

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, February 14, 2021

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1

Gospel: Matthew 15, 21-28

(Sunday of the Canaanite Woman)

Tone 3 • Matins Gospel 3

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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'd like to acknowledge Kosmas Karadimitriou and Maria Kalpidou for underwriting this month's meal. God bless them! If you and your family would like to 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 OATH OF OFFICE for the newly elected Parish Council Members will be administered this Sunday at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. Elected were: V. Gerald Belba, George Demake, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Margarite Landry, Dimitri Saffron, Christopher Seith, Evan Stamoulis, William Tsoules. Chanter: Timothy Rucho. We are grateful to them for offering their time and talents to our parish. *May God bless and guide them in this holy task!*

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS who staffed our responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center for the last two Saturdays. If you'd like to help, about 4 people are needed each Saturday. Help is also needed during the week for shopping and stocking the Pantry. Likewise, donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please e-mail Nicole Apostola at nicole.apostola@gmail.com.

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

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."

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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 only 1 staff member out with Covid, and all of our residents remain COVID-19 free at this time. We are anticipating some good news; we may be able to open our indoor visits as of February 16th as there has been new visitation guidance from DPH as of February 3rd. More information will be coming.

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.

JOB OPENINGS – Holy Trinity is hiring, and the staff is excellent to work with. At present, there is an **opening for an HR Generalist**, and a **Staff Development Coordinator**. Also, openings for 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 continues to provide weekly events despite the challenges of social distancing. Some scheduled events are “**doorway move**” which entails music and exercise. Another activity scheduled is “**circle of love**” which entails bible readings and discussion. Families and friends are encouraged to continue to schedule face time visits and to call their loved ones as often as possible to help brighten their day.

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,

Lord our God: You desire peace for us — peace, tranquility, and calm in our lives — at all times. We beseech you, therefore, to make us instruments of your peace, sources of calm and tranquility for one another daily. Keep us wakeful and alert lest our careless thinking and speaking provoke disharmony, unrest, and agitation in ourselves as well as in the lives of those with whom we live and work.

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

Lord, Help Me!

This week's Scripture reading is the story of the Canaanite Woman's faith, from the Gospel of Matthew (15:21-28). The last several weeks the prescribed readings have been from the Gospel of Luke, and we will return to that order next week, but this passage from the Gospel of Matthew (generally read from Pentecost to the Feast of the Cross) is interjected just before we begin the Triodion period. I believe that this is done to give us an example of faith to emulate; we can see in this woman the virtues of persistent prayer and great humility.

The story begins with Jesus leaving Israel proper and going north to Tyre and Sidon, near Canaanite territory. He had been followed by crowds and desired a quiet place to be with his disciples. When he came into the region a local woman, a Canaanite, came to him and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon" (v. 22). Jesus does not even turn to acknowledge her. Still, she doesn't stop, but continues to follow after him. The disciples urge him to "send her away, for she keeps shouting after us" (v. 23).

He says, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." She responds, as she kneels in front of him, "Lord, help me" (v. 25). He speaks even more harshly to her, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (v. 26). She replies to him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table" (v. 27). Jesus looks at her and answers, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish" (v. 28). Her daughter was healed immediately.

This is a remarkable and even uncharacteristic interchange. First, look at how she makes her request. She is not only insistent; she is also very direct: "Have mercy on me!" "Lord, help me!" We do not find the usual polite entreaties, like with the Centurion (Matthew 8:5), or Jairus (Luke 8:41). And she persists even when Jesus ignores her.

Next there is the form of her request. She wants her daughter healed, but she says, "Help me." The truth is that it is very likely that the mother needed as much help as the daughter. Given her possession, or illness, the daughter may have been more or less aware of her condition. The real burden is on the mother who has the responsibility of caring for her and watching her suffer.

Jesus' response is even more curious; he says nothing. The disciples urge him to speak to her, to even grant her request—because that is the other way of "sending her away." Regardless, they want to get rid of her. When Jesus does say something, he addresses not her but the disciples. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Still, she does not give up.

Then Jesus says something that seems at little jarring. "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." We should note two words here. Whereas he had called the Israelites "sheep," even if they're lost, he now calls them "children." The woman, being a Canaanite, he calls a "dog." This term requires a little explanation. Jews generally referred to Gentiles as "dogs." The original Greek word has more the sense of "house dog" or "pet," and she wouldn't have reacted in quite the same way as we might today. Nonetheless, it was still meant to demean. It was like calling an African American "boy" or "Nigger," as we sometimes still hear even today. But, she does not even flinch. There is not a word of protest or indignation. In fact, she accepts what he says and furthers the analogy by entering into a little repartee with Jesus.

"Yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." She takes the insult and turns it to her advantage. A quick wit was highly appreciated in the Middle East of Jesus' day. And while she might have been quick-witted, we should not lose sight of her humility and faith. She was not going to give up. Jesus responds, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."

Notice, he doesn't say, "Your daughter is healed," or "I will come to your house." He says, "Let it be done for you as you wish." Jesus was testing her faith and showing the disciples the true nature of humility. We are reminded of the time the disciples were not able to heal the epileptic

boy. When they asked Jesus why they couldn't do this, he said, "because of your little faith. ... If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

This is a lesson for us as well. How often do we simply give up, because after having made one feeble request from God, we become disheartened that what we desire has not been given? Or, when we feel as though we've been sorely tested by God, we become angry or discouraged? This woman teaches us how to believe, how to ask, and how to follow our Lord.

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

Dates To Remember

Friday, Feb 19	Mustard Seed Meal Prep, 1:00 pm
Sun, Feb 21	Publican & Pharisee. Triodion 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
www.StNicholasChurch.org
Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am