

# ***News from St. Nick's***

**Sunday, February 7, 2021**

## ***Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost***

***Apostolic Reading: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10***

***Gospel: Matthew 25, 14-20***

***(The Parable of the Talents)***

***Tone 2 • Matins Gospel 2***

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

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***FOOD PANTRY.*** Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center, **THIS 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](mailto: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. 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 1:00pm Friday, February 19th.

***THE ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY*** of our Parish was held last **Sunday, January 31st.** Reports were made by George Demake, the Parish Council President; Fr. Nicholas Apostola, the Parish Priest; Evan Stamoulis, the Treasurer. If you'd like any of the reports please contact either George or Fr. Nick and we'll get them to you.

***CONGRATULATIONS to the newly elected Parish Council Members!*** One of the actions taken by the General Assembly was the election of a new parish council for the 2021-2022 term. Elected were: ***Parish Council Members:*** V. Gerald Belba, George Demake, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Margarite Landry, Dimitri Saffron, Christopher Seith, Evan Stamoulis, William Tsoules. ***Chanter:***

Timothy Rucho. *Delegates to the Archdiocesan Congress & Deanery Assembly*: Margarite Landry, Christopher Seith. We are grateful to them for offering their time and talents to our parish. *May God bless and guide them in this holy task!*

**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. Organized and hosted by Fr. Christopher Stamas from St. Spyridon Cathedral, **ALL THINGS ORTHODOX TV** can be found on the Worcester Cable **Channel 194**. It's also available for viewing on the **WCCA TV's** website. 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 our Metropolita's 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](http://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 are 2 staff members out with Covid, and all of our residents remain COVID-19 free at this time. There is still an admission freeze. All our residents and staff who were scheduled for the second COVID-19 vaccine received it on February 2nd. More staff attended this clinic to receive their first vaccination. The clinic went well and there will be another clinic offered this month.

Our medical director **Dr. Nedelescu** presented an [informative talk regarding the vaccine and transmission of COVID-19](#). His presentation is posted on the [Holy Trinity website](#) and Facebook page beginning.

**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 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** – February is the month of “LOVE” with Valentine’s day around the corner our activities department will be providing many scheduled events some of which include: an all-time favorite of **doorway valentine Bingo** and an upcoming **Valentine’s Day social**. These events are carefully thought out as we must continue with social distancing and no formal groups.

**TREASURED GENERATIONS ANNUAL APPEAL** – If you wish to donate to the Treasured Generations fund please click [here](#). Remember to type "Treasure Generations" in the memo field. And, we thank you for your support!

**DIVINE LITURGY** celebrations will resume when DPH allows us to do so.

---

## 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,**

**O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:** When your divine Son was brought into the temple, carried along with the offerings to be sacrificed, the blessed Simeon received him from the arms of his mother. The elder’s joy, however, was tempered by apprehension, for, with the eyes of the spirit, he saw the powers of heaven in attendance, glorifying the infant saviour with great awe and reverence. Just as the divinity of your Son did not consume the elder, do not let it consume us, either, though we deserve it for our indifferent, careless, and fickle way of living. Rather, as we prepare for the night that quickly approaches, grant us forgiveness of our sins, and let peace and tranquility restore our tired souls and bodies.

By the grace and mercy and love of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## ***How Are The Investments Doing?***

**This week's Gospel reading** is the Parable of the Talents found in the Gospel according to St. Matthew (25:14-30). While it is part of the regular cycle of Sunday readings, we do not hear this parable as frequently as some others, since when it is read depends on the date of Pascha. However, it does feature prominently in the Gospel reading for Holy and Great Tuesday, as well as in the hymns of Holy Week. More importantly, it falls within a whole series of parables and other teachings that the Lord, according to St. Matthew, delivers in the Temple in the days following his Entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), leading up to his sacrifice on the Cross.

Remember, each of the Evangelists organized their telling of our Lord's teachings in a way that they saw as most effective. And while we shouldn't necessarily read the Gospel accounts as narrowly chronological, they certainly attempted to keep to a true telling. St. Matthew gathered a series of the Lord's powerful parables and teachings concerning the end-times and placed them as having been given in the days following his Entry into Jerusalem, when he was preaching and teaching in the Temple. This is what Jesus was referring to when he said to the Sanhedrin following his arrest: "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me" (Matthew 26:55). He was there, in the Temple, openly teaching; they could have arrested him at any time.

Given this context, the first thing we might want to appreciate about this Parable is the insight it gives us into the nature of the judgment that will happen when the Lord comes again, this time to settle the final accounts.

Something else also worth pointing out is how often the Lord uses monetary imagery when speaking of spiritual things. For example, in the Lord's Prayer we say, according to the received translation, "forgive us our trespasses (sins) ...", but the original is actually "debts", as in money debt. Jesus understood how to communicate. He often spoke of sin and "what we owe God," in terms that focused on the pocketbook. People understood that he wasn't talking about money, but the message stuck.

This parable itself is rather simple and straight-forward. A certain man is setting out on a long journey. Before he leaves, he entrusts his fortune to his servants (slaves) for them to manage in his absence. He gives one five talents, another two, and another one.

A talent, in Jesus' time, was a weight-measure. As you might surmise given the context, a talent's weight measured goods and commodities, but also money. In this case an enormous sum of money. To give you an idea, an Attic talent of silver was the value of nine man-years of skilled work. During the Peloponnesian War, an Attic talent was the amount of silver that would pay a month's wages of a trireme crew of 200 men. Hellenistic mercenaries were commonly paid one drachma per day of military service. There were 6,000 drachmae in an Attic talent. Do the math! This Master was entrusting his slaves with a fortune.

Another point. The way we currently understand the word “talent” directly grew out of the Parable itself. While the primary, if not only, meaning of the word during Jesus’ time (and for centuries after) was as a weight and monetary measurement, because of the way it was used in the Gospel parable, the word gradually acquired this additional meaning of “gift or aptitude.” This resulted in a powerful play-on-words. The way money is handled becomes a talent. And then, talent can be seen in money. More importantly, talents and money cannot be seen as ends in themselves, because each is meant for a greater purpose. So, the parable causes us to understand God’s gifts in an entirely different way. We’re expected to be productive with the talents given us. And we will be held to account in the end.

Each of the Master’s servants had been entrusted with a sum according to his ability. Upon the Master’s return (here, we are to understand this return as the Lord’s Second Coming) he requires an accounting of what each had done with what he’d been entrusted. The first two say they’ve double their portfolio. The third, literally, hid it in the ground. The Master rewards the first two and is furious with the third. He says: “You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So, take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth” (v. 26-30).

You might rightly ask, “For keeping his investment intact? He at least didn’t lose any of it!” And here is the terrifying message of this Parable. This servant is punished not for doing anything bad, but rather for not doing what he could have, what he should have.

When the Lord comes again he will be requiring of us a “return” on his investment in us. This is where the play-on-words takes on special meaning. The Lord has given each of us “talents.” What are we doing with them? How are we using them? Have they been invested selfishly or cowardly? Or, have they been invested with a view toward profiting our neighbor? These will be the questions asked of us.

I was studying theology the first time I really heard this Parable read liturgically. It was Great Tuesday morning. I was at Holy Cross in Brookline. It was a dark and gray morning, raining. I listened to the long Gospel reading of one parable and saying of the Lord after another, speaking of the accounting that awaits us at the Judgment; recounting the destruction of the world at the end-times. I left the Chapel terrified. I never forgot the experience or the message. Neither should any of us, if we have ears to hear and eyes to see.

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

---

## **Dates To Remember**

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  
Food Pantry, 9:00 am-noon  
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**

---

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church  
34 Gold St | Shrewsbury, MA 01545-6238  
508-845-0088 | fax: 508-845-8850 | e-mail: [ParishCouncil@StNicholasChurch.org](mailto:ParishCouncil@StNicholasChurch.org)  
[www.StNicholasChurch.org](http://www.StNicholasChurch.org)  
*Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am*