

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, January 31, 2021

Thirty-Second Sunday After Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: 1 Timothy 4:9-15

Gospel: Luke 19:1-10

(The Conversion of Zacchæus)

Tone 1 • Matins Gospel 1

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY of our Parish will be held **THIS Sunday, January 31st**. The election of the new Parish Council for its two-year term will take place then. The meeting will begin at 11:45am following the Divine Liturgy. A ZOOM link has been set up for those unable to physically attend. You may access the link off of the parish [Home Page](#), or just by [clicking here](#).

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center, **THIS Saturday, January 30th, and Saturday, February 6th, from 9 am - noon**. About 4 people are needed. Likewise, 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 at nicole.apostola@gmail.com.

MUSTARD SEED MEAL. We are providing a meal for the Mustard Seed on Friday, February 19th for 75 people. Given the virus, the meals are now pre-packaged and dropped off, ready to be distributed by their regular staff of volunteers. We are looking for sponsors to underwrite this month's meal (approx \$400). If you or your family would like to sponsor the meal or help with the preparation, please contact [Deb Sedares](#) — by [e-mail](#) or phone 508-509-6678. Gathering time is 1:00 pm Friday, February 19th.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR EXTRA HOLY WATER BOTTLES! Many of you have Holy Water bottles at home. Right now, we're running low on bottles. Please return the ones you're finished using by bringing them to Church on Sunday.

ALL THINGS ORTHODOX TV. A new cable program has been launched on WCCA TV this past week. Organized and hosted by Fr. Christopher Stamas from St. Spyridon Cathedral **ALL THINGS ORTHODOX TV.** A new cable program was launched this past week on the Worcester Cable Channel 194. It's also available for viewing on [WCCA TV's](#) website. Organized and hosted by Fr. Christopher Stamas of St. Spyridon Cathedral, the program focuses on topics of interest to both Orthodox Christians and those interested in learning more about our faith. The weekly program airs each Monday at 7pm; Tuesday at 11:30pm; Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 9pm. It also can be streamed on the [WCCA TV's](#) website. If you're a Facebook user, please be sure to "like" the Facebook page: "All Things Orthodox TV."

The latest issue of the Metropolitan quarterly magazine **CREDINȚA / THE FAITH** is now available. [Please click here to download it.](#)



REMEMBER, 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.](#)

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 – All staff and residents continue to be tested every 3 days. At this time there is 1 staff member out with Covid, and all of our residents remain COVID-19 free at this time. There is still an admission freeze. The second COVID vaccine will be offered to staff and residents on February 2nd. Those who did not receive their first vaccine that will also be offered. Our medical director Dr. Nedelescu presented an informative talk regarding the vaccine and transmission of COVID-19. His presentation will be posted on the [Holy Trinity website](#) and Facebook page beginning Monday, February 1st for all those interested.

VISITATIONS – There are no changes in the visitation policy. For the protection of residents and family members, all in-person visits are suspended.

JOB OPENINGS – Holy Trinity is hiring, and the staff is excellent to work with. At present, there is an **opening for a Director of Maintenance, and an HR Generalist.** Also, openings for entry level housekeepers for multiple shifts; nurses and CNAs 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.

THE ACTIVITIES DEPARTMENT. As January comes to an end the residents will be giving it a send-off with a **Ladies' Tea Social**, appropriately distanced by being held in the doorways. There will also be **manicures and musical presentations** and several types of doorway games for everyone to enjoy. **Nova**, (our Saint Bernard pup) is now 4 ½ months old and has completed her initial 7-week puppy class. She will begin her Canine Good Citizen Program for the next 14 weeks as the initial step to receiving her AKC pet therapy certificate.

TREASURED GENERATIONS ANNUAL APPEAL – This past year has been a difficult one for Holy Trinity's staff and residents. Now, more than ever, we need your help, and every donation makes a difference. If you wish to donate to the Treasured Generations fund please click [here](#). Please remember to type "Treasure Generations" in the memo field. And, we thank you for your support!

DIVINE LITURGY celebrations have been suspended until the current Covid surge has been contained.

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)

A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

When all the difficulties and troubles of life seem to overpower us at once, Lord, come quickly to our aid and give us the wisdom and strength we need to deal with it all. From on high, reach down and seize us, as it were, pulling us out of the depths of our problems and difficulties and rescuing us in your love. Do not forget us, but help us always.

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

Today Salvation Has Come to This House

This week's Gospel reading is the story of the conversion of Zacchæus, the Tax Collector (Luke 19:1-10). This encounter takes place in Jericho, following on the healing of the Blind Man (Luke 18:35-43) which occurred just on the outskirts of the city as Jesus was making his way into Jericho. Although the Evangelist Luke doesn't say so explicitly, it would be fair to assume that Zacchæus had heard of the miracle and was curious, like so many others, to see this Jesus.

St. Luke tells us a few things about Zacchæus. He's a chief tax collector and he's rich (v. 2). From what we know about how tax collectors operated in those days, we might correctly infer that at least some of his wealth was ill-gotten gain. He also tells us that he is short (v. 3). As Jesus is walking into Jericho, a crowd begins to form and people are struggling to get a glimpse of him. Because of the crowd it is difficult for Zacchæus to see Jesus as he passes, so he climbs a sycamore tree. Sycamore trees have short, fat trunks and branches that spread broad and wide, making it relatively easy for someone to climb up and gain an advantage of a few feet. Nonetheless, it must have been something to see — a prominent official climbing a tree, like a child.

When Jesus gets to where Zacchæus is he says to him: "Zacchæus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today" (v. 5). Zacchæus is overwhelmed. He hurries down and welcomes him with joy. People in the crowd began to grumble complaining that Jesus was going to Zacchæus' house, the house of a sinner, but Zacchæus isn't cowered. He turns to Jesus and says, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much" (v. 8).

St. John Chrysostom draws our attention to the way in which Zacchæus expresses his repentance. Chrysostom says that it isn't enough to simply restore what was stolen, but reparations are a necessary part of making amends. In this case Zacchæus says that he will pay back four times as much. Chrysostom uses this example to challenge us. He asks, if when we bring our sins before God asking for forgiveness, do we follow the example of Zacchæus? Do we offer to repay our debt four times as much?

Chrysostom presents another interesting analogy. He observes that when someone hosts an important guest the first impulse is to clean and redecorate and fill their houses with fine and even luxuriant furnishings. Zacchæus, Chrysostom says, "decorates" his house with this profound act of repentance.

When we bless a new home, the service prescribed uses this very same Gospel reading, illustrating what it means to ask Christ to come into our house. The prayer says: "O Lord, who condescended to enter under the roof of Zacchæus, bringing salvation to him and his whole house ... keep safe from harm those who dwell here ..."

In a prayer written by St. John Chrysostom read when preparing for Holy Communion we say, "O Lord my God, I know that I am not worthy that you should come under the roof of the house of my soul, for all is desolate and fallen in ruins ..." In these moving words, that bring to mind the faith of the Centurion (Matthew 8:8), we can also find the image of Zacchæus, and his act of repentance. We are offered his example for us to model and follow.

When Jesus sees Zacchæus' repentance, he says, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham" (v. 9). Some early Fathers speculated from the way in

which Jesus said this, that Zacchæus might have been a Gentile. Others say that the Lord is clarifying what makes each of us a true son or daughter of Abraham: faith in the Living God. Whichever is the actual case, it is love of God and our repentance that makes us true children of Abraham.

Zacchæus followed Jesus until the day he died. He was ordained Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine by the Apostle Peter. Later, during one of the persecutions of the late first century, he suffered martyrdom. The story of Zacchæus' great act of repentance comes alive for us each time we read it in Holy Scriptures, and especially when we put his example into practice in our own lives.

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

Dates To Remember

Saturday, January 30	Food Pantry, 9:00 am-noon
Sunday, January 31	GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 11:45 am
Saturday, February 6	Food Pantry, 9:00 am-noon
Friday, Feb 19	Mustard Seed Meal Prep, 1:00 pm
Sun, Feb 21	Publican & Pharisee. Tridion begins
Week of Feb 21	No Fasting
Sat, March 6	Saturday of the Souls, Liturgy 10 am
Sun, March 7	Meatfare Sunday
Sun, March 14	Cheesefare/Forgiveness Sunday
Mon, March 15	Great Lent begins
Sun, April 4	Western Easter
Sun, April 25	Palm Sunday
Sunday, May 2	Great and Holy Pascha

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