

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, September 5, 2021

The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:2-12
Gospel: Matthew 18:23-35

Tone 2 • Resurrection Gospel 11

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FOOD PANTRY THIS THIS SATURDAY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center, **THIS Saturday, September 4th from 9 am - noon.** It is a great blessing to help those who could use the help. So, if you're open like to sharing a small part of your Saturday morning, please e-mail Nicole Apostola at nicole.apostola@gmail.com. She can give you more details. You'll see what a difference it makes.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION will begin **Sunday, September 12th.** We'll open with a short prayer and the new school year will get underway. Every child is welcomed! Our youth are not the future of our parish, they are our present. Parents, if you have questions please contact either [Gina Skaff](#) or [Fadi Girgis](#). **Also, please be sure to let them know if your child will be participating!**

THE CDC HAS REVISED ITS MASKING GUIDELINES due to the increase in infections because of the highly contagious Delta variant. It recommends that **people vaccinated against the coronavirus resume wearing masks** in public indoor spaces and schools where the virus is surging, and that **unvaccinated persons seek a vaccine** as soon as possible. Following this recommendation, we are now asking that all persons attending the Divine Services wear masks until the numbers are more favorable.

COMMUNITY NEWS

STS. ANARGYROI in Marlborough will be holding their annual Greek Festival, **THIS Labor Day weekend:** September 4th-6th. For more information check out their [website](#).

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.

STS. CONSTANTINE & HELEN in Webster will be holding their annual Greek Festival, Saturday and Sunday, September 11th-12th. For more information check out their [website](#).

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

COVID UPDATE. Per the new DPH guidelines, all visitors to the building will continue to be screened and offered a rapid Covid test. If a visitor is fully vaccinated and their loved one is fully vaccinated, as well as their roommate, you may visit in the room. Masks must be worn at all times, regardless of vaccination status. If you are not vaccinated, you may visit outside or in a designated space. We also continue to offer virtual and electronic communication. All Holy Trinity employees will be fully vaccinated by October 10th in accordance with the state mandate.

ADMISSIONS. Both long-term and short-term admissions continue to increase at Holy Trinity. See for yourself what makes us a top choice for your loved one's care. To inquire about admissions or to schedule a tour, please e-mail Director of Admissions [Karen Barry](#) or call (508) 852-1000, ext. 213.

ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCED. The General Assembly for the Eastern Orthodox Management Corporation, which operates Holy Trinity, is scheduled for **Thursday, September 30th at 6:00 pm**. It will be held virtually, and is open to all CEOC parish members, who are encouraged to attend. Please [click here](#) for details, or e-mail [Steve Fotos](#) with any questions.

HOLY TRINITY IS SEEKING NEW BOARD MEMBERS as we have a few terms ending in September. If you are interested in learning more about the opportunity to volunteer for one of these positions, as we guide Holy Trinity into the future, please e-mail Board Chair, [Steve Fotos](#).

REHABILITATION. You have the choice when it comes to short-term rehab. We offer outstanding services in our extraordinary, Medicare-certified center, including physical, occupational, and speech therapies. For nearly 25 years we've been helping patients restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain and prevent or limit physical disabilities from injuries or disease. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact our Director of Rehab, [Heather Walsh](#).

JOB OPENINGS. Holy Trinity is actively seeking a Staff Development Coordinator. Must have valid and current RN or LPN state licensure and experience in gerontological nursing. [Click here](#) for a full listing with detailed job descriptions, including CNAs, nurses, dietary aides, and PT cook. 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.

DIVINE LITURGY continues in-person for residents on Wednesday mornings. We welcome volunteers and visitors who would like to be involved.

STAY CONNECTED. Be sure to like our [Facebook page](#) for frequent updates and photos. This week residents enjoyed activities including sea life video trivia with a photo booth, and a prize auction. If your parish, social group, or family may be interested in sponsoring an activity or funding a specific need for our residents, please contact our Director of Development & Communications, [Mackenzie Koch](#).

HOLY TRINITY HAS RECEIVED A DEFICIENCY-FREE SURVEY result from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). The deficiency-free rating is one of the top indicators of excellence for nursing and rehabilitation facilities.

CHURCH NEW YEAR

September 1st

The first day of the Church New Year is also called the beginning of the Indiction. The term Indiction comes from a Latin word meaning, "to impose." It was originally applied to the imposition of taxes in Egypt. The first worldwide Indiction was in 312 when the Emperor Constantine (May 21) saw a miraculous vision of the Cross in the sky. Before the introduction of the Julian calendar, Rome began the New Year on September 1.

According to Holy Tradition, Christ entered the synagogue on September 1 to announce His mission to mankind (Luke 4:16-22). Quoting Isaiah 61:1-2), the Savior proclaimed, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to proclaim release to captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord..." This scene is depicted in a Vatican manuscript (Vatican, Biblioteca. Cod. Gr. 1613, p.1).

Tradition says that the Hebrews entered the Promised Land in September.

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin

September 8th

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of humanity.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of humankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is

revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since St Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcome the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Sts Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Sts Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feasts at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

St Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. St Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained to extreme old age and prepared themselves by virtuous life for a sublime calling: to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God, and of them would be born a most blessed daughter Mary, through Whom would come the Salvation of all the World.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all humankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate ... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion.

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 Lord, our God: We give thanks to you and praise you for all the wonders you have accomplished for us. We ask you to consider not our failings but the virtue of the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. From the womb was she chosen, like Jeremiah; and, like Samuel, she was conceived through prayer and offered to you. In body, mind, and spirit, she was resplendent with purity and holiness. Grant that we, too, may attain a guilelessness like hers, serving you every day of our lives as you deserve.

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

Is It for Oxen that God is Concerned?

This is the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, and the reading is taken from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, 9:2-12. In this excerpt, St. Paul is defending the authenticity of his Apostolic authority against some in the Corinthian community who appear to have challenged it.

From what we can understand of the arguments directed at undermining his authority, one point was that St. Paul did not exercise the normal prerogatives of an Apostle, such as being financially supported by the community. I say 'from what we can understand' because we have to infer the argument of those opposing St. Paul from his response. We do not have other documents — such as the original letters coming from Corinth to St. Paul — to know precisely what they were saying. Nevertheless, we can still glean a great deal from St. Paul's writings.

Without inflating his Apostleship, he tells them simply, "If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord." (v. 2) He doesn't raise his other missionary work as proof; he tells them to look to themselves and their own community, at the work he has done there in Corinth. This is proof enough.

He then addresses the Apostolic prerogatives that he has not availed himself of. "Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?" (v.4-6) He is telling them plainly that just because he chose not to burden the community with supporting him and Barnabas, it does not mean that he had forfeited this right. The Church community has a duty to support those preaching and ministering to them.

We are reminded in these verses of some historical facts. All of the original twelve Apostles, except for John, were married. Paul chose to remain unmarried, perhaps because of the arduous nature of the missionary activity he was called to, or perhaps because he felt that the Lord's coming would be very soon and the new age would then begin. Regardless, he claims his right to be married, without feeling the need to exercise it. (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:23ff)

Similarly, we know that St. Paul was a tent maker. This is how he supported himself when he would go to a new city to preach the Gospel. He and many others sacrificed a great deal in order to bring the Good News of salvation to people everywhere.

He then begins a very down to earth way of explaining why he has a right to expect to be compensated for his ministry among them. "Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk?" (v. 7) Each one of us feels that it is only fair that we receive adequate remuneration for our work. This is at the very heart of our life in common. This is the foundation of our economy. But, the basic principle is even more obvious.

"Do I say this on human authority?" asks St. Paul. "Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.' Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop." (v. 8-10) One of the more amazing aspects of the Law is that even three thousand or more years ago fair payment for work rendered was considered central to being in a right relationship with God. Moses tells us that God is concerned with just treatment of laborers.

Everything that St. Paul has said up until this point was to prepare us for his central point: "If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ." (v. 11-12)

Things are not so very different today as they were in first century Corinth. The question of properly compensating people for their labor is again at the center of our nation's economic discussion. People are working harder for less. The Scripture has something to say about this, despite the common misperception that religion has no place in economic discussions.

In the Church the question of clergy salaries remains a lively one. How much should the priest be compensated? Is he really worth it? At least here in North America, this question still sparks a discussion.

There has rarely been a time more than the present when the Church has needed the "best and the brightest" to devote themselves to the preaching of the Gospel. We live in an epoch of huge cultural shifts. People are searching for a way to understand these changes in society and find meaning — find God — in what they are experiencing. We need people who have more insight, more understanding, and more spiritual wisdom than the average person to help minister to us. These persons need to be compensated at least as well as other professionals whom we regularly engage to assist us in our earthly comings and goings. Very simply, if we ask people to help us spiritually, we need to support them and their families.

I believe that among the most important issues facing the Orthodox Church here is the adequate compensation of the clergy. If this issue is not addressed, the consequences will be dire. As St. Paul reminds us, "It is for oxen that God is concerned?" It is certainly both oxen and us.

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, Sept 4 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
Sept 4-6 Marlboro Greek Festival
Sun, Sept 12 Religious Ed Classes Begin
Sept 11-12 Webster Greek Festival
Thurs, Sept 16 Parish Council Meeting, 7pm
Thurs, Sept 30 Holy Trinity Gen Assembly, 6pm
Sat, Oct 2 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
Fri, Oct 15 Mustard Seed Meal

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