

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, September 27, 2020

Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

(The Miraculous Draught of Fish)

Tone 7 • Matins Gospel 5

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](#).

SAINT NICHOLAS SUNDAY SCHOOL will begin in-person classes on Sunday, Sept. 20, 2020. Classes will be held during Liturgy following Holy Communion through dismissal (about 25 minutes). The students will be divided by grade into three classes, and class size will be small (no more than 5 children and the teacher). The standard COVID-19 precautions (handwashing, mask wearing, distancing and sanitizing materials and furniture) will be followed. If you have questions or to sign your child up to attend class, please contact: for grades **K through 2nd**, Cristina Iusco at cristinaiusco@yahoo.com; for grades **3rd through 6th**, Gina Skaff at ginaskaff@hotmail.com; and for grades **7th and up**, Fadi Girgis at elfady@yahoo.com. You may download a [Registration Form by clicking here](#).

ORTHODOX FOOD PANTRY is our on-going ministry with our sister Orthodox Churches to provide food to those in need. 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.

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

E-RECYCLING DAY

AN ELECTRONICS/WHITE GOODS, ETC. RECYCLING day is set for **THIS 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

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

Update for the week of Sept. 21st

COVID-19 Update—As we continue to monitor, test and communicate the COVID-19 situation, we have had one employee test positive. There have been no residents that have tested positive. Per the Department of Public Health guidelines weekly testing is continuing for those residents and staff who have always tested negative, until we have 14 days with no new positives. We continue to have adequate PPE and use it per CDC guidelines.

Visitations— As always Facetime and phone calls are encouraged for all residents. Item drop off *is* welcome as well. At this time, residents who are fully recovered from a prior positive test and not showing any signs or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 can participate in outside or window visits. For the time being there are no compassionate visits unless an individual is actively dying. Please reach out to the nurse manager for individual questions. For more information go to <https://www.htnr.net/coronavirus>

Job Openings— Please click here <https://www.htnr.net/career> to view the latest job openings.

Resident Activities— In order to keep our community safe and healthy we have scaled back on several activities until we have a clear 14-day window of no COVID-19 positive tests. The main dining room and salon is closed for now. The Divine Liturgy is canceled for this week and next and other small group activities have been put on hold for now.

However, our outside entertainment is continuing so residents can enjoy music via their windows. The schedule includes *Gary Landgren on September 22nd at 2:45p.m and Bill McCarthy September 28 at 2:00p.m.*

A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

In the midst of all the demands of this earthly life, O Christ, remind us of our purpose in this world. Draw forth from us a loving obedience to the will of your Father as it manifests itself to us daily, like the obedience you gave to him, thorough but not servile, willing and complete,

without holding back or being forced, and always animated by love. Give us courage to embrace the cross and imitate you in your perfect abandonment to the Father.

So that ever filled with health of soul and body, we may confidently glorify your wondrous and blessed name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Sow Bountifully, Reap Bountifully

Following the Feast of the Precious Cross, we begin a new cycle of Scriptural readings in our Sunday worship. The Gospel lessons are taken from St. Luke and the Epistle readings from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. The Ecclesiastical Year begins in September (as does the Jewish New Year), and in so many ways September is a more appropriate time for new beginnings than the icy days of January. Children start the new school year. The crisp days of fall invigorate us for hard work after the lazy days of summer. So, we begin anew studying God's saving words for us. We do all this even while feeling the pressure of the Virus and the constraints it places on everyone and everything.

Today's reading is 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. St. Paul is writing to the Corinthians to inspire them to contribute to the fund he is raising from the newly formed Gentile Churches. The purpose is to offer a gift to the needy brothers and sisters in Jerusalem and all of Palestine. The Holy Land was never a very wealthy place. During the time of St. Paul's missions, a great famine had broken out over the whole region. Everyone there was in great need. St. Paul saw a gift from these newly formed communities to the brethren there as a way to tighten the bond between Christian believers, especially between Jewish and Gentile Christians. This is the background for today's reading.

Even though his words were written with a very specific intent, St. Paul has left generations of Christians a number of important guidelines to live by when considering giving and generosity. This section begins, "The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (v. 6). The first thing we might notice is that he uses an agricultural (organic) image, not a monetary one. He speaks of sowing and reaping, not of investing and return on investment, although this could be inferred. He wants us first to enter into the relationship of the farmer with the land, and then the farmer, his land, and God (and of course, the rhythms of nature and weather). In many ways it is not unlike the calculation an investor makes in a start-up company or in the stock market. But as anyone who has planted a crop (even a backyard garden) knows, the variables of nature are much harder to predict than those of the marketplace. One plants a crop with faith and many prayers, while all the time hoping. It is the same whenever we give something to charity, or, perhaps to someone we know who is in need; it requires from us hope, faith and trust in God that what we give will bear fruit.

Also, sowing bountifully requires a certain amount of boldness and courage. The one who sows "sparingly," even if she or he has faith, is expressing a reserve or reticence when asked to put

that faith into practice. Sowing bountifully calls us to really put our complete faith in God. We're giving up a part of our own resources.

At the same time, no one forces us. St. Paul tells us, "Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (v. 7). Most of the modern translations use the word "mind" as the place where this decision is made, but the Greek word St. Paul uses is "heart." For St. Paul and the Church Fathers it is the heart that is the center of spiritual discernment, the noetic faculty. Today we think of the heart as the center of emotion and passion — the opposite of rational decision-making — so in this way the translation makes sense, but still something is lost. Our decision to sow bountifully and cheerfully is not just a rational calculation. It is a decision that is shaped and tempered by our trust in God. It should be a spiritually wise decision.

We all have fears when we give away some portion of our possessions. For this reason, St. Paul addresses these fears directly: "And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever'" (Psalm 112:9) (v. 8-9). If a person grounds their decision to be generous simply in his or her mind, the rational part will say, "the more you give, the less you will have for yourself." St. Paul is telling them and us to trust in God's generosity. He is saying that the rational calculus is not the whole story; that generosity, not selfishness, is the fundamental principle at work in creation. God's rules are different than what might seem to be true on the surface. God's rules require faith and trust in Him in order to become evident.

"He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness" (v. 10). God wants us to understand the correlation between material generosity and a spiritual harvest. He wants us to recognize how He sustains us in every way, and that the way to repay Him is by helping others who need our help. This is the real economic principle, a principle that rarely shows up on the nightly 'Business Report.'

We take as our comfort and inspiration this blessing that St. Paul bestows on us: "You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" (v. 11). When we are generous, we not only provide material relief to the person in need, we also strengthen their hope and faith in God. We are the instruments of God's mercy. He gives to each of us the means and the power to act, comfort, and gladden those around us. Let us use this gift, not sparingly, but bountifully; not grudgingly, but cheerfully. So that together we might thank and glorify our Heavenly Father who loves us.

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

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 26 - Electronics Recycling - 9 AM - 2 PM

Oct 3 - Food Pantry - 9 AM - NOON

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508-845-0088 | fax: 508-845-8850 | email: ParishCouncil@StNicholasChurch.org
www.StNicholasChurch.org
Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am