

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, September 12, 2021

The Sunday before the Elevation of the Precious Cross

Apostolic Reading: Galatians 6:11-18
Gospel: John 3:11-17

Tone 3 • Resurrection Gospel 1

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION begins this **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 FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS is **THIS** Tuesday, September 14th. We will celebrate the Feast with our sister parish of [Sts. Anargyroi](#) IN MARLBOROUGH. Liturgy at 10:00 am. We observe the Feast as a strict fast day.

WE NEED OFFERS OF BASIL to adorn the Cross for next Sunday. If you have some growing and would like to offer it, please speak with [Fr. Nick](#).

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. It is a great blessing to help those who could use the help. So, if you're open 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. Our next Saturday is October 2nd.

DONATE TO THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING! The news is filled with reports of people throughout the world who are suffering from the effects of all kinds of natural disasters and calamities. You can help. The International Orthodox Christian Charities is working in places across the globe. Check out the website, at: www.iocc.org. The IOCC is one of the top ranked relief organizations in the world, especially noted for its low overhead, directing most of the donations toward those in need. **Help those who are in need through our Orthodox Christian relief organization!**

THE PARISH COUNCIL will be holding its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, September 23rd at 7:00 pm. Parish Council Members, please let [Chris Seith](#) know if you are unable to attend.

A MEMORIAL WILL BE HELD THIS SUNDAY for Vasil Kristo fallen asleep one year today. **May his memory be eternal!**

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. CONSTANTINE & HELEN in Webster will be holding their annual Greek Festival, Saturday and Sunday, September 11th-12th. 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.

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](mailto:Karen.Barry@holytrinity.org) 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](mailto:Steve.Fotos@holytrinity.org) 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](mailto:Steve.Fotos@holytrinity.org).

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](mailto:Heather.Walsh@holytrinity.org).

JOB OPENINGS. The rehab team at Holy Trinity is growing! We are actively seeking per diem occupational therapists, certified occupational therapy assistants, and physical therapy assistants. [Click here](#) for a full listing of our openings with detailed job descriptions, including CNAs, nurses, dietary aides, and PT cook. If you have questions, please contact the Human Resources Generalist, [Kimberly Hescock](mailto:Kimberly.Hescock@holytrinity.org). 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. Our residents kept busy this week with activities including a Labor Day social, a painting class with resident artist Eunice, and a National Grandparents Day celebration. 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](mailto:Mackenzie.Koch@holytrinity.org).

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.

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

(For the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos)

Lord of all creation: We offer you praise and thanksgiving for all that you have done for us, from the creation of the universe and all its riches, to the brilliant salvation of our race that your Son accomplished in our very midst. Today we come before you to celebrate his mother's birthday, an event that stands on the border where shadows yield to light, where the new dispels the old, where we are finally united to realities and not just to signs and figures. For the sake of this wondrous woman whom you so favor, we beseech you to look favorably on us: Enable us to give birth to her Son in the spirit, just as surely as she gave birth to him in the flesh.

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



(For the Feast of the Cross)

O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: On this feast of the holy cross, that luminous beacon shining forth throughout the ages, we cry out to you from our darkness of mind and spirit. Let the light of this holy cross blaze forth in our lives, and let it illumine our enemies as well, so that, when it has dispelled the darkness from us all, we may cast off all the antipathy, distrust, and resentment we so easily hold for each other. As this light transforms and transfigures us, let it bring us together to feast the new creation brought about by your Son.

By the grace and mercy and love for mankind of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lifted Up Upon the Cross

This Sunday we prepare ourselves for the coming Feast of the Exaltation (Elevation) of the Precious Cross, celebrated on September 14th. The Gospel lesson is from St. John (3:13-17). It is part of his account of a discussion our Lord had with a Pharisee named Nikodemus. Nikodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling Council of the Jewish nation at that time. He, along with Joseph of Arimathea, would be among the ones to bury Jesus after his Crucifixion.

Nikodemus came to Jesus one night to talk to him and explore what Jesus was teaching. He came at night because while he perceived Jesus to be a "teacher who has come from God" (v. 2), he, Nikodemus, felt he should not broadcast his desire to hear and speak with Jesus in person. Not only was Nikodemus a prominent citizen of the nation, he was also a member of the ruling council. He knew that our Lord's message was a profound one, and was struggling to understand what this would mean for the nation, and he himself.

In this whole passage, that runs from John 3:1 through 3:21, we hear Jesus speak to him about the newness of God's Kingdom. He says we must be "born again" (v. 3). Nikodemus is confused, but Jesus guides him into a deeper understanding of God's mystery. He contrasts the difference of what it is to be born from earth, that is, to be born into this present existence, with what it is to be born from above, to be "born of the Spirit" (v. 8). Jesus gently reveals to him who He, Jesus, actually is. This is where today's Gospel lesson begins.

Jesus says to him: "No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man" (v. 14). Then, in a way that will only become clear to Nikodemus after Jesus' Resurrection, He speaks of His Crucifixion and the power it will have to change and save the world. "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life" (v. 14-15).

The reference here is to an incident in the desert when the children of Israel, after their liberation from Pharaoh and Egypt, became dissatisfied with their situation, and complained against God and Moses (cf. Numbers 21:5-9). In response, God sent fiery serpents that bit the people. Many died. Repenting, the people came to Moses and asked him to pray to the Lord that this curse be taken away. The Lord told Moses to make an image of a serpent out of bronze and to lift it high on his staff. Anyone who had been bitten, if they looked upon the bronze serpent, would live.

This might seem a rather obscure reference, even for those who have studied the Scriptures, but here is the point. Jesus tells Nikodemus that this incident in the desert was a prefiguring, a "type," of the Crucifixion. God had sent the serpents as punishment for the people's complaining and ingratitude. Then God tells Moses to use the very instrument of His punishment (the image of the serpent) as the means for healing and redemption. Jesus' self-sacrifice on the Cross uses the very curse that had befallen humanity because of Adam and Eve's sin, namely death, and transforms it into the means for our salvation. Jesus' sacrifice of his own life on the Cross becomes, for all of humanity, the path to redemption. If we look up with faith at the Lord hanging on the wood of the Cross, we too will be healed and live.

This Gospel lesson ends with a hopeful and prophetic set of passages, the most famous of which is: “for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but might have eternal life” (v. 16). When we contemplate these words of the Lord, we can begin to understand *why* God sent His Son. It is so that we can learn, through his example, his life, how to love God, and how to love one another. When we begin to feel the power of his sacrifice for us, then we will be able to perceive the real significance of this event that we celebrate — when the Precious Cross was found, unearthed, and lifted up for all to see.

God does not want us to die, but to live — forever. He does not consider “sin” the final word; “repentance” is. He offers us the remedy of the Cross, just as He offered the image of the serpent in the desert, as the way toward eternal life.

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, Sept 12 Religious Ed Classes Begin
Sept 11-12 Webster Greek Festival
Thurs, Sept 23 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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Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am