

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JUNE 20, 2010

THIS WEEK'S NEWS HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Thanks to all who helped throughout last weekend with the preparation and execution of the Parish Luncheon. Despite the rain, it was an enjoyable time and a great fundraiser for our Church. We appreciate your support. St. Nicholas is fortunate to have parishioners who are so generous with the time, talents and treasure.

We also want to thank the people who helped prepare the food and serve the visitors at the Mustard Seed this past Friday, June 18th. The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner each day to about 150 people in need. Our next meal is on August 20th. Please contact Fr. Nick if you can help with this ministry.

Today there will be a brief mid-year Treasurer's Update immediately following the Divine Liturgy. If you have any particular questions you would like addressed, please speak with Evan Stamoulis.

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. The 2010 Stewardship Pledge Form and other materials are available at the candle stand. For more information, con-

USHER TEAM 5:
BRYAN DONABED &
GEORGE DEMAKE
ALTAR TEAM A



THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

EPISTLE: ROMANS 6:18-23 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 8:5-13

TONE 3 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 4

tact Deb Sedares or Fr. Nick.

PLANNING AHEAD

There will be **NO Divine Liturgy at our Church on Sunday, July 4**, because Fr. Nick will be attending the bi-annual Archdiocese Congress in Chicago.

From **Sunday, July 11 through Sunday, September 5 we will be on "Summer Hours."** Divine Liturgy will **begin at 9:30 AM, and should be finished by 11:00 AM.** Coffee Hour will also be suspended for these summer weeks, so the faithful crew of coffee-hour workers gets some time off from that responsibility.

Save the Date — On *Friday evening, July 23*, we will have a Parish cookout, campfire, and talent show here on the Church grounds.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and Holy Trinity Hospice are Orthodox Charities and rely on your donations to continue their mission of providing the best care possible.

Did you Know? If you are a Fallon Community Health Plan member, you are able

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sunday, June 20 Treasurer's Mid Year Update
Wed, June 23 Vespertal Lit for St. John
- 6pm at St. Mary's
Thurs, June 24 Lit for St. John - 9am St. Spyridon
Mon, June 28 Vespertal Lit for Ss Peter & Paul
- 6pm at St. George
Tues, June 29 Lit for Feast - 9am St. Spyridon
Sunday, July 4 No Liturgy at St. Nick's
Sunday 7/11 - 9/5 Summer Hours, Liturgy 9:30 am
Friday, July 23 Parish Cookout / Campfire

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

2010 GRADUATES

"He has filled them with the spirit of God, with skill, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft." (Exodus 35:31) We want to acknowledge members of our Church community who are celebrating a graduation and recognize their achievement.

HIGH SCHOOL

Michael Bourisk graduated from St. John's High School and will attend Assumption College.

Ilie Durmillari graduated from Holy Name High School.

Ilya Gjanci graduated from St. Peter Marian High School.

Alex Johnson graduated from St. Mary's High School in Worcester and will attend Assumption College.

Stephanie Kamataris graduated from Shrewsbury High School and will attend Assumption College.

Paul Trotta graduated from Shrewsbury High School and will attend the Isenberg School of Business at UMass Amherst.

COLLEGE

Michael Clem graduated from the University of Massachusetts - Lowell with a degree in Exercise Physiology. He will continue on there to pursue his Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

Hanna Constance Datz graduated from La Salle University as the top student in the Marketing Department and delivered the commencement address at the graduation.

Cristina Elefteria Mazanitis graduated from Boston University.

Michael Prizio Blanchard graduated from Assumption College.

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Sophia Amyra Apostola graduated from Northeastern University School of Law.

Victor Apostol graduated from Worcester State College with a Masters in Education.

Nicole Maria Mazanitis graduated from Fordham School of Law.

May our loving Lord continue to bless their efforts and grant them a long life, health, prosperity, and many, many years!

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

GLORY TO YOU ALMIGHTY FATHER, for raising your Son from death to new life! The beautiful light of the moon and the stars cannot penetrate our hearts, and the light of the sun blinds the eyes that dare to stare at it, O eternal one. But your only Son, the light that shines forth from you, is a joyful brilliance that illumines our path to you. As we glory in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, fortify and sustain in us the hope he has given us that nothing may separate us from you, the savior of our souls.

By the grace and mercy and love for us of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

to go to Holy Trinity for your rehabilitation if you let the case manager know as soon as possible that you are a member of the Orthodox Community. They will make the referral to Holy Trinity, and we will do the rest!

COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Michael's Orthodox Christian Church in Southbridge invites you to attend its **Annual Church Picnic** - One of the Oldest & Best in Town! - On **Sunday, July 18th** beginning at 12 Noon. Specialties will include shish-ke-bab cooked to perfection and home-made Romanian pastries. Live music, Free Admission ~ Rain or Shine

WEEKDAY LITURGIES

Birth of St. John the Baptist

- ◇ Vespertal Liturgy at St. Mary's, Wednesday, June 23 at 6:00 pm
- ◇ Liturgy at St. Spyridon, Thursday, June 24 at 9:00 am

Holy Apostles Peter & Paul

- ◇ Vespertal Liturgy at St. George, Monday, June 28 at 6:00 pm
- ◇ Liturgy at St. Spyridon, Tuesday, June 29 at 9:00 am

NAMEDAYS

June 27

The Holy Myrrh-bearer Joanna

Joanne V. Prizio

June 29

The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

Patrick Disho

Petraq Dragoti

Paul Dymek

Petrika Lolo

Kenneth Paul Maynard

Peter Mountzouris

Rev. Fr. Peter Michael Preble

Paul Soter

Peter Toda

Peter Demetri Tsongalis

Paul Zekos

Peter Zekos

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

BY WEB OR PODCAST: WWW.RECEIVE.ORG

THE WAGES OF SIN

THIS is the fourth Sunday after Pentecost. In today's reading from his Letter to the Romans (6:18-23), St. Paul explains the radical transformation Baptism brings to our lives. In fact, all of Chapter 6 draws the relationship between Baptism and our participation in the Lord's death and resurrection. St. Paul asks us, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (v. 6:3; also part of the reading designated for the Baptism Service). By dying to our old selves in baptism, we also share in Christ's resurrected life—our new life in Christ.

The Baptismal service dramatically expresses this change in our lives. Just before the Baptismal service proper begins, the priest reads prayers of exorcism over the catechumen. He then directs the person who is to be baptized to turn toward the west (where the sun sets and a symbol of darkness), and asks: "Do you renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his worship, and all his pride?" He repeats the question three times. Then he directs the catechumen to turn toward east (sunrise and the source of light), and asks: "Do you unite yourself with Christ?" This is probably the most important question we will ever answer. The answer to this question is the theme of today's Epistle lesson.

St. Paul says to the Romans, "having been set free from sin, we have become slaves of righteousness." (v. 18) He tells them that he is "speaking in human terms, because of [their] natural limitations." (v. 19) He is using an image that would be very real to those listening to his words. Slaves have masters. A slave has no life or will of his or her own; they do what their master wants. In baptism we are set free from our slavery to sin. In baptism we freely accept Jesus as our King and Lord. We trade a mastery by sin, which rules over our lives and seeks our destruction, for a true master who desires only our

complete well-being. The choice is always ours.

St. Paul weaves his spiritual understanding of baptism with very real and practical examples. He says to us, "As once you surrendered yourselves as slaves to immorality and to a lawlessness which results in more lawlessness, now you have to surrender yourselves to uprightness which is to result in sanctification." (v. 19) He is talking about taking advantage of the fresh start that Christ gives us. He reminds us of the consequences of our choices.

"When you were the slaves of sin, you felt no obligation to uprightness, and what did you gain from living like that? Experiences of which you are now ashamed, for that sort of behavior ends in death." (v. 20-21) It is only when we stand in the freedom that God gives us that we can look back on our previous behavior and see it for what it actually is: slavery. A life without moral direction is a life wasted. What we thought was freedom was in fact permissiveness. This is what St. Paul means when he says ironically (in a more literal translation of the original text), "When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness." (v. 20) When the direction of our life points us toward selfishness, pleasure, and greed, we end up in a place where it is very difficult to see the ultimate consequences of our actions.

We are presently living through a very difficult economic period that has and will cause many people to suffer. We are living through an environmental catastrophe that will alter the ecology and way of life of our southern coast for a very long time. Pure and simple, this is the direct result of the kind of living and thinking of which St. Paul speaks. People tend to view sin in dramatic terms—the blatant and obvious sins that people commit such as murder, rape, robbery, and the like. But the path of sin is often more subtle than that. It is the small lie, the little thiev-

ery, and the clever belittlement. When we cut corners and take secret advantage of others, we sin. When we are on the trajectory of sin—when we are facing west—it is difficult if not impossible for us to see clearly. We all have a part in what has befallen our nation and indeed the world because we were feeling "no obligation to uprightness." What have we gained from living like this? How will we recover?

St. Paul reminds us of what God's Baptismal gift to us was: "Now you are set free from sin and bound to the service of God, your gain will be sanctification and the end will be eternal life." (v. 22) Can you see what power there is when we choose to turn from west to east, from darkness to light? By renouncing and spitting on the Devil, as we so overtly do in the Baptismal service, and accepting Christ as our King and God, we choose a new direction in our lives.

Of course, this choice was made for most of us when we were infants by our parents and godparents. They pledged to raise us on the right trajectory, on the path of righteousness. At some point, however, we need to make their pledge for us our own. We need to say for ourselves, "I unite myself with Christ!" The Grace given us in Baptism is not static, nor is it magic. It is potential. Just as before our Baptism we were predisposed to a certain outlook and action, so in the free gift of God we are given the proclivity for goodness. We become members of Christ's Body and have Jesus as our guide and helper.

St. Paul sets the stakes before us in clear and stark terms. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (v. 23) The parallel here is not equal, but neither are the choices. What we 'earn' for sin is death. What God freely gives is life. The choice is ours.