

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JUNE 24, 2018

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

NO LITURGY NEXT SUNDAY on Sunday, July 1st. Fr. Nick will be attending the Archdiocesan Congress in Chicago. Please plan on attending Liturgy at one of our sister parishes.

THE APOSTLES' FAST began on June 4th and concludes with the Feast of Ss. Peter and Paul on June 29th.

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED! We have no sponsors for the next weeks. Please speak with or contact **Presvytera Maria** if you and your family would like to sponsor one.

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Janice Samara**.

COMMUNITY NEWS

ST. MICHAEL SOUTHBRIDGE ANNUAL FESTIVAL will be held on **Sunday, July 29th** on the parish grounds. Food, music, dancing, and kids' games. www.stmichaelorthodox.com

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

"BACK TO SCHOOL" time for Holy Trinity's cooks! On June 21st Deb Bayer, Director of Food Services, and her cooks were willing students, and their teacher was a daughter of one of our Or-

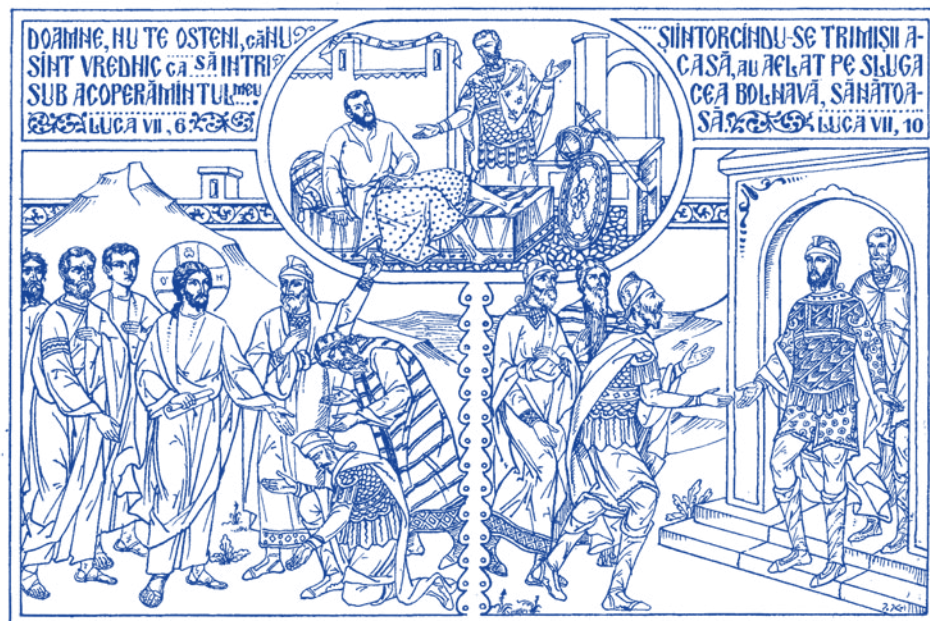
GREETERS TEAM 2:

ARTIC GAVALA AND V. GERALD BELBA

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW A:

MARGARITE LANDRY,
CHRISTINE MASTERJOHN

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

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

(JESUS HEALS THE CENTURION'S SERVANT)

TONE 3 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 4

thodox residents, as they learned how to make the **best lentil soup in the world!** This is part of a program to make use of the great culinary skills of our community to "spice up" the menu. Residents and friends were invited to watch the miracle and enjoy a bowl of the soup.

THE FIRST COOKOUT OF THE SUMMER will be held on **Thursday, June 28th**. This popular program is back. They're will food (of course!) and **entertainment by guitarist Paul Bonneau**. Everyone's invited, especially family and friends. If you'd like to attend, just let us know by leaving your name at the Front Reception desk.

REMEMBER: Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is an Orthodox Charity and relies on your donations to continue its mission of providing the best care possible.



DATES TO REMEMBER

- Mon, June 4 Apostles' Fast Began
- Sun, July 1 NO LITURGY, Archdiocesan Congress
- Sat, July 7 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
- Sun, July 29 St. Michael Southbridge Festival
- Aug 6-8 Vacation Church School
- Fri, Aug 17 Mustard Seed Meal, 5 pm

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850

E-MAIL: FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG ♦ WEB: WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG

A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of the Americas

NAMEDAYS

June 4

The Sunday of All the Saints

Amalia Polymeros

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

Paul Soter

Peter Toda

Peter Demetri Tsongalis



THE NATIVITY
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
JUNE 24TH

A PRAYER ON THE FORERUNNER'S BIRTH

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O FORERUNNER, PROPHET AND BAPTIST: while still in your mother's womb you recognized the Master and leaped in worship. You were born from a womb that had been barren and from infancy yearned for the height of virtue and to live in the pathless desert. You became the herald of repentance, the baptizer of our Lord, and, by grace, a witness of the Holy Trinity. Rightly did the Lord call you greater than anyone born of woman.

O Christ our God, you were baptized by him and enlightened the whole world, send us now your heavenly assistance and have mercy on all of us. For to you is due all glory, together with your Father who is without beginning, and your all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Gospel of St. Luke (1:5ff) relates that the righteous parents of Saint John the Baptist, the Priest Zachariah and Elizabeth (September 5), lived in the ancient city of Hebron. They reached old age without having children, since Elizabeth was barren. Once, Saint Zachariah was serving in the Temple at Jerusalem and saw the Archangel Gabriel, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. He predicted that Saint Zachariah would father a son, who would announce the Savior, the Messiah, awaited by the Old Testament Church. Zachariah was troubled, and fear fell upon him. He had doubts that in old age it was possible to have a son, and he asked for a sign. It was given to him, and it was also a chastisement for his unbelief. Zachariah was struck speechless until the time of the fulfillment of the archangel's words.

Saint Elizabeth came to be with child, and fearing derision at being pregnant so late in life, she kept it secret for five months. Then her relative, the

Virgin Mary, came to share with her Her own joy. Elizabeth, "filled with the Holy Spirit," was the first to greet the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God. Saint John leaped in his mother's womb at the visit of the Most Holy Virgin Mary and the Son of God incarnate within Her.

Soon Saint Elizabeth gave birth to a son, and all the relatives and acquaintances rejoiced together with her. On the eighth day, in accordance with the Law of Moses, he was circumcised and was called John. Everyone was amazed, since no one in the family had this name. When they asked Saint Zachariah about this, he motioned for a tablet and wrote on it: "His name is John." Immediately his tongue was loosed, and Saint Zachariah glorified God. He also prophesied about the Coming into the world of the Messiah, and of his own son John, the Forerunner of the Lord (Luke. 1: 68-79).

After the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ and the worship of the shepherds and the Magi, wicked king Herod gave orders to kill all male infants. Hearing about this, Saint Elizabeth fled into the wilderness and hid in a cave. Saint Zachariah was at Jerusalem and was doing his priestly service in the Temple. Herod sent soldiers to him to find out the abode of the infant John and his mother. Zachariah answered that their whereabouts were unknown to him, and he was killed right there in the Temple. The Righteous Elizabeth continued to live in the wilderness with her son and she died there. The child John, protected by an angel, dwelt in the wilderness until the time when he came preaching repentance, and was accounted worthy to baptize the Lord.

ONLY SAY THE WORD ...

THE Gospel lesson for this Sunday, the fourth after Pentecost, is the account of the healing of the Centurion's servant, taken from the Gospel according to St. Matthew (8:5-13). St. Luke tells of the same event (7:1-10) and adds a few other details.

The basic story is that there is a Centurion, stationed in Palestine, whose servant has fallen seriously ill. (A centurion was a Roman soldier who commanded a regiment of 100 men.) He is obviously quite worried about this servant. From St. Luke we learn that the Centurion is very pious and had even built a synagogue in the locale. He approaches Jesus and asks him to heal his servant. Jesus offers to go, but the Centurion says, "Only say the word, and my servant will be healed" (v. 8). Jesus marvels at his faith and points this out to everyone. Before proceeding, you might want to pick up your Bible and read both accounts.

There are two aspects of this story that I think are important for us to focus on. The first is the most obvious: the immediate faith-response of the Centurion. The second is a bit more subtle: the way in which the Lord elicits the Centurion's faith response. Let me begin with the second.

The Centurion comes to the Lord with his request. In almost every other similar incident the Lord would have simply performed the request (miracle) and sent the person on his or her way. In this instance what does he do? He says to the Centurion: "I will come and heal him" (v. 7). This causes the Centurion to openly confess his confidence that the Lord's word alone is sufficient. He has faith in Jesus.

Insofar as we might understand the immediate faith-response of the Centurion, St. John Chrysostom draws our at-

tention to other similar instances where the Lord, by subtle provocation, tests the depth of the faith of the person requesting his help. One example he points to is the Canaanite women who approached the Lord asking him to heal her daughter (Matthew 15:22-28). He at first refuses to even speak to her and then, in a startling response, likens her request to taking the children's bread and tossing it to the dogs. Rather than taking issue with the comparison, she rises to the challenge by embracing it, replying that even a dog under a table will feed off of the children's crumbs. Or, in the account of the healing of the ten lepers (Luke 17:12-19), only one returns to thank him, a Samaritan. Rather than praise him directly for this gratitude, the Lord asks after the other nine (who didn't return to thank him), and then calls the Samaritan a foreigner. But the Lord, having tested his faith tells him, "Get up and go on your way, your faith has made you well" (v. 19). The contrast is clear: the 'foreigner' has not only faith, but also gratitude. The other nine were wanting for both.

And then there is the particularly powerful case of Martha after her brother Lazarus had died. When the Lord finally arrives, and she runs out of the house to the place where he and the disciples were resting, says to him: "If you had been here, my brother would not have died ... even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you (John 11:21-22). Jesus questions her, again, testing her faith. He tells her: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (v. 25-26).

The faith of the Centurion, by contrast, is immediate and unwavering. It is

brilliant in its purity. He uses his own military training to explain it. He tells the Lord that as

a military officer he knows that if he gives an order it will be carried out. He doesn't need to see it to believe it. In the same way he knows that Jesus has the power to simply "order" the healing and it will be done. He doesn't need to see it to believe it. This is the lesson of total faith we should draw from the Centurion's example.

Finally, there is one more verse worth reflecting on in this story. The Centurion is perhaps a little embarrassed to have such a holy person as Jesus come to his house. He doesn't want to presume too much. And so, he gently says: "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof" (v. 8). The liturgical tradition has taken this verse and applied it to our own unworthiness, especially as we approach the Holy Eucharist. In many of the prayers before Holy Communion we echo the Centurion's humility as we reflect on the amazing reality that by partaking of the Body and Blood of the Savior, God comes to dwell within us. What more appropriate words are there than: "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof"?

We should always strive to be as truly humble and grateful in our hearts, as are the words we speak with our lips. We should prepare a worthy place within us, a roof under which the Lord might find rest. Let us ask the Lord to give us the Centurion's remarkable faith, and especially his humility.



FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA