

# ***News from St. Nick's***

## **Sunday, February 27, 2022**

### **Sunday of the Last Judgment**

***Meatfare Sunday***

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***Apostolic Reading: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2***

***Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46***

***Tone 3 • Resurrection Gospel 3***

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

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

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***THE SATURDAY OF THE SOULS / SĂMBĂȚA MORȚILOR*** is **THIS Saturday, February 26th**. Matins at 9:00 am and Liturgy at 10:00 am. If you would like to learn more about why and how we remember those fallen asleep, especially on this Saturday, [please click here](#).

***OUR SATURDAY AT THE FOOD PANTRY*** is **NEXT SATURDAY March 5th**. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center. 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 once a month, please e-mail Nicole Apostola at [nicole.apostola@gmail.com](mailto:nicole.apostola@gmail.com). She can give you more details. You'll see what a difference it makes.

***PITA DOUGH ROLLING SESSION*** will be held on **Saturday March 5th**. If you'd like to help, please contact Betty Anderson by [e-mail](#) or phone: **508-353-9449**. Remember: ***There's a job for everyone!***

***VESPERS AND CONFESSION*** will be held each Saturday evening at 5:00pm during Great Lent, beginning March 5th. Fr. Nick will be available for confession each week after Vespers, and before Vespers by appointment ([e-mail Fr. Nick](#)).

***THE MOVIE MAN OF GOD*** on the [life of St. Nektarios](#) will be shone on **Monday, March 21st at 7:00pm**, at the Regal Cinema in Marlborough. We are buying a block of tickets. Please let [Fr. Nick](#) know if you would like to go and how many tickets you will need. **It's important that we have a count**. Before the showing that night, at 5:15pm, Fr. Greg will be holding a compline service at Sts. Anagyroi in Marlborough. The relics of St. Nektarios will be there for veneration. We've been given is a unique opportunity.

***THE FIRST PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY*** during the Lenten season will be held at **St. George Cathedral** on Anna Street in Worcester on March 9th at 6:00pm.

***THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY*** is **March 13th**. We'll be gathering for **VESPERS** at St. Spyridon Cathedral at 6:30pm to celebrate together on this first Sunday of Lent. ***Please plan on being there.***

***THANKS TO THE MUSTARD SEED VOLUNTEERS!*** Those who prepared the meals, and distributed them last Friday! We are grateful to **Maria Dumitriu** who sponsored this month's meal. The next meal is scheduled for April 15th. If you or your family would like to help with meal preparations, please contact **Deb Sedares** by [e-mail](#) or phone: 508-509-6678.

***WE OBSERVE A MEMORIAL TODAY***, for the servant of God **Kamal Shaheen**, the father of Daniel Shaheen, fallen asleep six months. We also remember other members of their family fallen asleep. ***May their memory be eternal!***

***The Town of Shrewsbury has lifted its masking order.*** While encouraged for persons with certain medical conditions or are unvaccinated, masks are no longer required in indoor spaces.

## LENTEN RESOURCES

***We are beginning the journey toward Pascha, the Lord's Resurrection. To help along the way, each week we'll be posting some resources and reflections aimed at assisting and informing.***

**THE SATURDAY BEFORE THE SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.** On the day before the Sunday of the Last Judgment, and in close connection with the theme of this Sunday, there is a universal commemoration of the dead 'from all the ages'. (There are further commemorations of the dead on the second, third and fourth Saturdays in Lent.) Before we call to mind the Second Coming of Christ in the services on Sunday, we commend to God all those departed before us, who are now awaiting the Last Judgment. In the texts for this Saturday there is a strong sense of the continuing bond of mutual love that links together all the members of the Church, whether alive or dead. For those who believe in the risen Christ, death does not constitute an impassable barrier, since all are alive in Him; the departed are still our brethren, members of the same family with us, and so we are conscious of the need to pray insistently on their behalf.

**THE SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.** (Gospel reading: Matthew 25:31–46). The two past Sundays spoke to us of God's patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our judge. 'Behold the goodness and severity of God' (Rom. 11:22). Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the End comes. In the words of the Great Canon:

The end draws near, my soul, the end draws near;  
Yet thou dost not care or make ready.  
The time grows short, rise up: the Judge is at the door.  
The days of our life pass swiftly, as a dream, as a flower.

This Sunday sets before us the 'eschatological' dimension of Lent: the Great Fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Saviour, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come. (This is a theme that will be taken up in the first three days of Holy Week.) Nor is the judgment merely in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts towards others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgment on ourselves.

**FASTING RULES.** One question that often comes up is: [What are the Fasting rules? We've linked here](#) one of the better explanations of the rules around fasting. It is taken from the *Lenten Triodion*, translated and edited by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware and Mother Mary. If you've never been exposed to the whole discipline of the Fast, reading the rules can seem very daunting. You should seek advice from your spiritual father; no one should try this without guidance.

## 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.

## NOTES FROM HOLY TRINITY

**COVID-19 UPDATE** - Holy Trinity continues to be Covid-Free at this time. We do have a dedicate section for Covid + patient whom admit to Holy Trinity for rehabilitation.

**VISITORS** - Holy Trinity families and friends are now able to visit in our designated area and resident rooms. Per the guidance, visitation may vary based on individual status. All visitors are required to do a temperature check, sanitize their hands, and wear a new medical grade mask upon entry. **NEW ADMISSIONS** - Holy Trinity is open for admissions. To inquire about admissions, for either long-term or short-term rehab, please call (508) 852-1000.

**VOLUNTEERS** – We are especially excited to invite back our church groups who may be interested in hosting a luncheon or coffee social or assisting with Liturgy. We also are looking for someone who is interested in leading a Men's Group (card games, sports, model cars), assisting with Greek Club, or lending their artistic talents in the areas of painting, sewing, knitting, etc. Those who are fully vaccinated may be considered to volunteer. Please call [Donna with the Activities department](#) at (508) 852-1000 to discuss one of the many ways you can lend a helping hand.

**JOB OPENINGS.** Come work for an organization that walks the talk and cares about you and your well-being! We have openings for Physical and Occupational Therapists, Nurses, and CNAs for all shifts. [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.

***DIVINE LITURGY*** is celebrated each Wednesday morning at 9:30 am for the residents. We welcome volunteers and visitors who would like to attend and be involved.

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

You can now find us at [www.holytrinityrehab.org](http://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**

**This morning, Christ Jesus,** like David, we again ask you to forgive us all our sins, but especially those against the virtue of love. Forgive us for so often failing to love our neighbor by disdainingly our peers and resentfully resisting those who have any authority over us, by defaming our brothers and sisters as arrogant while elevating ourselves as models of humility, and by failing to love them and care for them while demanding unreasonable attentions for ourselves. Forgive us, a Lord, for our constant readiness to notice their every fault and failing while minimizing our own. Pardon us all of these, O Christ, and the countless other ways we sin against love, ways we cannot even remember. During these lenten days, turn us around and make true lovers of us, lest we find ourselves rejected from the paschal banquet.

For you, O Christ, deserve all glory, honor, and worship, together with your eternal Father, and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

## ***The Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian***

**O Lord and master of my life!  
Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness,  
of ambition and vain talk!**

**Instead, give me  
the spirit of prudence and humility,  
of patience and charity.**

**Yes, my king and Lord,  
let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others:  
For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.**

## ***When the Son of Man Comes in Glory***

**This is Meat-fare Sunday, the last preparatory Sunday before the beginning of Lent.** The appointed Gospel reading is the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). Unlike in other places in the Gospels where the Lord speaks of the Kingdom of God through parables, here he speaks directly of what his Coming will be like. Also, the Gospels lessons for the past two Sundays — the parables of the Publican and Pharisee, and the Prodigal Son — were gentle admonitions urging us toward repentance. Here the Lord clearly tells us what will be expected of us when we are judged.

The first thing we should pay attention to is that at the final judgment everyone will be gathered in front of the Judge, and

then separated into two groups (v. 32). Up until that time good and evil were allowed to commingle in the world. At the judgment they will be separated, on the right and on the left, sheep from goats, good from evil.

People often wonder about the presence of evil in the world and why the Lord allows it to exist. Jesus explains this in the parable of an enemy who sowed weeds in a newly planted wheat field (Matthew 13:24-30). When the householder found out what his enemy had done, and his servants asked what they should do, he told them to leave the weeds alone, because in gathering the weeds they would uproot the wheat as well (v. 29). "Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at the harvest time I will tell the reapers, 'Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn'" (v. 30). The Last Judgment is the "harvest time."

The second thing we should notice is the standard by which we will be judged: I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me. Everyone is capable of doing this. These acts of kindness form the very basis of our humanity.

If we aspire to be human, we need to be compassionate. The Lord doesn't speak here of Christian values such as love of enemy and self-sacrifice to the point of death. He will not expect this of everyone. Actually, he isn't even expecting what today we would call "systemic solutions." He doesn't say, "I was in prison and you freed me." Rather, he says, "I was in prison and you visited me." What will be expected of us is a basic emotion, one that we are all capable of: empathy. Empathy, coupled with a willingness to act in order to alleviate the suffering of the person in front of us, is the mark of a humanity to which each of us is called.

I am often asked how God will judge people of other faiths. This is the answer. God will judge us by how we have treated the weakest and most vulnerable among us. He identifies himself with the least and the smallest. Everyone is capable of compassion. Each of us can learn not be selfish and self-centered.

The third thing that should be pointed out is how the Judge addresses each of the two groups. To those on the right he says, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (v. 34). The "blessed" are heirs, children of God. The kingdom was prepared for them when God created the world. This is God's eternal intention for us.

To those on the left he says, "You are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (v. 41). The fires of eternal punishment were not and are not intended for us. We are called to be the children of God. Separation from God and punishment are the results of being blind to the suffering of others.

We live in a world where there is hunger and poverty, sickness and suffering, all around us. Each of us must stop and think. How will we answer on that dread day when we stand before the judge, and our deeds are laid bare before angels and people?

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

Sat, Feb 26	Saturday of the Dead, Liturgy 10 am
Sun, Feb 27	Last Judgment/Meatfare Sunday
Week of Feb 27	Fasting from Meat - Cheese/Dairy Allowed
Sun, March 6	Forgiveness Sunday/Cheesefare Sunday
Mon, March 7	Great Lent Begins
Wed, March 9	PreSanctified, St George Cathedral, 6 pm
Sun, March 13	Sun of Orthodoxy Vespers, St. Spyridon, 6:30 pm
Sun, April 17	Western Easter
Sun, April 24	Great and Holy Pascha

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