

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, April 25, 2021

The Entrance of our Lord Into Jerusalem

Apostolic Reading: Philippians 4:4-9

Gospel: John 12:1-18

(Everything According to the Feast)

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE, from Lazarus Saturday through Pascha, [may be downloaded here](#). This also includes a number of announcements related to Holy Week. *Please read it.*

PASCHA DONATIONS. The list of items that people may donate to decorate and enhance our Paschal celebration is [available here for download](#). If you'd like to donate anything, please see Betty Anderson, or [e-mail](#) her at bettya16@verizon.net or call her at: 508-335-9449.

THE GREAT FRIDAY CHILDREN'S RETREAT for the younger children will be held on **Friday, April 30th starting at 12:00pm**, and concluding with a celebration of Great Vespers at 2:00 pm. Older children and teens are also welcome. There are many ways each can help. Snacks will be served. For additional information and offers to assist, contact **Valarie Stamoulis**. Please **RSVP by April 23rd** to Valarie at valarie.stamoulis@gmail.com or **617-803-3798**.

THANKS TO THE MUSTARD SEED VOLUNTEERS! Those who shopped and prepared the meal Friday last. A generous family of our community, wishing to be anonymous, sponsored this month's meal, and we are very grateful. If you or your family would like to help with future meal preparations, please contact **Deb Sedares** — by e-mail or phone 508-509-6678

THE LATEST ISSUE OF THE CREDINȚA / THE FAITH quarterly magazine of our Metropolia may be [downloaded here](#). Please take an opportunity to read it.

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO HELP? Consider volunteering to be a **GREETER** for this period of Great Lent and Holy Week. [Margarite Landry](#) is working on a rotating schedule for the Sundays and Wednesdays of Lent, and each evening of Holy Week. **Duties are simple:** Greet people as they come in. Make sure everyone has a mask. Help them to sit at the appropriate distance. It's a wonderful way to help people feel welcomed and comfortable. If you're interested, please [e-mail](#) her.

THE ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS NEEDS YOUR INPUT! The **Mental Health Needs Assessment Survey**, designed by experts on the Assembly's Mental Health Task Force, takes only 15 minutes and consists of approximately 30 questions. **All information you provide is completely anonymous**, and the aggregate data will help the Task Force better understand the mental health needs and experiences of the faithful in order to develop resources and programs for enhanced ministry in your community. [Click here to go directly to the web page](#) to complete the survey.

The Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

O Lord and master of my life!
Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness,
of ambition and vain talk!

Instead, give me
the spirit of prudence and humility,
of patience and charity.

Yes, my king and Lord,
let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others:
For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

COVID-19 UPDATE - Holy Trinity continues to be Covid-Free at this time.

VISITORS - Holy Trinity families and friends are now able to visit in our designated areas, in resident rooms and outdoors. Per the guidance, visitation may vary based on individual status. Please schedule your visit in advance with the Activities Department by calling (508) 852-1000.

NEW ADMISSIONS - Holy Trinity is now accepting new admissions. To inquire about admissions, for either long-term or short-term rehab, please call (508) 852-1000.

VOLUNTEERS - Just in time for National Volunteer Week, Holy Trinity is excited to be able to welcome back volunteers. Even if you are not a medical professional, you can dramatically affect the life-quality of our residents. As a volunteer, you may spend time during the day or night, providing company and care. This will mean more than you can imagine to each person you touch. If you are interested, please contact our Activities Director, [Donna Benard](#), or call (508) 852-1000 and let us know when you can help and what you would be most comfortable doing. Per the guidance, volunteers must be fully vaccinated.

JOB OPENINGS - Holy Trinity is looking to add to its excellent staff. Due to the unprecedented shortage of CNAs and nurses in central Massachusetts, we are urging anyone looking for employment with background in these areas to join our great team and assist our wonderful residents. Contact our Human Resources Generalist, [Kimberly Hescocock](#), to apply or call (508) 852-1000. Recent grads of any program are encouraged to apply. [Click here](#) for a full listing with detailed job descriptions. We offer great benefits and sign on bonuses.

REHABILITATION - Sometimes, the need for short-term rehabilitation isn't as obvious as a loved one having trouble walking or recovering from an injury or surgery. For those with dementia, Alzheimer's, and other diagnoses, their loss of speech, memory, cognition, and ability to swallow may happen gradually over time. At Holy Trinity, our highly skilled in-house speech therapists work with the entire rehab team, as well as the family, to provide individualized treatment to address these issues, vital for residents' quality of life. For more information, please contact our Director of Rehab, [Heather Walsh](#).

ACTIVITIES - Our Activities department has been busy making up for lost time. This week, our creative and gifted residents are participating in a new poetry group, as well as continued painting classes, Greek club, and bowling league.

HOLY WEEK celebrations for the residents will include Holy Unction on Great Wednesday, and Divine Liturgy on Great Thursday. Residents will also be dyeing eggs — red and otherwise — on Great Thursday, according to our custom.

STAY CONNECTED - Be sure to like our [Facebook page](#) for frequent updates and photos.

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,

Glory to you, O Lord, for letting us live to enjoy the beautiful morning that celebrates the triumphal entry of your Son into Jerusalem. As we add our own hosannas to those of the people who welcomed him, number us among those who hymn you forever. Give us all we need to live in a way that is pleasing to you. Take pity on those whom your own hands fashioned and for love of whom your Son sojourned on this earth. Bring a loving peace and unity to your churches, disturbed by so many divisions and contrary opinions. Grant us all remission of our sins, and, by the prayers of the Theotokos and all your saints, enable us to offer you this morning worship with attention and true devotion.

For you deserve all glory, honor, and worship, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Lord is Near

We are entering Jerusalem with the Lord today. It is Palm Sunday. For everyone except Jesus, this is a climatic event. I say everyone except Jesus because no one else except he understands what will eventually take place. In last Sunday's Gospel lesson we heard the disciples continue to be oblivious to the true nature of our Lord's presence on earth. They will continue to not understand until after the Resurrection.

The Epistle lesson for today is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:4–9. This is a remarkably beautiful letter on many levels. It is gentle, poetic and generous. Paul has an affection for this community, and this community has been generous and affectionate toward him. On a number of occasions, they have sent him assistance when he was in need. He says that he is writing this letter from prison; many think this was when he was imprisoned in Ephesus. Regardless from which prison he was writing, the important point is that St. Paul doesn't offer advice out of intellectual speculation. He speaks from the experience of suffering, and this gives his words power.

Listen to what he writes from prison: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (v. 5-6).

In this one sentence he twice tells the Philippians to "Rejoice." He is suffering and the Philippians are themselves suffering, but he nonetheless tells them to rejoice. I heard someone say that the difference between happiness and joy is that happiness means doing what you want, and joy is doing what God wants. Everyone around us (and, this everyone includes ourselves), is searching for happiness by fulfilling their own desires. We are living through a time when we are able to see what the "happiness" that fulfilling our desires produces. Many of us are suffering because of it, while others continue to profit on the suffering of others. It is not a pretty sight. Moreover, no one seems very happy. That we are living to see this terrible principle at work is in one sense a gift from God. If we take the lesson offered, it will be for our salvation.

Never forget: what God wants for us is what we want for ourselves — in the middle of the night, when we wake up in a cold sweat and regret every evil thing that we've ever done. When we realize our weaknesses and beg God to help us, and then get a glimpse of our true selves. What God wants for us is joy, a joy based not in material things that pass away, but grounded in the very depths of our being, body and soul.

After telling them to “rejoice,” St. Paul tells them to: “Let [their] gentleness be known to everyone” (v. 5). This one word “gentleness” is translated as “good sense” (in the Jerusalem Bible), and also “forbearance” (in the Revised Standard and King James versions). Translation can be a tricky business, and while each of these meanings can work well here, we can see even in this small example how much depends on the spiritual insight of the translator.

St. John of the Ladder writes that the antidote to the sin of anger is gentleness. From what we know of the Philippian community, they were guided by good sense, they practiced forbearance, and so St. Paul tells them to let people see how good and gentle they were, as encouragement and inspiration for others; to show others how to quell the fires of anger through gentleness.

The next verse is possibly why this reading was chosen for today. St. Paul bolsters the Philippians by reminding them: “The Lord is near” (v. 5). He surely was referring to his eager hope that the Lord would be returning very soon, but there is another sense to his phrase that we pick up in verse 6: “Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” God is near to us when we pray. God hears and knows our thoughts and needs even before we ask.

God is also near to us in a particular way today, as he enters Jerusalem. We share the joy of seeing him, even as we contemplate the pain he will endure in the coming days. But, through his suffering he will draw nearer to us still.

If we pray and trust, St. Paul says, “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (v. 7). One of the great mysteries of the Life in Christ is how God gives us the ability to reconcile and make coherent the joys as well as the tribulations of this life. The world looks for logic. By taking up our cross and following Christ we find the understanding that surpasses logic. We find God's peace.

“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you” (v. 8-9).

It is when we do what is right and good that we find God. It is when we do what God asks of us, that we find ourselves. Resist the temptation to over-analyze. It keeps you from doing what you're supposed to do.

During the coming week we will see the Lord do “what he's supposed to do.” He will say many things, but as the time for “doing” draws closer, he will say less and less. Instead, he allows his actions to speak. We should take our lesson from him, and do likewise.

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

Dates To Remember

Sat, April 24 Lazarus Sat. Liturgy, 10 am
Vespers/Confession, 5 pm
Sun, April 25 Palm Sunday
April 26-May 1 Holy Week
[Download full Schedule](#)
Sunday, May 2 Great and Holy Pascha
Sat, May 28 **e-Recycling, and more 9am-2pm**

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
34 Gold St | Shrewsbury, MA 01545-6238
508-845-0088 | fax: 508-845-8850 | e-mail: info@StNicholasChurch.org
www.StNicholasChurch.org
Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am