundays: Dec 8, and Dec 15; and on Saturday, Dec 21 at 10AM**. All of those who are interested please attend on these Sundays. **Questions?** see **Valarie Stamoulis: 617-803-3798**.

**DONATIONS FOR ALBANIAN EARTHQUAKE RELIEF** may be made through our parish. Please clearly designate this on donation. We will forward all monies collected to the Orthodox Church of Albania. For information about their relief efforts: <http://orthodoxalbania.net/index.php/en-us/>.

**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-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

APOSTOLIC READING: EPHESIANS 6:10-17 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 13:10-17

(JESUS HEALS THE WOMAN WITH OSTEOPOROSIS)

TONE 8 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 3

**OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL** is Friday, December 20TH. We'll need help cooking and serving. **Prep** help needed (3 persons), **NOON** Thursday. **Prep** help needed (2 persons), **NOON** Friday. **Serving** help needed (5 persons), 5:30PM Friday. If you'd like to help, please talk to Fr. Nick.

**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.

**THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS** for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9AM to noon. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with **Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola**. Our next Saturday is January 4TH.

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**CHRISTMAS GIFTS PURCHASED FOR HOLY TRINITY RESIDENTS** need to be at the Church **THIS Sunday, December 8th**. **Questions?** Eleanor Sedares (508-753-3106).

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

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

### DATES TO REMEMBER

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
Sat, Dec 21	Pageant Rehearsal, 10 AM
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

**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).



### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**WE GLORIFY YOU**, Lord Jesus Christ, for allowing us to know you. Everything we have belongs to you and we possess nothing of our own, for it is you who gave us all we have. By coming into our midst, you show us how to let go of everything, and by the poverty of your birth, you teach us to be attached to nothing. As we prepare for the celebration of your earthly birthday, O Christ, keep our hearts fixed only on you, so that we may always sing: Glory to God in the heights; on earth peace, and among all love and understanding.

For you are God and we give you glory together with your Father Who is without beginning, and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## NAMEDAYS

### 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

### December 12

#### *St. Spyridon the Wonderworker of Tremithus*

Spiro Kelly  
 Spiro Kelly  
 Spiro Spyrou

### December 15

#### *The Hieromartyr Eleftherios, Bishop of Illyria*

Lillian Chachi

### December 17

#### *The Holy Prophet Daniel*

Dan Manescu  
 Dana Manescu  
 Dan Alexandru Nedelescu  
 Robert Daniel Salerno  
 Daniel Shaheen  
 Dana Tsoules

## SUITING UP FOR THE STRUGGLE

**T**HIS is the twenty-seventh Sunday after Pentecost. The Epistle Lesson is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 6:10-17. These verses form the conclusion of his letter. He is admonishing the Ephesians to be vigilant. He warns them about the trials to come, and he wants them to be prepared. He uses military language to describe what lies before them, but he is clear that this is a *spiritual* struggle against the forces of darkness.

In St. Paul's world people believed very strongly in 'spirits' and 'angels' and felt that these forces controlled their lives. While we are not necessarily held as captive as they by these ideas, even so today many people think there are forces that direct us and determine our destinies. St. Paul wants the Ephesians to trust in God and abandon the fear of being controlled by other forces. Similarly, we too need to abandon either a fatalism (somebody else controls us), or a self-sufficient spirit (we can do it all by ourselves), in order to be ready to engage the spiritual challenges in front of us.

St. Paul tells us: "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (v. 10-11). The first thing we need to realize is that our strength comes from the Lord. We are truly locked in a struggle, but we are being foolish if we think we can rely solely on our own strength. Our strength is grounded in God's power, not our own. We put on "the whole armor of God" so that we can withstand spiritual forces that can attack us in ways we cannot even imagine. St. Paul uses a phrase here found nowhere else in the whole Bible: "against the wiles of the devil." He is telling us clearly that the Evil One does not play fair, or, at the very least, does not play in a way that will be immediately apparent to us. Simply put, he plays dirty.

We must always be on our guard, because "our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (v. 12). Our spiritual struggle takes place in many places, visible and invisible. St. Paul speaks here of the "cosmic powers" and the "heavenly places." Sometimes we are very limited in our vision of the struggle of which we are a part. We tend to be earth-bound. We see only the here and now.

Jesus came to rescue us not only from the here and now, but especially from the here and forever. Our outlook needs to include not just the world and life we currently see, but more importantly the world and life that God has in store for us. *This* is the struggle in which we are engaged. It is a battle, but not like the ones we see on television or even in front of us. These are spiritual battles that are waged in our heads and in our hearts. The battle is no less real just because we can't see it. We know it exists because we feel it in our own person and in those around us.

"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day" (v. 13). We are not defenseless. God does not leave us without protection. We do have armor against the evil forces that assail us. Only, they are not the sorts of things that we usually associate with "battle." They are spiritual weapons and defenses, often the things we might associate with weakness.

"Fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness" (v. 14). How exactly does this work? St. Paul isn't talking about a belt of leather and bullet-proof armor. He's talking about truth and righteousness. The real weapons against evil — all kinds of evil — are the virtues. In the short run it may seem that guns, bullets,

bombs, and the like are the only effective weapons against evil. What we are coming to understand in a world where war pops up where you least expect it, where there are no clear battle lines, where even evil takes on the battle-cry of justice, is that the only possible defense is a "breastplate of righteousness and a belt of truth."

It is not easy in our day to be a Christian. Even some who call themselves Christians seem to preach a strange Gospel, foreign to what we have always understood it to be. Nevertheless, the Good News is just that, good news, and we must be prepared to preach it. St. Paul says that the shoes for our feet should be "whatever will make [us] ready to proclaim the gospel of peace" (v. 15). We may be asked to proclaim the gospel of peace in the world or in our families. It either case it may not be well received, and will require us to have faith.

It is faith that is at the heart of our "defense." St. Paul says that with "the shield of faith ... you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one" (v. 16). Trusting in the Lord our God is the very foundation of strength. So many spiritual arrows and bullets are targeted toward us, that, without a grounded faith, we would not be able to withstand. When we are in the middle of our struggle, we may feel as though we will certainly succumb, but the Lord will always support us. We have His shield in our hands.

Finally, we "take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (v. 17). The "helmet of our salvation" is like a crown on our heads. God grants us salvation to protect our heads, but also in anticipation of our victory laurel. He gives us the sword "of the Spirit" and the "Word of God" that cuts through every obstacle. Let us prove ourselves worthy of this great grace.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA