

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, December 5, 2021

The Twenty Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: Ephesians 6:10-17
Gospel: Luke 13:10-17
(Jesus Heals the Woman with Osteoporosis)

Tone 7 • Resurrection Gospel 2

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE ARE IN THE NATIVITY FAST. Let us use this time to withdraw from the noise of the "Christmas Season," and the stresses of the "world," in order to reflect on the great mystery of Emmanuel: God-with-us!

THE PATRONAL FEAST OF OUR PARISH HONORING ST. NICHOLAS IS THIS WEEKEND. We will celebrate **Great Vespers on Sunday, December 5th** at 6:00 pm, and **Divine Liturgy on Monday, December 6th** at 10:00 am, preceded by Matins at 9:00 am. ***Please come and celebrate this beautiful feast honoring St. Nicholas!***

REHEARSALS FOR THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT will be held **Saturdays December 11 and 18** in the afternoon from 5:00-7:00pm, in addition to Sundays during Religious Education classes. The Saturday rehearsals will be broken up with a Christmas and St. Nicholas movie. Any question, please see [Gina Skaff](#) after Sunday Liturgy, or [e-mail her](#). If you'd like to offer a little adult help in organizing the Pageant, this too would be greatly appreciated.

THE FOOD PANTRY IS THIS SATURDAY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center, **this Saturday, December 4th from 9 am - noon**. It is a great blessing to help those who could use the help. So, please share a small part of your Saturday morning. E-mail Nicole Apostola at nicole.apostola@gmail.com for more details. You'll see what a difference a little giving can make.

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. As usual, our parishioners have been very generous and we have the **15 gifts** covered. If you'd like to contribute, we're accepting cash donations to buy extras for the Holy Trinity residents. ***Questions?*** Talk to or [e-mail Deb Sedares](#), or call **Eleanor Sedares** at (508-753-3106). ***Thank you and God bless you!***

CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF ST. SPYRIDON with our sister community of St. Spyridon Cathedral. **Great Vespers NEXT Saturday at 6:30 pm.**

The Town of Shrewsbury has a MASKING ORDER. Masks are 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

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

We glorify you, Lord Jesus Christ, for allowing us to know you. Everything we have belongs to you and we possess nothing of our own, for it is you who gave us all we have. By coming into our midst, you show us how to let go of everything, and by the poverty of your birth, you teach us to be attached to nothing. As we prepare for the celebration of your earthly birthday, O Christ, keep our hearts fixed only on you, so that we may always sing: Glory to God in the heights; on earth peace, and among all love and understanding.

For you are God and we give you glory together with your Father Who is without beginning, and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Set Free from Our Bondage

This week's Gospel lesson is the story of how Jesus healed a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years (Luke 13:10-17). "She was bent over and quite unable to stand straight." (v. 11) Today we would say that she very likely had osteoporosis that led to curvature of the spine. Many of us know people who suffer in this way. Those of us who have had occasion to visit people in a nursing home have probably seen more than a few women like this. (It is something that afflicts women much more than men.) There was a woman in my neighborhood who was so bent over that it was impossible when seeing her, not to suffer with her. Needless to say, it is a debilitating illness, and this poor woman had been suffering like this for eighteen years.

This particular story is unique to the Gospel of St. Luke, which is in keeping with his habit of highlighting for us Jesus' attention toward the poor and the weak. Here, we are told, that while he was preaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath Jesus saw her and called her over to him. She didn't ask anything of him, but rather *He* reached out to *her*. From among all the people in the assembly, he noticed her and her suffering. He said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment" (v.12). Laying his hand on her she stood up straight and began praising God (v. 13).

He was immediately criticized by the leader of the synagogue for having broken the rules around work on the Sabbath. Jesus is outraged at the hypocrisy. He says, "Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water?" (v. 15) There were intricate rules around what could or could not be done on the Sabbath. In one commentary on the Law, tying and untying knots was strictly forbidden, while in another certain kinds of knots were exempt. Similarly, it was forbidden to lead animals more than 2,000 yards to water. Jesus is intimating that these rules were regularly broken out of necessity. No one would not tie or untie a rope or not water thirsty animals if their well-being were at stake.

This is the power behind his point, when he says: "Ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" (v. 16) The congregants immediately understand the hypocrisy and the lack of compassion that Jesus is decrying. I would also draw your attention to a subtle point in this account. Jesus says that **Satan** had bound this woman. Often we think that illness is a punishment from God, or just a natural part of life. The Lord calls this bondage, not punishment. He certainly doesn't see this as natural. He wanted her healthy and whole. Moveover, he wants us healthy and whole.

It is perhaps not too much to see in this crippled woman an image of humanity bound and held captive by the Evil One. It brings to mind the old Latin hymn that we sing at this time of year:

"O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear."

We should — each of us — prepare for His coming. We should set aside time for prayer and fasting, withdrawing from the frenzied pace of life. We should make room in our hearts to welcome that young child who comes to us, in order to free us, He who is the pre-eternal God.

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, Nov 15	Christmas Lent Began
Sat, Dec 4	Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon Pita Baking, 9am
Sun, Dec 5	Great Vespers for St. Nicholas, 6pm
Mon, Dec 6	St. Nicholas Feast—Liturgy, 10am; Matins 9am
Tues, Dec 7	Pita Baking, 9am
Sat, Dec 11	Pageant Rehearsal, 5-7:00 pm
Thurs, Dec 16	Parish Council, 7pm
Fri, Dec 17	Mustard Seed Meal
Sat, Dec 18	Pageant Rehearsal, 5-7:00 pm
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