

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN NOVEMBER 29, 2009

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

We want to **thank everyone who worked so hard to make the fundraisers of last weekend such a great success.** Through the bake sale, luncheons, and e-waste recycling program we raised over to \$3,000 for our Church. May God bless you for your generosity of time and spirit.

Last Sunday was **IOCC Sunday**, and our Parish held a special collection to contribute to our Archdiocesan challenge. The IOCC has a \$1.6 grant from the European Union for assistance to impoverished families and retirees in Romania. In order to realize that grant, the Orthodox Churches here in North America are challenged to raise \$200,000. Our Archdiocese's challenge is \$50,000, and **our Parish challenge is to raise \$1,000 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 IOCC in the "category" line. We'll forward this money to the Archdiocese as our part of the total goal. www.IOCC.org

We are closing in our MPG (Mortgage Payment Goal). **To date we are 56% toward our \$75,000 goal!**

This Sunday we will celebrate a **1 Year Memorial Service** for the servant of God, **Marija Tonevski** fallen asleep in

USHERS TEAM 5:
BRIAN DONABED &
GEORGE DEMAKE
ALTAR TEAM A



THE THIRTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (LUKE 18:18-27) THE RICH YOUNG MAN & KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS TONE 8 — RESURRECTION GOSPEL 3

the Lord. May she find rest among the saints and may her memory be eternal!

FEASTDAY BANQUET

Next Weekend is our Parish's Anniversary Feastday; **celebrating 60 Years of God's gracious blessings to His people, in this parish.**

We will have the blessing of **His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae** presiding over the weekend's festivities.

On Saturday, December 5, there will be an **Altar Server training session at 9:00am** at the Church to practice procedures and protocol for serving with the Archbishop on the Feastday. If you are unable to attend, please let Fr. Nick know.

Also on **Saturday, December 5**, we will have **Great Vespers at 7:00 pm**. Please make every effort to attend, so that our Church will be full to greet our guests from the Orthodox community.

On Sunday, December 6, we will celebrate the **Divine Liturgy for the Feast at 10:00 am**, followed by the Anniversary

Banquet. At the Divine Liturgy, we will have the rare opportunity to witness an **ordination**, as His Eminence ordains **Vasile Mureșan** to the Holy Diaconate.

Our special **60th Anniversary Feastday Banquet** will be held at **Cyprian Keyes Golf Club** immediately following the Divine Liturgy. The cost is \$50 for adults and \$15 for children. **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 e-mail Tim Rucho at tjruchov@verizon.net

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Nov 15th Christmas Lent Begins
- 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

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. For more information or more tickets, contact **Dean Valoras** by e-mail, in Church, or at 508-308-3582.

LOOKING AHEAD ...

Please remember to take fliers and encourage family and friends to purchase our delicious **Pastry Platters** for Christmas and New Years. The **absolute deadline for all Christmas orders is Sunday, December 13th**. You may e-mail your order to: pastry@stnicholaschurch.org.

Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the **Orthodox Food Center next Saturday, December 5, from 9 am - noon**. About 4 people are needed. Likewise, donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with Nicole Peterson or Lisa Mielnicki.

We have planned to prepare food and serve the visitors at the **Mustard Seed on Friday, December 18th**. 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 help with either preparing food or serving

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. 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!

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:

NAMEDAYS

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

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

LORD GOD: We really do not know you at all, even as much as we are able as your finite creatures! Who you are is clearly a mystery to us! We cannot grasp the reality that you truly exist or that we really can know something about you to some extent, so we end up treating you more as an idol, again, usually without even knowing it. Our minds are forever distracted by the things of this world, and so we fail to reflect on you and contemplate the mysteries of our faith as we should. Enlighten the eyes of our minds and hearts that we may know you to some extent.

For great are you and wonderful are your works, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.

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.



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

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

AND, BE THANKFUL

THIS is the thirtieth Sunday after Pentecost. The Epistle Lesson is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:12-16. The Church at Colossae was not founded by St. Paul, but by Epaphras one of his disciples. While St. Paul was pleased with the general progress of the community, he was concerned that influences from a number of native pagan beliefs and Judaism were having a distorting effect on the Gospel preached to them. They were becoming syncretistic. This tendency toward syncretism is a problem in our own time as well. We can see the phenomenon at work particularly in "New Age" thinking that takes a little of this and a little of that and blends them into a not so very coherent set of beliefs. St. Paul was warning the Colossians against drifting in this direction.

In this letter St. Paul urges the Colossians to shape themselves in the image of Christ. He calls them to remember their new status, "as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved." He tells them to clothe themselves with "heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience." (v. 12) He instructs them on what it means to be a Christian, a follower of Christ. We are not simply to have kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, but these must be *heartfelt*. Our behavior toward one another should go beyond outer forms and social convention; it should spring from the deepest recesses of our being.

He wants them to see their goal as being like our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. "Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." (v. 13) We are to support one another. We are to put up with one another. When tested or offended we are to forgive one another "just as the Lord has forgiven you." St. Paul is telling us to transform ourselves by the power given

us in the Holy Spirit.

He then says to them, "Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." (v. 14) It is possible to have these virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and even patience without having love. Love is what makes these other actions real and complete. Without love they will lack the substance necessary for them to withstand time. Love is the glue that "binds" our virtuous act with our deeper intention. It makes it whole.

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body." (v. 15) The word "rule" could also be translated as "umpire," (although it might sound a little awkward). What St. Paul means is that as an emotion love can sometimes be an unsteady gage. Just observe at the various ways 'love' is used and misused in our common speech. When we are wrestling with difficult questions, when all of our thoughts and emotions are engaged, we need to let Christ's peace be the arbiter. It serves as the stabilizing influence. While we might go back and forth, Christ's peace remains a steady guide. It rules over all the pettiness or spite we might feel. If we allow Christ's peace to arbitrate our emotions, we become one with Him. We become one with the body to which we were called.

"And be thankful." (v. 15) St. Paul makes this a stand-alone statement. Like "love, which binds everything together," thankfulness is a state of being that changes us. It is the perspective that reinterprets all of our experiences.

When we thank someone for what they've given us or done for us, our words and sentiments should direct us to transcend the gift in order to focus on the giver. While a kind action is not incidental, the one who offers it is far more important than the thing given. When we are thankful we move from focusing on our ourselves to focusing on

someone else. We are drawn out of ourselves to *see* the other. This is the essence of thankfulness.

We might say "thank you" to other people a thousand times a day, and rightfully so; but the deeper question is: do we really *mean* it? Are we employing the words "thank you" as simple social convention, or are they actually a reflection of our inner disposition? Striving to make our sentiments truly heartfelt directs us to the goal to which St. Paul is directing us: "be thankful."

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God." (v. 16) St. Paul uses another word in this verse very much like "thankful." He tells the Colossians and us to teach and admonish one another in wisdom and "with gratitude."

Gratitude and thankfulness have a similar root: joy or pleasure. When we are truly grateful or thankful we also have a joy deep inside us. We take pleasure in the act of kindness shown us. More importantly, we take joy in the one who has given this to us. When we are thankful the joy will change us.

St. Paul tells the Thessalonians: "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18) We know we have grown in Christ when our thankfulness is not conditioned on externals. It is easy to give thanks when things are going relatively well. It is another matter to give thanks when things seem to be going badly. Can we still open a voice of praise to God even when the wind is against us?

Brothers and sisters, as we celebrate our national day of Thanksgiving, let us reflect on the true nature of thanksgiving, and be grateful always and in every circumstance.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

MPG Update

We are working on a plan to help pay down our Mortgage. We have received a couple of questions about this, so to help clarify, here are some of the questions and answers.

I know that our goal this year is to raise \$ 75,000. When we reach our goal, are we done with our mortgage?

No. The \$ 75,000 represents our mortgage payment for 2009 only. Our current total mortgage balance is \$ 659,373.

How long will the MPG campaign go on?

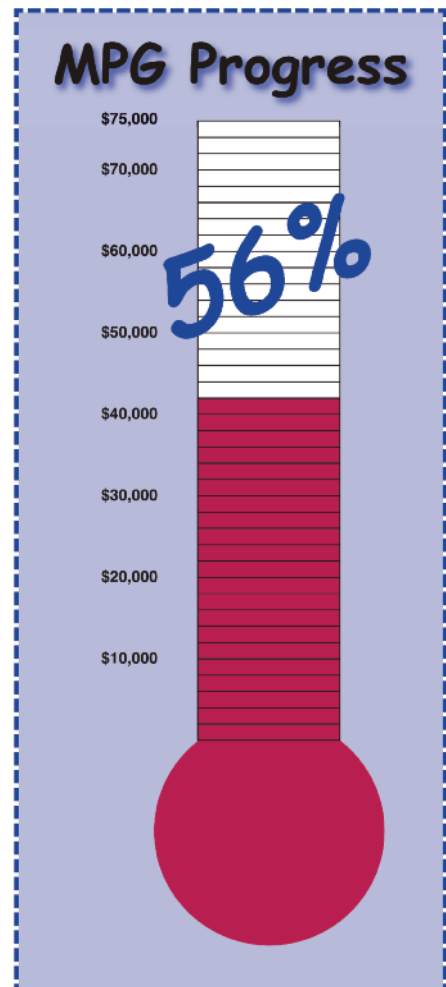
The purpose of the 2009 MPG Campaign is to raise \$ 75,000 as an annual goal for this year. The campaign will end when the goal is met — which needs to be by the end of this year. This will not pay off the mortgage in full. So we will need to continue to set a new MPG for the following years until the mortgage is paid in full. If we are able to increase donations and fundraising towards the MPG that exceed our annual goal then we can pay off our mortgage that much faster.

I'm a little confused, is the MPG part of the Capital Budget, or the Operating Budget, or Mortgage Budget? What is the difference between all these terms?

At our 2009 General Assembly in January, our Parish voted to create two budgets to help prepare our community for the years ahead: (1) an Operating Budget which tracks the income and expenses associated with running our Church day-to-day as if we did not have a mortgage, and (2) a Capital Budget which tracks the income and expenses associated with the responsibility of having a mortgage. Your Stewardship contributions, trays and candles, and all fundraising, are included in the Operating Budget. Payments towards the MPG are included in our Capital Budget since they relate to our mortgage. We also discussed at our General Assembly that one day in our near future, when the economic environment is better for all, we will kick off a multi-year Capital Campaign focused on building our new Church and Education Building. But, with the current state of the global economy, we need to make sure we take care of our immediate Mortgage responsibilities. Paying down our Mortgage is indeed the critical stepping stone (i.e., being debt free) for kicking off the larger Capital Campaign.

What is the Capital Campaign Committee doing now?

The committee has two goals for 2009: (1) to make sure we meet our immediate annual mortgage responsibility of at least \$ 75,000. We've labeled this the Mortgage Payment Goal or MPG. (2) to research and plan for a larger multi-year Capital Campaign so we are prepared to implement it once the economic times turn in our favor.



Our 2009 Mortgage Payment Goal or "MPG" is \$ 75,000. This amounts to about \$ 205 per day. We are asking that everyone consider donating toward our MPG in addition to your regular Stewardship pledge. You may also consider making a day's donation toward the MPG to honor a family member or loved one to mark a special occasion, or in their memory. If you would like to do this, please talk to either Evan Stamoulis or Fr. Nick. We will arrange for your gift to be acknowledged to the person whom you are honoring.

Good News!

Commerce Bank has given us a 2% reduction on our mortgage rate. This means even more of our dollars go toward paying down the principle