

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN DECEMBER 16, 2018

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THANKS TO ALL WHO WORKED AND SUPPORTED THE FEASTDAY CELEBRATION. A lot of people contributed to his effort, but a special thanks goes to **Deb Sedares and the kitchen crew, and Tim Rucho** who decorated the Church and the hall.

We also want to thank **Tom Fitzpatrick and George Demake** for spearheading the Raffle. And thanks to all those who bought and sold tickets. The Feastday **Raffle realized approximately \$9,000** after prizes and expenses. Congratulations to the winners!

\$1,000 our own St. Nick's Church
\$500 Eleanor Sedares
\$250 Kosmas Karadimitriou

THE CHRISTMAS/THEOPHANY SCHEDULE is attached to the Bulletin.

OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL is **THIS** Friday, December 21st. We'll need help cooking and serving. **Prep** help needed (2 persons) Thursday. **Prep** help needed (2 persons), noon Friday. **Serving** help needed (5 persons), 5:30pm Friday. **This month's meal is sponsored by Simona and Philip Mills.** God bless them and their family! If you'd like to help, please talk to Fr. Nick.

GREETERS TEAM 1:
V. GERALD BELBA & MARGARITE LANDRY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:
HELP NEEDED
PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE TWENTY EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS)

EPISTLE: COLOSSIANS 3:4-11 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 14:16-24
(THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET)

TONE 4 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 7

OUR CHILDREN & YOUTH CHRISTMAS PROGRAM will be held on **Sunday, December 23rd.** Preparation and rehearsal will occur **during Religious Ed on Sunday the 16th.** All of those who are interested please attend on that Sunday. **Questions?** see **Valarie Stamoulis** or **Deb Sedares.**

THE 2019 CHURCH CALENDARS are here, in both English and Romanian. Pick them up at the candles. Please consider a small donation to cover the costs.

THE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD is **wrapping up this week.** If you'd like to be included on this Christmas greeting, please see **Tim Rucho** in Coffee Hour today. **We want our whole Community to be a part of this Christmas greeting!**

THIS WEEK'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by **Caro-**

lina Ionete in memory of her mother **Sofia**, fallen asleep one year. **May her memory be eternal!**

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

THANKS FOR ALL WHO VOLUNTEERED TO BUY GIFTS for the Holy Trinity Residents. Also, we appreciate **Eleanor Sedares'** efforts coordinating our parish's part in this effort. **God bless all of you!**

HAPPY 103rd BIRTHDAY TO OUR OWN GRACE H. a Holy Trinity Res-

DATES TO REMEMBER

HOLIDAY LITURGICAL SCHEDULE ATTACHED

Fri, Dec 21 Mustard Seed Meal, 5:00 PM
Sun, Dec 23 Children & Youth Christmas Program
Tues, Dec 25 Nativity of the Lord
Sat, Jan 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9 AM-noon

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

ident! She was honored by the City of Worcester with the Key to the City. It was presented to her by City Councilor Sean M. Rose. Check out the photos at: www.htnr.net.

VOLUNTEER AT HOLY TRINITY. It's great to see all of the Church groups and choirs visiting with and performing for the residents and staff of Holy Trinity, sharing the joy of the Holidays. These same opportunities are present throughout the year. Many women's groups sponsor Coffee Socials. Youth groups have organized community service projects. Individuals set up regular times to come and simply be present to talk to the residents, one-on-one. These moments of giving are what make Holy Trinity a special place. If you'd like to help, and perhaps need an idea, talk to our **Activities Director, Dana Spinney**, at 508-852-1000 or e-mail her at: dspinney@htnr.net.

THE DECEMBER ISSUE of the *Holy Trinity Times* is available at: www.htnr.net. Check out the latest news.

DIVINE LITURGY is celebrated every Wednesday morning at 9:30am. And please always keep Holy Trinity Nursing Home, it's staff, directors, residents, and families in your prayers. And remember: you can always visit!

NEVER FORGET: 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.



NAMEDAYS

December 15

*The Hieromartyr Eleftherios,
Bishop of Illyria*
Lillian Chachi

December 17

The Holy Prophet Daniel
Dan Manescu
Dana Manescu
Dan Alexandru Nedelescu
Robert Daniel Salerno
Dana Tsoules

December 23

*The Sunday of the Ancestors of our
Lord, according to the flesh*
The Patriarch Jacob
Jacob Datz
The High Priest Aaron

Aaron Paul Christo

The Righteous Deborah

Deborah Rucho

Deborah Sedares

The Righteous Noah

Noah Peter Christo

The Righteous Rebecca

Rebeka Tanacea

The Righteous Sarah

Sarah Maria Blanchard

Sarah Maria Bourisk

December 25

*The Holy Nativity of our Lord and
God and Savior Jesus Christ*

Christopher Blanchard

Chrysanthi Charalambides

Christopher Demake

Cristean Dumitriu

Kristjan Endriko

Cristina Gavala

Cristian Ionete

Christine Kelly

Christian Andrew Polymeros

Christian Prizio

Christopher Rucho

Rev. Fr. Milad Selim

Christina Soter

Christo Spyrou

Christian Thoren

Christina Thoren

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

BLESSED ARE YOU, Lord God of our fathers, for giving us your only Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, as our refuge and stronghold, that evil might never master our lives nor the enemy enslave us! Now, as we offer you these prayers in watchfulness and expectation, enable us to call on your holy name, filled with understanding and love. Prepare us for the celebration of your Son's birthday by renewing in us a spirit of true dedication and discipleship, and grant that we may always enjoy your saving power.

For you are one to have mercy on us and save us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



Christine Toda
Christina Marina Tonna
Chris Zaruha
Cristian Zaruha

CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL

As we approach the feast of the Lord's birth we might also want to keep in mind the full line of holiday celebrations ahead climaxing with the Lord's baptism in the Jordan — his Epiphany. In the weeks before Christmas the Apostolic readings are taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians, which will be interrupted for readings specifically chosen for each feastday. (We take up again the Letter to the Colossians following Theophany.) This Sunday we read Chapter 3, verses 4-11 from this Letter.

To refresh your memory, Colossae was a community composed largely of Gentile converts, but also with a substantial Jewish component. Some of them were falling under the influence of gnostic teachers — what today we might call “new age” thinkers. There was a lot of syncretistic thinking and behavior, a kind of mix-and-match approach to the spiritual life. Paul wanted to address what he saw as the dangers of these tendencies straight on.

This Letter has two distinct parts. Paul starts out by addressing questions of faith. There were real doctrinal problems in the Colossian community, and he wanted to get them back on the right track. The verses we read today are the opening thoughts to the second part: how Christians ought to live. In order to make his point about the new life that Christ offers us, he draws on imagery and language from the Baptismal rite. He bridges his discussion of doctrine and faith to his thoughts on Christian living by reminding the Colossians of their baptism. Very probably, much of what St. Paul wrote to them was part of their catechetical instruction when they were preparing for baptism.

I should say one more thing. Often when the portions of St. Paul's letters are read during the Liturgy, people can be left a little perplexed, wondering what it meant. St. Paul intended his Letters to be read as a whole, and even studied. It

may be hard to appreciate the fact that they are usually very pastoral and even emotional, when we only hear them in small snippets, dare I say, sound bites. This week's reading is a good example. He uses the images of death in the waters of Baptism and the new life in Christ which we have been given. But the selected reading only gives us the first part. We have to wait until another Sunday to get the second. So if you don't understand the whole context, the opening verses can be a little jarring. Listen to what he says:

“Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things — anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth” (v. 3:5-8).

If you have attended a baptism recently, you probably recognize many of these phrases from the first part of the service, the exorcisms. When we hear these words read again, it reminds us of the “old man” we left behind when we embraced Christ. Think about that moment in the baptismal service where, after having renounced Satan and joined Christ, the person who is to be baptized is led by the priest toward the font. Now listen to the next verses from today's reading:

“[Y]ou have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator” (v. 9-10). These verses echo what he wrote to the Galatians: “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (v. 3:27). We sing these words at every baptism and at every Divine Liturgy that was traditionally a day for baptisms, like Pascha, Theophany and

Christmas. It is a regular reminder of our baptismal commitment and vow.

In order to emphasize this change that we undergo in Christ — the “new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (v. 10) — he speaks of the disappearance of social barriers in the Christian community, such that, “there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!” (v. 11). He says something similar in Galatians: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (3:28).

Because so many people who called and call themselves Christians have behaved in discriminatory and even horrific ways toward other human beings “different” from them, it can be easy to forget that Christianity and the Church has been the greatest liberating force in human history. One doesn't need to look very hard to see how over the millennia people who were poor and marginalized were able through the Church to rise out of their situations in societies that were frozen by social position and class. As Christians we need to remember St. Paul's words and help to make our parish communities examples of the new humanity that we find in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian faith is regularly criticized as a regressive force in our modern world. All religious faith is often characterized as a source of division and even war. It is true that faith is a powerful motivating force, and sometimes people act badly, thinking it is what God wants. But we know that Christ came to restore humanity, not to destroy it. We know that we are called to renew and reshape ourselves according to the image of him who created us. Let us act on it. Each of us needs to listen to God's call and let it permeate our hearts.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

CHRISTMAS & THEOPHANY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2018

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM
 Children's Christmas Program after the Liturgy

CHRISTMAS EVE MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2018

Royal Hours 9:30 AM
 Great Vespers 6:00 PM

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2018

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2018

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

NEW YEAR'S DAY

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD ❄️ FEAST OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2019

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 AM

FRIDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY ❄️ JANUARY 4, 2019

Royal Hours 9:30 AM

EVE OF HOLY THEOPHANY SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 2019

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom 10:00 AM
 Great Blessing of Water at end of Liturgy

HOLY THEOPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 2019

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 AM
 Great Blessing of Water at end of Liturgy

SUNDAY AFTER HOLY THEOPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2019

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM



HOUSE BLESSINGS. The blessing of homes at Theophany will begin on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, and continue until all homes are blessed. As in the past, we will be setting times when we will be coming to bless your home. If there is a specific time that is more convenient for you, please call Fr. Nick to arrange it (508.335.7378).