

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, March 13, 2022

The Sunday of Orthodoxy The First Sunday of Great Lent

— REMEMBER: Set Clocks *AHEAD* One Hour —

Apostolic Reading: Hebrews 11:24-26; 32-40

Gospel: John 1:43-51

(Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael)

Tone 5 • Resurrection Gospel 5

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREAT LENT began this past Monday, March 7th. Tomorrow marks the start of the second week of Lent.

THE PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY THIS WEDNESDAY, March 16th will be hosted by our St. Nicholas Parish. We are responsible for providing a light Lenten meal following the service. Donations of prepared Lenten foods are needed as well as help with set up, serving and clean up. Please talk to [Betty Anderson](#) or [Presvytera Maria](#) during coffee hour today! For the full PreSanctified Schedule, scroll down below.

A PITA BAKING SESSION is set for this **Tuesday, March 15th**. 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!***

THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY is TODAY, 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.***

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold it's regular monthly meeting this **Thursday, March 17th**, at 7:00pm. Parish Council members please let [Chris Seith](#) know if you're unable to attend.

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 a unique opportunity.

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

UKRAINIAN RELIEF. The **Saint Paraskeva Orthodox Charity** in partnership with our Metropolia is working with the Archdiocese of Suceava and Rădăuți to support Ukrainian war refugees in transit or intending to stay in Romania. This region of Romania is one of the major entry points for persons fleeing the invasion of Ukraine. Funds collected will assist the monasteries and parishes in the diocese that have set up more than 500 fully equipped shelters. If you would like to learn more about this effort and contribute, please [click here for the website of Saint Parascheva Charity](#) or go to their [Facebook page](#).

OUR ON-LINE GIVING SYSTEM HAS BEEN UPGRADED! Please check it out by [clicking here](#), or by using the **ON-LINE** link on our parish homepage. You may use this option to submit one-time or recurring payments.

A MEMORIAL will be observed today for the servant of God **Nița Dumitriu**, fallen asleep six months. The Dumitriu family will be sponsoring the Coffee Hour. **May his 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 SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY. The sense of joy and thanksgiving, already evident on the Saturday of St. Theodore, is still more apparent on the first Sunday in Lent, when we celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy. On this day the Church commemorates the final ending of the Iconoclast controversy and the definitive restoration of the holy ikons to the churches by the Empress Theodora, acting as regent for her young son Michael III. This took place on the first Sunday in Lent, 11 March 843. There is, however, not only a historical link between the first Sunday and the restoration of the ikons but also, as in the case of St. Theodore, a spiritual affinity. If Orthodoxy triumphed in the epoch of the Iconoclast controversy, this was because so many of the faithful were prepared to undergo exile, torture, and even death, for the sake of the truth. The Feast of Orthodoxy is above all a celebration in honour of the martyrs and confessors who struggled and suffered for the faith: hence its appropriateness for the season of Lent, when we are striving to imitate the martyrs by means of our ascetic self-denial. The fixing of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday is therefore much more than the result of some chance historical conjunction.

The *Triodion* gives the text of a special 'Office of Orthodoxy', which is held at the end of Mattins or, more commonly, at the end of the Divine Liturgy on this Sunday. The Office celebrates not only the restoration of the holy ikons but, more generally, the victory of the true faith over all heresies and errors. A procession is made with the holy ikons, and after this extracts are read from the synodical decree of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787). Then sixty anathemas are pronounced against various heretics dating from the third to the fourteenth century; 'Eternal Memory' is sung in honour of the emperors, patriarchs and fathers who defended the Orthodox faith; and 'Many Years' is proclaimed in honour of our present rulers and bishops. Unfortunately in many parts of the Orthodox Church today this impressive service has fallen into disuse; elsewhere it is performed in a greatly abbreviated form.

Before the Triumph of Orthodoxy came to be celebrated on the first Sunday, there was on this day a commemoration of Moses, Aaron, Samuel and the prophets. Traces of this more ancient observance can still be seen in the choice of Epistle reading at the Liturgy (Hebrews 11:24–6, 32–40), and in the Alleluia verse appointed before the Gospel: 'Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His Name'.

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.

PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY SCHEDULE

Wednesday, March 9, 2022
St. George

Wednesday, March 30, 2022
St. Spyridon

Wednesday, March 16, 2022
St. Nicholas

Wednesday, April 6, 2022
Sts. Anargyroi

Wednesday, March 23, 2022
St. Mary

Wednesday, April 13, 2022
St. Nicholas

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest 'pot-luck' lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others

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

A BLAST FROM THE PAST - Do you remember some of Worcester's hot spots of yesterday, such as: the 1975 Webster House, the old El Morocco restaurant on Wall St., or the Table Talk factory on Green Street? Thanks to a generous donation from the late William Nimee, 12 photos from the Worcester Historical Museum are now hanging in the hallways of Hillside for the enjoyment of our long-term residents. In the future, more photos will grace the hallways of the Courtyard and Hillside units.

COVID-19 UPDATE - Holy Trinity currently has one employee who tested positive for Covid and is now in recovery. In addition, two Covid patients, recently admitted for rehabilitation, are quarantined in our dedication isolation rooms.

JOB OPENINGS. Skilled, highly respected, and valued professionals are the hallmark of our patient-centered care. To join our award-winning team and advance your career, [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.

NEW ADMISSIONS - We have limited number of beds available at this time; to inquire about long-term or short-term rehab admissions, please call **Mary Charmchi** at (508) 852-1000, ext. 204, or email her at mcharmchi@htnr.net.

LEND A HELPING HAND - We are looking for fully vaccinated summer interns who would like to get hands-on experience in administration, marketing, as well as help us implement fun and engaging activities for our patients. To lend a helping hand, please call Director of Activities **Donna Benard** at (508) 852-1000, ext. 282, or e-mail her at dbenard@htnr.net.

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

Glory to you, O Father, for sending us your only Son to be our salvation! Glory to you, O Christ, for dying on the cross to give us life! Glory to you, O Holy Spirit, for initiating and perfecting the mystery of our salvation! We again ask you to bring our lenten observances to fruition. Enable us to internalize our external practices, and convert us to the truth in spite of us, showing us how to think and live correctly. Help us to hold onto confidence and endurance, so that, by doing your will, we may reap the rewards you promise. And, as we rejoice in this season of grace, enable us to remain focused on the paschal mysteries, so that our joy may be completed by seeing them fulfilled in our lives.

For you are indeed our God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy 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.**

Moses Fasted and Saw God

The Epistle lesson for this first Sunday of Lent is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews (11:24-26; 32-40). In chapter eleven of Hebrews St. Paul speaks of the meaning of faith and opens with his famous definition: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). He then gives us examples of people who down through the centuries, while not seeing and realizing the promise given them by God, nevertheless continued to persevere. Some of the verses from today's reading (v. 32-40) are also read on the Sunday before Christmas to remind us of how God's promise was realized in the birth of the Messiah. We read these words again, as we begin the Fast, to remind ourselves of the faith of all of those holy people — those saints — who persevered, never faltering in that faith in the promise.

What St. Paul says in Hebrews bears directly on what we celebrate this first Sunday of Lent. We remember how after a long civil struggle, holy images — icons — were restored in the life and worship of the Church. And while the struggle centered around painted or mosaic images of our Lord, his mother, and the other saints, the issue went much deeper than a controversy over artwork. The question was, and continues to be, how does the invisible God make Himself known in our world?

The first and most important way God is visible in the world is in each of us. We believe that every human being is created in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). I think it is not too much to say we are God's living icons, or, at the very least, we are called to be that. This verse of Genesis says that God created us in His image and likeness. Reflecting on these two words, theologians have come to see a growth dynamic between the image of God "burned" into our very being, and the day-to-day way we strive to make that image within us real and visible. The men and women we call "holy" are those who through trial and adversity kept their faith with God. When we look at them, we see God. More importantly, when a holy person looks at us, they too see God, in spite of all of our imperfections and doubts — the ways we ourselves struggle with our faith.

Today the iconoclast struggle takes a different form. Many fellow Christians have difficulty understanding the role of saints. The most straight-forward way to understand why we honor the saints is that these holy people — some of whom we recognize and know, but vastly more whom we do not know and are known only by God — are given to us as examples and role models. In a world where celebrities are idolized and discarded, we are in serious need of people whom we can trust and follow.

The beauty of the saints is that they are people like us; people created in God's image who struggled to make their likeness match God's design. Some speak to us more directly because we can recognize our own struggle in the difficulties they endured. Others we simply admire for their total commitment to God and neighbor. They reveal God in a real and actual way. They worked and work in the world, making His presence known.

In this eleventh chapter St. Paul cites many such examples of persons of faith, but he highlights two in particular: Abraham and Moses. The verses we read before Christmas featured Abraham, because he was Jesus' very-great-grandfather, through Mary. In the first three verses of today's reading St. Paul concentrates on Moses.

We begin Lent by remembering Moses first and foremost because he is a "type" or image of Christ. Both were liberators. Moses foreshadowed the freedom Christ would bring. As Moses freed the children of Israel from slavery to Pharaoh and Egypt, Jesus, our Savior, freed us from slavery to Satan and death. As Moses led his people through the waters of the Red Sea changing them from slaves to free persons, our Lord changes us from mortal to immortal in the waters of Baptism. As Moses renounced his royal status, embracing the low-status of his people, Christ left the heights of heaven to be one with us.

This is how St. Paul puts it: "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward" (v. 24-26).

Moses renounces the comfort of Pharaoh's house, choosing to "share ill-treatment with the people of God." In Philippians St. Paul speaks of how Christ identified himself with us, his people, by emptying himself. He took on the form of a servant. Even though he was in the form of God, he did not cling to his equality with God. He became humble and obedient, even to the

point of death (cf. Philippians 2:6-8).

In Moses we see a preview of what God was planning for us in Jesus Christ. In Moses' faith we see what God intends for each one of us, if we too share his faith. But lest we think that this faith Moses had was easy for him, pick up your Bible and read the Book of Exodus. It's not long. In it you will read not only of his confrontation with Pharaoh, but also the struggles Moses had with his brother Aaron, the whining of the Israelites, and his own temptations and sins. Throughout, he persevered and was rewarded by God.

In a hymn we sang last Sunday during Matins we heard: "Moses fasted for forty days and saw God." We are encouraged to follow his example, especially during Lent, so that we too might see Christ, radiant and risen.

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, March 7	Great Lent Began
Sun, March 13	Sun of Orthodoxy Vespers, St. Spyridon, 6:30 pm
Wed, March 16	PreSanctified, St. Nicholas, 6 pm
Thurs, March 17	Parish Council, 7:00 pm
Sat, March 19	Vespers/Confession, 5 pm
Mon, March 21	Movie, Man of God, Life of St. Nektarios
Wed, March 23	PreSanctified, St. Mary, 6 pm
Fri, March 25	Feast of the Annunciation
Sat, March 26	Vespers/Confession, 5 pm
Wed, March 30	PreSanctified, St. Spyridon 6 pm
Sat, April 2	Food Pantry, 9 am - noon Vespers/Confession, 5 pm
Fri, April 15	Mustard Seed Meal
Sun, April 17	Western Easter
Sun, April 24	Great and Holy Pascha

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
34 Gold St | Shrewsbury MA 01545-6238
508-845-0088 | fax: 508-845-8850 | email: info@StNicholasChurch.org
www.StNicholasChurch.org
Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am