

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, June 6, 2021

The Sunday of the Man Born Blind **(The Sixth Sunday of Pascha)**

Apostolic Reading: Acts 16:16-34
Gospel: John 9:1-38

Tone 5 • Resurrection Gospel 8

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

[\(Click here for a PDF version of this week's news\)](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COVID GUIDELINES. The Parish Council is reviewing the best practices for our parish moving forward, keeping in mind everyone's safety. For the present we will continue to follow the protocols that have been in place. Over the next week or weeks, we'll announce the changes that seem prudent. Feel free to express your ideas on this question to member of the Council.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center, **THIS Saturday, June 5th 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.

THIS THURSDAY JUNE 10th IS FEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD. We will be celebrating the Feast along with our brothers and sisters at St. Mary's Albanian Orthodox Church on Salisbury St. Liturgy begins at 9:30 am.

MUSTARD SEED MEAL. We are providing a meal for the Mustard Seed **Friday, June 18th** for 80 people. We are still preparing the meals pre-packaged and ready to drop off and distribute by their regular staff of volunteers. The family of **Bill and Katina Cocavessis** is sponsoring this meal. If you or your family would like to help with meal preparations, please contact [Deb Sedares](#) — by [e-mail](#) or phone 508-509-6678. **Gathering time is 1:00pm on Friday, June 18th.**

SATURDAY OF THE SOULS before Pentecost is Saturday, June 19th. **Liturgy will be at 10:00 am.** That Sunday is the **Feast of PENTECOST**, the Descent of the Holy Spirit! Please make an extra effort to attend.

THE RELIGIOUS ED STUDENTS WILL PRESENT A PASCHA PAGEANT that they have been working very hard on, at the end of Liturgy on **Sunday, June 27th.** Please mark your calendars. **It will be something you'll remember!**

ALL THINGS ORTHODOX is a weekly show hosted by Fr. Christopher Stamas of St. Spyridon Cathedral. Fr. Chris interviews people active in the life of the Church on questions of faith and action. It is aired on the **Worcester Cable channel 194** on **Mondays** at 7 pm, **Saturdays** at 8 pm and **Sundays** at 9 pm. Also look for it on the Cable website: wccatv.com, or the **Worcester TV** Roku app.

2021 Graduates

***"He has filled them with the spirit of God,
with skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft." (Exodus 35:31)***

We want to acknowledge and recognize the achievements of the members of our parish community

who are celebrating a graduation.

HIGH SCHOOL

— **Robert Daniel Salerno**, son of Rob & Dina Salerno, grandson of Joanne Prizio, graduated from Tahanto Regional High School where he played baseball all four years. He will attend Quinsigamond Community College to study business and play on the baseball team.

— **James Stamoulis**, son of Evan & Valarie Stamoulis, grandson of Jim & Argie Vlamis, graduated from Algonquin Regional High School and will attend the University of New Hampshire in the fall.

COLLEGE

— **Noah Peter Christo**, son of James & Lea Christo, grandson of Joan Christo, will graduate from Assumption University in August with a BA in Business & concentration in Digital Marketing.

— **Sarah Moore**, daughter of Charles & Sharon Moore, granddaughter of Janice Samara, graduated from the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth with a BA in Political Science & minor in Data Analytics.

May our loving Lord continue to bless their efforts and grant them a long life, health, prosperity, and many, many years!

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

COVID-19 UPDATE - Holy Trinity continues to be Covid-Free at this time. We continue to offer vaccination thru DPH for any resident who would like to receive one, and we assist all employees in setting up vaccination appointments.

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. All visitors are required to do a temperature check, sanitize their hands, and wear a new medical grade mask upon entry. Please schedule your visit in advance with [Donna](#) in the Activities department by calling (508) 852-1000.

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

VOLUNTEERS – We are especially excited to invite back our church groups who may be interested in hosting a luncheon or coffee social or assisting with liturgy. We also are looking for someone who is interested in leading a Men's Group (card games, sports, model cars), assisting with Greek Club, or lending their artistic talents in the areas of painting, sewing, knitting, etc. Those who are fully vaccinated may be considered to volunteer. Those who are fully vaccinated may be considered to volunteer. Please call [Donna](#) with the Activities department at (508) 852-1000 to discuss one of the many ways you can lend a helping hand.

JOB OPENINGS - Come join the amazing team at Holy Trinity! We are seeking a Director of Admissions, and there are also openings for nurses and CNAs for all shifts, including sign on bonuses and great benefits. [Click here](#) for a full listing with detailed job descriptions. If you have questions, please contact the Human Resources Generalist, [Kimberly Hescocock](#). Recent grads and people familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

REHABILITATION – Did you know? Addressing short-term rehab issues (both physical and cognitive) sooner than later can help delay or prevent the need for long-term nursing care in the future. At Holy Trinity, our skilled team works with both the patient and the family to provide individualized treatment plans that may have greater benefit than home care services or no treatment at all. For more information, please contact our Director of Rehab, [Heather Walsh](#).

DIVINE LITURGY is celebrated in-person for residents each Wednesday mornings.

STAY CONNECTED - Be sure to like our [Facebook page](#) for frequent updates and photos of our resident activities. This week, our residents are celebrating May birthdays with a party and look forward to pet therapy with Nova and a Memorial Day social.

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

Sweet Jesus, our saviour: We who enjoy the effulgence of the sun and who delight in the luminescence of the moon give thanks to you for the gifts of light and sight. In our good fortune, most of us have never actually known the meaning of being blind, and we cannot even begin to appreciate what a life of total darkness is. You, however, know all things, so your understanding and tenderness brought you to bestow a twofold enlightenment on that poor fellow who had been deprived of sight from his mother's womb. As we commemorate his healing during this paschal season, we entreat you to preserve us from all interior blindness that we may always see reality as it is in fact, and live accordingly.

For you are the healer of our souls and bodies, Christ our God, and we give you glory, together with your eternal Father and your all-holy, good, and lifegiving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Ascension

The Lord Jesus passed forty days on earth after His Resurrection from the dead, appearing continually in various places to His disciples, with whom He also spoke, ate, and drank, thereby further demonstrating His Resurrection. On this Thursday, the fortieth day after Pascha, He appeared again in Jerusalem. After He had first spoken to the disciples about many things, He gave them His last commandment, that is, that they go forth and proclaim His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. But He also commanded them that for the present, they were not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait there together until they receive power from on high, when the Holy Spirit would come upon them.

Saying these things, He led them to the Mount of Olives, and raising His hands, He blessed them; and saying again the words of the Father's blessing, He was parted from them and taken up. Immediately a cloud of light, a proof of His majesty, received Him. Sitting thereon as though on a royal chariot, He was taken up into Heaven, and after a short time was concealed from the sight of the disciples, who remained where they were with their eyes fixed on Him. At this point, two Angels in the form of men in white raiment appeared to them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:11). These words, in a complete and concise manner, declare what is taught in the Symbol of Faith concerning the Son and Word of God. Therefore, having so fulfilled all His dispensation for us, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended in glory into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of God the Father. As for His sacred disciples, they returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, rejoicing because Christ had promised to send them the Holy Spirit.

It should be noted that the Mount of Olives is a Sabbath's day journey from Jerusalem, that is, the distance a Jew was permitted to walk on the day of the Sabbath. Ecumenius writes, "A Sabbath day's journey is one mile in length, as Clement says in his fifth Stromatis; it is two thousand cubits, as the Interpretation of the Acts states." They draw this conclusion from the fact that, while they were in the wilderness, the Israelites of old kept within this distance from the Holy Tabernacle, whither they walked on the Sabbath day to worship God.

The Way of Salvation

This is the sixth Sunday of Pascha. Today's Gospel lesson is the Lord's healing of the man blind from birth (John 9:1-38). In the reading from Acts (16:16-34), St. Luke tells us of the start of St. Paul's missionary work in Europe. Paul had been visiting the coastal cities of Asia Minor with Silas and Timothy. One night "a vision appeared to Paul ... a man of Macedonia was standing beseeching him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us'" (Acts 16:9). And so Paul and Silas sailed to Philippi, a large city in that province.

Today's reading begins with the encounter Paul and Silas had with a slave girl while they were going toward a place outside of Philippi where the Jews usually gathered to pray on the Sabbath. She had a "spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by soothsaying" (v. 16). In the original Greek the phrase a "spirit of divination" is actually a "Pythonic spirit," referring to the snake that the god Apollo was believed to have slain at Delphi. In Apollo's temple at Delphi, a priestess of Apollo called the 'Pythius' would prophesy in the god's name there. So rather than believe this spirit as something benign, we should understand the girl as possessed.

The girl followed Paul and Silas for a number of days crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation" (v. 17). Finally Paul had reached his limit and "turned and said to the spirit, 'I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out that very hour" (v. 18).

St. Paul did this for two reasons. The first was to free this poor girl from the exploitation of both the demon and her masters. The second was because the spirit meant to deceive and mislead those people who had come to believe in Jesus through Paul's and Silas' preaching. Paul and the other Apostles never drew attention to themselves when they preached. Their goal was to proclaim salvation in the name of Jesus Christ. The objective of this demon was to gain credibility by correctly saying who and what these Apostles were, only then to later use this gained confidence for evil purposes. Paul knew this, and this is the reason he cast out the demon.

We can see Paul's wisdom in what happened next. Her masters, instead of believing her words that Paul and Silas were indeed "servants of the Most High God, who proclaim the way of salvation," immediately seized them and brought them before the local magistrates complaining that, "these men are Jews and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice" (v. 21-22). A riot began. The magistrates had Paul and Silas flogged and imprisoned.

During the night while Paul and Silas were singing hymns and praying in prison, an earthquake opened the jail doors and loosened the chains binding Paul and the other prisoners. The jailer woke up, thinking that everyone had escaped. He was ready to kill himself, when Paul cried out to stop him. He told him that no one had escaped. The jailer was so moved that he fell down before Paul and Silas and asked how he might be saved. Finally, he and his whole household believed and were all baptized.

There are at least three important lessons in this story. The first is that believing in Jesus Christ and proclaiming him to the world is not always popular. Sometimes it can lead to outright persecution. Paul and Silas were not doing anything wrong, yet they were seized, brought up on false charges, beaten, put in stocks, and put in prison. They were never even given the opportunity to defend themselves.

The second lesson is that when evil things befall us we should accept them without complaint. Paul and Silas were not sitting in the prison bemoaning their fate. They were not complaining to God: "Why me? I was doing your will! Why didn't you protect me?" Rather, they were singing hymns and praying. We should understand that we grow when tested. Sharing and witnessing to our faith is like exercising — like exercising our soul. It brings growth. We know what happens to a body that sits all day in front of the TV. It gets fat and lethargic. Exercise strengthens. Comfort weakens. God intends to strengthen us through many of the difficulties we may encounter.

The third important lesson is that we should not try to gain advantage at the expense of others. Paul and Silas were unjustly imprisoned. They could easily have used the opportunity of the earthquake to escape. What would have been the result? The jailer would have committed suicide, his children would have been orphaned, and his family disgraced. Even if Paul and Silas managed to save themselves, they would have been seen by many as in fact guilty as charged, and their preaching would have been in vain. Instead, by trusting in God and enduring their trials, the jailer and his family were saved, not only physically, but also spiritually. The truth of the Good News they preached spread throughout the whole city, even and especially to the pagans. Most importantly, Jesus was glorified.

I would like to emphasize this last point. We are living through world-wide economic and socio-political storms. Even though some people and places seem to have passed through the worst of it, many more have not. These crises are not "acts of God," but created by people, many of whom identify themselves as Christians, and who think nothing of taking advantage of opportunities without considering the consequences of their actions on others. We see this same sort of selfish behavior exercised in many different ways each and every day. Sadly, we ourselves often behave similarly. Can we learn from these catastrophes? Can we be like Paul and Silas? Can we be witnesses to "the way of salvation"? Perhaps. And if we rise to our high-calling, many will indeed be saved.

Christ is indeed Risen!

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, June 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
Thurs, June 10 Lord's Ascension, St. Mary's 9:30am

Fri, June 18 Mustard Seed Meal, 5:00pm
Sat, June 19 Saturday of Souls, Liturgy, 10:00am
Sun, June 20 PENTECOST
Thurs, June 24 Parish Council Meeting, 7pm
Mon, June 28 Apostles Fast Begins
Sat, July 10 e-Recycling and more 9am-2pm

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