

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, November 15, 2020

Twenty-fifth Sunday After Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: Ephesians 4:1-7

Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

(The Parable of the Good Samaritan)

Tone 6 • Matins Gospel 1

➔ For COVID Guidelines, [click here](#)

➔ For Live Streaming Link, [click here](#)

THE NATIVITY (CHRISTMAS) FAST begins today, November 15th.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR HOLY TRINITY RESIDENTS. Each year the Orthodox Community has the blessed opportunity to give Christmas Gifts to the residents of Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation. Our Parish is responsible for providing 15 gifts, such as throws and slippers. *There are four gifts remaining on the list. Thank you to those who have responded so far.* Eleanor Sedares and Deb Sedares are coordinating the effort, and have a list of items residents would like to receive. Please contact Eleanor or Deb if you would like to participate. We ask that you purchase and wrap the gift and bring it to the Church no later than Sunday, December 6. Call Eleanor Sedares: 508-753-3106, Deb Sedares: 508-509-6678 or dsedares@pinehills.com.

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish this Saturday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9 am to noon. About 4 people are needed. Help is also needed to do the shopping at the Food Bank. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please e-mail [Nicole Apostola](mailto:nicole.apostola@gmail.com) at nicole.apostola@gmail.com. Our next date is December 5th.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FALL RETREAT will be held with our children K-12 on Friday, November 27th together with and at St Anargyroi Church in Marlborough. See [this flier](#) for details and contact information.

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN SERVICES. You may attend Liturgy on Sundays at church. **Of course the usual COVID rules apply.** Here are the [Guidelines](#) for attending Church services. Please follow the directions of ushers for everyone's safety.

WE ARE LIVE-STREAMING THE LITURGY. If you can not physically attend church, you may 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](#).

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!**

PASTRIES AVAILABLE: Just in time for Thanksgiving, while supplies last, St. Nick's Kitchen has freshly baked **baklava, kouroubia, & koulourakia** available for sale. Pickup is on Sunday from 10am to 12:30 pm. To order, e-mail/call [Betty Anderson](mailto:Betty.Anderson@verizon.net) at 508-353-9449, or bettya16@verizon.net.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

HOLY TRINITY HAS RECEIVED A 4-STAR RATING from CMS (The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. This rating reflects our commitment to the safety and health of the residents. Kudos to the staff who deserve our thanks. We are extremely proud of them.

HOLY TRINITY IN THE NEWS! The Worcester T&G featured an opinion piece by our Director of Nursing, AnnMarie LeBoeuf ([read it here](#)) on the challenges faced by Holy Trinity and other long-term care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's an important contribution to the discussion.

ON THE COVID-19 FRONT – Holy Trinity continues biweekly testing of 50% of staff per state directives, and continue to have deficiency free infection control state surveys.

THERE ARE JOB OPENINGS AVAILABLE AT HOLY TRINITY, such as: Director of Advancement; Certified Nurse Assistant; Dietary Aides; and more. [Click here](#) for a full listing with detailed job descriptions. People familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

FAMILY COUNCIL'S next meeting will be on Saturday, November 14 at 1 pm. Each monthly meeting is hosted by the Administrator and one member of the Management team. Keep an eye out for the invitation by either text or e-mail.

VISITATIONS ARE ALWAYS ENCOURAGED, following the COVID-19 guidelines! These visits must be scheduled, and may be held outside (weather permitting) or in the three designated indoor locations. Compassionate visits may also be scheduled. Facetime and phone calls are encouraged for all residents. Item drop-offs are welcome as well. To schedule a visit, contact the Activities Staff through the main number: 508-852-1000. Please check the [COVID-19 page \(click here\)](#) for more information. Protocols are constantly changing.

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES ARE ON-GOING. Weather permitting, outside entertainment continues and residents can enjoy music via their windows. Piano music with Gary Landren (Honky Tonk Piano Man) is scheduled for November 16th 2:00p.m and Guitar music with Paul Bonneaus on November 18th at 2:30p.m. The main dining room and unit dining rooms are open for meals as well. And, the Hairdresser is back by appointment.

DIVINE LITURGY is celebrated every Wednesday at 9:30a

Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

Lord our God, the ways of society stress us on all sides, so much so, that we live lives that are not real. We were born in ignorance of who we really are, and our real self still lies hidden from us. We constantly live on edge, trying always to conform to 'them' and all their demands, while trying to function with some pride and self-possession. We need to free the deep mystery that is our true self, but we cannot do this without your help. Show us how, Lord.

For you alone can make us holy, O our God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Called to One Hope

This is the twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost. The Epistle Lesson is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:1-7. The great theme of the whole Letter is unity: the unity of God, the unity of the Church, the unity of Christians one with another in Christ. A few weeks ago we heard St. Paul talk about how Christ had "broken down the dividing wall of hostility" between

Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:14). In this week's reading we receive both inspirational words and practical spiritual advice on how to build up and maintain the oneness that God gives us in Christ Jesus.

The passage opens with a reference to Paul's imprisonment. "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (v. 4:1-3). St. Paul spent prison time in almost every place he preached and established a Church. He was most likely writing this letter from either Caesarea or Rome. But more important than the place is the fact that he wears his suffering for Christ proudly. He is offering the joy he takes in his suffering as an example of the "lowliness and meekness" which he is urging the Ephesians to embrace. It is very much like the words he spoke to King Agrippa and Governor Festus: "I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am—except for these chains" (Acts 26:29). He wants to lead us to a higher spiritual awareness.

In order to prepare the Ephesians to understand the oneness of the "life worthy of the calling to which [we] have been called," he lists the necessary virtues: lowliness and meekness, patience and forbearance in love. These all could be summed up in one virtue: humility. The Church has always considered humility to be the Mother of virtues; the one from which all the other virtues spring. In the world of Greek philosophy, not only was this not considered a virtue, it was thought as something to be avoided. Humility becomes worth something only in Jesus Christ. It is revealed as a divine virtue. Through His example we find a way to remake ourselves, becoming God's witness to others, and able to "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (v. 3).

In much of his writings, and especially here in Ephesians, St. Paul is concerned with this unity of the Spirit. The unity of the Church, the Body of Christ, should mirror the unity of God. This vision of God's unity is grounded in his Jewish upbringing. He was a pious Jew who prayed twice a day: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one ..." (Deuteronomy 6:4). Jewish belief is that God's Reign will bring a great revelation of God's oneness to the world. The Prophet Zechariah said: "On that day there shall be one Lord, and his name shall be one" (Zechariah 14:9 LXX).

So, St. Paul spells out exactly what this unity, this oneness, looks like: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all" (v. 4-6).

Let me try to explain. "There is one body:" one visible community; one Church. "And one Spirit:" a single inner source, the one Spirit of the Father given to us at our baptism. "Called to one hope:" we all share in the one and same hope of our salvation; we all share in the one Spirit who is the pledge of the promise. "One Lord:" in our baptism we pledge our obedience to one Lord and Master. He is the one to whom we give our loyalty. "One faith:" much of what St. Paul and the other Apostles were preaching was directed at keeping the Church in the one faith.

“One baptism:” this refers not only to the “one baptism for the remission of sins” that we confess in the Creed; it is also the one baptism of Christ that we all share. And finally, “one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all:” ultimately, it is God’s love for us as Father that makes us capable of moving outside of our self-centeredness and embracing one another as brothers and sisters.

As I have reminded you so often, (and as I remind myself even more frequently), the unity of the Church is not a choice; the unity of humanity is not an option. We do not get to choose this as something we might *like* to value. It lies at the very foundation of creation. If we are to be true children of our one Father, we must learn how to love each other, even those who hate us. If we don’t then God’s experiment with us will fail. (God forbid!)

This is not just about the Orthodox Church; we must reach out in love to all who call themselves Christians. Nor, is it limited to Christians; we must also find a way to speak to those with whom we apparently share little in common. The consequence of not doing so is not merely hostility and war. It is to be shut out from the Kingdom.

We live in a time where conflict seems never-ending. Ours are not the great epic wars of the first half of the twentieth century. Rather, we have wars without battle lines, and enemies without faces. One could almost say it is like a spiritual war, except that we see with our own eyes the wounded, maimed, and dead. But, these wars are spiritual in this sense: the solution is not to be found in guns and bombs, rather in patience, forbearance, forgiveness, and in humility. Only Christ can give us these. For those who do not embrace Christ, we who do must be an example.

And so, while St. Paul begins with our oneness in Christ, it is so that we might grow fully and humbly in order to embrace the “grace ... given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (v. 7).

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

Sunday, Nov 15 - Nativity (Christmas) Fast begins
Thursday, Nov 19 - Parish Council Meeting 7 PM (Zoom)
Thursday, Nov 26 - Thanksgiving Day
Friday, Nov 27 - 2020 Fall Sunday School Retreat at Marlboro
Saturday, Dec 5 - Food Pantry (9 AM - NOON)
Saturday, Dec 5 - Great Vespers for St. Nicholas 6 PM
Sunday, Dec 6 - St. Nicholas Feastday
Friday, December 18 - Mustard Seed Meal Prep (1:30 PM - 3:30 PM)
Friday, December 25 - Feast of the Lord's Nativity

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
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508-845-0088 | fax: 508-845-8850 | e-mail: ParishCouncil@StNicholasChurch.org
www.StNicholasChurch.org
Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am