

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN AUGUST 30, 2009

12TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

This is the last Sunday of "Summer Hours," beginning next **Sunday, September 6th**, Matins will be at 9 am and Divine Liturgy will begin 10am.

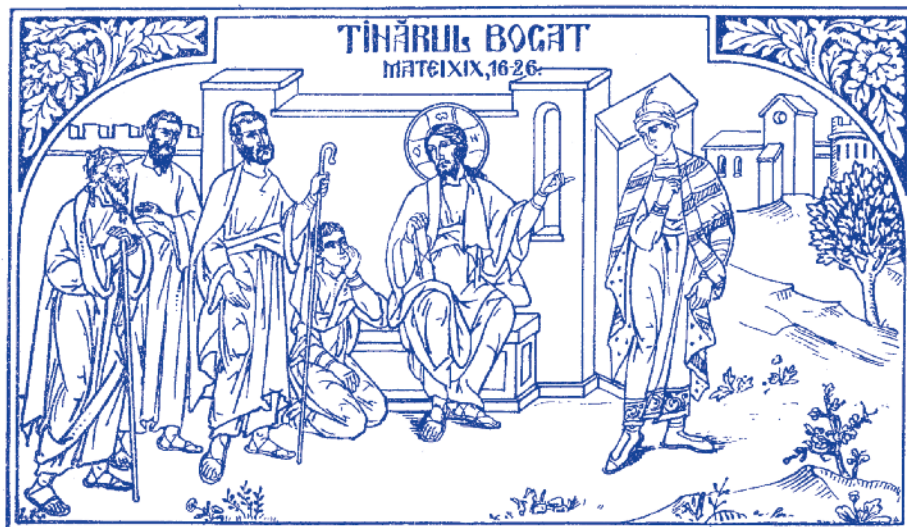
You learned last Sunday of the plans to purchase a **new sign for the Church**, to more clearly identify our community and to take advantage of the local traffic on Rt. 140 to promote fundraising events. The sign will have several lines of changeable letters within a locked case, so that we can change our message as needed. We want to recognize several parishioners who have made gifts to support this effort, the **Keimig Family, Elva Gartsu, and Steve Thoren** who cut down the trees that needed to be removed. We also want to especially thank **Joanne Prizio and family** for her most generous gift, which enabled this project to reach fruition. May God bless you for your generosity of heart and spirit.

The monthly **Parish Council meeting** will be held on **Tuesday evening, September 8 at 6:30** at the church, rather than the usual Monday due to the Labor Day Holiday.

The opening ceremonies for **Religious Education for children will be Sunday, September 20th**. Registration Forms are available at Church. We ask

USHERS TEAM 2:
LISA MIELNICKI AND JIM CHRISTO

ALTAR TEAM B



TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST THE RICH YOUNG MAN (MATTHEW 19:16-26)

that you complete and return those forms ASAP so we may plan appropriately. Please speak with **Preoteasa Maria or Deb Sedares** if you have any questions.

"OLD STYLE CHURCH PICNIC"

On **Sunday, September 13th**, we will once again host an "Old Style Church Picnic" here on the Church grounds. The theme will be **"Bring a Friend to Church."** In celebration of our 60th Anniversary year, we encourage you to invite friends and neighbors to visit the "open house" we will have set-up in the Church for visitors and guests to tour the Church and learn a little bit more about the Orthodox Faith.

The **Picnic Lunch will be served from noon - 3pm, with an "a-la-carte" menu** of Lamb Shish-ke-bab with Pilaf & Roasted Vegetables, "Mititei" - Traditional Romanian Lamb & Beef Sausage, Spinach, Leek, and Cheese "Pita," Ethnic Pastries and Delicious Sweets, and for the kids; Hot dogs, Hamburgers, and Ice Cream.

For the picnic, **help is needed** to prepare "shish" on **Thursday, August 27 at 6 pm, and Saturday August 29 at 9 am**. Please let **Deb Sedares** know if you can help.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

You have received a letter in the mail inviting you to participate in **Holy Trinity's Treasured Generations 2009 Annual Fund**. This annual gift program helps to provide the highest quality of care that we believe every "senior citizens in residence" deserve.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sat, Sept 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
- Tues, Sept 8 Parish Council Mtg. 6:30pm
- Sat, Sept 12 Picnic Set Up / Food Prep
- Sun, Sept 13 St. Nicholas Parish Picnic
- Sun, Sept 20 Religious Ed Classes begin
- Sat, Oct 10 Electronic Recycle Day & Car Wash
- Sun, Oct 18 Parish Luncheon
- Sat, Nov 21 Harvest Bake Sale and Luncheon
- Sun, Nov 22 Parish Thanksgiving Luncheon
- Sat/Sun Dec 5-6 60th Anniversary
Feastday Celebration

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

You may also visit www.htnr.net to give online. Please be generous.

Save the Date!! Holy Trinity is planning a special **15th Anniversary celebration** titled "Rehabilitate with Laughter" on Friday, October 2, 2009, at 6:30 pm at the Manor Restaurant in West Boylston. Carol Fotos is coordinating reservations from our Parish. You may speak with her in Church or contact: carol.fotos.47@gmail.com



**THE BEHEADING OF THE PROPHET,
FORERUNNER OF THE LORD,
JOHN THE BAPTIST**

The Evangelists Matthew (Mt.14:1-12) and Mark (Mark 6:14-29) provide accounts about the martyric end of John the Baptist in the year 32 after the Birth of Christ.

Following the Baptism of the Lord, St John the Baptist was locked up in prison by Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch and governor of Galilee. The prophet of God John openly denounced Herod for having left his lawful wife, the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas, and then instead cohabiting with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip (Luke 3:19-20). On his birthday, Herod made a feast for dignitaries, the elders and a thousand chief citizens. Salome, the daughter of Herod, danced before the guests and charmed Herod. In gratitude to the girl, he swore to give her whatever she would ask, up to half his kingdom.

NAMEDAYS

August 26

The Holy Martyrs Adrian and Natalia at Nicomedia

Natalia Grace Dorogi
Natasha Zhaka

August 29

St. Theodora of Thessalonika

Gina Theodora Trakadas

August 30

**St. Alexander,
Patriarch of Constantinople**

Alexander Charalambides
Aleksandar Cheverevski
Emilia Alexandra Galeriu
Dr. Alexander Gouvelis
Alexandra Mazanitis
Alexander Moe
Alexandru Nace
Conner Alexander Polymeros
Alexander James Trakadas

The vile girl on the advice of her wicked mother Herodias asked that she be given the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod became apprehensive, for he feared the wrath of God for the murder of a prophet, whom earlier he had heeded. He also feared the people, who loved the holy Forerunner. But because of the guests and his careless oath, he gave orders to cut off the head of St John and to give it to Salome.

According to Tradition, the mouth of the dead preacher of repentance once more opened and proclaimed: "Herod, you should not have the wife of your brother Philip." Salome took the platter with the head of St John and gave it to her mother. The frenzied Herodias repeatedly stabbed the tongue of the prophet with a needle and buried his holy head in a unclean place. But the pious Joanna, wife of Herod's steward Chuza, buried the head of John the Baptist in an earthen vessel on the Mount of Olives. The holy body of John the Baptist was taken that night by his disciples and buried at Sebastia, there where the wicked deed had been done.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O GOD, prevent us from being content solely with not disobeying your law, though we satisfy all our whims otherwise! Give us, first, the consciousness to be aware of this, and then, the integrity to desist from it once and for all. Inspire us to seek the heights of perfection by rising out of the pit of our mediocrity.

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

The judgment of God came upon Herod, Herodias and Salome, even during their earthly life. Salome, crossing the River Sikoris in winter, fell through the ice. The ice gave way in such a way that her body was in the water, but her head was trapped above the ice. It was similar to how she once had danced with her feet upon the ground, but now she flailed helplessly in the icy water. Thus she was trapped until that time when the sharp ice cut through her neck.

Her corpse was not found, but they brought the head to Herod and Herodias, as once they had brought them the head of St John the Baptist. The Arab king Aretas, in revenge for the disrespect shown his daughter, made war against Herod. The defeated Herod suffered the wrath of the Roman emperor Caius Caligula (37-41) and was exiled with Herodias first to Gaul, and then to Spain.

The Beheading of St John the Baptist, a Feast day established by the Church, is also a strict fast day because of the grief of Christians at the violent death of the saint.

LISTEN TO THE WEEKLY NATIONAL ORTHODOX RADIO BROADCAST "COME RECEIVE THE LIGHT"

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

SO WE PREACH, AND SO YOU BELIEVE

THIS is the twelfth Sunday after Pentecost and we continue reading from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, specifically 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. We should remember that the Corinthian community was composed of many volatile elements. While some were Jewish converts, others had been pagan and only recently acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures. All were heavily influenced by the wide variety of philosophical and religious beliefs current in cosmopolitan Corinth. In this letter St. Paul is attempting to correct their thinking; to bring them back to the principles of faith that he had originally taught them.

In verse 12 and what follows, St. Paul tells us that some of the Corinthians had begun to question the belief in the bodily resurrection of Christ, and their own at the time of the second coming. Others believed that the "resurrection" had already occurred, that is, Christ, having risen from the dead, inaugurated the new world; they were living the "resurrected" existence in the here and now. This is the background for what he writes in today's lesson

St. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the gospel that he preached to them, and that they accepted to live by. He said that in believing in Christ's gift of salvation, they should "hold it fast—unless [they] believed in vain." (v. 1-2) He reiterates for them the very center of our Christian faith: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures." (v. 3-4) In these two verses St. Paul makes four very important points.

The first is that Christ died. To say that he died means that he was born, was human, and was susceptible to all of the frailties of our condition.

The second is that he died and was buried. This means that there was no illusion about his death. This was not the figment of someone's imagination, or

simply a story told. To be buried means that everyone who saw it believed he was dead.

The third is that this all occurred according to the scriptures, meaning the Old Testament, the Psalms, the Prophecies, and the other writings. Most of these were well known among Jewish religious scholars. The Lord himself quoted some. Others are given to us by St. Paul and the other New Testament authors.

The fourth, and most important, is that he rose from the dead on the third day. St. Paul says, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." (v. 14) Christ's resurrection from the dead is the cornerstone of our faith.

He again reminds the Corinthians of the witnesses to Christ's rising. "He appeared to Cephas [i.e., Peter], then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me." (v. 5-8)

St. Paul references many people, most of whom were still alive at his writing. These are concrete witnesses to both the Lord's death on the Cross, and his resurrection afterward. St. Paul, who did not witness him dead, nonetheless did experience the Lord on the road to Damascus. These eyewitnesses are the ones on whom our faith is grounded. When he says: "I delivered to you ... what I also received," he wants to remind them that he did not invent the story, nor was he the only witness. Many saw and many believed. We should take note that St. Paul does not mention Mary Magdalene, the other Myrrh-bearing women, and especially his own Mother as witnesses, even though Tradition and Scripture has it that he appeared first to his Mother, then to the other women, and then to the other disciples gathered in the upper room. The reason for St.

Paul's omission is simple. He is speaking as a Jew to other Jews. In those days (however we might think of it today) by Jewish Law only the witness of men was valid; women's witness had no authority; hence the omission. St. Paul's intension is to bolster his argument with what others would consider to be authentic verification. He wanted to give credence to the most important things, the facts themselves and those who could verify them.

In the list of "witnesses" he mentions himself as the last of all: "For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." (v. 9) He doesn't want to aggrandize himself. He simply states the facts. "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me." (v. 10)

Here is St. Paul's central point: "Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed." (v. 11) In one sense it does not matter who tells you the "good news;" the preacher is irrelevant. It is the truth of the message that matters. You verify the truth of the story from your own experience of God's truth in the witness itself. God opens your heart to hear the "Good News" What St. Paul means is that it is the authenticity of the witness that matters, not necessarily the standing of the person. When someone testifies to us of their experience of God, we believe because we sense in their witness a reality that goes beyond that particular person. If we do not find God in what they say, for example if we sense they are preaching themselves, not Jesus, then we walk away unconvinced.

St. Paul asks the Corinthians and us as well to encounter and know the Risen Christ for ourselves: to know Him and in this way to believe for ourselves.