

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, November 21, 2021

The Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

Apostolic Reading: Ephesians 5:8-19

Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

(The Parable of the Rich Fool)

Tone 5 • Resurrection Gospel 11

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE CHRISTMAS FAST began this past **Monday, November 15th**. **FASTING IS THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS!** In addition to fasting from food, you may want to consider fasting from shopping as well — or at least choosing when and how much to shop. Don't shop on Thanksgiving. Use it as a family day. Don't shop on Sundays. Instead, relax with your friends. We can do things that will feed our souls, while perhaps striking a note for a saner society as well. God gave us the gift of his Son. Let us give the gift of ourselves to those around us.

TODAY IS IOCC SUNDAY — A Day of Sharing. The International Orthodox Christian Charities is the major charitable arm of the Orthodox Church. Based in the United States, it brings relief to people in need throughout the world. Our **Metropolitan Nicolae** is the IOCC liaison to the Assembly of Bishops. Download and read his IOCC Sunday letter by [clicking here](#). To **donate** go to the website: www.iocc.org, or call: (877) 803 IOCC (4622).

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR HOLY TRINITY RESIDENTS. Each year Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehab gives the Orthodox community the opportunity to provide Christmas Gifts for the facility's residents. This year, **our Parish is responsible for providing 15 of these gifts.** You will be asked to purchase and wrap the gift, and bring it to the Church, Sunday, December 13th. **Eleanor Sedares** (508-753-3106) and **Deb Sedares** (dsedares@pinehills.com) are coordinating this effort for our parish. There will be a sign up sheet at the entrance to the church if you would like to select a gift to purchase. ***Thank you and God bless you!***

THANKS TO THE e-RECYCLING TEAM for their work last Saturday: Gerry Belba, George Belba, and Andy Cavanaugh.

THE PATRONAL FEAST OF OUR PARISH HONORING ST. NICHOLAS will be observed with **Great Vespers on Sunday, December 5th** at 6:00 pm, and **Divine Liturgy on Monday, December 6th** at 10:00 am. ***Please mark your calendars and come and celebrate this beautiful feast!***

WE OBSERVE A MEMORIAL TODAY for the servant of God **Christy and Doxa Belba**, the parents of **George Belba**. ***May our Lord rest their souls among the just!***

The Town of Shrewsbury has revised its MASKING ORDER. Wearing masks is required in all indoor spaces, including Churches. We are now asking that all persons attending the Divine Services wear masks until is order is lifted.

COMMUNITY NEWS

10th Annual Shrewsbury Turkey Trot for the Memory will be held on Thanksgiving Day, on the Common. It's a 5-mile run and 2-mile fun run/walk to support Alzheimer's disease research. **Questions:** [James Heald](#) or [Jane Lizotte](#). **To register:** www.turkeytrotforthememory.org.

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

HOLY TRINITY

- Has been awarded a 4-star ranking by CMS
- Specializes in short-term rehabilitation with the goal of getting residents back to the community as quickly as possible.
- Is committed to providing exceptional care in a patient-centered environment. Whether residents are there for a short or long-term stay, all aspects of care are focused on meeting the individual's recovery goals.

LONG TERM CARE. Holy Trinity offers long-term care and end-of-life services. Knowledgeable and compassionate care is provided for long-term residents with chronic illnesses, dementia and other conditions. Residents are assisted to achieve as much independence as possible while enjoying the highest quality of life. Compassionate and dignified end-of-life services are also provided in a comforting, supportive environment.

SUB-ACUTE TRANSITIONAL CARE. Holy Trinity provides caring, compassionate, and skilled care in a nurturing environment to patients needing additional recovery time after a hospitalization, with staff experienced in caring for even the most serious health conditions and diagnoses. Interdisciplinary care plans play a vital role in ensuring that residents' physical, emotional and spiritual needs are met and that rehabilitation goals are attained.

We specialize in caring for patients with cardiovascular disease, neurological conditions, such as stroke, and post-surgical needs.

STAY CONNECTED. Be sure to like our [Facebook page](#) for frequent updates and photos.

You can now find us at www.holytrinityrehab.org!

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

Lord, our God: our Thanksgiving celebration makes us reflect on the riches of life. All too often, we take them for granted! We presume — if we really think about it at all! — that what we are and have is somehow all our own doing. As we prepare for the coming feast, help us to reach a better understanding of how things really are. Enable our minds and hearts to find inspiration and renewal by pondering the marvels life affords us at every turn. Show us how to receive everything and, indeed, every moment of life, as a gift. Cleanse our minds and hearts of the cynical and perverse desire to believe we simply have a right to everything that comes our way. Show us, rather, how indebted we are to everyone, beginning with you, and in all things lead us to yourself.

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

Eat, Drink, and Be Merry?

The Gospel lesson this week is the parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21). In the lectionary schedule of our Church, this parable is usually read near Thanksgiving, which proves to be quite appropriate. Thanksgiving is first and foremost about keeping the things of this life in perspective, and learning how to give thanks always, and for everything. The lesson of this parable is aim at these very points.

In order to better understand the parable, we should look at a few of the preceding verses. St. Luke tells us that while Jesus was teaching to a large gathering, someone from among the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me" (v. 13). Jesus responds with a question, asking why he (Jesus) should be the arbiter. Then the Lord says to him: "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (v. 15). This is the context in which the Lord tells them story of the Foolish Rich Man.

The parable itself is rather straightforward, even predictable. A certain wealthy person, presumably after a life's worth of work, finally had the kind of harvest that would set him up for his retirement. Not having the possibility of a 401k, he decided to build bigger barns in order to store the bumper crop. This would be his retirement income.

The Lord tells us that he then said to himself: "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry" (v. 19). He simply wants to be comfortable. He thinks that this is his due. He has accumulated all of this wealth, and now will be able to live off of it for a long time. And this is a reasonable expectation, except that he doesn't consider his own mortality.

God says to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you And the things you have prepared whose will they be?" (v. 20) Jesus concludes the story with this admonition: "So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God" (v. 21).

At first we are struck by the most obvious point of the parable, our own mortality and the unpredictability of death. But if we look a little more closely we can see that the Lord is saying much more than just "you can't take it with you." He is saying that "one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." There is more to life — our life — than what we might accumulate, or at least there should be.

Listen again to the last verse: "So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God." It is greed and selfishness that the Lord is warning us against. This man was thinking only of himself, not of others. He was not intending to share the wealth he had accumulated. He says to his soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." However, the wealth of one's soul is measured in good deeds, not in material possessions. Even more, consider this: what we give to others can never be lost or stolen. The generosity of our gift remains forever.

As we reflect on this parable we are reminded of another of Jesus' sayings: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

Soon we will be gathering with family and friends to celebrate the coming Thanksgiving holiday. For many of us it may be the first time we've seen many of them in person since the Covid outbreak began. This is a powerful moment and we should use it to ask ourselves: Where is our heart? That is to say, what do we value more than anything else? Our tables may be laden down with all good things, but are we rich in the eyes of God? If our lives were required of us this very night, and we were called before the Judge, which way would the scales tip?

The spiritual life — the Life in Christ — is about keeping the things of this earthly life in proper perspective. The old adage is true: you cannot buy happiness. The happy person is the one with a generous and gentle heart.

We live in a land of abundance, but so many around us go hungry. We try to make ourselves comfortable with the fading things of this life, while so many live in squalor. If we have been given much, then we need to share. If we share then Thanksgiving will truly fill our hearts. We will be rich, in God's eyes, and in our own as well.

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

The Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple

November 21

According to Holy Tradition, the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple took place in the following manner. The parents of the Virgin Mary, Saints Joachim and Anna, praying for an end to their childlessness, vowed that if a child were born to them, they would dedicate it to the service of God.

When the Most Holy Virgin reached the age of three, the holy parents decided to fulfill their vow. They gathered together their relatives and acquaintances, and dressed the All-Pure Virgin in Her finest clothes. Singing sacred songs and with lighted candles in their hands, virgins escorted Her to the Temple (Ps. 44/45:14-15). There the High Priest and several priests met the handmaiden of God. In the Temple, fifteen high steps led to the sanctuary, which only the priests and High Priest could enter. (Because they recited a Psalm on each step, Psalms 119/120-133/134 are called "Psalms of Ascent.") The child Mary, so it seemed, could not make it up this stairway. But just as they placed Her on the first step, strengthened by the power of God,

She quickly went up the remaining steps and ascended to the highest one. Then the High Priest, through inspiration from above, led the Most Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest entered once a year to offer a purifying sacrifice of blood. Therefore, all those present in the Temple were astonished at this most unusual occurrence.

After entrusting their child to the Heavenly Father, Joachim and Anna returned home. The All-Holy Virgin remained in the quarters for virgins near the Temple. According to the testimony of Holy Scripture (Exodus 38; 1 Kings 1: 28; Luke 2: 37), and also the historian Josephus Flavius, there were many living quarters around the Temple, in which those who were dedicated to the service of God dwelt.

The earthly life of the Most Holy Theotokos from Her infancy until She was taken up to Heaven is shrouded in deep mystery. Her life at the Jerusalem Temple was also a secret. "If anyone were to ask me," said Saint Jerome, "how the Most Holy Virgin spent the time of Her youth, I would answer that that is known to God Himself and the Archangel Gabriel, Her constant guardian."

But there are accounts in Church Tradition, that during the All-Pure Virgin's stay at the Temple, She grew up in a community of pious virgins, diligently read the Holy Scripture, occupied Herself with handicrafts, prayed constantly, and grew in love for God. From ancient times, the Church has celebrated the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple. Indications that the Feast was observed in the first centuries of Christianity are found in the traditions of Palestinian Christians, which say that the holy Empress Helen (May 21) built a church in honor of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa, in the fourth century, also mentions this Feast. In the eighth century Saints Germanus and Tarasius, Patriarchs of Constantinople, delivered sermons on the Feast of the Entry.

The Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple foretells God's blessing for the human race, the preaching of salvation, the promise of the coming of Christ.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, Nov 15 Christmas Lent Began
Sat, Dec 4 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
Sun, Dec 5 Great Vespers for St. Nicholas, 6pm
Mon, Dec 6 St. Nicholas Feast—Liturgy, 10am; Matins 9am
Thurs, Dec 16 Parish Council, 7pm
Fri, Dec 17 Mustard Seed Meal
Sun, Dec 19 Children's Christmas Program
Sat, Dec 25 Nativity of the Lord

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Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am