

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, October 3, 2021

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9

Gospel: Luke 6:31-36

(The Sermon on the Mount – Love of our Enemies)

Tone 6 • Resurrection Gospel 4

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FOOD PANTRY THIS SATURDAY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center, **THIS Saturday, October 2nd from 9 am - noon.** 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.

MUSTARD SEED MEAL. We are providing a meal for the Mustard Seed on **Friday, October 15th** for 80 visitors. Given the virus, the meals are now pre-packaged and ready to be distributed by their regular staff of volunteers. We are grateful to **Lisa Demake** who is sponsoring this month's meal for the health and well-being of her family members, and in memory of those fallen asleep. If you or your family would like to sponsor a meal or help with meal preparations, please contact **Deb Sedares** — by e-mail or phone: 508-509-6678.

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold a very brief meeting on **Monday, October 4th** to finalize the plans for the parking lot patching and sealing. Members, please let **Chris** know if you can't attend (login).

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 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.

YOUTH EVENTS UPDATE

ATTENTION: Young Adults, Teens, Tweens, and younger; (and, of course, parents)

We're planning a few events for this fall: get-togethers, retreats, and more.
Please take a look at the list below and save the time and dates on your calendar!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23rd in the afternoon. Exact program is being worked out. **Gina, Fadi,** and **Cristina** are the organizers. This is targeting the Religious Ed age group. Teens are welcomed and encouraged to help out! We'll have more details in the next week or so. Feel free to e-mail them (just click on their name).

BEE-TREATS FOR TEENS. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6th. Target age group: Grades 7-12. Teens from around Central Mass are all invited. Place: **Sts. Constantine and Helen** in Webster. **Steven Christoforou** is leading the retreat. Many of you know him from

the "Be the Bee" videos. [Click here for the flier](#) with more information.

That same evening a 6:00 pm there will be a **Young Adult Coffee House/"Theology on Tap"** — and evening of fellowship and sharing. [Click here for the flier](#) with more information.

A FALL RETREAT is planned for **Thursday, November 11th** (Veteran's Day — it's a school holiday). The theme is: **"Who Is The Holy Spirit."** Details will be available soon!

CHRISTMAS IS COMING (as the saying goes). We're going to dedicate a couple of the **Saturdays in December to PAGEANT REHEARSALS** and some more enjoyable activities for the kids. Dates and times will be forthcoming.

COMMUNITY NEWS

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

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED. You can now find us at www.holytrinityrehab.org!

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

REHABILITATION. Our short-term rehabilitation and post-hospital care includes orthopedic, cardiovascular, neurological, and post-surgical recovery and rehabilitation, to name a few. Our ultimate goal is to safely return patients to their homes, or other appropriate levels of care. We offer physical, occupational and speech therapies, with a commitment to the highest level of quality care, a focus on customer service and providing a nurturing environment for both patients and families. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact our Director of Rehab, [Heather Walsh](#).

WELLNESS TIP OF THE WEEK. As we prepare for the days to get shorter and the weather to get cooler, maintaining daily activity and exercise is extremely important as we spend more time indoors. Set a goal of 30 minutes a day, whether it's going for a walk around the neighborhood, raking leaves, or cleaning out a closet or organizing a room in your home.

ADMISSIONS. If you are choosing from a group of nursing centers, we encourage you to review the ratings of each facility for potential short term rehabilitative care or long-term placement. We are happy to answer any questions you have along the way and would welcome the opportunity to give you a tour of our nursing center. Please contact Director of Admissions [Karen Barry](#) or call (508) 852-1000, ext. 213.

JOB OPENINGS. We are seeking an Activities Assistant for a FT 32 hrs/week position. Must have experience in working in activities at a long-term senior care facility and be available every other weekend and some holidays. [Click here](#) for a full listing of our openings with detailed job descriptions, including nursing, reception, and dietary. 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. We are actively seeking volunteers, especially those able to assist with bingo, 1:1 visits, Men's club, events, and specialty hobbies, including knitting, crocheting, and quilting. All volunteers must be fully vaccinated. If your parish, social group, or family is interested in sponsoring an activity or funding a specific need for our residents, please contact our Director of Development & Communications, [Mackenzie Koch](#).

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.

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 triune God, one divinity in three persons: How magnificent are your majesty and glory! Our humanity, limited and frail as it is, knows the truth of this simply by looking at the grandeur of ourselves, not to mention of your other creations. Teach us how to contemplate your glory while we live in this world amid all the beauty your hands fashioned. Let us learn, too, from the ugliness by which we have marred your creation in so many ways, and help us to change that insofar as we are able.

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

Love Your Enemies, Do Good, Expect Nothing

There comes a point in our growth from child to adult when we begin to understand that words are not just written and spoken ideas, but are meant to take concrete form as an object or an action. Since the time I was old enough to appreciate the importance of what Jesus was saying to us through his words and his deeds, I have struggled to put what he was telling us into practice. For me, this is what it means to be a Christian.

Today's Gospel lesson (Luke 6:31-36) is a portion of St. Luke's account of the Lord's Sermon on the Mount. The reading begins with what's commonly called the Golden Rule: "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (v. 31), and ends with the injunction: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (v. 36). In between those two familiar phrases he offers us the path to live our lives in an entirely a new way. He wants us to become a different kind of person. Actually, he wants us become the kind of person he intended us to be from the outset.

The center of Jesus' message is love. He speaks about it powerfully. Most people are instinctively drawn to it. He asks us to love even to those who would do us harm. But how? Yes, how indeed.

When he began to preach, his way of speaking about both the Law of Moses and the sayings of the Prophets seemed to wipe away a cloud from the eyes of many of those who heard Him. The Scripture they had read and learned took on new meaning. People said, he spoke with "authority" (Luke 4:32). He changed the focus of "religion," as they had known and practiced it. God's law was not simply following rules, but listening to our conscience and following our heart, the place where our conscience resides. He said the Law is more than simple justice; it requires self-sacrificial love.

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them" (v. 32). The standard is no longer simple parity: what is done to me, I will do to you. Rather, he asks us to change our thinking from the inside out; or turn it upside down: How I would like to be treated is how I should treat you. If I am going to follow Christ, then I need to deal with friend or stranger by thinking of them first, putting myself in their shoes, and then act accordingly.

Clearly, this is not easy. Often we try to find ways to avoid taking what the Lord said too seriously. We tell ourselves that these are simply pious wishes, not really meant to be put fully into practice. We see them as so difficult to achieve that we tell ourselves it is unrealistic to imagine anyone could actually accomplish what is asked.

Or, we think that the Lord was simply teaching a moral code of life, possibly a higher (more "spiritual" in today's language) way of life, but a code that doesn't carry the weight of being God's command; something good to do, but not really required.

However, we have the witness of what Jesus actually did. The Lord's life and the way he lived it is testimony to the truth of what he said. His Death and Resurrection showed us the power it has to transform everything. The holy men and women who down through the centuries took Jesus' words seriously and lived by them show us that it is possible for us to do the same. We can see that the world becomes a different place when we live the Gospel. People around us can sense this, and come to treat each other with respect. It isn't just monks and nuns who are asked to follow Christ. The truth is that the most important "missionaries" are the good and faithful people of our parish communities who bring the life and light of the Gospel to home, and work, and the supermarket, to each and every place they go, each and every day. The Lord's words are not pious wishes. He lived by them. Christians for millennia have lived by them. We should live by them too.

Our Faith is not a moral code. It is a relationship with the living God. The Lord tells us to not simply **do** good, but rather to **be**

perfect (cf. Matthew 5:48). This means that we are called first to a life of holiness and sanctification. Doing good springs from the desire to be like God, to be holy. People say that they don't need faith to be a good person — perhaps. But, how would we know to distinguish between good and evil except that our conscience convicts us? In making us in His image (Genesis 1:26), God made us good, to do good. When we distance ourselves from God, our hearts (conscience) darkens and we lose our way. Without God in our lives we might try to make our own way — but it is a way without grounding and direction, no map and no GPS.

So, take the Lord's words seriously. Live them. "Love your enemies, do good, lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High." (v. 35)

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, Oct 2 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
Pita Dough Rolling 9am
Fri, Oct 15 Mustard Seed Meal
Thurs, Oct 21 Parish Council 7pm
Sat, Oct 23 Children's Retreat
Sat, Nov 6 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
[Be the Bee](#) Teen Retreat
Thurs, Nov 11 Children's Retreat

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