

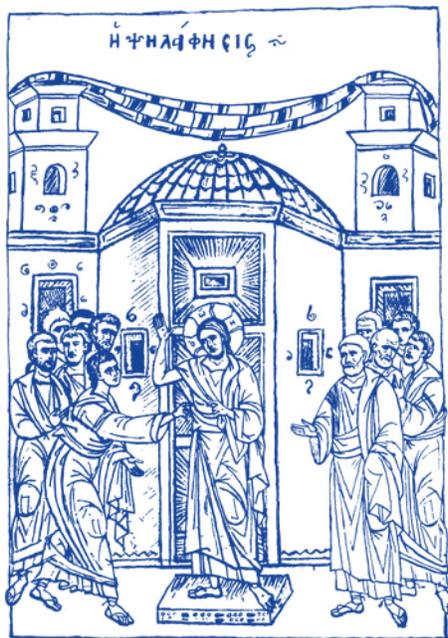
ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN APRIL 26, 2020

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

LIVE STREAMING. The live-streaming of the Services during Holy Week was a real blessing. It helped to make the Feasts of our Lord's Passion and Resurrection a little closer to normal. The number of people who were participating through their computers was very impressive. More importantly, many of you wrote in or posted how meaningful the experience was. While we're all anxious to get back together and worship face-to-face, God has given us this medium to help bring us closer to one another, in spite of the physical distance. Needless to say, we'll be continuing. You can count on regular Sunday services: Matins at 9:00am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00am. We also have a YouTube Channel where you can access the Services we have archived.

To access the Live-Streaming for Sunday Liturgy, go to our website and click on the "Live Streaming Services": www.stnicholaschurch.org.

STEWARDSHIP. It was really heartening to see how many people remembered the Parish in their giving this Pascha. However, the economic crisis is paralleling the Covid crisis. Everyone is being effected. Please remember that **the Church is also in the same situation.** There are on-going expenses. As you are able, please continue to send what stewardship offering that you feel comfortable with. You may mail it to the Church address. You may also give on-line, on the parish website. That address is: <https://www.myowngiving.com/Default.aspx?cid=854>



THE SECOND SUNDAY OF PASCHA ST. THOMAS SUNDAY

APOSTOLIC READING: ACTS 5:12-20

GOSPEL: JOHN 20:19-31

TONE 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 1

WE HAVE A COVID FUND. There are people both in our parish and who come to the Church who are in need. There will very likely be even more as this situation continues. **If you need help,** whatever it might be, including financial assistance, please contact Fr. Nick. We'll find a way to assist you. **ALSO,** we are asking the faithful in our parish **WHO ARE ABLE,** to perhaps contribute toward this fund. We've set up a small committee, headed by Fr. Nick, to administer this fund, and distribute what we're able to give as equitably as possible. **May God keep us all!**

LET'S PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER. You already know that Fr. Nick maintains a Parish Diptych. He remembers all of the members of the

Parish, living and dead, as he prepares the Holy Offering at every Liturgy. But each one of us has a part in that prayer as well. Sometimes we bake a Prospora and give that along with names of people who need our prayers, to be remembered during the Liturgy. Very often, when we enter the Church we light a candle, or two or three, as an offering for people we love. The distancing imposed upon us has definitely put a crimp in these beautiful practices, but here's a suggestion. **Send the names of people you'd especially like to be remember to Fr. Nick.** He'll make sure they are prayed for during the Liturgy. If you'd like to have **candles lit as well,** make a note on the message that you send, and we'll make sure candles are offered. If you'd like to **make a donation,** that would be a help for our Parish. Either mail it to the Church address, or give on-line by clicking here.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

"THANK YOU MEALS" FOR HOLY TRINITY STAFF. One way Holy Trinity is trying to show the staff how much each of them is appreciated is by providing a substantial meal for them during their shift. They've partnered with a number of our local restauranteurs. One way we can help is to sponsor some of these meals. **We are hoping to sponsor at least one day of meals each month (hopefully more).** **The cost is around \$500/day.** If you'd like to donate toward this you may either go to **our website** and click on the **"On-Line Giving"** button, or mail in a check. Please designate

DATES TO REMEMBER

Thurs, May 28	Ascension of the Lord
Sat. June 6	Saturday of the Dead
Sun, June 7	Pentecost

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

"Holy Trinity Meals." Questions? e-mail Fr. Nick.

MUSTARD SEED. We are looking to get back on track with providing meals for the visitors to the Mustard Seed. It will be a different procedure than the hot meals we would normally provide. What they are asking for is **125 bag meals that they can then distribute.** For our part, we are working out a plan where we can prepare the meals with teams following the standard safety protocols. We'll have more information next week.

FOOD PANTRY. At the outset of the stay-at-home protocols our **Orthodox Food Pantry** stopped operations until the situation could be analyzed. At a Pantry Meeting this past week plans were discussed toward reopening by the end of May or early June. We're looking forward to it, and we'll give you more information when things firm up.

GENERAL STUFF AROUND CHURCH. There are a number of projects in and around the Church that we've been putting off. This now seems like a good time to work on some of these. The Parish Council is developing a list and a plan. It would involve one, maybe two, people focusing on things like: deep cleaning, organizing and cleaning-out, small repairs, etc. By next week we should have a clearer list and plan.

AND FINALLY, if you have any ideas of what **we might do** during this period, please send them along to **George De-make** so we can put them on our agenda.

WORDS OF THANKS

BAKING. The challenges of shut-downs and distancing protocols seemed as though they would jeopardize our Pascha Holiday Baking sales, but they didn't. **Thanks to Chris Toda and Betty Anderson, and the hard work of all of the bakers,** everything was in place before travel and contact became difficult. After a slow start, orders came in. Certainly Easter dinners were very much smaller, but our baked goods helped to bring some normalcy. So, a big "thank you" to all of them. There are still some pitas and pastries available. If you're interested, talk to Chris Toda, 508-832-6271 or Betty Anderson, 508-756-4848.

LITURGY. There are a few people who we really need to thank for making this year's Paschal celebration possible. The first are **Tim Rucho and George De-make,** who not only came and chanted, but had the added task of figuring out a very new situation. They did it, and made it sound beautiful and feel normal. As you could see from the streaming, Tim was able to decorate the Church as usual.

The other critical piece was the streaming. **Evan Stamoulis** was able to pull together a plan and the necessary equipment on very short notice, and then committed himself to get it up and running for every Service. We'll continue streaming for the time being. We'll see what the future holds. And, we're really grateful that we have this option. Also, a thank you to Louis, James and Mark Stamoulis whose help during the services really made a difference.

To be clear, we all followed careful safety protocols.

A PRAYER FROM THE MONASTERY OF BOSE, ITALY

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

GOD OUR FATHER, with the resurrection of Jesus your Son, you destined creation for transfiguration in a new heaven and new earth, look upon humanity suffering in the hour of the pandemic, and pour forth your Spirit of compassion and mercy, so that all may find hope and work together in charity and solidarity, awaiting to be together in You in eternal life. Amen.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

HOLY TRINITY has set up a **dedicated web page** on its site to address all of the questions and changing information regarding the situation, especially with the COVID-19 virus. We urge all families and other interested persons to go directly to the site — <https://www.htnr.net/coronavirus> — for answers to the many questions they might have. There are also links and phone numbers to use if one would like more specific information.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your kindness and generosity during this difficult time, and for thinking about those that need our help. God Bless you and please stay healthy!



CHRIST IS RISEN, INDEED!

THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST is the central tenet of our Christian faith. As St. Paul says: “if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:14). Put another way, for Christians, Christ’s actual, physical resurrection from the dead after he was crucified is the cornerstone of our faith. Christianity would be close to meaningless without it.

While this might appear to be a jarring statement, it is not as extreme as it first seems. Christ’s resurrection is not just another miracle, nor is it just the validation of who Christ said he was and is, but rather it is the natural and logical consequence of God’s entire plan for His creation. It was a plan borne out of love, to form a creation brimming with life and grace that would reflect God’s majesty. We humans are intrinsic to this plan. Created in His image, we were designed to grow into the divine likeness. When our Lord Jesus Christ took on our humanity it was to show us what it is like to accept God’s challenge and grow into the fulness of our potential. Christ’s resurrection, and our eventual resurrection, is the fulfillment of God’s promise.

The centrality of Christ’s resurrection to the Christian faith can be seen in how the historical reality of it is constantly affirmed. The earliest written account we have is St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians written around 57 ad. After giving a short synopsis of the basic Christian Kerygma (proclamation), that Jesus suffered, died, was buried, and rose on the third day, he names the people who saw him after his resurrection.

“He appeared to Cephas [Peter], then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he

appeared also to me” (v. 15:5-8). There is a significance to why he doesn’t mention the women who were the first to see him. St. Paul is making a “legal” argument, and regardless of what we might think about it today, in the Roman world a woman’s testimony would not be allowed in court. The actual historical reality of Christ’s resurrection had witnesses, and these witnesses were to be believed by everyone.

In a similar way, one can see this appeal to historical grounding in the Nicæan-Constantinopolitan Creed that we recite at every Liturgy. Among other things, Pontius Pilate, is mentioned because, like Annas and Caiaphas, he was a well-known historical figure. Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection could be “dated.”

The other important aspect of our Lord’s resurrection is that this was not a simple resuscitation of his crucified body. There was something different about it. In each of the Scriptural accounts we learn that the people he appeared to did not immediately recognize him. It wasn’t simply because they were not expecting to see someone who they knew to be dead now standing before them alive. It was only when he touched their faith, their hearts, and the scales fell from their eyes that they could realize who he was. He had changed.

People often wonder what our own resurrection will be like. We can get some hints if we read the accounts of how Jesus appeared to his disciples in the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension. We can see there are certain continuities with our present existence as well as some disconnects.

For example, Jesus can be touched and held. Mary Magdalene grabs on to his feet when she recognizes him in the Garden (John 20:17; Matthew 28:9). Thomas touches the wounds of his hands and side, which are very real (John 20:27). He eats fish with the disci-

ples in the upper room, in order to prove he’s not a ghost (Luke 24:41). He lights a charcoal fire and cooks breakfast for the disciples at the Sea of Galilee and then walks and talks with them (John 21:9). He encounters Luke and Cleopas on the road to Emmaus and dines with them, breaking the bread, at which point they recognize him (Luke 24:30).

Then there are the disconnects. For example, St. Paul says “he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time.” Holy Tradition tells us that while he appeared to all of these at the same time, not all of the brethren were in the same place. Similarly, while talking and walking with Luke and Cleopas, he was also appearing to the other disciples in the Upper Room (Luke 24:34-35). And, he entered that Upper Room “even though the doors were sealed” (John 20:19).

In his risen body Jesus could be in many places at once, walk through walls, transport himself great distances instantaneously, yet eat, walk, talk, and be held just as we can.

The last important fact that we should consider is that our Lord did not “discard” his body after he was “done” with it. Having assumed it, it is his for eternity. The material world is not only important, it is sacred. It is holy. We regularly use things and throw them away once we are done with them. God is telling us that using His creation in this fashion is an abomination. Everything is holy. His creation is holy. We are called to *be* holy.

So, we Christians believe in Christ’s physical, actual, historical resurrection, because we trust in God’s promise, and we trust in those who saw him. We look forward to our own resurrection, because we too want to be full of light.

Christ is Risen, Indeed!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA