

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MAY 3, 2020

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

LIVE STREAMING. The live-streaming of the Services will continue. 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>

THERE ARE PITAS AND PASTRIES AVAILABLE! If you'd like to know what we have and how to purchase, talk to **Chris Toda, 508-832-6271** or **Betty Anderson, 508-756-4848.**

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.



THE THIRD SUNDAY OF PASCHA OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN

APOSTOLIC READING: ACTS 6:1-7

GOSPEL: MARK 15:43-16:8

TONE 2 ☩ RESURRECTION GOSPEL 4

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!**

LOOKING FOR THIS YEAR'S HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE GRADUATES (Yes, people are still graduating) in our Parish so we can recognize them on their accomplishment. If you know of a soon-to-be graduate, please inform **Tim Rucho** or **Fr. Nick.**

THE PARISH COUNCIL has been meeting regularly during this time period (by confer-

ence call). You'll notice in the announcements some of the ideas being discussed. If you have suggestions please send them along to George Demake.

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 and other 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

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850

E-MAIL: FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG ♦ WEB: WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG

A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

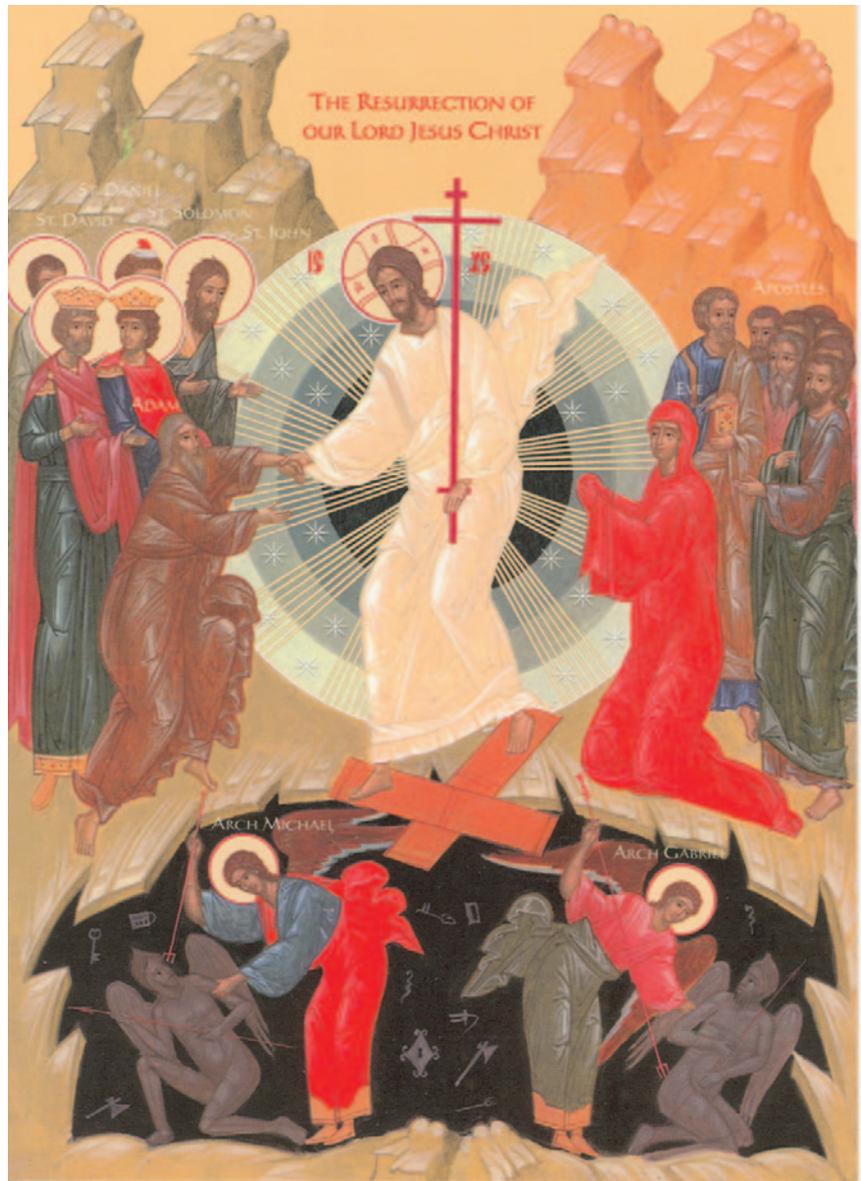
number of our local restaurateurs. One way we can help is to sponsor some of these meals. **We are hoping to sponsor at least one day of meals each month (hopefully more).** The cost is around \$500/day. If you'd like to donate toward this you may either go to **our website** and click on the **"On-Line Giving"** button, or mail in a check. Please designate **"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 bagged 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 evaluated. At a recent Pantry Meeting 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 need doing. This now seems like a good time to work on them. 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 plan.

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



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!



THE DIACONATE IN CHRIST

THIS is the third week of Pascha. It is when we remember the Myrrh-bearing women, as well as Nikodimos and Joseph of Arimathea. This Sunday's reading from the Apostolic writings is from Acts 6:1-7. In this passage we learn something about the beginnings of Church structure and order.

The early Christian community in Jerusalem was growing by leaps and bounds. It was becoming too large to be administered on an *ad hoc* basis by the Apostles, and tensions began to surface. In the Scripture we read: "Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word'" (Acts 6:1-4).

There are three important points raised in these verses. The first is that there are "Hellenists" who are complaining that their widows are being neglected. The second is that there is a hierarchy of gifts and responsibilities; should the Apostles give up preaching to serve the tables? (The 'table' referred to here is the dinner table *not* the Altar table.) The third is that in order to "serve the tables" you need to be a person of "good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom."

Let's begin with the "Hellenists." These are not Greeks, *per se*, but Jews from outside Palestine who spoke Greek as their first language. Given that they were feeling neglected in the daily distribution, it is likely that they spoke little if any Aramaic. It is also interesting to note that the widows were not receiving

'alms.' Rather, they received from the "daily distribution." This early community held things in common (Act 2:44). They distributed to all the members of the community according to need from what they had.

Let's move to the second point. In saying that it wasn't right for the Apostles to give up preaching to serve the tables, they were not saying that serving tables was beneath them, only that it was an inappropriate use of their time. They had a different responsibility, namely, prayer and ministry of the word (v. 4). Their prayers and preaching encouraged and strengthened this early community. Their proposal to appoint deacons is intended to ensure that the distribution was being properly administered, also a sacred task.

Here's the third point. We learn from this passage both the way leadership in the Church is chosen, as well as the qualifications. The Apostles asked the brethren to pick out from among the community persons of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom they might appoint to this duty (v. 3). The Apostles didn't simply name people to the positions; they asked the people themselves to choose persons who were qualified and worthy, both administratively and spiritually. The Apostles didn't relinquish their overall responsibility for the administration of the Church, but they did delegate and empower qualified persons with specific tasks. After the decision had been made, the Apostles prayed over these seven men and laid their hands on them. This is what ordination is: identifying persons who are both spiritually and physically up to the task. Then, God's Grace is prayed for to "complete that which is lacking" in the person ordained.

It is unfortunate that today we understand the role of "deacons" as almost exclusively liturgical. The root meaning of the word deacon is "to minister." In

the Liturgy when we pray for "the diaconate in Christ," the reference is not primarily to the ordained diaconate, but more importantly to what we might call today lay societies and organizations intended for ministry and service.

On the national level, we have living examples of these "diaconates in Christ" in the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), and the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), as well as many other Pan-Orthodox agencies and organizations chartered by the Assembly of Bishops. Closer to home we have our own Orthodox Food Center — the food pantry — and Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehab Center. Many of us cook and serve meals at the Mustard Seed — a diaconate, if there ever was one. Persons who serve on the parish council and various parish organizations minister to our own community and the whole society around us powerfully and in very real ways. And, so that we don't forget the other important aspect of the Apostolic criterion: in order to be effective, each one who serves in the name of Christ needs to be a person of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.

Each of us is called to be a deacon, ministering to the members of Christ's Body and to all of the world. We are all called to be persons of good repute, filled with the Spirit and wisdom. We are all called to reach out to those in need, both physically and spiritually, lifting them up in our Lord's name. May God give us the strength and wisdom to fulfill this call.

Christ is Risen!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

THE MYRRHBEARERS



SUNDAY OF THE MYRRHBEARING WOMEN

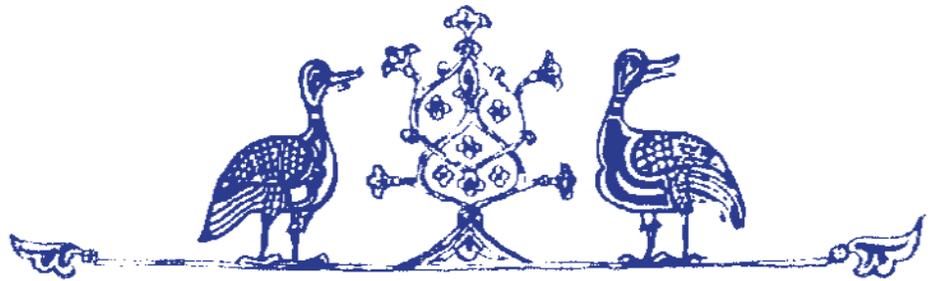
About the beginning of His thirty-second year, when the Lord Jesus was going throughout Galilee, preaching and working miracles, many women who had received of His beneficence left their own homeland and from then on followed after Him. They ministered unto Him out of their own possessions, even until His crucifixion and entombment; and afterwards, neither losing faith in Him after His death, nor fearing the wrath of the Jewish rulers, they came to the sepulchre, bearing the myrrh-oils they had prepared to anoint His body. It is because of the myrrh-oils, that these God-loving women brought to the tomb of Jesus that they are called the Myrrh-bearers. Of those whose names are known are the following: first of all, the most holy Virgin Mary, who in Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40 is called “the mother of James and Joses” (these are the sons of Joseph by a previous marriage, and she was therefore their step-mother); Mary Magdalene (celebrated July 22); Mary, the wife of

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O GOD OUR FATHER: As a new day is born and the light of early morning fills the world, we come before you once again, ready to anoint your Son with our praises as once the myrrhbearing women hoped to anoint him with their precious herbs and spices. Through your Christ, the great saviour of all creation, enable us ever to be mindful of the wondrous things you have done for us, that we may bring forth fruit worthy of your benevolence. Teach us how to hold fast to these mysteries we celebrate, and make us fit to join all your saints at the table of the eternal banquet.

For you deserve all glory, honor, and worship, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



Clopas; Joanna, wife of Chouza, a steward of Herod Antipas; Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee, Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus; and Susanna. As for the names of the rest of them, the evangelists have kept silence (Matt 27:55-56; 28:1-10. Mark 15:40-41. Luke 8:1-3; 23:55-24:11, 22-24. John 19:25; 20:11-18. Acts 1:14).

Together with them we celebrate also the secret disciples of the Saviour, Joseph and Nicodemus. Of these, Nicodemus was probably a Jerusalemite, a prominent leader among the Jews and of the order of the Pharisees, learned in the Law and instructed in the Holy Scriptures. He had believed in Christ when, at the beginning of our Saviour's preaching of salvation, he

came to Him by night. Furthermore, he brought some one hundred pounds of myrrh-oils and an aromatic mixture of aloes and spices out of reverence and love for the divine Teacher (John 19:39). Joseph, who was from the city of Arimathea, was a wealthy and noble man, and one of the counsellors who were in Jerusalem. He went boldly unto Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, and together with Nicodemus he gave Him burial. Since time did not permit the preparation of another tomb, he placed the Lord's body in his own tomb which was hewn out of rock, as the Evangelist says (Matt. 27:60).