

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

DECEMBER 13, 2009  
SUNDAY OF THE ANCESTORS

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

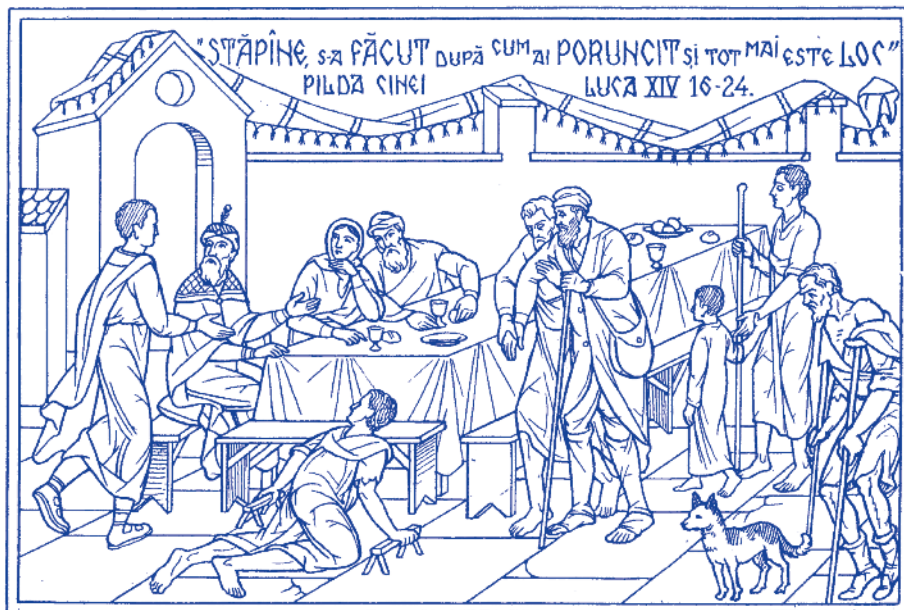
We want to thank everyone for helping with our monthly responsibility for the **Orthodox Food Center** last Saturday. Our next scheduled date is **Saturday, January 2nd**. About 6-8 people are needed to bag and distribute groceries. If you can help with this worthwhile ministry once a month on a Saturday morning from 9 am till noon, please see Nicole Peterson or Lisa Mielnicki.

The **absolute deadline for all Christmas orders of pita and pastry platters is THIS Sunday, December 13th**. You may e-mail your order to: [pastry@stnicholaschurch.org](mailto:pastry@stnicholaschurch.org).

We will be preparing food to 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

- 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.

USHERS TEAM 2:  
LISA MIELNICKI & JIM CHRISTO  
ALTAR TEAM A



THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (LUKE 14:16-24)

THE PARABLE OF THE BANQUET  
TONE 2 — RESURRECTION GOSPEL 5

- 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.

The St. Nicholas Sunday School presentation of the **Nativity Pageant** will be on **Sunday, December 20** immediately following the Divine Liturgy. Costumes and parts will be assigned during Sunday School classes. **Full dress rehearsal will be Saturday, December 19 from 10:30 to 12:30**. Pizza lunch will be provided. It is very important that the children who wish to participate in the Pageant attend the rehearsal. If parents have any questions concerning the pageant, please speak with Preoteasa Maria or Deb Sedares at Church or contact either of them at [mzm@netplus.com](mailto:mzm@netplus.com) or [dsedares@pinehills.com](mailto:dsedares@pinehills.com)

Today we celebrate a memorial

for our sister in Christ **Helen Maynard**, fallen asleep 40 days. *May her memory be eternal!*

### FEASTDAY THANK YOU'S

We want to thank the **Parish Council and everyone involved** for their efforts in planning and orchestrating the celebration of our special **60th Anniversary Parish Feastday last weekend**. It was a wonderful opportunity to come together as a Church family to acknowledge the Faith and commitment of those who came before us, as well as prayerfully look forward to and trust in the continued blessings God will provide for us in the future. Through your presence, and the generosity of those who offered sponsorship gifts, about **\$7,500** was raised for our Church.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

- Fri, Dec 18 Mustard Seed Meal
- Sat, Dec 19 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 10am
- Sun, Dec 20 Christmas Pageant
- Thurs, Dec 24 Christmas Eve, Vesper 6pm
- Fri, Dec 25 Nativity of our Lord, Lit at 10 am
- Sat, Jan 2 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

Likewise, we again owe a debt of gratitude to **Dean Valoras** for his outstanding efforts serving as chairperson for the annual raffle. This year 707 tickets were sold and initial results indicate a profit of about \$12,000. The winners are listed below. We greatly appreciate the efforts of those of you who sold tickets and helped to make this fundraiser a success.

- \$2,500 Christos Johns
- \$1,000 Joe Paladino
- \$250 St Nicholas Church
- \$250 Paul Cantiani
- \$250 Mary Gity
- \$250 Anthony Soter
- \$100 Richard Aramony
- \$100 Joan Smith
- \$100 Flavia Guran
- \$100 Michael Dhembe
- \$100 Nick Johnson

We were also blessed to have the presence of **His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae** presiding over the weekend's festivities. His Eminence graced our parish with his thoughtful and spiritual words, along with the gift of a beautiful hand-painted Icon of St. Nicholas to mark this momentous occasion. *Many Years, Your Eminence!*

### HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Once again this year, our Parish has been asked to help provide **Christmas gifts for all of the residents at Holy Trinity Nursing Center.** **Eleanor Sedares** is coordinating this effort. If you would like to purchase a gift for a resident, please give your name to Helen today, and she will assign specific gifts to you.



#### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**O**VER COMPASSIONATE LORD: We marvel at your patience and mercy with your chosen people. But we do not see our own sins. Make us grasp the truth that sin is always turning away from you, saying 'no' to you. Help us to understand this and let us no longer mistake sin as something inconsequential, something of little importance, but let us ever work at being true to you, ready at all times to practice fidelity to you without question.

For you are a kind and merciful God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.

## NAMEDAYS

### December 12

#### St. Spyridon the Wonderworker of Tremithus

Spiro Kelly  
V. Rev. Fr. Spero Page  
Spiro Llambi Treska

### December 15

#### The Hieromartyr Eleftherios, Bishop of Illyria

Lillian Chachi  
Eleftheria Mazanitis

### December 17

#### The Holy Prophet Daniel

Dan Manescu  
Dana Manescu  
Dan Alexandru Nedelescu  
Robert Daniel Salerno

### December 20

#### The Fore-father of our Lord, the Patriarch Jacob

Jacob Datz

#### The High Priest Aaron, and all the holy forefathers

Aaron Paul Christo

#### The Holy Fore-bearers of Christ, Adam the first man

Adam Donabed  
Adam Mayer

#### The Holy Prophetess Abigail, wife of David

Abigail Mayer

#### The Righteous Deborah, and all the holy forefathers

Deborah Rucho  
Deborah Sedares

#### The Righteous Joshua, and all the holy forefathers

Joshua Vessio

#### The Righteous Noah, and all the holy forefathers

Noah Peter Christo

#### The Righteous Sarah, and all the holy forefathers

Sarah Maria Blanchard  
Sarah Maria Bourisk

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

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

## HE IS THE FIRSTBORN OF CREATION

**T**HIS is the twenty-eighth Sunday after Pentecost. The Epistle Lesson is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 1:12-18. This reading highlights two powerful themes present in the Mystery of our Lord's Incarnation: the coming of Light into a world of darkness by the coming of Emmanuel — that is so say, "God-with-us."

This selection has two distinctive parts. Verses 12-14 conclude a prayer that St. Paul is offering for the Colossian community. Remember, Colossae was a community composed largely of Gentile converts, but also with a substantial Jewish component. Some of them were falling under the influence of gnostic teachers (what today we might call "new age" thinkers). He wanted to remind the Colossian Christians of the preëminence of Christ, as well as the great grace that had been offered them through him.

"Give thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light." (v. 12) St. Paul is making a subtle reference to the Christian status of now being a priest through Jesus Christ, the High Priest. We all share in His priesthood, the priesthood of all believers. This is what he means by telling them they are sharing in the "inheritance." Unlike the rest of the tribes of the children of Israel, the Levites, that is the priestly tribe, were given no land. Their inheritance came from God directly. They shared a portion of the sacrifices that were offered to God. This was their inheritance. St. Paul is saying that this is now the Christian's inheritance.

For "He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (v. 13-14) God has saved us from the dark powers of this world and brought us into the safe place that is His kingdom. St. Paul uses a phrase here unique to him: "the king-

dom of his beloved Son." In the rest of the Scriptures it is either the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. The image that St. Paul gives us is of a Kingdom in the making. God has entrusted it to "His beloved Son" who will nurture it and perfect it, and then present it back to His Father at the end of time.

The second part to this reading is a great Christological hymn. It speaks of Christ as the center, head, and source of all of creation. Whether it is St. Paul who is the author of this hymn or whether it was already in general use in Colossae and other Churches is unclear. It most likely formed part of the Baptismal service and perhaps even of the Eucharist. It is rooted in Old Testament wisdom literature—for example, the Books of Job, Proverbs, Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon. In Jewish thinking God's Wisdom, Spirit and Word were closely related. One can see many elements of themes in those Books used in this hymn.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." (v. 15) St. Paul is speaking of Christ as the new Adam. Adam was the "image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." Because Adam failed in fulfilling this great calling it was necessary that the Christ should come. Jesus, St. Paul reminds the Colossians, is the Christ, the new Adam.

"For in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him." (v. 16) In this phrase St. Paul is addressing directly the syncretistic tendencies in the Colossian community. If there are other forces in the world, visible and invisible, not only are these subject to Christ, but even more, he created them and they serve him. He created us and we should only serve him.

"He himself is before all things,

and in him all things hold together." (v. 17) The phrase "before all things" has a number of meanings, first of these being Jesus' nature as God's Word; but, this is also a reference to him as the new Adam. It is also tells us that he has preëminence over every other thing in the universe.

"He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything." (v. 18) For St. Paul the "head" is where all things come together and are coordinated. The image is apt. If we can envision the Church as a body, we can certainly understand Christ as our head. He holds all of the members together.

Keep in mind that this is a hymn, poetry. Similar ideas are repeated using other images to reinforce and give texture to the meaning. As both the new Adam and the Christ (Messiah) "he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything." He both creates and recreates the creation.

There is a strong parallel in these lines of St. Paul with the beginning of St. John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:1-5) Both speak of God's Word and Wisdom coming into the world to save it and us.

As we prepare for the coming of Emmanuel, let us make room for him in our hearts. Let us allow him to be at the head of our thoughts and actions. Let us be "first" in and through him.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA