

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

## **Sunday, August 23, 2020**

***The Leave-Taking of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos***

### **The Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost**

***Apostolic Reading: 1 Corinthians 9, 2-12***

***Gospel: Matthew 18, 23-35***

***"The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant"***

***Tone 2 • Matins Gospel 11***

## **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](#).

***MUSTARD SEED MEAL.*** **Thank you to those who helped with preparing and delivering 100 meals for the Mustard Seed on Friday.** Observing COVID 19 protocols and social distancing measures a small group of volunteers met at the Church to make sandwiches and assemble the bagged meals. Thank you also to our donors whose generous contributions covered all of the expenses for the meals. Our next Mustard Seed meal will be in October. Watch for details in the Church Bulletin. If you/your family would like to help with preparing and packaging the meals or transporting them to the Mustard Seed or make a donation in support of

this ministry, please call or contact **Betty Anderson by email** ([bettya16@verizon.net](mailto:bettya16@verizon.net)) or by phone 508-353-9449.

**PASTRY FOR SALE.** “St. Nick’s Kitchen” has scrumptious **Baklava, Koulourakia, & Kouroubia** available for you to enjoy! Please consider a purchase to support your Church and help us reduce our inventory. To order, email/call [Christ Toda](#) at 774-272-2773 or [Betty Anderson](#) at 508-353-9449.

**AN ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING** day is set for **Saturday, September 26, from 9 - 2.** This is an opportunity for our parish to serve our local community while caring for the environment. If you’re able and willing to help, please call **Gerry Belba** at **508-868-1569** or email him at [vgbelba@msn.com](mailto:vgbelba@msn.com)

**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).

**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)

## **ST. MICHAEL’S GOLF TOURNAMENT**

Our sister parish, **St. Michael’s Romanian Orthodox Church** is hosting the **13th Annual Romanian Open in memory of George Nasto** at the **Cohasse Country Club in Southbridge.**

- Date: **Saturday September 12th, 2020**
- Time: **12:30 pm Shotgun Start**
- Format: **18 Hole 4 Man Scramble**
- Cost: **\$120/golfer** (dinner included)  
**\$480/foursome** (dinner included)

Immediately following the tournament, we will have a meal, raffle, and presentation of the prizes at Saint Michael's Church Hall. Other opportunities to participate are by sponsoring a hole at \$100/hole or purchasing a ticket for the dinner only (if not playing) at \$25/person. For more information, to register your team, or to donate, contact: Luke Yanka @ 508-958-4144 or [email](#).

## **IOCC URGENT NEED: LEBANON NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

The International Orthodox Christian Charities team in Beirut has reported on the heartbreaking impact of this tragedy and is planning how to best help the people of Lebanon. **Short-term assistance will include hygiene parcels, expansion of community kitchens, and building rehabilitation. Given the continuing danger posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, all activities will incorporate measures to prevent the further spread of the virus.** Your support of IOCC's work through their International emergency response effort will allow them to respond quickly and effectively in Lebanon. [Click on this link](#) to access the online donation form.

## **HOLY TRINITY NEWS**

**Updated 8.10.20**

**COVID-19 Update** – We are pleased to announce that at this time we have no patients or staff testing positive! We are conducting bi-weekly testing of 30% of staff, per state directive. We are so grateful to all staff, patients and family members who are adhering to the safety guidelines.

**Visitations** – We continue to offer multiple ways for families and residents to connect. There are outside in-person visits with social distancing measures — Understandably residents and loved ones are very happy to see each other. Family members can schedule Facetime or Skype visits through our website. Window visits are still an option too, and families may call the main number: 508-852-1000, ext. 282 and leave a voicemail; they could also contact the receptionist or social worker. For more information go to <https://www.htnr.net/coronavirus>

**Job Openings** – The newest job opportunity that we are excited to announce is a part-time activities assistant. But there are many other job openings. Click here <https://www.htnr.net/careers> to view the latest ones. We are very proud of our team. Our staff is dedicated to the highest standards of a team-oriented care program. Residents are treated with compassion, understanding and personalized care. Each person deserves dignity and respect.

**Resident Activities** – We are excited to announce that we are starting to hold entertainment and small group activities which is great news for our vibrant and active community. Our residents are thrilled that our activities are back including: bingo, exercise, baking, virtual museum tours, gardening, trivia, movies and more. Food socials such as gelato, ice cream, lemonade and popsicle carts are back as well. These activities really help lift the residents' spirits. The Main Dining room and unit dining rooms are open for meals. On August 2nd

entertainment with T.J. was held outside. And later in the month activities including a magic show and cookout will take place. Stay tuned for dates and be sure to follow us on Facebook.

Many of the residents are very pleased that the celebration of the **Divine Liturgy on Wednesdays** has resumed. There is a restriction on numbers allowed to attend at one time, so a rotation has been adopted. But the Live-Streaming to resident rooms has been a real spiritual comfort.

**General Assembly Meeting** – Holy Trinity will be holding its annual General Assembly Meeting on **Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm**. For the first time we will be holding the General Assembly Virtually. This meeting is open to anyone from the parishes that would like to attend, and of course, will be held via Zoom. Please contact Steve Fotos ([stevefotos82@gmail.com](mailto:stevefotos82@gmail.com)) to obtain the meeting information.

## **“Is It for Oxen that God is Concerned?”**

This is the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, and the Apostolic reading is taken from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians: 9:2-12. Here St. Paul is defending the authenticity of his Apostolic authority against some in the Corinthian community who appear to have challenged it.

We have one problem as we try to understand both St. Paul's comments and the arguments directed at undermining his authority: we only have St. Paul's response. We do not have other documents — such as the original letters coming from Corinth to St. Paul — to know precisely what they were saying. So, we are left to infer the argument of those opposing St. Paul from what St. Paul himself wrote. Nevertheless, we can still glean a great deal from St. Paul's text.

It seems that one strong point was this: St. Paul did not exercise the normal prerogatives of an Apostle, such as being financially supported by the community. Without inflating his Apostleship, he tells them simply, “If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord” (v. 2). He doesn't raise his other missionary work as proof; he tells them to look to themselves and their own community, at the work he has done there in Corinth. This is proof enough.

He then addresses the Apostolic prerogatives that he has not availed himself of. “Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?” (v. 4-6) He is telling them plainly that just because he chose not to burden the community with supporting him and Barnabas, this does not mean that he had forfeited the right. The Church community has a duty to support those preaching and ministering to them.

We are reminded in these verses of some historical facts. All of the original twelve Apostles, except for John, were married. Paul chose to remain unmarried, perhaps because of the arduous nature of the missionary activity he was called to, or perhaps because he felt that the

Lord's coming would be very soon and the new age would then begin. Regardless, he claims his right to be married, without feeling the need to exercise it (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:23ff).

Similarly, we know that St. Paul was a tent maker. This is how he supported himself when he would go to a new city to preach the Gospel. He and many others sacrificed a great deal in order to bring the Good News of salvation to people everywhere. He uses very down to earth images to explain why he has a right to expect to be compensated for his ministry among them. As examples he says: "Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?" (v. 7) Each one of us feels that it is only fair that we receive adequate remuneration for our work. This is at the very heart of our life in common. This is the foundation of any economic system. But, he points to a deeper Scriptural principle for support.

"Do I say this on human authority?" asks St. Paul. "Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.' Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop" (v. 8-10). One of the more remarkable aspects of the Law is that even three thousand or more years ago fair payment for work rendered was considered central to being in a right relationship not only with our neighbor, but with God. Moses tells us that God is concerned with just treatment of laborers.

Everything that St. Paul has said up until this point was to prepare us for his central point: "If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ" (v. 11-12).

Things are not so very different today as they were in first century Corinth. The question of properly compensating people for their labor is again at the center of our nation's economic discussion. People are working harder for less. The Scripture has something to say about this, despite the common misperception that "religion has no place in economic discussions."

And, of course, the question of clergy salaries remains a lively one in the Church. How much should the priest be compensated? Is he really worth it? At least here in North America, this question still sparks a heated discussion.

There has rarely been a time more than the present when the Church has needed the "best and the brightest" to devote themselves to the preaching of the Gospel. We live in an epoch of huge cultural shifts. People are searching for a way to understand the changes in society and find meaning — find God — in what they are experiencing. We need people who have more insight, more understanding, and more spiritual wisdom than the average person to help us. These persons need to be compensated at least as well as the other professionals whom we regularly engage to assist us in our earthly existence. Very simply, if we ask people to help us spiritually, we need to support them and their families.

I believe that among the most important issues facing the Orthodox Church here and now is the adequate compensation of the clergy. If this issue is not addressed, the consequences will be dire. As St. Paul reminds us, "It is for oxen that God is concerned?" It is certainly both oxen and us.

—Fr. Nicholas Apostola

## A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

You alone, Lord God, fill us with hope and confidence! So we are intent on living to the best of our ability, for the salvation of our souls and for your glory. Still, it is so hard to focus on you. For look, we are endlessly distracted in prayer. We know that this is something natural, but it is frustrating to have our attention always submerged beneath a tidal wave of wild and stupid images, so much so, that we are tempted to give up entirely. Therefore, give us perseverance; please, Lord!

For you are a good and loving 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

Sept 5 - Food Pantry - 9 AM - NOON

Sept 15 - Holy Trinity Annual Mtg. - 6 PM

Sept 26 - Electronics Recycling - 9 AM - 2 PM

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[www.StNicholasChurch.org](http://www.StNicholasChurch.org)

*Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am*