

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN NOVEMBER 22, 2009

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

On **Sunday, November 22**, we will host a **Parish Fellowship Luncheon**. The adult menu will be Spinach Lasagna, Salad, Garlic bread and coffee at \$15 per person. The children's meal will be macaroni and cheese, salad and French fries, at \$5 per person. To end your meal, sweets will be available for purchase from the bake sale. **To make reservations, please speak with Eleanor Sedares or sign the reservation sheet** that located at the candle stand.

Also, Sunday November 22 is International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC). Live your faith this Thanksgiving by supporting IOCC's relief and self-help programs throughout the world. Our Parishes of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese have a particular challenge this year. IOCC has a **\$1.6 grant from the European Community for assistance to impoverished families and retirees in Romania.** But there is a "challenge" aspect to it. All of the Churches here in North America are asked to provide \$200,000. **Our Archdiocese's challenge is \$50,000. We need to raise \$1,000 from our parish by December 1st.** Read the SCOBA Pastoral Letter for IOCC Sunday and a letter from Archbishop Nicolae available at the candle stand. Makes checks payable to St. Nicholas Orthodox Church with

USHERS TEAM 4:
DEAN VALORAS &
EVAN SPARAGES
ALTAR TEAM B



THE TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (LUKE 12:16-21)

THE WEALTHY MAN'S BARN
TONE 7 — RESURRECTION GOSPEL 2

IOCC in the "category" line. We'll forward this money to the Archdiocese as our part of the total goal. www.IOCC.org

Don't forget to sell your raffle tickets!

The price is \$25 a ticket and drawing will be held at the Feast Day Banquet, December 6th. The prizes are: a grand prize of \$2500, with four \$500, and five \$100 prizes. Our goal this year, as always is simple: **"Participation!"** — Please take some tickets and give it a try. See **Dean Valoras** in Church or contact him at 508-308-3582 for more information and tickets.

Our delicious **Holiday Pastry Platters are a big hit!** 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. **The absolute deadline for all Christmas orders is Sunday, December 13th.** Please request this flier by **e-mailing: pastry@stnicholaschurch.org** and we will forward it to you.

We are closing in our MPG (Mortgage Payment Goal). **To date we are 52% toward our \$75,000 goal!** For more information click here.

The Clergy Association of the Shrewsbury **Ecumenical Council will host the annual Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, Nov 22nd at 7:00 pm at the St. Anne's Parish** on Boston Tpke. in Shrewsbury. Rev Mariah Furness Tollgaard will be the preacher. Everyone is invited to come and pray together as people of Faith, expressing gratitude for God's many blessings.

FEASTDAY BANQUET

Our special **60th Anniversary Feast-**

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Nov 15th Christmas Lent Begins
- Thurs, Nov 26 Thanksgiving
- Mon, Nov 30 Deadline for Feastday Reservations
- Sun, Nov 22 Parish Thanksgiving Luncheon
- Sat, Dec 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
- Sat/Sun Dec 5-6 60th Anniversary Feastday Celebration
- Fri, Dec 18 Mustard Seed Meal

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

day Banquet is fast approaching. You all should have received an invitation and response card in the mail this week. **Reservations must be made by Sunday, November 29th**, as we must give the final count to the restaurant on the next day. Specific seating requests will be honored in the order that reservations are received. For more information, call the Church at 508-845-0088 or contact Tim Rucho at tjruchov@verizon.net

COMMUNITY NEWS

The Parish Council of **St. Mary's Albanian Orthodox Church** is pleased to announce the appointment of their new priest, **Father Timothy Cremeens**. He will soon be joined by his wife, Tammy, and their three children, Gabriel, Zoe and Magdalena. Father Timothy has a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Colorado State University and a Master of Divinity from St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. He earned his PhD in the Renewal History Program at Regent University School of Divinity. We join them in welcoming Father Timothy and his family to the community of St. Mary's and to the larger family of Orthodox Churches in Central Massachusetts.

The list of the **Orthodox Christian Mission Center 2010 Mission Teams** is complete! OCMC Teams are an opportunity to change lives and to have your life changed in return! To learn more about Mission Teams, go to www.ocmc.org or contact OCMC at (904) 829-5132 or teams@ocmc.org. Share in a Journey of Faith!

Help is needed for the **Thanksgiving distribution at St. Anne's Human Services** located at St. Anne's Parish in Shrewsbury. They have 268 families registered. Gift certificates and turkeys are most welcome. For more informa-

tion, call 508-799-4169.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehab Center will be hosting their **3rd Annual Craft & Gift Fair on Friday, Nov. 20th from 2-6pm and Saturday, Nov. 21st from 10am -2pm**. Rain or Shine! All proceeds will benefit the residents of Holy Trinity. For more information, call 508-852-1000.

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.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

EACH day, we attempt to turn our minds and hearts to you, Lord, but our attention-span is minimal. We need to learn recollection. We also need to learn to meditate, and then to do it regularly. Teach us also the art of contemplation, bringing our inner selves together and centered on you. Enlighten us and make us follow through on this. Show us how to enter the mysteries of life with you, always growing in understanding and love for you and our brothers and sisters. Forgive us our failures, strengthen our resolve, and lead us to yourself.

For you are good and full of love for us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.

MIRACLE OF LOAVES AND FISH



NAMEDAYS

November 16

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew

Richard Matthew Belba
Scott Matthew Belba
Matthew Robert Clem
Matthew Collins
Matthew John Dorogi
Matthew Soter

November 25

The Great-martyr Katherine of Alexandria

Katrina Banks-Binici
Katina Vanthia Christo
Kathryn Eleanor Sedares
Katina Spataro
Emily Katherine Valoras
Katina Wolfe

November 26

St. Stylianos of Paphlagonia

Steliana Naumescu
Steliana Predoiu

November 30

the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called

Andrew John Demake
Andrea Martin
Andrew Opio
Andrienne Opio

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

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

THIS is the twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost. The Epistle Lesson is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 5:8-19. While the section we read last week was concerned about the unity of the Church (especially in what we would call the parish) St. Paul turns now to the behavior of individual Christians. He urges the Ephesians — and us as well — to reflect in our behavior the faith that we have in our Lord Jesus.

He tells them, “for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.” (v. 8-10) One of the great themes of the spiritual life, the spiritual struggle, is between the forces of darkness and the forces of light. St. Paul echoes here a common theme that people in his time would understand immediately. The difference between darkness and light is like the difference between evil and good. He isn't necessarily following the “dualist” schools; the persons who taught that everything could be seen in the stark contrasts between black and white. Yet, he is saying that those who follow God, who follow Jesus, need to distinguish themselves by their way of life.

He caps this verse with the comment “try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.” The very center of our life needs to be: what is pleasing to the Lord? Light and darkness are only metaphors for this tension within our psyche, our soul, as we attempt to discern God's will for us. We continually struggle against doing things that we know are not helpful. At the same time, we strive to do things that we feel will bring us closer to God. The back and forth of it is the essence of what it means to grow in the spiritual life, to grow in the Life in Christ.

He then offers us this very concrete advice on how to recognize growth. “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light.” (v. 11-13)

There is, particularly in ‘good government’ circles, the notion that sunlight is the best disinfectant. This is actually a scientific truth. Those with access to outdoor clotheslines should hang your clothes on them. It's better than Clorox! The metaphor of light as a disinfectant is in fact a deep reality. God's light burns away our sins and purifies us. When acts of sin, and evil, become known, they lose both their allure as well as their power. We see people confessing sins publically to everyone. Whatever glamour seemed to be present in their action quickly evaporates in the light of day.

“Therefore it is said, ‘Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.’” (v. 14) Sleep is another way of speaking about deadness to spiritual reality. We are in a great world-wide economic crisis. yet almost everyone around us is still asleep to its root causes: personal selfishness; greed beyond conception; desire to live beyond not only our own means, but the means of our planet to sustain us. When the Scripture speaks of ‘sleep’ and ‘death’ it wants us to understand our ‘unconscientiousness’ to the deeper spiritual truth that God wants us to understand. To be awake is to be conscious. Then we truly see the things going on around us and we understand their consequences.

This is why St. Paul tells the Ephesians: “Look carefully ... how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil.” (v. 15-16) The days

were not any more evil in St. Paul's time than in ours. We are both equally exposed to the dangers of the time. It is about being ‘wise’ or ‘unwise.’ Are we being careful of where we walk? Are we making the best use of the time we have? Are we trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord? What keeps us honest (at least it should, if we think about it often enough) is that when the day of judgment comes all of our secrets will be exposed in the Light.

“Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (v. 17) Our constant temptation is to be foolish. Our real desire is to do what the Lord's will for us is. There is a constant back-and-forth at work in our mind. But, when we are really honest with ourselves — when we think about things in the light of day — we know that doing God's will is what we will for ourselves. It is the foolishness of sinful temptation that keeps us away from what we know to be our true selves.

Finally, St. Paul warns us, “do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit.” (v. 18) There was a practice among some of the ‘Mystery’ cults in his time to become ‘high’ not by God's Spirit, but by other kinds of more earthly spirits. We must always strive to be filled with the Holy Spirit, truly loving one another and “addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.” (v. 19)

Brothers and sisters, faith must be expressed in the way we live. It is not that good deeds justify us before God. All the same, the way we treat one another, those who love us and those who hate us and wish us harm, is the way the world will know that we follow our Lord, Jesus Christ, crucified and risen!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA