

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN DECEMBER 20, 2009 SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

We want to thank everyone for helping with the **Mustard Seed Meal on Friday**, those who cooked the meal and those who served.

The St. Nicholas Sunday School presentation of the **Nativity Pageant** will be on **Sunday, December 20** immediately following the Divine Liturgy.

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.

We are saddened to learn that the **Very Reverend Father Nicolae Marioncu**, who served our Parish in the late 1960s, fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, November 1, 2009, at the age of 82, in Russell, Manitoba. His wife, Preoteasa Maria predeceased him, but he is survived by his three daughters. *May he rest among the saints and may his memory be eternal!*

The **Feast of the Nativity of the Lord**, Liturgical schedule is: Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24th, we will celebrate Royal Hours at 9:30 am; Great Vespers at 6:00 pm. On Christmas Day, Friday, December 25th, Divine

USHERS TEAM:
ALL TEAMS ON DUTY
ALTAR TEAM B



THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY (MATTHEW 1:1-25)

THE GENEALOGY OF THE SAVIOR
TONE 3 — RESURRECTION GOSPEL 6

Liturgy will begin at 10:00 am.

The coffee hour today is sponsored by **Nicola & Natasha Zhaka** in memory of their son **Ilia**.

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 Eleanor today, and she will assign specific gifts to you.



DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, Dec 19 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 10am
Sun, Dec 20 Christmas Pageant
Thurs, Dec 24 Royal Hours, 9:30 am
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

NAMEDAYS

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

December 24

The Holy Nun-martyr Eugenia of Rome

Elgenia Pantelopoulos
Dr. Eugeniu Predoiu

December 25

The Holy Nativity of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ

Christy Belba
Christopher Blanchard
Chrysanthi Charalambides
Christopher Demake
Cristean Dumitriu
Kristjan Endriko
Cristian Ionete
Christine Kelly
Krista Leach
Cristina Mazanitis
Christian Andrew Polymeros
Christopher Rucho
Christina Soter
Christina Thoren
Christine Toda
Christina Marina Tonna
Kristina Treska
Christina Tsoules
Chris Zaruha
Cristian Zaruha

December 27

The holy and righteous Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin

Joseph Paul Kamataris
Joseph Opio
Josephine Opio

The Holy Prophet and King David

David Zonia

The Holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen

Stephanie Elizabeth Demake
Stephanie Lynne Kamataris
Stephanie Keimig
Stephen Keimig
Stephen Maynard
Stephanie Anne Miner
Stephen Michael Mountzouris
Stephanie Sparages
Stephen Sparages
Steven Thoren

December 31

St. Melania the Younger, nun of Rome

Melanie Mentis



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

LORD OUR GOD: had we lived during the times when you showed your people your mighty power, we would doubtless have behaved as they did, forever falling back into the same old ways of behaving — no, most likely we would have done worse! The weakness of our nature and our unfaithfulness forever work against our rising above this dreadful conduct, and, instead, we sink deeper into our misery. Still, in moments like this, we know that we want to love you and do what pleases you, and for this we ask your help.

For you can make us holy, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.

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

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

GOD HAS PROVIDED SOMETHING BETTER FOR US

THIS is the the Sunday before the Nativity of our Lord. The Epistle Lesson is taken from the Letter to the Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40. This chapter of Hebrews concerns faith. It begins with the famous line: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (v. 1) The rest of the chapter talks about specific people and examples of their continuing faith in God, even though they "did not receive what was promised." (v. 39)

From generation to generation faith in the 'promise' is passed down parent to child. St. Paul says that, "by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (v. 9-10) Abraham left Ur (in modern-day Iraq) at God's bidding and went and sojourned in Canaan (cf. Genesis 12:1ff). He believed in God's promise that one day this land would be given to him and his descendents. He never saw this, nor did Isaac and Jacob. St. Paul seems to be suggesting in the impermanence of 'tents' and the looking forward to the 'city which has foundations,' that they knew the promise was not about the land of Canaan, but about their real dwelling place in the heavenly city.

St. Paul offers Abraham's faith as a model for us to emulate (cf. Romans 4). He is the prototype of the Christian believer. As Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, confident that his descendents would inherit it, so we sojourn on this earth awaiting the promised Kingdom.

The selected reading jumps from verse 10 to 32. In those verses not read, St. Paul speaks in detail of the faith not only of Abraham, but of Sarah, who believed and gave birth in her old age to Isaac. Of Isaac, who on his death-bed continued to believe in the promise

and passed this faith to his sons Jacob and Esau. In like manner Jacob, as he died blessed each of his twelve sons with the same faith in the promise as yet unseen.

He speaks of Joseph's faith in the land of Egypt, sold into slavery. He reminds us of Moses' faith, viewing the land of promise only from afar. These and others are held up to us persons to mirror, examples to encourage us.

We resume reading at verse 32. Even St. Paul does not want to tire us by recounting all of the persons who lived by this faith; these few examples are enough to illustrate his point. "And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets — who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented — of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground." (v. 32-38)

Reflect, for a moment, on this list; and, he could have mentioned more. These were people with real lives, like ours. They lived with all of the difficulties of life, like we do. They passed on to their children the things that they held to most closely, just as we do. This went on for hundreds and thousands of years, not unlike our own experience. Except for one thing.

"Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect. (v. 39-40)

Think about this. People, whose faith so surpassed ours, like the earth from the heavens, needed us to 'be made perfect.' Never wavering from their faith, even in the most difficult of circumstances, they waited with certainty knowing that the promised would be fulfilled.

We live in the time of the promise. The Lord has fulfilled His Word. It is not only that 'apart from us, [they would not] be made perfect;' it is also that we would not have been made perfect except for their watchful expectation, certain of God's promise.

The Feast of the Lord's Nativity is often called a 'quiet' celebration. The quietness can be found in the small number of people who knew (Mary and Joseph, perhaps the shepherds and magi). The quietness is also located in the humble circumstances: a new-born infant, a cave, a small village. We should celebrate this great event quietly as well: in our hearts, in our minds, and in our actions.

The great events of our Lord's coming are the Baptism, the Entry in Jerusalem, the Crucifixion, and finally the Resurrection. However, each of these is wrapped tightly in the swaddling cloths in that cave in Bethlehem. We too await the promise with Abraham and all the others. However, we await our Lord's birth, not in Bethlehem, but in our hearts and souls.

Brothers and sisters, cut away the noise and distractions of the world. Let us not put Christ back into Christmas, but rather, put Christmas back into Christ. Let us be firm in the hope of the promise given us, putting all our faith in Christ our Lord.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

CHRISTMAS & THEOPHANY

SCHEDULE

SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2009

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
 Children's Christmas Program after the Liturgy

CHRISTMAS EVE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2009

Royal Hours 9:30 a.m.
 Great Vespers 6:00 p.m.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2009

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2009

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD ✻ FEAST OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2010

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 a.m.

SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 2010

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

EVE OF HOLY THEOPHANY TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2010

Royal Hours 9:30 a.m.
 Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 6:00 p.m.
 Great Blessing of Water at end of Liturgy

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY JANUARY 10, 2010

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.



HOUSE BLESSINGS. The blessing of homes at Theophany will begin on Friday, January 8, 2010, and continue until all homes are blessed. As in the past, we will be setting times when we will be coming to bless your home. If there is a specific time that is more convenient for you, please call Fr. Nick to arrange it (508.845.0088).

