

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, January 16, 2022

The Twenty-Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: Colossians 1:12-18

Gospel: Luke 17:12-19

(Jesus Heals the Ten Lepers)

Tone 5 • Resurrection Gospel 8

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE GREAT BLESSING OF WATER will be celebrated **after Liturgy this Sunday, January 16th**. We are asking people to **bring their own bottles** for Holy Water. We've run short. ***For questions about House Blessing, please see below.***

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold its regular monthly meeting this **Thursday, January 20th at 7:00 pm**. Parish Council members please let [Chris Seith](#) know if you are unable to attend.

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT was held on Sunday, January 2nd following the Divine Liturgy. It was a beautiful production. Our young people worked very hard these last weeks memorizing their lines, executing their parts, and inspiring all of us. A special thanks to the Religious Education teachers — **Gina Skaff, Cristina Iusco, and Daniel Shaheen** — as well as others in the parish, for organizing this annual event. And, give a word of thanks to the kids themselves when you see them on Sunday.

OUR SYMPATHY to Christine Masterjohn, and the entire Masterjohn family, on the falling asleep of their mother **Charmaine Masterjohn** this past Saturday. She and her husband Ralph were the parents of eight children and many grand and great-grand children. You may read the entire obituary by [clicking here](#). A good and pious women, we pray that our Lord will rest her soul among the righteous!

The Town of Shrewsbury has issued 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.

HOUSE BLESSING

WE CELEBRATED THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY last week. We mark the great self-revelation of God at the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the River Jordan by the hand of St. John the Baptist. We partake in the miracle of water restored and sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit through prayer. We then take God's gift and bless ourselves, our family, our homes, our work places — in short, everything. The local priest, often assisted by faithful parishioners, travels from place to place to spread and share this sanctification. This is the way it usually happens.

But these are not usual times. We are in the middle of a pandemic, and this current variant seems to spread much more quickly and easily. It does not seem prudent or safe to bless homes as we normally do.

However, there is a solution. Each one of us can take the water sanctified at the Great Blessing of Water and bless our own homes. This is an ancient and beautiful practice of our Church. Perhaps many of you have seen pious members of your family bless their homes on a regular basis with the reserve of water that they keep next to the household Ico. You can and should do this yourselves as well.

We've prepared a sheet with simple instructions and a service to follow. [You may download it here](#). If you would like Fr. Nick to come and bless your house, you may either [e-mail](#) him or call him at 508-335-7378, to set up a specific time.

Never forget, God is always with us! And please, return your extra Holy Water bottles. We're running short.

COMMUNITY NEWS

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE. Father Chris Stamas from St. Spyridon Cathedral will be leading a [trip to the Holy Lands](#) in November, 2022. With a goal of about 100 people, they can still accommodate up to 15 more people! The hope is to accommodate as many parishioners from our local parishes as possible. The dates are November 10-20 and the cost is \$3,500. Click here to see the flyer. For more information, [e-mail Fr. Chris](#).

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

In 2021, Holy Trinity was on the receiving end of an unprecedented outpouring of generosity by friends and family. Our mission to provide the highest quality of care and social programs for older adults was never more critical, or more imperative. In 2021, we raised \$56,637.52 which helped us purchase furniture for our residents' rooms, iPads for our residents, laptops for our nurses, personal protective equipment (PPE) for our staff, and so much more. Unrestricted giving allows Holy Trinity to use these gifts in the areas most needed. We wish to express our unending gratitude to our wonderful families, to our community, our friends and neighbors. Your donations and gifts bolstered our staff and brought smiles to our residents.

Your gift to our Treasured Generations Annual Appeal honors those we serve and ensures that we are able to continue to provide care and comfort to all seniors in need as we look ahead to the future

COVID UPDATE. We need to let you all know that we have had 18 staff test positive for COVID to date. Employees are vaccinated, doing ok, with mild symptoms. Contact tracing has been conducted. We have been testing every 3 days, during which all residents have continued to test negative. Out of the 18, 6 staff have returned to work.

It is time for us to be vigilant, apply all that we have learned and use all the tools we have in our toolbox to protect each other. The Omicron variant is highly transmissible.

This does not require you to change your own plans for visiting with resident, but you should be aware and make decisions you are comfortable with. Masking is more important than ever right now. As always, we will be in touch with any further updates.

REHABILITATION. Holy Trinity, we understand and respect your desire to return to your greatest level of independence after recovering from an illness, injury or surgery. Our nurses and licensed therapists focus on helping short-term rehabilitation patients recover successfully and return home as quickly as possible.

JOB OPENINGS. We are confident you will come to see that Holy Trinity is an organization that offers the not only an exceptional program for employees, but a working environment that is the best in the area! If you choose Holy Trinity, with its inspiring and rewarding organizational culture, you will join an organization that values employees as its greatest asset and nurtures an environment of trust, respect, and encouragement. Come work for an organization that walks the talk and cares about you and your well-being! We have openings for nurses and CNAs for all shifts, Admission Director and Maintenance Director. [Click here](#) for a full listing of our openings with detailed job descriptions. Recent grads and people familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

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

Blessed are you, Lord Jesus, light of lights, who enlighten all creation with your resplendent brilliance! By coming into our midst, you enable us to pursue a new way of life, free of the burdens of the old law, for, in your infinite wisdom, you give us the marvelous mystery of your holy church wherein we work out our salvation with your divine help. In your great compassion pardon us of all our faults and failings, and purify us of all that displeases you. Fill our minds with understanding, help us to grow in love as well as wisdom, and deepen our faithfulness to you with every new day.

For you are indeed our 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 to the ages of ages. Amen.

Get Up, Your Faith Has Made You Well

This week's Gospel reading is the account of the healing of the ten lepers (Luke 17:12-19). While very much written in the form of a parable, it is, in fact, true story. The use of the parable style was most likely intended as a teaching tool. And, without a doubt, there is a lot to learn from this story.

Ten men were afflicted with leprosy. They happened upon Jesus, begged for mercy and were healed. To be stricken with leprosy was like being given a living death sentence. You were seen as cursed and unclean. Someone who had contracted leprosy was driven from family and friends. To imagine what it was like, think on the Ebola epidemic and how devastating it was (and is) for people who contracted it and those who came in contact with them. Or, like the HIV/AIDS epidemic, especially in the early days. People were forced to isolate and hide. They were ostracized from family and friends, and often died quite alone. Right now we are living through a worldwide pandemic that forces people to quarantine from those even in their own household. Thinking on all of these things should help us to appreciate what it was like to be a leper, to be forced to hide and live apart, sometimes in a colony, but often alone. In many ways, it was worse than being dead.

When Jesus entered this particular village the ten of them recognize him, and, while keeping their distance, called to him saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" (v. 12-13) It is clear from the way they address him that they understood who he was. They most likely had heard of his healing power. Jesus answers them simply: "Go and show yourselves to the priests" (v. 14).

The priests were the only ones authorized to attest to a healing. Today we understand that what people in Biblical times called "leprosy" could have been other skin ailments as well, not necessarily Hansen's Disease. Nonetheless, neither Hansen's, nor skin conditions such as eczema, are easily cured. For Jesus to have told those afflicted to present themselves to the priests meant that they were healed.

As they were traveling on their way to the priests, the ten looked and saw that they had indeed been made whole. But only one of them, when he realized he had been healed, turned back and fell at the feet of Jesus to thank him. It is at this point that we realize how this man is different from the other nine, and not only because of his feeling of gratitude. He's of a different nation. He is a Samaritan (v. 15-16).

Jesus then says something he usually doesn't say after he has healed someone. He asks, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" (v. 17-18) The first thing to note is that in the way Jesus asks the question, he is telling us that the other nine were Jews. The second point that jumps out at us is that he wants us to know there is something else special about this man, apart from the fact that he is a Samaritan. He is grateful from his heart. Jesus gives us an insight into the character of this person.

We know that there was a tension between Jews and Samaritans (cf. John 4:5ff). However, apart from this man's particular ethnic and religious differences — his social standing — we are encouraged to put aside our prejudices and to look at his character. We see that he possesses a depth of heart that seems to be missing from the other nine. Ask yourself, if you had been healed of such a grievous illness, could you imagine that you would not run back to thank the person who had healed you? Yet, as we see here in this passage, 90% of this small sampling of humanity did not. And, from experience, I might hazard a guess that this is probably closer to the rule, rather than an exception. But, can it really be that most people would not stop to give thanks, neither to the person who healed them nor to God? Would you? This is the question that Jesus asks us to ponder.

Many of the Patristic commentators use this passage as a way to emphasize the ingratitude of the Jews and the gratitude of the Gentiles. I truly do not think this is the point of the story. So often we are quick to call on God and promise anything when we are suffering or in a moment of crisis. But, do we remember our promises when we have become well, when our need has passed? When we become comfortable again and can resume our normal lives, do we reflect on God's help and love for us? Moments of hardship and distress can transform us. If we practiced gratitude and thoughtfulness before, it is likely we'll

continue on this path. But we need to be constantly vigilant.

In the final verse of this account Jesus tells the Samaritan: "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well" (v. 19). But what of the other nine who were also cured? If it was this man's faith that cured him, how were these other nine cured? God's Grace falls as rain on each and every one of us. God continues to pour His love down, whether we deserve it or not, hoping that we will turn back to fall at His feet and give thanks (v. 16).

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Thurs, Jan 20 Parish Council, 7:00 pm
Sat, Jan 29 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Sat, Feb 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Sun, Feb 13 Triodion Begins
Fri, Feb 18 Mustard Seed Meal
Sat, Feb 26 Saturday of the Dead
Sun, Feb 27 Last Judgment/Meatfare Sunday
Sun, March 6 Forgiveness Sunday/Cheesefare Sunday
Mon, March 7 Great Lent Begins
Sun, April 25 Great and Holy Pascha

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