

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

## **Sunday, June 13, 2021**

### **The Sunday of the Fathers of the First Œcumenical Council (The Seventh Sunday of Pascha)**

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**Apostolic Reading: Acts 20:16-18; 28-36**  
**Gospel: John 17:1-13**

**Tone 6 • Resurrection Gospel 10**

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

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

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**TRANSITIONING TOWARD "NORMAL":** The Parish Council met briefly this week to compare notes on what they've heard from some of the parishioners, and discuss the best ways to move forward. There was a general consensus that keeping everyone as safe as possible was the first priority. It was also important that people feel comfortable that attending Liturgy would not put them at risk. The current thinking is that for at least the next few weeks the mask policy will remain in effect. Other CDC recommendations such as hand-washing and physical distancing are strongly encouraged (but these are common sense, and people have been very conscientious about following these). Other procedures that no longer seem necessary will be lifted. In addition, measured return to pre-pandemic activities will be tried, such as limited baking. We will soon be looking to set up a "coffee hour" committee to see if regular working teams can be formed. If you have any ideas or concerns, please talk to one or more of the Parish Council members..

**MUSTARD SEED MEAL.** We are providing a meal for the Mustard Seed **THIS 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 NEXT 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!**

**THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS** for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish last Saturday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9am to 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). Our next Saturday is July 3rd.

**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](http://wccatv.com), or the **Worcester TV** Roku app.

**THE ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS NEEDS YOUR INPUT!** The **Mental Health Needs Assessment Survey**, designed by experts on the Assembly's Mental Health Task Forces, 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.

**MANY YEARS** to the newly illumined **Gia Elise Spyrou**, daughter of **Chriso and Tracie Spyrou**, and big brother Noah Vasil. She was baptized this past Saturday. Her sponsor is **Spiro Spyrou**. *May our Lord shower them with every blessing!*

**OUR BEST WISHES** to the servant of God **Margareta Elena Seith** who received her 40-day Churching last Sunday. May God preserve her and her parents, **Ana Stefania and Christopher Seith**, and grant the every blessing and *many years!*

**OUR SYMPATHIES** are with **Tom Fitzpatrick** on the falling asleep of his father **Daniel J. Fitzpatrick** this past weekend. Our prayers are with him and his family. *May our good and loving Lord rest the soul of Daniel among the just in the Kingdom.*

## 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

— **Elizabeta Florica Galeriu**, daughter of Elena and Călin Garleriu, graduated from St Paul's Diocesan Jr./Sr. High School. She will be attending the College of the Holy Cross with a double major in Accounting and Economics.

— **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

**HOLY TRINITY ANNOUNCES NEW CEO/ADMINISTRATOR.** The Holy Trinity Board is pleased to announce that Rodolfo Parra will be joining Holy Trinity as the permanent CEO and Administrator. He will provide the leadership in the management of day-to-day operations of the facility, keeping it on track to meet its strategic, operational, quality and financial goals. He will have direct oversight of clinical and administrative affairs, financial matters, human resources, facilities, medical equipment, and other duties related to 24/7 health care delivery. He will also serve as the primary liaison for residents, families, our community parishes and the general public.

Rodolfo Parra, LNHA has been a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator for about 12 years and has held various leadership positions, such as CEO, Regional Director of Operations, Executive Director, and Consultant. His experience in the senior living industry has involved oversight of Skilled Nursing Facilities, Independent, Assisted Living, and Memory Care communities in multiple states including Massachusetts. He has experience working in privately owned facilities, large for-profit companies, as well as non-profit communities. Mr. Parra holds a bachelor's degree from Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois, and a long-term health care management graduate certificate from the University of Connecticut, School of Business, Hartford, CT. His

broad experience in the senior living industry, and his ability to balance strategic decisions and financial discipline with a hands-on approach to management are all assets we believe will contribute to his success in this position. His ability to build positive and productive relationships with staff, residents and their families also make him an exceptional choice to bring Holy Trinity forward in accomplishing its mission.

His official start date is July 6, and he will be working with interim CEO Dan Burns to ensure a smooth transition. We are excited to welcome Mr. Parra to the Holy Trinity community.

## 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*

**Praise to you, eternal, loving God and Father,** O you who loved us before we were even conceived: Today, the gates of heaven, the eternal portals, are lifted high, because your only Son, the king of glory, enters in. As we celebrate his glorious return to the right of your majesty, we pray that you will draw us ever closer to him, so that, faithful to him at all times, we may rise above the difficulties of this earthly life to enjoy the glory of eternal life. Receive our spiritual worship, and prepare us for the descent of your all-holy Spirit in the days to come.

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

## The Cosmonauts Didn't Find God

**It seems to me that the Lord's Ascension** presents the modern believer with a few difficult questions, conceptually speaking. For example, for those of us who regularly fly — who regularly “ascend” — what exactly does the Lord's going up mean? For the last fifty-odd years, we periodically send people up beyond earth's atmosphere. What does it mean then that the Lord was carried up into heaven? When the Soviet cosmonauts ascended into the heavens they proclaimed that they hadn't found God there, in this way claiming to prove the silliness of religious faith. For people of Jesus' time it was a marvel if someone ascended to the heavens. Today, we go to the airport and catch our flight.

A second question is perhaps more mystifying. How can the actions of one person effect all of humanity? How can Christ's Ascension (when He took His place on the right hand of God the Father), also impact us? How do we share in the Lord's Resurrection? Why are we living the consequences of what Adam and Eve did?

Even though we have other examples in Scripture of people either being taken up into the heavens or transported from one place to another, the way in which the Lord ascended differs in a number of important ways. His ascension is seen as a return to the Father, a completion of His mission to restore the relationship between God and humanity. It fulfills the promise implicit in the resurrection. He also will send the Holy Spirit to enliven His followers. Moreover, He says that He will return.

The closest example we have in the Bible of an ascension like the Lord's is with the Prophet Elijah (Elias). He had been told by God that he would be taken up and was preparing his disciple Elisha to take up his mantle. (A mantle is a large cloak.) Elijah's mantle is a sign of his prophetic power. For example, one day Elijah and Elisha were walking and talking about this, and were only able to cross the Jordan after Elijah had struck the water with it causing the river's flow to stop. As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven (2 Kings 2:11). As he was taken up his mantle dropped from the chariot and Elisha picked it up. As Elijah had promised him, Elisha received a double share of his spirit. This is where we get the expression to “take up the mantle.”

Unlike the Lord, Elijah is taken up before he tasted death. In one sense it was a prefiguring, a foreshadowing, of what was to come in Jesus. The way he was taken up also gave rise to the speculation in Israel that Elijah would return to proclaim the coming Messiah. It was John the Baptist, as the Lord himself said, who would be the “Elijah” announcing the Christ (cf. Mark 9:13).

Another example of this sort was in the days of Daniel, when he was held prisoner in the lion's den. The Prophet Habakkuk

was in Judaea making a stew and breaking bread and an angel of the Lord took him up and brought him to Babylon to feed Daniel (cf. Daniel 14:31ff). There is also the Prophet Ezekiel, who was carried by the hand of the Lord into the middle of a valley where he was presented with the vision of the dry bones (cf. Ezekiel 37:1). These examples are not ascensions in the sense of Elijah's and certainly not the Lord's, yet in these two instances we can see how time and space have a different meaning for God. The Lord ascended to the place He was before, but not a place we can get to without God's help and permission. So, the Soviet cosmonauts were not able to find God, even though they passed through earth's atmosphere.

I find the second question to be even more interesting than the first. While we might find it engaging to speculate where the Lord went when He ascended, the fact that His bodily ascent has an effect on us is more provoking. How is it that what Christ did and does changes me? This is not only true in the Ascension, but in every aspect of Christ's Incarnation. As the Church has always taught, through the sacraments we participate in our Lord's saving work. As St. Paul says, those of us who have been baptized have been joined with Christ in his death. "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:5).

We've been nurtured in a culture that emphasizes our individualism and plays down our connectedness — to one another and to the world around us. Yet our study of biology and other sciences has begun to tell us the same story that our theology has told us for millennia: we are all deeply connected one to another and to the whole of creation. St. Maximos the Confessor speaks of the human being as a "microcosm," literally, a small world. He says that God created us in such a way that all of creation is summarized in us. We contain the world inside us, in our very being.

The more we unpack and analyze our own DNA and the DNA of everything living, the more we realize how interconnected the creation is. We used to think that "people are different." Now we know that we are all practically first cousins, even with the animals and plants.

When the Second Person of the Holy Trinity assumed our nature, He changed our DNA. When Jesus dies and rises, death is destroyed for each of us. And, when the incarnate Word of God sits at the right-hand of the Father, we are all enthroned. God's promise to each of us is real and true.

***Christ has Ascended! ...  
He has Ascended in Glory!***

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**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**  
**Sun, June 27 Religious Ed, Pascha Pageant**  
**Mon, June 28 Apostles Fast Begins**  
**Tues, June 29 Feast of Ss Peter and Paul**  
**Sat, July 4 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon**  
**Sat, July 10 e-Recycling and more 9am-2pm**

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[www.StNicholasChurch.org](http://www.StNicholasChurch.org)  
*Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am*