

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN OCTOBER 11, 2009

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

We will hold a **Special General Assembly** on Sunday, October 25, 2009 immediately following Divine Liturgy. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an update to the parish concerning the financial condition of the parish and to present a proposal obtained from Commerce Bank for refinancing of the current church mortgage. We will be requesting a vote from the General Assembly to authorize the officers of the Parish Council to undertake the refinancing. Please plan on attending this important meeting.

Heading into the Fall season, we are again preparing for the sale of our wonderful **Pastry Platters**. Last year we doubled sales from the prior year, and this year we hope to do that again! We have created an "e-flier" with colored pictures of our platters that we ask you to send to your friends and family. They could place orders with you, or use the contacts on the flier directly. Please request this flier by **e-mailing [pastry@stnicholaschurch.org](mailto:pastry@stnicholaschurch.org)** and we will forward it to you.

We have planned to prepare food and serve the visitors at the **Mustard Seed on Friday, October 16th**. The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day. Please e-mail Fr. Nick or Deb Sedares if you would like to

USHERS TEAM 3:  
MARY ANNA DYMEK &  
EVAN STAMOULIS  
ALTAR TEAM B



### THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (LUKE 8:5-15)

#### THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER AND THE SEED

#### THE SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE 7TH ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL

help with either preparing food or serving

- Several people are needed to help with the preparation of the meal. Please contact Deb Sedares if you can help ([dsedares@pinehills.com](mailto:dsedares@pinehills.com)).
- Volunteers meet at the Church at 5:00 pm to transport the meal to the Mustard Seed, to be served promptly at 5:45.
- We encourage teens and pre-teens to participate by assisting with serving the meals.
- If you have committed to help serve, and are unable to do so, please let Fr. Nick know ASAP.
- We also invite donations to cover the \$250 cost of providing that meal.

### LOOKING AHEAD

We will host a **Parish Luncheon following Liturgy on Sunday, October 18**. The menu will be roast chicken, oven roasted potatoes and glazed carrots served family style. The cost will be **\$15.00 for Adults and \$5.00 for children 12 and under**. Advance reservations are required,

and can be made by speaking to Eleanor Sedares in Church. Please spread the word to your friends and family and invite them to attend to help support your church.

For that Luncheon, **volunteers are needed** to help prepare and serve the meal. Likewise, **donations of baked goods** (cakes, cupcakes, cookies, etc) for the dessert table are also requested. Lastly, we welcome donations to **help underwrite the cost of the meal**. All proceeds will benefit St. Nicholas. See **Deb Sedares or Chris Toda** or sign up on the Volunteer Board in the church hall.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

- Fri, Oct 16 Mustard Seed Meal
- Sun, Oct 18 Parish Luncheon
- Sun, Oct 25 Special General Assembly
- Sat, Nov 7 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
- Sat, Nov 21 Harvest Bake Sale and Luncheon  
E-Recycling Day
- 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*

The “**Fall Cleaning E-Waste Recycling Day**” will be held in conjunction with our **Thanksgiving Bake Sale and Luncheon on Saturday, November 21st from 9-3 here at the Church**. In one day, you can get rid of unwanted electronic appliances at a minimal cost and protect the environment, purchase our wonderful pitas and pastries for Thanksgiving, and have lunch while you’re there too! Fliers are on the tables in coffee hour with all of the details.

### COMMUNITY NEWS

**St. George Women’s Club** announces their annual **fashion show on Thursday, October 15, 2009, “The Sound-track of Your Life”** featuring “Couture Designs by Nasrin” and live music by Clyde of England, along with Dragon Fly Jewelry designs by Mina. Reservations are on a first-come first-served basis, and can be made by contacting Pam Samara at (508) 769-8338 or email pms@townisp.com. Dinner is at 7:00pm and the show starts at 8:00pm. This year, they have pledged to donate a portion of our proceeds to the orphans that reside at the Convent of Saidnaya (Our Lady) outside of Damascus, Syria.

**St. Spyridon Cathedral is hosting a Basketball Clinic** for all children on **Saturday, October 24**, at Becker College, Leicester Campus. The schedule is as follows: Elementary Grades 4 & 5th, 9am — Middle School Grades 6-8, 9am – High School Grades 9-12, Noon. The Registration Fee is \$10 (Includes a t-shirt!) Beginners in all brackets will learn and improve their skills. A waiver notice must be signed by parents. To register, please contact George Leasca at 508-751-5654

St. Mary’s Albanian Orthodox Church is sponsoring a **Costume Party and Dance on Friday Night, October 30th**. They will have a DJ, food, drinks etc. It

is not a “Halloween” Party, but a fun night so they young people (ages 13-17) can get to meet one another. The party is for the members of our Orthodox parishes (please, not for “friends” outside of our communities). If interested, please see Fr. Nick or Tim.

### HOLY TRINITY NEWS

The **Holy Trinity Activities and Volunteer Department** provides many fun activities and meaningful moments for our residents. *Please come and join our volunteer team!* The residents truly appreciate your time and company. Volunteering at our facility is a deeply rewarding Christian experience. If interested, please contact: Catherine E. Sabatini at 508-852-1000 or e-mail: csabatini@htnr.net

**Holy Trinity Hospice “Transitions”: A Grief and Healing Support Group** meets every other Wednesday from 6-7:30pm. It is free and open to the public. Light refreshments served. It is held at Holy Trinity Hospice, at Washburn House, 1183 Main Street, Worcester, MA. For more info and to pre-register, e-mail David Day or call at 508-791-8200.

#### October 13

##### **St. Edward the Confessor**

Brian Edward Miner

#### October 18

##### **The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke**

Luke Alexander Demma  
Fr. Luke Veronis

#### October 20

##### **The Great-martyr Artemius of Antioch**

Artemis Gouvelis

### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**L**ORD our God: We consider ourselves upright folk — often, even better than others! — but our minds and hearts are actually far from you. We confess that, truth be told, we are not really that concerned with what heaven holds for us, nor are we truly interested in you on this earth. At time we doubt even that you exist! And we are not even sure there is a heaven or hell! In any case, our concerns, we fear, are bound much too securely to this world in which we live. Take hold of our hand, then; guide us with your counsel and, in the end, welcome us to glory.

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

### NAMEDAYS

#### October 26

##### **The Holy Great-martyr Dimitrios of Thessalonika**

Dimitri Soterios Apostola  
Dimitra Belica  
Dimitri Daniel Christo  
James L. Christo  
James Demake  
Dimitri Disho  
Dimitraq Lolo  
Dimitraqi Lolo  
James Seferi  
James Evan Stamoulis  
James Trakadas

LISTEN TO THE WEEKLY NATIONAL ORTHODOX RADIO BROADCAST “COME RECEIVE THE LIGHT”

BY WEB OR PODCAST: [WWW.RECEIVE.ORG](http://WWW.RECEIVE.ORG)

## AVOID STUPID CONTROVERSIES

**T**HE Epistle lesson this week is related to the commemoration of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, the second held in Nicea in 787ad. This was the Council that addressed the issue of the proper role of icons in the Church. The selection today is from St. Paul's letter to his disciple and co-worker Titus (3:8-15). In this Letter he addresses some of the finer points of pastoring a community, especially an early Christian one still influenced by many pagan enticements.

We read today from the very last verses of that Letter. St. Paul, after giving Titus his advice on how to guide the community in a Christian way, tells him: "I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men." (v. 8) St. Paul is a man of action. He believes that the principles of faith are meant to be put into practice. This is true as well of many of the spiritual fathers of the Church. They believed that by practicing acts of charity and good works a person integrated their faith into their very being. It is not enough for someone to have good intentions in their head; they also needed to act on these same intentions with their hands.

He warns Titus to "avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile." (v. 9) This isn't to say that Titus himself was prone to such controversies, but rather that itinerant preachers were stirring up things everywhere. People in local communities, informed or ignorant, would form camps and tear each other apart. This is what St. Paul is concerned about.

He tells Titus: "As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned." (v. 10-11)

The word translated as "factious" is, in the Greek, "αἱρετικὸν" — "heretical" — although it didn't assume the more technical theological meaning understood today until a few hundred years after St. Paul. The Greek root word of "heretical" literally means "to choose;" that is to say, to single out one particular point and emphasize it to the exclusion of other points of view. Such a person makes their one central point the whole truth. Many persons who the Church considered to be heretics were not entirely wrong. The problem was that the one point they clung to and emphasized changed the full meaning of the truth. In effect, their one point became their whole truth. The Church has always had a wider understanding of truth than a singular concept.

St. Paul calls this "factious" person "perverted and sinful." Before discussing St. Paul's understanding or intent of that word in the context of the early Church, we can see his point very easily in the way much public discourse happens today — shouting matches on cable TV and radio, and in public arenas. No doubt much of this is theatre, contrived for effect; but often it is not. The factious person uses ideas and language to push people to extremes. The part is presented as the whole. The truly thoughtful person keeps all perspectives in balance.

This does not mean there are no principles we should defend; of course there are! It is the "stupid controversies" and "dissensions" that St. Paul asks us to avoid; "quarrels" that are "unprofitable and futile." These last two words are key to understanding where and how someone should stand on a question of principle. Will the dispute ultimately build up the Body of Christ, or will it finally be unprofitable and futile? Understanding this difference is what makes one person a saint and another a heretic. It requires discernment.

Discernment is first and foremost a

spiritual gift. It is the ability to distinguish between the various thoughts that enter our mind and to recognize those that come from God and those that are from the devil. As such, the person with discernment can understand both the short and long term consequences of an action. Like all spiritual gifts, God gives discernment to a person of prayer. Most of us need to ask God's help to direct us toward people of true discernment so that we can listen to them and learn.

In St. Paul's last few lines to Titus, we gain insight into how he was so successful in establishing Churches throughout the Roman world. St. Paul had sent Titus to Crete to bring order to the Church there. He tells him he will "send Artemas or Tychicus" to Crete to replace him and then he would like Titus to come to Nicopolis to join him there. (v. 12) He asks him to "speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way;" to "see that they lack nothing." (v. 13) We suppose that these two, whom St. Paul speaks about in other letters, had brought this message to Titus. They will leave Crete and visit other Churches.

Finally, he offers Titus a final piece of advice: "Let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful." (v. 14) While much has been made of St. Paul's principle of justification by faith, not by works (Romans 3:25ff), we see here, as in other places, the emphasis on how our faith should take concrete form, in taking care of those in need.

He reminds us that ultimately the Church is composed of communities of faithful who love one another. He says: "All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all." (v. 15) And so this is how it should always be, one community embracing another in the love of Christ.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA