

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN FEBRUARY 21, 2010

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

We want to thank **everyone who helped with set-up, clean-up, and cooking on Wednesday evening** when our Parish hosted the first of the Lenten Pre-Sanctified Liturgies. Your generosity of time and spirit is greatly appreciated.

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 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**

USHERS TEAM 1:
GERRY BELBA & CĂLIN GALERIU
ALTAR TEAM B



THE FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT — THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

EPISTLE: HEBREWS 11:24-26; 32-40

GOSPEL: JOHN 1:43-51

TONE 4 - RESURRECTION GOSPEL 4

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 appointment (e-mail Fr. Nick).

On **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 announcement and solicitation

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Mon, Feb 15 Great Lent begins
- 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.

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

The **Lenten Pre-Sanctified Liturgy** sponsored by the Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches this week will be held on **Wednesday, February 24th at 6:00 pm at St. Spyridon Cathedral**. Persons wishing to receive Holy Communion must prepare themselves in the usual manner, including fasting from at least noon. You are also invited to remain for a "pot-luck" Lenten meal after that service.

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.

Today's Coffee Hour is sponsored by **Florence Rucho** in memory of her mother **Sophie George**.

We want to offer our **deepest sympathy to Elva Gartsu, on the loss of her beloved sister, Peggy Wright**, who fell asleep in the Lord on Monday, February 15. May she find rest where there is pain, grief, or sighing, but life, which does not end. May her Memory be Eternal!

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Families and people of all ages are invited to attend the **Worcester Sharks AHL Hockey Game on Sunday, March 14th at 3:30pm at the Worcester DCU**. A local **Christian band, Shades of Skin**, will be playing before and after the game. If we have a group of 15 or more from the parish we are eligible for the group discount rate of \$10 for youth 16 and under, and \$14.50 for adults. Seating will be in the lower level closer to the ice surface. If you are interested in going to the game, make a reservation by contacting George Demake at 508-753-6297 or gdemake@charter.net

The **St. Nicholas Teen Youth Group** (ages 12 to 18) will be holding its first get together on **Friday evening, March 19th at 7pm at the church**. This will provide an opportunity for the teens to get to know one another, as well as to discuss and plan different type of events that the group would be interested in. Pizza and beverages will be served. Please RSVP to gdemake@charter.net

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

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 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, 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.

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

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

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

MOSES FASTED AND SAW GOD

THE EPISTLE lesson for this first Sunday of Lent is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews (11:24-26; 32-40). In chapter eleven of Hebrews St. Paul speaks of the meaning of faith and opens with his famous definition: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) He then gives us examples of people who down through the centuries, while not seeing and realizing the promise given them by God, nevertheless continued to persevere. Some of the verses from today's reading (v. 32-40) are also read on the Sunday before Christmas to remind us of how God's promise was realized in the birth of the Messiah. We read these words again, as we begin the Fast, to remind ourselves of the faith of all of the holy people — the saints— who persevered, never faltering in their faith.

What St. Paul says in Hebrews bears directly on what we celebrate this first Sunday of Lent. We remember how after a long civil struggle, holy images — icons — were restored in the life and worship of the Church. And while the struggle centered around painted or mosaic images of our Lord, his mother, and the other saints, the issue went much deeper than a controversy over artwork. The issue was, and continues to be, how does the invisible God make Himself known in our world?

The first and most important way God is visible in the world is in each of us. We believe that every human being is created in the image of God (cf. Genesis 1:26-27). I think it is not too much to say we are God's living icons, or, at the very least, we are called to be that. This verse of Genesis says that God created us in His image and likeness. Reflecting on these two words, theologians have come to see a growth dynamic between the image of God "burned" into our very being, and the day-to-day way we strive to make that image within us real and visible. The

men and women we call "holy" are those who through trial and adversity kept their faith with God. When we look at them, we see God. More importantly, when a holy person looks at us, they too see God, in spite of all of our imperfections and doubts — the ways we struggle with our faith.

Today the iconoclast struggle takes a different form. Many fellow Christians have difficulty understanding the role of saints. The simplest answer is that these holy people — some of whom we recognize and know, but vastly more whom we do not know and are known only by God — are given to us as examples and role models. In a world where celebrities are idolized and discarded, we are in serious need of people who we can trust and follow.

The beauty of the saints is that they are people like us; people created in God's image who struggled to make their likeness match God's design. Some speak to us more directly because we can recognize our own struggle in the difficulties they endured. Others we simply admire for their total commitment to God and neighbor. They reveal God, real and actual, working in the world, making His presence known.

In this eleventh chapter St. Paul cites many such examples of persons with faith, but he highlights two in particular: Abraham and Moses. The verses we read before Christmas featured Abraham, because he was Jesus' very-great-grandfather, through Mary. In the first three verses of today's reading it is Moses.

We begin Lent by remembering Moses first and foremost because he is a "type" or image of Christ. Both were liberators. Moses foreshadowed the freedom Christ would bring. As Moses freed the children of Israel from slavery to Pharaoh and Egypt, Jesus, our Savior, freed us from slavery to Satan and death. As Moses led his people through the waters of the Red Sea changing them from slaves to free persons, our

Lord changes us from mortal to immortal in the waters of Baptism. As Moses renounced his royal status, embracing the low-status of his people, Christ left the heights of heaven to be one with us.

This is how St. Paul puts it: "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward." (v. 24-26)

Moses renounces the comfort of Pharaoh's house, choosing to "share ill-treatment with the people of God." In Philippians St. Paul speaks of how Christ identified himself with us, his people, by emptying himself. He took on the form of a servant. Even though he was in the form of God, he did not cling to his equality with God. He became humble and obedient, even to the point of death. (cf. Philippians 2:6-8)

In Moses we see a preview of what God was planning for us in Jesus Christ. In Moses' faith we see what God plans for each one of us, if we too share his faith. But lest we think that this faith Moses had was easy for him, pick up your Bible and read the Book of Exodus. It's not long. In it you will read not only of the confrontation with Pharaoh, but also the struggles Moses had with his brother Aaron, the whining of the Israelites, and his own temptations and sins. Throughout, he persevered and was rewarded by God.

In a hymn we sang last Sunday during Matins we heard: "Moses fasted for forty days and saw God." We are encouraged to follow his example, especially during Lent, so that we too might see Christ, radiant and risen.

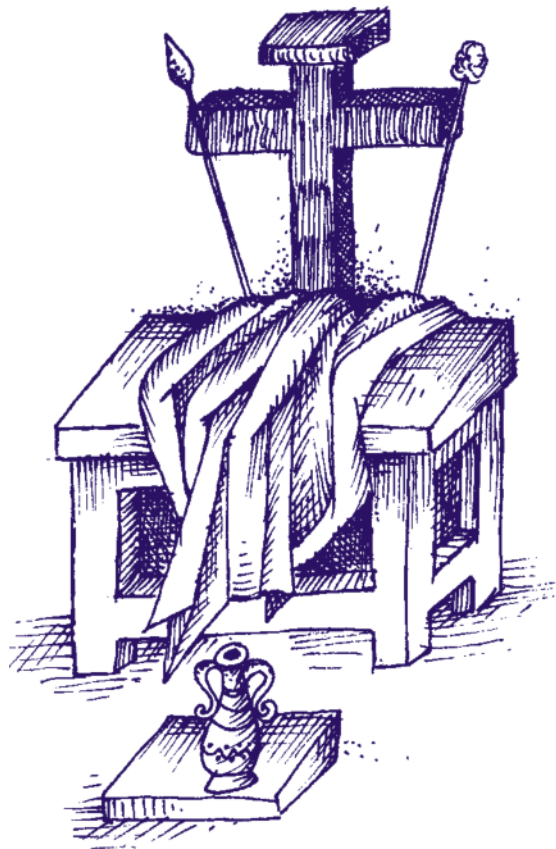
FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGIES 2010

Wednesday, February 17, 2010
St. Nicholas Church

Wednesday, February 24, 2010
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, March 3, 2010
St. George Cathedral



Wednesday, March 10, 2010
St. Mary's Assumption

Wednesday, March 17, 2010
St. Spyridon Cathedral

Wednesday, March 24, 2010
Vesperal Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
St. George Cathedral

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest 'pot-luck' lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others.