

# ***News from St. Nick's***

## **Sunday, July 26, 2020**

### **The Seventh Sunday After Pentecost**

***Apostolic Reading: Romans 15, 1-7***

***Gospel: Matthew 9, 27-35***

*"Jesus Heals Two Blind Men and a Mute Demon-Possessed Man in Capernaum "*

***Tone 6 • Matins Gospel 7***

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***PARTICIPATING IN SERVICES.*** As a reminder, we are able to welcome parishioners to attend Liturgy on Sundays at church. Here are the [Guidelines](#) for attending Church services. Everyone **must wear a mask** while present, and **at this time we can comfortably accommodate 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.*** If you are not able or ready to return to church, you will still be able to access the live-stream of Divine Services. Go to: [www.stnicholaschurch.org](http://www.stnicholaschurch.org) and click on "**Live Streaming of Services**". ***To view previous Services*** on our YouTube Channel, [click here](#).

***AN ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING*** day is this **Saturday, July 25th from 9 - 2**. [Here is a flier with all the details](#). This is a great opportunity to get rid of electronic goods that are cluttering your home. For more information, contact Gerry Belba, at 508-868-1569 or [vgbelba@msn.com](mailto:vgbelba@msn.com)

***THE DORMITION FAST BEGINS ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 1st.*** We will have special services during the fourteen day fast. The first Paraklesis (Supplication) service will be held on Tuesday, August 4th at 6:30pm. A full schedule will appear in next week's Bulletin.

***ORTHODOX FOOD PANTRY UPDATE.*** Our Parish's responsibility to staff the Food Pantry will be **Saturday, August 1 from 9:00 AM to NOON**. The Food Pantry continues to serve the

community with volunteers using PPE (masks and gloves) and following social distancing procedures. For more information, contact [Lisa Demake](#) or [Nicole Apostola](#) at 508-797-9482.

**USHERS NEEDED.** The Parish Council is **seeking volunteers to assist with ushering** on Sunday mornings on a rotating schedule. You would need to be at Church from 9 AM to 11:30 AM on Sundays. If you can help, please email Christopher Seith at [cbseith@gmail.com](mailto:cbseith@gmail.com).

**THE FAITH / CREDINTA MAGAZINE.** The **April-June issue** of our Metropolia's quarterly magazine is now available. Please download and read it by [clicking here](#).

**PRISON MINISTRY AWARENESS SUNDAY.** The [Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the USA](#) ask you to observe **July 26, 2020, as Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday**. The Holy Scriptures instruct us to proactively serve those in our community in love. Part of this calling to serve includes those who are in prison, where true, deep isolation has enveloped our brothers and sisters incarcerated. In prison, the simple acts of kindness are magnified: a letter to someone serving a long sentence, a Bible Study in the local jail, making the wife of a prisoner feel welcome in church. These are the acts of proactive mercy our Lord calls us to that Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry and many of our clergy and parishes participate in every day. Please consider a [donation](#) to support the work of the [Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry](#).

**MUSTARD SEED MEAL.** **We are scheduled to provide 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. If you/your family would like to help with this, please call or contact **Betty Anderson by email** ([bettya16@verizon.net](mailto:bettya16@verizon.net)) or by phone 508-353-9449.

**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](mailto:Bulletin@stnicholaschurch.org). Likewise, questions or information for the Parish Council may be addressed to [ParishCouncil@stnicholaschurch.org](mailto:ParishCouncil@stnicholaschurch.org)

## **PITA & PASTRY FOR SALE**

### ***Inventory Available!***

“St. Nick’s Kitchen” has many items available for purchase. Enjoy these treats with your summer barbecue:

**Large Leek Pita**  
**Large Spinach Pita SOLD OUT**  
**Sweet bread**  
**Baklava**  
**Koulourakia**  
**Kouroubia**

Please consider a purchase to support your Church and help us reduce our inventory. To order, email/call [Christ Toda](#) at 1-774-272-2773 or [Betty Anderson](#) at 508-353-9449.

## **VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL 2020**

### ***“Metamorphosis & Prayer”***

The Sunday School programs of Sts. Anargyroi & St. Nicholas invite you to join a one-day event on the Feast of the Metamorphosis or Transfiguration of our Lord. [Here is a Flier](#) with all the details.

**WHO:** Youth, **grades K - 8**

**WHEN:** **THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 9 AM - 2 PM**

- Liturgy- 9 AM
- Sessions & Lunch (provided) - 10 AM - 2 PM
- (1:15 pick-up for those not staying for lunch)

**WHERE:**

- **RAIN Location - Sts. Anargyroi Church**, 9 Central Street, Marlboro, MA
- **SUNNY Location - St. Nicholas Church**, 34 Gold Street, Shrewsbury, MA

**RSVP:** **By AUG 1st!** - [Valarie Stamoulis](#) OR [Presbytera Eleni Christakos](#)

**NOTE: All CDC Guidelines for Covid will be followed.**  
**All participants and leaders are required to wear masks.**

## **HOLY TRINITY NEWS**

Updated 7.14.20

**COVID-19 Update** – Holy Trinity is extremely proud to say there are NO Covid-19 positive residents at this time. Holy Trinity continues accepting new residents and rehabilitation patients who are Covid-19 positive, however there have been NO cases of Covid-19 acquired from the facility in weeks. The staff have performed admirably and the results prove their hard work and dedication!

**Visitations** – Since June 3, 2020 Holy Trinity is providing in person outside visits and we have expanded the days and times visits are possible. If you are looking for more information on visiting a loved one please click [here](#). The residents are so happy they can once again interact with their loved ones and the smiles on their faces say it all!

**Job Openings** – Please click [here](#) to view the latest job openings. Become part of an amazing team!

**Resident Activities** – Resident activities have recently changed to include small group activities for those who are fully recovered! It has been over 3 months and residents are thrilled to return to some semblance of the way things “use to be”. We are accepting donations to go towards increased resident activities. Please click [here](#) if you would like to contribute. Thank You!

## “Welcome One Another”

This Sunday, the seventh after Pentecost, we conclude reading from St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans. Today’s selection — Romans 15:1-7 — are his final words of encouragement to the Roman Christians. There is an epilogue that follows in which he tells them of his future travel plans and his intention to visit Rome, as well as greetings to a number of people whom he knows in Rome, but the verses that we read today close his spiritual and theological advice to them.

In the opening line he uses a rhetorical device to win them over, to open their hearts to listen to what will follow. He tells them, “We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (v. 1). In this one phrase, “we who are strong,” he compliments them by both calling them ‘strong’ and also identifying them with himself.

He tells them that the strong need to ‘bear’ or ‘put up with’ the failings of the weak. The one Greek word (βαστάζειν) he uses holds both of these meanings, and each one applies equally as well to the context. The strong ‘ought’ (this is an ethical imperative) to both endure and carry the failings of weaker brothers and sisters and put aside their own comfort, but with a purpose.

“Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor” (v. 2). Whether we either ‘put up with’ or ‘carry’ the weaknesses of our brother or sister, it is toward a specific end: their edification. The Greek word St. Paul uses, ‘oikodomen’ (οικοδομήν) is similar to the English word ‘edify’ in the sense that at the root of both is the word ‘house’ or ‘building.’

Whatever we do as Christians should also have a social dimension. This phrase resonates with other images that St. Paul uses — for example, the Church as Christ's Body (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12ff; Romans 12:4ff) — to explain this responsibility we have as individual Christians to the whole body. So, when we build up our neighbor, our objective is also to strengthen the whole 'structure' of Christ's Body.

He then directs us to look at our Lord's example: "For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me' (Psalm 69:10)" (v. 3). In one sense, all of St. Paul's argumentation in the Letter have been leading to this point. He offers us the example of Christ, and then invites us to meditate on it and then follow Him.

In his Letter to the Philippians St. Paul says of Christ that "He emptied Himself" (2:7). But here he wants us to focus not simply on the Incarnation — that He became human for us. Rather, he wants us see the full extent to which He 'bore' our failings. Jesus not only became human, but He was ill-treated, became a person of ill-repute, was seen as someone weak and of no account, all for our sake. In a word: He suffered. His 'not pleasing Himself' meant a real sacrifice on His part. It will require the same from us.

In order that we might not loose heart, St. Paul tells us that our Lord gave us His example in order to strengthen and encourage us. In quoting from Psalm 69, he wants us to understand that Christ's sacrifice is part of God's whole plan for us. "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope" (v. 4).

It is not an easy thing to bear one another's burdens. This is why St. Paul reminds us of what exactly might be required of us by offering the example of Christ. Regardless of how 'strong' we might think ourselves, without God's help we will find it impossible to accomplish.

St. Paul directs us to the Scriptures — where the history of God's engagement with humanity is recorded — for instruction and encouragement. By using the tools offered us in the Sacred Writings, our steadfast commitment to follow the Lord will be filled with hope. Without this hope we will find it impossible to take up the kind of life to which God calls not only us, but all of humanity.

He then bestows a blessing on the Roman Christians. "May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (v. 6-7). Many of the blessings that we use in the Services of our Church, especially those offered during the Divine Liturgy, echo this blessing. It asks that God our Father grant us the strength to persevere so that we might be able to live together in peace and harmony.

Harmony is a wonderful word to express the unity of life to which we strive. Those who have sung in a choir or played in an orchestra know that each musician offers their particular note and rhythm. When each one is doing exactly as they are supposed to the outcome is

magnificent. The whole becomes much more than the sum of the parts. The result is a peaceful beauty that uplifts. On the other hand, if even one person is 'off key' the result is a sourness that can be like the scratching of nails on a blackboard.

In order to realize this harmony, we must "welcome one another ... just as Christ has welcomed [us], for the glory of God." (v. 7) Last week I spoke about the virtue of hospitality. What is asked of us here is more than hospitality. It is the opening of our hearts and the offering of ourselves to one another, just as Christ has opened His heart toward us. It is not only the emptying of ourselves, but the filling of ourselves with love for our neighbor, bearing their burdens in order to build them up.

—Fr. Nicholas Apostola

## **A Prayer of Fr. Laurence**

Let us pray to the Lord,

Lord, eternal God and Father: When your Christ took on our flesh, your righteousness became man in him, and an adequate response to this mysterious fact is necessary not only in the church as a whole, but in each of us as individuals. Unfortunately, we do not know how to grasp the mysteries of faith, let alone know how to implement them. Give us true understanding — more and more of it day after day — as well as consciousness, and teach us how to fulfill your will in all these matters.

By the grace and mercies 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.

## **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**

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

July 26 - Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday

August 1 thru 14 - Dormition Fast

Aug 1 - Food Pantry - 9 AM - NOON

Aug 6 - Vacation Church School - 9 AM - 2 PM

August 15 - Feast of The Dormition

Aug 21 - Mustard Seed

Aug 29 - Food Pantry - 9 AM - NOON

Sept 5 - Food Pantry - 9 AM - NOON

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St. Nicholas Orthodox Church  
34 Gold St | Shrewsbury, MA 01545-6238  
508-845-0088 | fax: 508-845-8850 | email: [ParishCouncil@StNicholasChurch.org](mailto:ParishCouncil@StNicholasChurch.org)  
[www.StNicholasChurch.org](http://www.StNicholasChurch.org)  
*Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am*