

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, December 6, 2020

Twenty-seventh Sunday After Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: Ephesians 6:10-17

Gospel: Luke 13:10-17

(Jesus Heals the Woman with Osteoporosis)

Tone 1 • Matins Gospel 4

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE ST. NICHOLAS FEASTDAY is **THIS 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! (We will also live-stream Vespers.)

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) at nicole.apostola@gmail.com.

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 e-mail [George Demake](mailto:George_Demake) 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!

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR HOLY TRINITY RESIDENTS. Thanks to all the parishioners who provided the holiday gifts for Holy Trinity residents. If you haven't brought your gift in yet, please bring it **THIS Sunday, December 6**. Thanks to [Eleanor Sedares](#) and [Deb Sedares](#) for coordinating the program for St. Nick's. Any questions, contact: Eleanor Sedares at 508-753-3106, or Deb Sedares at 508-509-6678 or e-mail dsedares@pinehills.com.

PASTRIES AVAILABLE: Just in time for Christmas, while supplies last, St. Nick's Kitchen has freshly baked **baklava, kouroubia, and 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. We want to thank George Demake who is sponsoring this month's meal. If you would like to help with the preparation, please contact **Deb Sedares** — by e-mail (dsedares@pinehills.com) or phone 508-353-9449. Gathering time is 1:00pm Friday, Dec 18th.

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!*

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES to the family of **Ernestine (Tanca) Rucho**, who fell asleep in the Lord this past week. *May our good and loving God rest her soul with the righteous!*

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

COVID-19 UPDATE– Holy Trinity remains Covid free and remains free from the flu virus. Due to increased rates of community transmission, the Department of Public Health is now requiring that all long-term care facilities conduct weekly testing of all staff, providers, and volunteers. We have offered and administered flu vaccines all to residents and staff, and will continue throughout the season.

VISITATIONS– At this time Holy Trinity is offering indoor visits. There are 3 private rooms available for 30-minute visits. You can still schedule Facetime and window visits anytime. We are allowing compassion room visits on an individual basis. Item drop off is always welcome to bring your loved one any necessary belongings or special foods. Please 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. For more up to date information click [here](#)

JOB OPENINGS–Our staff is our most valuable resource. We are hiring RNs, and LPNs for either 16-hour or 32-hour shifts. Click [here](#) for a full listing and detailed job descriptions. People familiar with the languages and cultures of the Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES ARE ON-GOING – The Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Wednesday at 9:30a.m. * Outside entertainment is continuing, so residents can enjoy music via their windows (weather permitting). * We have Guitar music with Paul Bonneau scheduled for December 10. * To celebrate the holiday season and to enjoy some treats we have National Cookie Day on December 4, and National Brownie Day is on December 8. * The main dining room and unit dining rooms are open for meals as well. * And, the hairdresser is back by appointment only.

TREASURED GENERATIONS ANNUAL APPEAL– This year has been a difficult one for Holy Trinity's staff and residents. Now, more than ever, we need your help. If you wish to donate to the Treasured Generations fund please click [here](#). Every gift helps. And, we thank you for your support.

Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for allowing us to love you. No one can adequately describe the perfection of your goodness, though your ineffable love is evident throughout creation. In coming into our midst as one of us, you did not consider it below your divine dignity to take on our flesh, nor did you undo or disturb the virginity of your mother. In all that you have done for us, whether before your birth or after, you draw us forever toward your divine goodness and love. Therefore, as we prepare to celebrate your birthday, teach us, once more, to perceive your goodness, to reflect on it at all times, and to respond to it throughout our lives, that it may be clear to all the world that we are truly your disciples.

For you are, indeed, our God, and we give you glory, together with your Father who is without beginning, and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Set Free from our Bondage

This week's Gospel lesson is the story of how Jesus healed a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years (Luke 13:10-17). "She was bent over and quite unable to stand straight" (v. 11). Today we would say that she very likely had osteoporosis that led to curvature of the spine. Many of us know people who suffer in this way. Those of us who have had occasion to visit people in a nursing home have probably seen more than a few women like this. (It is something that afflicts women much more than men.) There was a woman in my neighborhood who was so bent over that it was impossible when seeing her, not to suffer with her. Needless to say, it is a debilitating illness, and this poor woman had been suffering like this for eighteen years.

This particular story is unique to the Gospel of St. Luke, which is in keeping with his habit of highlighting for us Jesus' attention toward the poor and the weak. Here, we are told, that while he was preaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath Jesus saw her and called her over to him. She didn't ask anything of him, but rather He reached out to her. From among all the people in the assembly, he noticed her and her suffering. He said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment" (v.12). Laying his hand on her she stood up straight and began praising God (v. 13).

He was immediately criticized by the leader of the synagogue for having broken the rules around work on the Sabbath. Jesus is outraged at the hypocrisy. He says, "Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water?" (v. 15) There were intricate rules around what could or could not be done on the Sabbath. In one commentary on the Law, tying and untying knots was strictly forbidden, while in another, certain kinds of knots were exempt. Similarly, it was forbidden to lead animals more than 2,000 yards to water. Jesus is intimating that these rules were regularly broken out of necessity. No one would not tie or untie a rope, or not water thirsty animals, if their well-being were at stake.

This is the power behind his point, when he says: “Ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?” (v. 16) The congregants immediately understand the hypocrisy and the lack of compassion that Jesus is decrying. I would also draw your attention to a subtle point in this account. Jesus says that Satan had bound this woman. Often we think that illness is a punishment from God, or just a natural part of life. The Lord calls this bondage, not punishment. He certainly doesn’t see this as natural. He wanted her healthy and whole. Moreover, he wants us healthy and whole.

It is perhaps not too much to see in this crippled woman an image of humanity bound and held captive by the Evil One. We are suffering through an historic, world-wide pandemic. Climate change is an environmental catastrophe that hangs over all of us. It brings to mind the old Latin hymn that we sing at this time of year:

“O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.”

We should — each one of us — prepare for His coming. We should set aside time for prayer and fasting, withdrawing from the frenzied pace of life. We should make room in our hearts to welcome that young child who comes to us, in order to free us, He who is the pre-eternal God.

— 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
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
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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