

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

## **Sunday, September 6, 2020**

### **The Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost**

***Apostolic Reading: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24***

***Gospel: Matthew 21:33-44***

*(The Parable of the Bad Tenants)*

***Tone 4 • Matins Gospel 2***

## **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](#).

***ORTHODOX FOOD PANTRY.*** Thank you to the Food Pantry Volunteers who helped out this past Saturday, September 5. The first Saturday of each month St. Nicholas is responsible for staffing the Food Pantry. Our next monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center is Saturday, October 3rd, 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](mailto: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 [Betty Anderson](#) at 508-353-9449.

**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)

## **E-RECYCLING DAY**

**AN ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING** day is set for **Saturday, September 26, from 9 - 2.** [Here is a flier with all the details.](#) If you have computers, printers, small and large household appliances, TVs, bicycles, cell phones, exercise equipment, etc., they can be recycled to benefit the parish and the environment. If you're able and willing to help during the event, please call **Gerry Belba** at **508-868-1569** or email him at [vgbelba@msn.com](mailto:vgbelba@msn.com)

## **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.

## **STS. CONSTANTINE AND HELEN DRIVE-THRU FOOD FEST & BAKE SALE**

Sts. Constantine and Helen in Webster will be holding a [drive-thru Food Fest & Bake Sale](#) on Sept. 12-13 in Webster. To pre-order meals, please go to their website, [www.schwebster.org](http://www.schwebster.org). It is a great opportunity to support a sister church in their fundraising, and enjoy some delicious cooking.

## **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.

## **The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary**

*(September 8th):*

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of humanity.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of humankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since St Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcome the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Sts Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Sts Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feasts at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

St Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. St Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained to extreme old age and prepared themselves by virtuous life for a sublime calling: to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God, and of them would be born a most blessed daughter Mary, through Whom would come the Salvation of all the World.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all humankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate ... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion.

## **Greet One Another With A Holy Kiss**

[This is the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost](#) and we conclude reading from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. The verses of today's lesson (1 Corinthians 16:13-24) form the closing of the letter, St. Paul's final admonition and greetings. He tells the faithful at Corinth that he is sending his younger disciple Timothy to work with them (v. 10) and that Apollos has decided he will come to them later (v. 12), perhaps as not to seem to be interfering with Timothy's ministry.

After all of the difficult things he has had to say to them, he leaves them with words of both admonition, and especially encouragement: "Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love" (v. 13-14). As we reflect on the issues and even strife that had been afflicting the Corinthian community, we can see the power and wisdom of his counsel. "Be watchful!" — because they had been spiritually asleep. "Stand firm in your faith!" — because they had been wavering, questioning the very foundational principles that Paul had taught them. "Be courageous! Be strong!" — because in a cowardly and weak fashion they had succumbed to the passions of pride, selfishness and factionalism.

However, the most important piece of advice was: "let all that you do be done in love." The lack of love among the brothers and sisters was the root cause of the conflicts in Corinth. The

remedy he gave them was to monitor their motives before acting or speaking. Were their actions and attitudes done out of love, or for some other reason? This is powerful advice for us as well. At home, at work, among friends and within the Church, is love at the heart of our motivation? When we might need to speak a hard word, is it with love or out of anger? In this one phrase St. Paul offers the Corinthians a cure for what has afflicted them, and a powerful life principle for us.

St. Paul waits until the end to address what could be the most divisive issue: Who was it that wrote to St. Paul? Which members of the community journeyed to see him? He was cryptic about this at the beginning of the Letter, referring to them simply as “Chloe’s people” (v. 1:11). Here he tells them plainly, but subtly. “Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men” (v. 15-18).

He gives the Corinthians reasons why he is listening to these men. He says that Stephanas and his household were the first converts, not just in Corinth, but in all of Greece (Achaia). In addition they are devoted, giving of themselves for all of the “saints.” He urges the Corinthians to listen to him and “fellow workers” like him. He also mentions Fortunatus and Achaicus in this regard, and then he says something we can all understand: “they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours.”

We all know the feeling of longing for the one who is away from us. After having lived in a place for a period of time and then moved elsewhere; or, when others we have known and loved move away and return to visit, the reunion brings joy to our hearts and the tangible presence of those we miss. In a certain sense they “make up for the absence” of others not present. In this case there is something more. The presence of St. Paul’s “fellow workers” comforts him. He is reassured by their being with him, but even more by their words of encouragement and commitment to the Gospel. St. Paul has confidence in them and knows that through them the Corinthian community will be strengthened.

“The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings” (v. 19-20). This may seem like a perfunctory thing, but there is a profound message here: there is a deep connection among those who share the same faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. This shared faith makes us all brothers and sisters in a way that biology can only emulate.

He tells them, “Greet one another with a holy kiss” (v. 20). St. John Chrysostom says that this is the only place where St. Paul explicitly tells people to do this. This is not quite the case because he does end a few other letters similarly. However, St. John’s larger point is that the deep divisions and hard feelings within that community needed to be healed, and healed face to face. When faced with kissing the one with whom we have argued we realize that our love can

overcome any difference. But, the kiss must be a “holy” one, a spiritual reconciliation, and not just for show.

Finally, St. Paul says, “I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand” (v. 21). Surely he had a scribe writing the Letter. He takes the parchment and finishes the Letter himself, so that they will know the depth of his love for them. He then says something that will get their attention: “If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed” (v. 22). The word we translate as “accursed” is, in Greek, “anathema” which has a much stronger meaning. The Corinthians would have been shaken.

St. Paul uses an Aramaic phrase: “Maranatha,” meaning: “Lord, come!” (v. 22) This was the fervent prayer of early Christians, as well as ours, that the Lord come! and come soon!

He finishes by blessing them: “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.” (v. 23-24)

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

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

Let us pray to the Lord,

Lord of all creation: We offer you praise and thanksgiving for all that you have done for us, from the creation of the universe and all its riches, to the brilliant salvation of our race that your Son accomplished in our very midst. Today we come before you to celebrate his mother's birthday, an event that stands on the border where shadows yield to light, where the new dispels the old, where we are finally united to realities and not just to signs and figures. For the sake of this wondrous woman whom you so favor, we beseech you to look favorably on us: Enable us to give birth to her Son in the spirit, just as surely as she gave birth to him in the flesh.

For you deserve all glory, honor, and worship, 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 15 - Holy Trinity Annual Mtg. - 6 PM

September 20 - Sunday School Classes Begin

Sept 26 - Electronics Recycling - 9 AM - 2 PM

Oct 3 - Food Pantry - 9 AM - NOON

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