

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN FEBRUARY 14, 2010 THIS WEEK'S NEWS

We want to **thank everyone who helped with cooking, set-up and clean-up for our Parish Fellowship Luncheon** last Sunday. Not only are these luncheons a wonderful time to enjoy the company of your Church family, but they serve as very successful fundraisers for our community. Please consider volunteering to help with a future luncheon.

We will host the first of the **Lenten Pre-Sanctified Liturgies** sponsored by the Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches here at our Church, on **Wednesday, February 17 at 6 pm**. Help will be needed with preparing Lenten foods for the pot-luck that follows, as well as with set-up/clean-up. **Please tell Preoteasa Maria how you can help.**

After coffee hour today, we need **help to set up for the PreSanctified Liturgy** on Wednesday. If we all pitch in, it will only take 20-30 minutes.

We will be preparing food to serve the visitors at the **Mustard Seed on Friday, February 19th**. The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 150 people in need each day. You can participate in this ministry in the following ways:

- Help with the **meal preparation** on Friday morning at 9:30 am, please

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



CHEESEFARE SUNDAY, THE SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS THE CASTING OUT OF ADAM AND EVE FROM PARADISE

EPISTLE: ROMANS 13:11-14:4

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 6:14-21

TONE 3 — RESURRECTION GOSPEL 3

contact Deb Sedares (dsedares@pinehills.com).

- Help **transport the meal** to the Mustard Seed (Meet at the Church at 5:00pm) please contact Fr. Nick
- Help **serve the meal** (promptly at 5:45). We especially encourage teens to participate in this ministry
- 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.

Divine Liturgy will be held on February 20, the **Saturday of St. Theodore**, at 10 am.

Beginning on **Saturday, February 20th**, and throughout the weeks of Great Lent, we will hold **Great Vespers each Saturday evening, at 5:00 pm**. Fr. Nick will be available for confession each week after Vespers, and before Vespers by appoint-

ment (e-mail Fr. Nick).

Next **Sunday, February 21st**, we will celebrate **Great Vespers for the Sunday of Orthodoxy** along with the Procession of Icons at 6:00 pm at St. George Cathedral. A coffee-hour will follow. You should have received an

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, Feb 15	Great Lent begins
Wed, Feb 17	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy at St. Nick's
Fri, Feb 19	Mustard Seed Meal
Sat, Feb 20	St. Theodore Saturday, Lit. 10 am Vespers/Confession 5 pm
Sun, Feb 21	Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers St. George Cathedral, 6 pm
Wed, Feb 24	Pre-Sanctified Lit at St. Spyridon
Sat, Feb 27	St. Vladimir's Seminary Choir - Vespers at St. George, 5 pm
Wed, March 3	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy at St. George
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

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O ALMIGHTY Lord of power and might, invincible God: Instill within us a deep appreciation of the surrounding creation which we always take for granted. Make us sensitive to the multiform beauty of this world, so that we may walk with renewed awe and wonder, marveling at the magnificence of your wondrous works. By your grace, prevent us from abusing these gifts of your ineffable love for us, but let them help us, rather, to reach you.

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

announcement and solicitation from the **Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches**. Please be generous.

If you have not already done so, we ask you to consider your **Stewardship Pledge offering** prayerfully, fill out the pledge form, and submit it today. You may obtain the 2010 Stewardship Pledge Form at the candle stand. For more information, contact Deb Sedares or Fr. Nick.

The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston is sponsoring a **Family Camp Weekend February 26-28**. Members of our community are going. If you'd like more information talk to Lea Christo.

Today we celebrated a Memorial Service for the servant of God **Vasil Symock** fallen asleep three years. **May his memory be eternal!** Today's coffee hour is sponsored by in his memory by the Symock family.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Volunteers needed for Saturdays and Sundays at Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehab Center, during the hours of 1:00pm to 3:00pm. Please call Catherine Sabatini at 508-852-1000 or email 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, call David Day at 508-791-8200.

Did you know? All of the staff at Holy Trinity Hospice have specialized expertise in Hospice care.

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.

The **2010 Archdiocesan Almanac has arrived**. The cost is \$10, available at the candle stand.

MISSION SUNDAY

The hierarchs of the **Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas** (SCOBA), have declared the Sunday before Great Lent, **February 14th, 2010**, as Mission Sunday. Our Hierarchs ask for our prayers and active support of all the faithful for OCMC, so that laborers will answer the call of the Lord and enter into His abundant and glorious harvest.

Today, through the prayers and support of the faithful, there are 20 men and women who are serving, or preparing to serve, as long-term missionaries in places like Albania, Romania, and Tanzania. Likewise, young, growing seminaries around the world are receiving support to provide the-

ological training to over 250 local priests, catechists, and ministry leaders in places where the Church is newly emerging. With assistance from OCMC's Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) Program, there are 400 priests in 19 countries who are bringing the Faith to those who may never have heard the Gospel's message of salvation. And, in 2010, OCMC plans to train and send over 100 Orthodox Christians from across North America to serve on 14 short-term Mission Teams, bringing a living witness to the Orthodox Faith in Africa, Asia, Europe, Central America, and Alaskan North America. Read the entirety of their statement at : www.scoba.us/articles/2804.html

WHO IS A FAITHFUL STEWARD OF THE CHURCH?

A faithful steward and member of the Orthodox Christian Church, who can receive or participate as a sponsor in any Sacraments of the church implies that the person:

- Is baptized and christmated an Orthodox Christian
- Comes to Church regularly
- Participates in the Life of the Church
- Participates in Holy Communion regularly
- Is a financial steward of the Church
- Goes to Holy Confession when necessary

NAMEDAYS

February 20

St. Theodore of Tyre

Theodore Belba
Theodora Collins
Theodhoraq Lolo
Teodor Nedelcu
Theodore Peter Tonna
Theodore Russell Tonna
Vjollça Treska
Derek Wilder

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

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

LIVE HONORABLY, AS IN THE DAY

TOMORROW we begin Great Lent. The Scripture readings chosen for this Forgiveness Sunday are meant to give us some guidance as we set out. In the Gospel of Matthew (6:14-21) the Lord tells us to forgive one another, as well as to fast with joy and in secret. In the selection we read from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (13:11-14:4) we also receive some sound advice on the proper way to approach the Fast. As a way to steel the resolve of the Roman Christians, he reminds them of the sleep and darkness from which they have emerged, and the day of salvation that draws every closer. He also counsels them not to judge how and what people eat — this is an echo from last week's reading from First Corinthians.

One of the powerful themes during Lent, especially at both the beginning and end, is the Lord's return — His Second Coming. Not only did we hear of this in the last Sunday's Gospel lesson, but the same subject was also present in all of the weekday readings during the past two weeks. Many of these same readings, as well as others on the Lord's Coming, will be read during Holy Week.

As Christians we experience and live the reality of the Kingdom on two levels. The first is in the changed reality we now live because Jesus our Savior has come. St. Paul reminds the Roman of this in the first part of the reading. The second level is the expectation of the Lord's coming-again. We await the great day of judgment when the Lord will come in glory. Then everything and everyone will be sorted out. This is the Judgment spoken of in last week's Gospel reading.

When we hear words like 'sleep' and 'waking' or 'night' and 'day', these are used to give us a way to understand a deeper spiritual reality: our movement from captivity to evil, to freedom in Christ. So, St. Paul tells the Romans: "You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now

than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." (v. 11-12) The early Christians (St. Paul included) believed that the Lord would be coming again soon. In addition, everyone in these communities was a convert to faith in Jesus Christ. Both the darkness they had left and the day drawing near were very palpable to them. It is hard to feel this same immediacy for us who have grown up in the Good News of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, part of our objective during Lent is to heighten and deepen within us the experiences of which St. Paul speaks.

St. Paul next turns to how we should actually live now: "Let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." (v. 13-14) It would be easy to interpret these lines as St. Paul being 'prudish;' but this is not the case. St. John Chrysostom says that St. Paul is not speaking against normal partying, drinking, socializing or conjugal relations. He is warning us against the excesses of these that lead us to pervert our true human nature — our nature in Christ.

The fast is meant as a time for us to regain our sense of who we are and what we are called to be. To "live honorably as in the day" is to embrace our true selves — who God created us to be and to which He calls us again.

The second theme in this week's reading concerns judgment: forming opinions about and criticizing others. He uses the same categories of 'weak' and 'strong' as he did when writing to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 8:8ff). This suggests that the matter of whether or not a Christian could or should eat food offered to idols was being discussed in Churches throughout the ancient world. While today we

might not face the question of food offered to pagan gods, we do have the Church's fasting rules that present a similar spiritual challenge.

St. Paul says: "Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand." (v. 14:1-4)

The first thing that strikes us is that the 'weak' are eating vegetables, and the 'strong' are eating freely. Our fasting rules are the absolute inverse: the strong are those who abstain and the weak are eating freely. Fasting is an important spiritual discipline, but it is our own personal discipline. We fast not because God needs our fasting, but rather because we need to change our focus from our stomach and desires, to the deeper reality of our love for God and His love for us. When we are tied down to the things of earth, it is hard to ascend toward Heaven.

Because fasting requires us to be disciplined, it is very easy to fall into the sin of pride. We may feel our fasting deserves some recognition, by God and others. We can feel we are better than those who do not fast, or, do not fast rigorously. But, "who are you to pass judgment on servants of another?" Our fasting is our own, something private between us and God. Our good works are our own, a secret between us and God. Our prayer is our own, the quiet conversation we have with our Lord. But, may each of us grow together during this time of the Fast, and so be worthy to see the Light of Christ's Resurrection.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

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