

ST. NICHOLAS

WEEKLY BULLETIN

JANUARY 10, 2010
SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

As is our custom in celebration of the Feast of Holy Theophany, the **blessing of homes** will continue until all homes are blessed. If you are unable to receive the Priest at the scheduled time indicated on the card you received in the mail, or if for some reason did not receive a notice, please contact Fr. Nick at 508.845.0088 or FrNick@StNicholasChurch.org

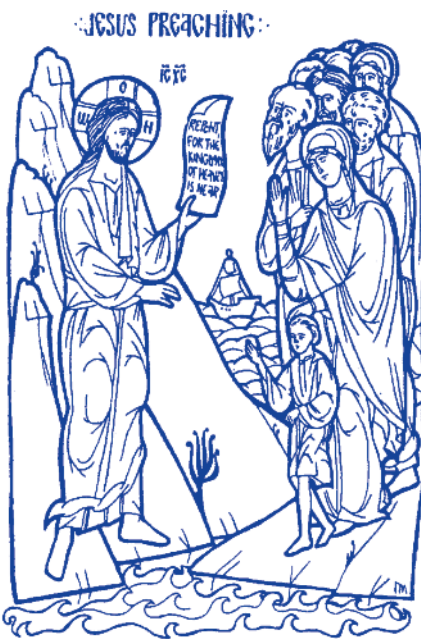
We want to thank everyone who helped staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center last Saturday. Our **next scheduled dates are Saturday, January 30th and February 6th** . If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with or e-mail Nicole Peterson or Lisa Mielnicki.

There is a pita **dough-making session scheduled for Saturday, January 23** , at 9 am here at the Church. To volunteer to help, speak with or contact Chris Toda

The **Annual General Assembly** of our Parish will be held on Sunday, January 24th directly following the Divine Liturgy. Please make every effort to attend and participate in that important act of stewardship of your Church.

Our Church is participating in a special program for teenagers called S.T.O.P which means **"Students Together Op-**

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



THE SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

EPISTLE: EPHESIANS 4:7-13

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 4:12-17

TONE 6 — RESURRECTION GOSPEL 9

posing Prejudice. " S.T.O.P is an interfaith initiative to educate young people on how to identify and confront stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. It begins Thursday, January 14, 2010, from 6:45-8:30, and will continue for 7 sessions. Locations will rotate among houses of worship in the Shrewsbury/Westboro area. There are 3 participants from our Church already, and we invite you to join us! For more information, contact **Tim Rucho** at 508-754-0062 or tjrucho@verizon.net

New Experience Theater (N.E.T. Works) Productions Inc. in conjunction with the **Shrewsbury Ecumenical Council** is sponsoring **"You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown!"** at Southgate Theater, 30 Julio Dr., Shrewsbury. This show is a whimsical journey through many antic-filled snippets in the lives of the 5 year old

Charlie Brown cartoon characters. The dates are **Friday and Saturday, Jan. 22, 23, 29, 30 at 7:30 pm** . The cost is \$15 general admission, \$12 senior/student. Matinees are Sunday, Jan. 24, 31 at 2:00 pm. The cost is \$10 matinee general admission for all. A portion of the proceeds will benefit St. Anne's Food Pantry in Shrewsbury. You may purchase tickets from Fr. Nick or contact Chris White at 508-842-0867.

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! If interested, please contact: Catherine 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 6-7:30 pm 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.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, Jan 10 Sun after Theophany, Lit 10:00 am
Sat, Jan 23 Pita Dough-making 9am
Sun, Jan 24 General Assembly, after Liturgy
Sat, Jan 30 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Sun, Jan 31 Baking/Pastry Strat Mtg.
Mon, Feb 1 Parish Council Mtg. 6:30pm
Sat, Feb 6 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Saturday of the Souls, Liturgy 10am
Sun, Feb 7 Parish Luncheon after Liturgy
Mon, Feb 15 Great Lent begins
Wed, Feb 17 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy at St. Nick's
Sat, March 6 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Sun, March 28 Palm Sunday
Sun, April 4 Great and Holy Pascha
Sat, April 24 Spring Dance

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

NAMEDAYS

January 6

The Holy Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Francis Polymeros
Jordan Sparages

January 7

The Holy Prophet and Forerunner John the Baptist

Dr. John Andronic
John Banks-Binici
Joanna Boukalis
John G. Cosmas
Rev. Fr. John Daly
Nita Dumitriu
Ian Mayer
Jonathan Paul Maynard
John Rucho
John David Thoren
John Tonevski

January 17

St. Anthony the Great

Anthony Theodore Christo
Scott Anthony Maynard
Anthony Rucho
Anthony Rucho
Tony Nicholas Trakadas

January 18

St. Athanasios Patriarch of Alexandria

Thanas Lolo
Arthur Peterson

January 22

the Holy Apostle Timothy

Timothy Rucho

January 25

St. Gregory the Theologian

Gregory Chachi
Rev. Fr. Gregory Christakos
Dr. Gregory Tsongalis

January 28

St. Ephraim the Syrian

Rev. Fr. Ephraim Peters

Did you know? Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is “rehabbing the rehab space” to enlarge it and make it state of the art ... keep watching this publication for more information.

ARCHDIOCESE NEWS

The Archdiocese has launched a new **monthly e-bulletin** with news from within the Archdiocese and throughout the world. We have printed copies available.



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

MERCIFUL LORD: Rid our hearts of all thought of revenge, of answering evil with evil. Instead, give us the grace to live as we ought, repaying evil only with good. And for your name's sake, forgive us our sins, so that unbelievers may come to realize that you do indeed exist. For the glor of your name, come to our aid and give us a taste for pursuing holiness.

For yours is dominion and your is the kingdom and the power and the 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

GROWING INTO OUR POTENTIAL

THE Lord's Epiphany at his baptism in the Jordan by John marks the beginning of his earthly ministry. Very soon after this, John will be imprisoned and put to death. Jesus will begin preaching and healing. Slowly people will recognize that Jesus is the Messiah. The Scripture readings for this Sunday following the Feast of Epiphany — the Gospel lesson is Matthew 4:12-17) and the Epistle lesson is Ephesians 4:7-13 — speak of the Lord's ministry, and the ministry given to those who have chosen to follow him.

The reading from Ephesians is taken from a section of St. Paul's Letter where he speaks of the unity of the Body of Christ and how each of us can contribute to building it up. He says, "each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift." (v. 7) Each of us has been given something by Christ that is essential for the well-being of the whole Church. Christ is sharing his gifts with us. We are essential participants in Christ's work of salvation. No gift is better than another. Each is needed; all are critical. Our task is to understand our gift and use it for the well-being of others.

In order to emphasize both the power and humility of the Lord Jesus he quotes Psalm 68:18 adding insights from both Jewish Biblical scholars of the time as well as his own: "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (v. 8) Here is how St. Paul explains this verse: "When it says, 'He ascended,' what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things". (v. 9-10)

St. Paul wants us to appreciate how the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, God's Son, "descended" to the earth.

He came and lived among us. Some Biblical scholars say that when St. Paul says he "descended into the lower parts of the earth" this is a reference to his death and descent to Hades to liberate the souls of the righteous held captive there. St. Paul's central point is that by both descending and ascending Jesus defeated the Evil One. "He made captivity itself a captive." And, "he gave gifts."

What are these gifts that Christ gave us? "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers." (v. 11) St. Paul gives us other lists of gifts given us, for example in Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-31. However, the list he gives in Ephesians has to do with the Church, particularly offices in the Church. These are not 'personal' gifts. Rather, they are gifts "for building up the body of Christ," and, "to equip the saints for the work of ministry." (v. 12)

When God gives us gifts they are always meant to be used for the well-being of others. They don't belong to us for us to use narrowly or even selfishly. This is particularly evident in the four gifts that St. Paul names here: apostles, prophets, evangelists; and pastors/teachers. Each of these gifts represents a position of responsibility within the Church. The apostles were those with a direct, first-hand experience of Jesus and given a commission to preach Him. A prophet is an inspired preacher who encourages, warns or stimulates the community. An evangelist is an itinerant preacher, proclaiming the Gospel from community to community. The pastor/teacher is the presbyter (priest) or bishop; the one responsible for ministering to and guiding the local community. These gifts, and the responsibilities that come with them, have as their sole purpose the edification, the building-up, of the Body of

Christ.

The gifts and offices are given, "until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." (v. 13) You can see from what St. Paul says that these gifts are not intended to be permanent; that is to say, they are given to us for a purpose and toward an end. The end is that all of us should come to maturity, the full stature of Christ.

Let's look at some of the phrases St. Paul gives us. He tells us that we are expected to come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. The "unity of the faith" means that we, each of us in the Church (that is, the whole Church) and each of us in the church (that is, our home parish), come to a common and correct faith. The "knowledge of the Son of God" does not mean to "know Jesus." Rather, it means to know what Jesus knows; to think and understand as Jesus does.

When we are able to take on "the mind of Christ," we become mature. We become fully human. When we say that Jesus became fully human, we are not only saying that the Son of God became like us; we are also saying that Christ became what we were intended to be — when He created us. He has come to give us the opportunity to become fully human — if we want to.

God gives us gifts to help one another. He asks us to learn, grow, and fully develop into the kind of persons who look like Adam and Eve in Paradise. He invites us to live up to our full potential. He give us the gifts we need and the grace to realize it.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA