

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, April 17, 2022

The Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem

Apostolic Reading: Philippians 4:4-9

Gospel: John 12:1-8

Everything of the Feast

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A REMINDER: HOLY WEEK SERVICES begin each evening at 6:00 pm. The complete schedule along with the various announcements, from Lazarus Saturday through Pascha, ***may be downloaded here***. It is also available at the candles and on our parish website.

THANKS TO OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED VOLUNTEERS who prepared the meal for this Friday and our sponsors: ***Sandra Nedelescu*** who sponsored this month's meal in memory her father ***Alexandru***, grandmother ***Ecaterina***, and great-aunt ***Victoria***, as well as ***Hannah Datz and Sam Scavuzzo*** who are honoring their daughter ***Clara Genevieve Datz*** who was recently baptized. ***May our loving Lord bless them!*** If you or your family would like to help with meal preparations, please contact ***Deb Sedares*** — by e-mail or phone: 508-509-6678.

PASCHA DONATIONS. The list of items that people may donate to decorate and enhance our Paschal celebration is ***available here for download***. If you'd like to donate anything, please see ***Betty Anderson***, or e-mail her at ***bettya16@verizon.net*** or call her at: 508-335-9449.

THE GREAT FRIDAY CHILDREN'S RETREAT for the younger children will be held on ***Great Friday, April 22nd*** starting at 12:30 pm, and concluding with a celebration of Great Vespers at 2:00 pm. Older children and teens are also welcome. There are many ways each can help. For additional information and offers to assist, contact ***Gina Skaff***. Please ***RSVP by April 16th*** to Gina at ***ginaskaff@hotmail.com*** or 508-873-9600.

THANKS TO THE BAKERS! As we've been carefully ramping up to our pre-pandemic baking levels, we should never forget the dedicated people (mostly ladies, but some brave men) who have been working hard to fill orders for the coming holiday season. We need to especially thank ***Betty Anderson*** who has been tireless in keeping this going. ***God bless her and all those who have stepped up to the plate!***

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.

HOLY WEEK DONATIONS

General donations in any amount to defray the cost of decorations for the Paschal Feast are most appreciated. Some specific needs are:

Flowers for Palm Sunday Icon	50.00
Palms	\$100.00
Flowers for Bridegroom Icon	\$50.00
Holy Thursday Gospel Candles	\$60.00
Wreaths for Cross (Great Friday)	\$75.00
(Resurrection)	\$75.00
Resurrection Icon	\$50.00
Bay Leaves for Holy Saturday	\$100.00
1 Gallon of Olive Oil	\$25.00
1/2 lb Incense	\$40.00
Priest's Paschal Candle	\$50.00
Rose Oil for Epitaphion	\$25.00

Flowers for Epitaphion	\$600.00
Decorations/Plants for Pascha	\$250.00
Easter Candy/Gifts for Children	\$100.00

*Please see Betty Anderson to make a donation
call: 508-353-9449 ✦ e-mail: bettya16@verizon.net*

COMMUNITY NEWS

A MEDICATION TAKE BACK opportunity will be held on **Saturday, April 30th from 10:00am to 2:00pm**, at the Shrewsbury Senior Center, 98 Maple Ave, Shrewsbury. No fee. No proof of identification. No questions. This is open to the general public. Bring in your expired or unused medications for safe and proper disposal. If you're unable to make it that day, you can search for year-round Pharmaceutical Public Disposal Locations by [clicking here](#).

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

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE - April's the time to celebrate Occupational Therapy Month. Occupational Therapy, or OT, is the only profession that helps rehabilitate individuals experiencing medical, psychological, developmental, and cognitive challenges. Holy Trinity's lead Occupational Therapist, **Nina Asfoura**, is a member of St. George Orthodox Cathedral and a 1st generation Syrian American, who works to help long-term residents and short-term patients regain life skills through meaningful therapeutic activities. "It's a very rewarding profession," comments Nina. "I use a variety of modalities available including ultrasound, diatherapy, electrical stimulation, and standard testing for cognitive abilities. I also recommend a variety of adaptive equipment and assistive devices." Nina is part of a team that includes a speech and language pathologist and physical therapists.

HOLY TRINITY IS HERE TO HELP! - While we have a limited number of beds available, if you need long-term or short-term rehab admissions, please call our **Admissions Director, Mary Charmchi**, on her cell: (774) 502-5745 or, by email: mcharmchi@htnr.net.

COVID-19 UPDATE - There are currently no Covid-positive Holy Trinity residents or employees.

JOB OPENINGS - Recent grads and people familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply. To join our award-winning team and advance your career, [Click here](#) for a full listing of our openings with detailed job descriptions.

CHECK OUT THE LATEST ISSUE OF THE HOLY TRINITY BULLETIN! [Click here to download it.](#)

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 Lord, for letting us live to enjoy the beautiful day that celebrates the triumphal entry of your Son into Jerusalem. As we add our own hosannas to those of the people who welcomed him, number us among those who hymn you forever. Give us all we need to live in a way that is pleasing to you. Take pity on those whom your own hands fashioned and for love of whom your Son sojourned on this earth. Bring a loving peace and unity to your churches, disturbed by so many divisions and contrary opinions. Grant us all remission of our sins, and, by the prayers of the Theotokos and all your saints, enable us to offer you this morning worship with attention and true devotion.

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

Palm Sunday

Come with me on a trip to a time past, yet still ever-present. Come and visit in our mind's eye that Sunday two thousand years ago when Christ entered Jerusalem as King. We feel the atmosphere charged with electricity. We can see that the whole city is buzzing with the news of the great prophet who had just raised a man who had been dead for four days. We silently ask ourselves, "Could this Jesus be the one? Could he be the Savior, the Anointed of God who is to rescue my country?" Having waited so long for the promised Messiah, we ponder in our hearts whether it will be our generation that sees the restoration of Jerusalem.

It is the time of the great feast of Pascha — the Passover — when we recall how Moses led our people from captivity in Egypt to freedom here in Palestine. But, truth be told, it has been downhill since. Certainly there were moments of glory under David and Solomon, but that was one thousand years ago. Since then we have been occupied by one foreign power after another. Now it's the Romans. God promised someone who would free us. Can this Jesus be the one?

All of a sudden there is a commotion. I look around and there is a crowd running toward the city gates. Someone shouts out "Hosanna" (it means, "Lord, save us"). Another person says, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Someone else says, "He is the King of Israel." But in my mind I can only think that he really doesn't look like much of a king. While there is something magnetic about him, I find it hard to believe can he lead my nation against the Romans. These people are calling him Lord and King, but how can I be sure? If I am going to commit myself to him, I want to know that I won't end up tortured and executed.

The questions haven't really changed much since that Sunday two thousand years ago. The person of Jesus Christ remains as controversial. The claims made on us by him remain as difficult. One isn't compelled any more today than then to recognize Christ as King and Lord. Perhaps it is easier today to fall into 'worshiping' him as God. The Church is organized and people are born and baptized into the Faith. But, at some point, after having heard all the stories about him, each of us must face the very personal choice of accepting him or rejecting him. It is not like voting in a secret ballot election for president. While it is a personal choice, it is not a private one. We will be asked to take a palm branch in our hands and cry out loud: "Hosanna!"

Many people, perhaps most, find this a difficult decision. I suspect that among the reasons is that if we make a choice to follow Jesus Christ we are being asked to make a total commitment. Or, to put it into classical terminology, we are being asked to recognize Him as King and Lord. This is a decision going far beyond who we think would be best to serve as president. We are choosing who will rule our very life.

We live in an era where democracy is the norm and its guiding principle is: "the government that governs least, governs best." But in Christ's time rulers had total authority over your life. To say that someone was your King and Lord was to give your life over to him in a very real way. This is the reason why so many Christians were tortured and killed by the Roman authorities when they refused to call the Emperor "Lord." It was treason; an act of sedition.

While we likely would not be physically threatened for calling Christ our Lord in today's society and culture, the spiritual struggle is as intense. At the same time we should never forget that many places in the world do not play by our rules. People

are tortured and killed today for being Christians. Many more are ostracized and discriminated against. Yet even within the context of our relative freedom, the decision remains a profound one.

When we recognize Christ as our King, then we must dislodge the king presently reigning over our hearts: our own ego. This is not an easy task. And, I think, herein lies our dilemma. To accept Christ is first and foremost to deny ourselves. This is what the Lord Himself asks of us (cf. Mark 8:34). He also says that to save our life is to lose it, and to lose our life, for His sake, is to gain it (cf. Mark 8:35).

Unlike any other king or any other ruler, we believe Jesus Christ to be God who lived and continues to live among us. There is no proof of this. Either you accept it or reject it. If you say to yourself: "If only I could see a miracle, a sign, then I would believe," just remember that there were people present who saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, and not only did not believe, but plotted to put Him to death (cf. John 11:46).

To pick up the palm branch, to take that step, is a decision to change the focus of our life. It is to set our course on a heavenly goal. We leave behind our self-centeredness and our selfishness in order to devote our life to Christ.

One of the hymns we sing on Palm Sunday says: "Buried with you through baptism, O Christ our Lord, we have been granted immortal life by your resurrection." For most of us this commitment was made for us at our baptism, when we were infants. Of courses, we were truly baptized into the death and resurrection of the Lord, but we were not consciously making the decision at the time. However, there comes a time when we must affirm or reject that commitment. It is totally voluntary — no one will force us — but we do need to reaffirm that commitment made on our behalf when we were young, now totally our own.

Christ did not enter Jerusalem with an army. Rather, He rode on the foal of an ass led by children. Those who picked up branches recognizing him as King did so persuaded by the force of his person, by the light of the divinity permeating His being. This same Christ exists today as he did then. He doesn't force by external means. There are no armies making us believe. There is only the person of Jesus Christ, compelling in His humility. "The King of heaven, who enters Jerusalem seated upon a humble colt as though upon a lofty throne" (*from Palm Sunday Matins*).

If we are moved by this sight of children and adults running to worship the King; if as we stand there trying to decide whether or not to pick up a palm branch, we are compelled by the warm and loving Lord who comes to free His people not by violence, but by sacrifice; if there is only the smallest impulse within us that cannot let the Lord pass by without adding our voice to the chorus of praise; then stand up and act on it! For who can be unmoved as the King passes? "The mountains and hills break forth into great rejoicing at the mercy of God, and the trees of the forest clap their hands" (*Palm Sunday Matins*). Can we just stand by? Will we remain unchanged by this encounter with the Lord?

What if the procession were to stop, and the Lord were to call us out of the crowd as he did Zacchæus (cf. Luke 19:5)? What would our reaction be? Could we continue to be apathetic or hesitant?

The Lord asks this commitment from us every day. We can choose to answer His call with the words of the hymnographer, "Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us together, and we all take up your Cross and say: 'Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!'"

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Fri, April 15 Mustard Seed Meal
Sat, April 16 Lazarus Sat, Liturgy 10 am
Vespers/Confession, 5 pm
Sun, April 17 Palm Sunday
(Western Easter)
April 17-24 **HOLY WEEK**, Services at 6 pm
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