

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, June 28, 2020

The Third Sunday After Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: Romans 5, 1-10

Gospel: Matthew 6, 22-33

Tone 2 • Matins Gospel 3

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PARTICIPATING IN SERVICES. As a reminder, here are the [Guidelines](#) for attending Church services. Everyone **must wear a mask** while present, and **we have increased the attendance limit to approximately 50 people**. Please follow the directions of Parish Council members at all times as they will ensure it is controlled and safe for all.

THE LIVE-STREAMING OF THE LITURGY WILL CONTINUE. For the indefinite future, you will still be able to access the live-stream of Divine Services. Go to: www.stnicholaschurch.org and click on "**Live Streaming of Services**". **To view previous Services** on our YouTube Channel, [click here](#).

DO YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE IN ACCOUNTING AND BOOK-KEEPING? If so, your Church needs YOU! The Parish Council is in need of someone with book-keeping experience to serve as treasurer of the parish. **This has been an ongoing and persistent need, and is an essential component of the stewardship of the parish.** Please consider if you might be able to offer this stewardship of time and talent to your Church. For more information, contact Evan Stamoulis at estamoulis@gmail.com

USHERS NEEDED. The Parish Council generally attends to ushering on Sundays, but given the current situation some are not able to do so. **As a result, we need a few more people to help with ushering** on a rotating schedule. One would need to be at the Church at 9 am on Sundays. If you can help, please email parishcouncil@stnicholaschurch.org or speak to George Demake.

MUSTARD SEED MEALS. We plan to continue our practice of supporting The Mustard Seed in its mission to provide meals to those in need. **We have committed to providing a meal for the Mustard Seed on August 21.** Observing social distancing measures here at the Church, we will prepare 150 meals that will be pre-packaged and dropped off, ready to be distributed by their regular staff of volunteers. Donations to help defray the cost for the meals is also needed. **Donations can be made to St. Nicholas Orthodox Church – online or by check.** Please note that the donation is for “The Mustard Seed meals”. If you/your family would like to help with this, please call or contact **Betty Anderson by email** (bettya16@verizon.net) or by phone 508-353-9449.

ORTHODOX FOOD PANTRY UPDATE. The Food Pantry has reopened and is serving the community. Volunteers will have PPE (masks and gloves) and follow social distancing procedures. **Additional help is needed now and in the coming weeks** because many of the regular volunteers may not be in a position to return just yet. **Our Parish’s next responsibility to staff the Food Pantry will be on Saturday, July 4 from 9:00 AM to NOON.** Also, help is regularly needed on **Fridays from approximately 10 AM to NOON** for pick up of food at the Food Bank; transport back to St. Spyridon; and pre-bagging for Saturday. For more information, contact [Lisa Demake](#) or [Nicole Apostola](#) at 508-797-9482.

STEWARDSHIP. This is a difficult time for everyone, on so many levels. One is economic. But if you are able, please continue to send what stewardship offering that you feel you can afford. Keep in mind that **the Church is also in the same situation.** There are on-going expenses. You may mail any contributions to the Church address, or you may give on-line, at the parish website by [clicking here](#). God bless you and keep you safe!

WE HAVE A COVID FUND. There are people both in our parish and in the larger community who are in need during this time. **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!**

NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR THE CHURCH. If you have information or a notice to share in the Church bulletin, please send that to Bulletin@stnicholaschurch.org. Likewise, questions or information for the Parish Council may be addressed to ParishCouncil@stnicholaschurch.org

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

End of the School Year Meeting

Date: Saturday, 6/27

Time: 12-1pm

Place: St. Nicholas Church (grass area & parking lot)

This is an opportunity for kids to visit together and chat with Father prior to their summer vacation. Kids will need to bring a mask with them. We will be outside and maintain social distance, observing all appropriate Covid 19 protocols. **We plan to serve lunch during this time.** If this is something you are not comfortable with, please feel free to pack your child a lunch. Please **RSVP** to Valarie at valarie.stamoulis@gmail.com or 617-803-3798.

VIRTUAL CHURCH SCHOOL. We are considering offering a “Virtual Church School” session once in July and once in August for our Sunday school students. We want to try to compensate for some of the class time missed this school year due to COVID-19. The virtual program will be activity based for younger children and focus on discussions and activities for older children. **We have prepared a short survey to get feedback from our parish families on this idea.** Please fill out this survey <https://forms.gle/CUsGxVkJQguiMgBN28> to help us evaluate the overall interest in this program.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

A message from Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (6/23/20)

Holy Trinity In The News...A LOT!

Last Sunday was Father’s Day and one of the first celebratory days when families were able to visit with the residents in person! Holy Trinity was in the limelight this week as Boston and Worcester Media outlets did full stories covering outdoor Father’s Day visits. We are all extremely proud of the way that Holy Trinity came across in these stories and hope that you will share it with your friends and family.

- [CBS Boston](#)
- [7 News Boston](#)
- [Spectrum News Worcester](#)
- [Worcester Telegram & Gazette](#)

Update – At this time, three residents are positive (not acquired at Holy Trinity), 51 are fully recovered, and 24 have always tested negative. Holy Trinity continues to admit residents needing long term care or short-term rehabilitation services, and provide for them in the safest, most caring manner possible no matter what their pre-existing condition.

Resident IN PERSON Visits - At this time, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services Department of Public Health is allowing in-person, outside visits with residents, provided certain safety conditions are met. If you would like to schedule an in-person visit, window time, or video call please click [here](#) to complete a visit form. You’ll receive a follow up email and/or phone call with details about your scheduled visit. Please do not call the center to schedule a visit.

Board Members Needed – Holy Trinity will be voting on new board members in September at the General Assembly to replace those that have completed their term. Please email Steve Fotos stevefotos82@gmail.com if you are interested. This is a great opportunity to join a fantastic team for a wonderful cause.

A MESSAGE FROM FR. NICK

Would We Die for our Enemy?

This third Sunday after Pentecost we continue reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (5:1-10). In this passage St. Paul explains how faith in our Lord Jesus Christ does not simply restore our relationship with God, but transforms it. We are able to stand before our heavenly Father as a true, albeit adopted, child of God. He calls this ability to stand before God "justification." I think it might be helpful to use our current legal term "standing" as a way to understand St. Paul's meaning, because he is, working out of the Torah, making a legal argument. To have "standing" in the legal sense means that you have a "right" or a "stake" in the court proceedings; you have a place there. When St. Paul says, "we are justified by faith" (v. 5:1), he means that we can stand before God because we belong there.

In the previous chapter, St. Paul provides the example of the Righteous Abraham. He says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (v. 4:3). Even though Abraham and Sarah were very old, God promised him that he would be the father of many nations. Abraham believed Him. This act of faith in God made him righteous, made him able to stand before God.

St. Paul continues this line of thought when he tells us that, "since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God" (v. 5:1-2). Through our faith we have peace with God. On the other hand, because of our sin and lack of faith — our disobedience — we lose this peace, but it can be restored to us through Jesus and our faith in him. Through him, as St. Paul says, we now have access to the grace that allows us to stand before God; and this gives us hope.

Having said that "we rejoice in our hope," St. Paul directs us to an even deeper reality. He says, "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings" (v. 3). After having told us of the gift that God offers us by believing in Him, he then tells us that this faith which gives us hope, will also comfort us in the very real trials of this life. We rejoice in God not only for the good things given us, but even during the sufferings that life holds for us.

So, St. Paul sets before us a progressive pattern for spiritual growth. He says that, "suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope" (v. 3-4). Our hope isn't abstract; it is grounded in the very real trust that we place in God during the most difficult times of our lives. Remember Jesus' words: "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

But stop and appreciate the difficulty in translating St. Paul's words in this verse. What we translate into English as *endurance* or *patience* is the Greek word ὑπομονή (ipomoni), which captures both of these concepts together. He is speaking of a "constant patient endurance;" a

constancy which forms and develops a tried and tested character through tribulation. This kind of character begets hope. It takes away the fear of what the future may bring.

After describing what we need to do — what our part is — St. Paul returns to God's initiative. He says that "hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (v. 5). He doesn't say that the Holy Spirit has been given to us in a measured way. Rather, God's love has been "poured" into our hearts. This is an image of overflowing grace; an abundance of love. God is not holding back; He is overwhelming us with His presence.

In order to emphasize his point, St. Paul gives us the ultimate example. "While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (v. 6). We are the ungodly. God did not wait for us to turn and repent. He did not wait for our expression of faith. He proved his faithfulness and love "while we were yet sinners" (v. 8).

Listen to St. Paul's argument: "Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man — though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (v. 7-8). I have often reflected on this verse, taking St. Paul's words very seriously. Would I give up my life even for a good person? Could I even contemplate sacrificing myself for someone who was my enemy? But, this is what he who we call Lord, God, and Savior did for us, his enemies; his disobedient children. He did it because he loves us and wants to call us back to our Father.

St. Paul finishes his argument with these words: "Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (v. 9-10).

St. Paul is giving the Romans and us hope and urging us on to courageously pursue the spiritual life, the life of faith. He points to God's love for us as expressed by His Son's sacrifice. He tells us that because of this, God and humanity are reconciled — we can be restored to what He intended us to be. He urges us to believe, to have faith in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, and in this way the hope that we have in God's love for us will be poured into our hearts.

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

We beseech you, Lord God of glory: Restrain us lest we fashion more and more idols to worship. Show us how idol-ridden we already are and help us to wipe them out, for though they are not statues of gold and silver, they are not any less idols, the by-products of our forgetfulness of you. Prevent us from worshipping honor, position, and possessions, homes,

money, and yes, even our children and other loved ones. You be our only God, and let us glorify and worship you alone.

For you are the one and only God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Orthodox Links

[Romanian Orthodox Metropolia](#) of the Americas

[Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America](#) (Assembly of Bishops)

[International Orthodox Christian Charities](#) (IOCC)

[Orthodox Christian Mission Center](#) (OCMC)

[Orthodox Christian Radio Network](#) (OCN)

[Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches of Central Mass.](#) (CEOC)

Dates To Remember

June 15 thru 28 - Apostles' Fast

June 27 - Sunday School End of Year Meeting

July 4 - Food Pantry - 9 AM - NOON

July 25 - E-Recycle - 9 AM - 2 PM

Aug 1 - Food Pantry - 9 AM - NOON

Aug 21 - Mustard Seed

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www.StNicholasChurch.org
Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am