

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, August 30, 2020

The Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Gospel: Matthew 19:6-26

(The Rich Young Man)

Tone 3 • Matins Gospel 1

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 and click on "**Live Streaming of Services**". ***To view previous Services*** on our YouTube Channel, [click here](#).

ORTHODOX FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center Saturday, September 5th, from 9 am - noon at St. Spyridon Cathedral in Worcester. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please contact Nicole Apostola by email at nicole.apostola@gmail.com.

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

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.

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

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 15th 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) to obtain the meeting information.

So We Preach, and So You Believe

This is the twelfth Sunday after Pentecost and we continue reading from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, specifically 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. We should remember that the Corinthian community was composed of many volatile elements. While some were Jewish converts, others had been pagan and only recently acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures. All were heavily influenced by the wide variety of philosophical and religious beliefs current in cosmopolitan Corinth. In this letter St. Paul is attempting to correct their thinking; to bring them back to the principles of faith that he had originally taught them.

In verse 15:12 and what follows, St. Paul tells us that some of the Corinthians had begun to question the belief in both the bodily resurrection of Christ, and their own at the time of the second coming. Others believed that the "resurrection" had already occurred, that is, Christ, having risen from the dead, inaugurated the new world; they were living the "resurrected" existence in the here and now. This is the background for what he writes in today's lesson.

St. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the gospel that he preached to them, and that they accepted to live by. He said that in believing in Christ's gift of salvation, they should "hold it fast—unless [they] believed in vain" (v. 1-2). He reiterates for them the very center of our Christian faith: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures" (v. 3-4). In these two verses St. Paul makes four very important points.

The first is that Christ died. To say that he died means that he was born, was human, and was susceptible to all of the frailties of our condition.

The second is that he died and was buried. This means that there was no illusion about his death. This was not the figment of someone's imagination, or simply a story told. To be buried means that everyone who saw it believed he was dead.

The third is that this all occurred according to the scriptures, meaning the Old Testament, including the Psalms, the Prophecies, and the other writings. Most of these references were well

known among Jewish religious scholars. The Lord himself quoted some. Others are given to us by St. Paul and the other New Testament authors.

The fourth, and most important, is that he rose from the dead on the third day. St. Paul says, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (v. 14). Christ's resurrection from the dead is the cornerstone of our faith.

He again reminds the Corinthians of the witnesses to Christ's rising. "He appeared to Cephas [i.e., 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 fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me" (v. 5-8).

St. Paul references many people, most of whom were still alive at his writing. These are concrete witnesses to both the Lord's death on the Cross, and his resurrection afterward. St. Paul, who did not witness him dead, nonetheless did experience the Lord on the road to Damascus. These eyewitnesses are the ones on whom our faith is grounded. When he says: "I delivered to you ... what I also received," he wants to remind them that he did not invent the story, nor was he the only witness. Many saw and many believed.

We should take note that St. Paul does not mention Mary Magdalene, the other Myrrh-bearing women, or even our Lord's Mother as witnesses, even though Tradition and Scripture has it that he appeared first to his Mother, then to the other women, and then to the other disciples gathered in the upper room. The reason for St. Paul's omission is simple. He is speaking as a Jew to other Jews. In those days (however we might think of it today) by Jewish Law only the witness of men was valid; a woman's witness had no authority, hence the omission. St. Paul's intention is to bolster his argument with what others would consider to be authentic verification. He wanted to give credence to the most important things, the facts themselves and those who could verify them.

In the list of "witnesses" he mentions himself as the last of all: "For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (v. 9). He doesn't want to aggrandize himself. He simply states the facts. "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (v. 10).

Here is St. Paul's central point: "Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed" (v. 11). In one sense it does not matter who tells you the "good news;" the preacher is incidental. It is the truth of the message that matters. You verify the truth of the story from your own experience of God's truth in the witness itself. God opens your heart to hear the "Good News." What St. Paul means is that it is the authenticity of the witness that matters, not necessarily the standing of the person. When someone testifies to us of their experience of God, we believe because we sense in their witness a reality that goes beyond that particular

person. If we do not find God in what they say, for example, if we sense they are preaching themselves and not Jesus, then we walk away unconvinced.

St. Paul asks the Corinthians (and us as well) to encounter and know the Risen Christ for ourselves: to know Him and to believe.

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

Hear us, Lord, and have mercy on us, for you are merciful! Enable us to cling to the ways of your law, in your footsteps, lest our feet stumble. Teach us your ways, that we may walk in your truth. Let our prayer reach you. Attend to our plea, for we have had our fill of trouble and our life is on the brink of the grave. Be mindful of us, O Lord, when you show favor to your people; take note of us when you save them.

For you are full of mercy and compassion, O 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

[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

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