

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, November 29, 2020

Thirtieth Sunday After Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: Colossians 3:12-16

Gospel: Luke 18:18-27

(The Rich Ruler & Keeping the Commandments)

Tone 8 • Matins Gospel 3

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FR. VASILE AILENI has produced a short video introducing himself to the parish. While we wait for the visa process to be completed, we're making use of various electronic media to get acquainted. [Click here to see his video.](#) We're also pulling together any questions you might want to ask him. If you've got a question, please email [George Demake](mailto:Gedemake@charter.net) at gdemake@charter.net. We are also arranging small group video chats so those interested can strike up a direct conversation.

WE ARE IN THE NATIVITY FAST. Let us use this time to withdraw from the noise of the "Christmas Season," in order to reflect on the great mystery of Emmanuel: God-with-us!

THE ST. NICHOLAS FEASTDAY is next **Sunday, December 6th**. We'll celebrate **Great Vespers on Saturday, December 5th at 6:00 pm**. Because of Covid restrictions, this year's Feastday will be a low-key affair. Nonetheless, we look forward to seeing and praying with you as we honor our parish's Patron Saint, and give glory to God!

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **THIS Saturday, December 5th**, from 9 am-noon. About 4 people are needed. Donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. Help is also needed during the week for shopping and stocking the Pantry. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please e-mail [Nicole Apostola](mailto:Nicole.Apostola@gmail.com) at nicole.apostola@gmail.com.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR HOLY TRINITY RESIDENTS. Thank you to all the parishioners who provided the holiday gifts for Holy Trinity residents. All the gift requests have been filled by generous givers. Thanks to [Eleanor Sedares](#) and [Deb Sedares](#) for coordinating the program for St. Nick's. ***They ask that gifts be brought to the church no later than Sunday, December 6.*** Call Eleanor Sedares at 508-753-3106, or Deb Sedares at 508-509-6678 or e-mail dsedares@pinehills.com.

LAST SUNDAY WAS IOCC SUNDAY. The International Orthodox Christian Charities is the major charitable arm of the Orthodox Church. Based in the United States, it brings relief to people in need throughout the world and here at home. His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae is the Liaison from the Assembly of Bishops to the IOCC. [Read his Encyclical here.](#) Our support for this Christian work is needed now more than ever. To donate, go to the website: www.iocc.org, or call: (877) 803 IOCC (4622).

PASTRIES AVAILABLE: Just in time for Christmas, while supplies last, St. Nick's Kitchen has freshly baked **baklava, kouroubia, & koulourakia** available for sale. To order, call [Betty Anderson](#) at 508-353-9449, or e-mail her at: bettya16@verizon.net.

MUSTARD SEED MEAL. We are providing a meal for the Mustard Seed on Friday, December 18th for 100 people. Given the virus, the meals are now pre-packaged and dropped off, ready to be distributed by their regular staff of volunteers. If you would like to donate toward the cost of the meal (around \$300.00), or if you or your family would like to help with the preparation, please contact **Deb Sedares** — by e-mail (dsedares@pinehills.com) or phone 508-353-9449.

AN ELECTION FOR THE NEW PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE HELD IN JANUARY. Following Archdiocesan procedures, the Parish Council has formed a Nominating Committee to propose a slate of candidates to the General Assembly. [George Demake](#) is the Chair of that Committee. If you would like to serve, or if you would like to nominate someone for the Parish Council, please [e-mail](#) him.

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!**

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

COVID-19 UPDATE – New DPH guidance as of November 23, 2020. Due to increased rates of community transmission, DPH is now requiring that all Long-term care facilities conduct weekly testing of all staff, providers, volunteers etc. Currently Holy Trinity remains Covid free. Holy Trinity also remains free from the flu virus. We have offered and administered all resident and staff flu vaccines and will continue offering throughout the season.

VISITATIONS – At this time per guidance Holy Trinity is offering indoor visits. We have 3 private rooms available for 30-minute visits. As always you can still schedule Facetime and window visits. We are also allowing compassionate room visits on an individual basis. It is approved to bring in your loved one any necessary belongings or special foods. Please ensure you do not schedule any visits if you are not feeling well. COVID-19 screening continues for all staff and visitors. Proper PPE is provided and Holy Trinity has adequate supplies.

JOB OPENINGS – We are hiring and our staff is excellent to work with. We are hiring entry level housekeepers for multiple shifts. We are also looking for a Nurse Unit manager and Licensed nurses all shifts. [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.

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES CONTINUE – On Thanksgiving Day residents are doing crafts making turkeys. We have a guitar player on December 10 indoors, and a piano player indoors December 28th. The main dining room and unit dining rooms are open for meals as well. Our hairdresser is back by appointment.

Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Wednesday at 9:30a.m.

Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

Blest be this morning for the joy it affords us to stand before you once more, O Lord and lover of all humanity! We give thanks to you, not only for another day, but especially for the wondrous truth that we belong to your Christ, that we are anointed and guaranteed as his. How grateful we are to you, O eternal Father, for it is you who have set your seal on us and sent us your Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts as a pledge of what is yet to come. As we celebrate this festival of thanksgiving, enable us to love you with all our strength and to offer you this reasonable worship, mindful of the gift of your Christ and our unity in him.

For you are indeed our God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Inheriting Eternal Life

This week's Gospel lesson (Luke 18:18-27) is the story of the Rich Ruler who asks Jesus, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (v. 19). This is St. Luke's account of the same story we heard earlier in the Liturgical year from St. Matthew (19:16-26), only he is identified there as the Rich Young Man. St. Mark (10:17-27) also tells us the same story, adding some important details. When I commented on St. Matthew's account I focused on the phrase: "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone" (v. 19). Here, I would like to talk about question of wealth, because, at least on the surface, this seems to be at the heart of the story.

Clement of Alexandria, a Church father born around the year 150ad, wrote a commentary on this Gospel story entitled: "Who is the Rich Man that shall be Saved?" The first thing you might notice is how Clement invites us to think about the question differently. We can sense the way in which he will cause us to shift our preconceptions about the story even from the title of his treatise.

When we listen to the Evangelists' accounts, we come away with the impression that it is impossible for someone with wealth to be saved. Isn't that what we usually infer from the Lord comment that, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God"? (v. 25) Clement asks us to focus on the next thing the Lord says: "What is impossible with men is possible with God" (v. 27).

From another perspective, what is central to this story is neither wealth nor poverty, but the pull these have on the heart. We are being asked to examine where our priorities lay. Remember how the Lord says: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34)? It is attachment to the things of this earthly existence that is the subject of the story. A wealthy person who views his or her possessions with detachment, using his or her resources for good, is better off spiritually than a poor person who clings in a greedy fashion to what little he or she might have.

The primary challenge for us in understanding this Gospel story is to remain focused on the question of attachment to the things of this world. When most of us hear the word “rich” we immediately exclude ourselves. I think that it is fair to say that even given the current economic situation, most of us Americans are as wealthy, if not more, than was this Rich Ruler. We more than likely are better housed, and with more conveniences, than most very wealthy people in the ancient world.

This is not to minimize the reality of poverty here and in our own time — more and more people are barely making it, if even that. Volunteers at our Food Pantry or those who serve meals at the Mustard Seed get to see the growing numbers of “working poor.” Yet even the poor of our country are wealthy in comparison to the very poor in most of the world. Those of us who live an even modest middle-class existence are likely to be on a par with the Rich Ruler who is the subject of this story.

Always keep in mind this spiritual principle: the “thing” — whatever that “thing” might be — is always in the middle. Money and wealth, privileged or status, looks or popularity, each can be good or bad depending on our attachment to them. It is how we use this thing that makes it “good” or “bad.” So, it is not the amount of possessions we might have, but our attachment to them. Can we part with them?

What do we do with our wealth? Do we consider it as our own, for our own comfort? Or, do we see this as God’s gift that we should share with others? In the imagery that the Lord gives us, we could say that the attachment to the things of this world are the “camel.” We need to decide what we are willing to let go of in order to fit through the “needle’s eye,” that is to say, the high-calling we have received from the Lord.

Our society has become not only materialistic, but also selfish. This was not always the case. America was known throughout the world for its altruism. Our nation was founded on the principle of caring for the “weakest among us.” We still see this principle powerfully at work during times of disasters and catastrophes, when charitable donations and acts of kindness abound, or even now with the pandemic upon us, and the call of Thanksgiving and Christmas lifting us up. Our challenge is to make this care for the other the normal everyday rule, not the exception.

Certainly, our Orthodox Christian faith has always taught that we should value love of the other — be it God or our neighbor — above all things. The Lord says that love of our neighbor is the very icon of love of God. He equates them. So, when the Rich Ruler asks Jesus “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”, Jesus points him in the right direction. The Lord also invites us to follow this same path. May we find the courage to follow in the direction to which he is pointing 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

Sunday, Nov 15 - Nativity (Christmas) Fast started
Thursday, Dec 3 - Parish Council Meeting 7 PM (Zoom)
Saturday, Dec 5 - Food Pantry (9 AM - NOON)
Saturday, Dec 5 - Great Vespers for St. Nicholas 6 PM
Sunday, Dec 6 - St. Nicholas Feastday
Thursday, Dec 17 — Parish Council, 7pm
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
34 Gold St | Shrewsbury, MA 01545-6238
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