

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN MARCH 31, 2019

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

GREAT LENT: Tomorrow marks the start of the fourth week of Lent.

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN NICOLAE will be celebrating Liturgy **this Sunday, March 31st**, with us. Please plan on coming at the start of the Liturgy. His Eminence will also be administering the oath to the newly elected Parish Council.

TODAY IS THE SUNDAY OF THE VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS. DONATIONS ARE WELCOMED toward the flowers that adorn the Precious Cross. **Please see Tim Rucho.**

THE WEDNESDAY PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY this week will be held at St. George Cathedral at 6:00 PM. Plan on attending these services. Set aside your Wednesday evenings and use this as one way to prepare for Pascha. The full schedule is below.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **this Saturday, April 6th, from 9 AM-NOON.** About 4 people are needed. Likewise, donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. If you can

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 THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

THE VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS

APOSTOLIC READING: HEBREWS 4:14-16; 5:1-6 ☩ GOSPEL: MARK 8:34-38; 9:1

TONE 3 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 11

help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with **Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola.**

BAKING ORDERS FOR EASTER need to be in by **this Sunday.** If you have family or friends who would like pitas, pastry, or pastry platters for the holiday, please make sure you get the orders in on time! **Any questions, please contact Chris Toda.**

A HUGE 'THANK YOU' TO THE BAKERS. People have been hard a work for months now baking to fill the orders for our holiday celebrations. Please remember to offer a heartfelt thank you to them.

VESPERS AND CONFESION will be held **each Saturday evening at 5:00 pm during Great Lent.** Fr. Nick will be available for confession each week after Vespers, and

before Vespers by appointment (e-mail Fr. Nick).

WE CELEBRATE TWO MEMORIALS TODAY. For the servant of God **Vasilika Lolo**, fallen asleep 6 months. And also for the servant of God, **Pavlo Goulas**, father of Spiro Kelley, fallen asleep 21 years. **May our loving Lord rest their souls with the just!**

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, March 30	Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON Vespers/Confession, 5 PM
Sun, March 31	Visit of Metropolitan Nicolae
Wed, April 3	PreSanctified Lit - St. George 6 PM
Sat, April 6	Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON Vespers/Confession, 5 PM
Wed, April 10	PreSanctified Lit - St. Nicholas 6 PM
Wed, April 17	PreSanctified Lit - Sts. Anargyroi 6 PM
Sun, April 21	Palm Sunday (Western Easter)
Sun, April 28	GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

HOLY TRINITY RECEIVED A DEFICIENCY FREE SURVEY ON FRIDAY, MARCH 15! This current survey, conducted annually by the Dept. of Public Health, was the most stringent and difficult it has ever been. The DPH Inspectors deemed Holy Trinity's staff to have no areas in need of improvement. ***Congratulations to the staff for such a phenomenal achievement!*** The residents are extremely happy to call Holy Trinity their home and the parishioners of every church should be proud to be associated with such a wonderful facility.

There will be a **COFFEE SOCIAL** on **Thursday, April 4th at 2:00 PM**, sponsored by St. Mary's Albanian Orthodox Church. As always, families and friends are invited!

SEND AN E-CARD to your loved one and put a smile on their face!!! Visit our website at www.htnr.net/e-cards and submit a message and it will be handwritten and delivered daily! ***The little things in life make the biggest difference to someone!***

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.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

WHOM SHALL WE GLORIFY? Whom shall we praise? And to whom shall we give thanks, if not to you, O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for that terrible instrument of the cross on which your Son was put to death for love of us? Though it was a symbol of shame, he transformed it into a resplendent trophy of victory. As we venerate its triumph during these days, and contemplate the salvation it purchased for us, help us truly understand its meaning so that we may share in the resurrection it promises.

Through the same Lord Jesus Christ, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



NAMEDAYS

March 25

The Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos

V. Gerald Belba
Lea Christo
Mary Anna Dymek
Vangjush Lolo
Evan Stamoulis
Lynne Tonna
Evans Tsoules

THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

O Lord and master of my life! Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness, of ambition and vain talk!

Instead, give me the spirit of prudence and humility, of patience and charity.

Yes, my king and Lord, let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others: For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE HEAVENLY LITURGY

WE'VE NOW reached the third and mid-point Sunday of Great Lent, and are asked to pause and reflect on our Lord's Precious Cross. The Epistle lesson it taken from the Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-5:6. St. Paul continues his reflection on Jesus as the high priest who presents our case before the Throne of God. There are two major points that he highlights in this passage. The first is that Jesus is like us in every respect, except for sin, and so he can thoroughly identify with our struggles, and as such present our case before God sympathetically. The second is that because of Jesus and his sacrifice, we can have more confidence before God than would have previously been possible.

St. Paul says that, "We have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God" (v. 14). There is a subtle reference to Moses in this verse; a contrast made between Moses who was prevented from entering the Promised Land because of his sin in Sinai, with Jesus who was permitted to "pass through the heavens" because of his faithfulness. Hebrews is constantly drawing our attention to the possibilities present in the Old Covenant, and now realized in the New.

"For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (v. 15). When St. Paul speaks of the ability of Jesus as high priest to "sympathize with our weaknesses" he is not just referring to the fact that he is human like us; he is also saying that unlike the high priests of the Jerusalem Temple, he lived the life of a common person, not insulated from the real worries and concerns of daily existence. He also says that in every respect Jesus was tempted as we are, but without sin. There is a nuance to the Greek verb tense "has been tempted" that doesn't come across in English. It means that he was tempted not just once or only on a particular occasion, but continually. Jesus was

tempted all the time to do this or that, in the same way we are; only he did not succumb. He experienced the allure, but he resisted. In short, he can relate to our struggle. More importantly, we can gain courage from his example. He shows us that it is possible to weather the storm of temptations.

St. Paul says that we can, "With confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (v. 16). Christ's example and position before God gives us access to God.

This is an idea that we might find hard to relate to in our more egalitarian society. We are a democratic society and consider access to power a right, not a privilege. Of course, we know that even in America some people are more equal than others, yet we see this as an aberration of the fundamental egalitarian principle. And so, in order to appreciate what our Lord Jesus did, we need to do some reality-checking. Each of us, from the highest to the lowest, will find ourselves in serious need of help at some time in our life, especially before God. Unfortunately, we usually realize this only when we've hit bottom.

The image of the heavenly temple and God's throne that St. Paul gives us is much closer to our actual circumstance. If we honestly examine our hearts and our actions, we will quickly realize that we have no way to access God's grace on our own. Most of us are like that poor man in the parable who shows up at the wedding dressed inappropriately (cf. Matthew 22:12). The king had him arrested, cuffed, and thrown into the outer darkness. This is our plight without Jesus. He's the one who lends us 'proper attire' so that we can confidently approach God's throne of mercy.

We Orthodox understand the Eucharistic celebration, the Divine Liturgy, as actually being in the presence of God, before his heavenly throne. The celebrant, usually our parish priest, is the

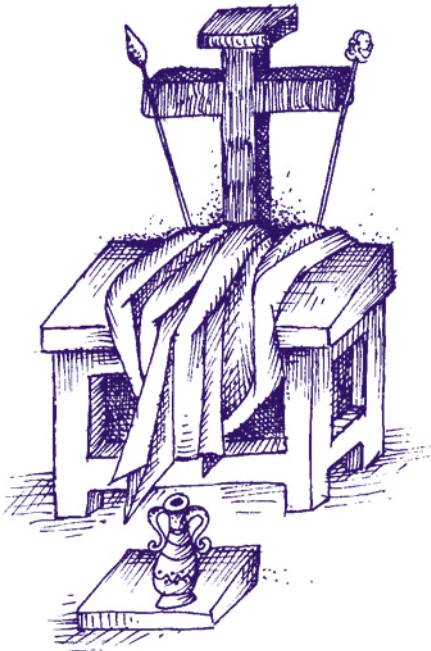
living icon of our Lord, who is Himself the *only* true celebrant. Jesus continually presents Himself before His Father, for our sake. In the Divine Liturgy we are healed of our wounds and changed by grace. Jesus intercedes, presenting Himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

Listen to how St. Paul explains it: "Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'; as he says also in another place, 'You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek'" (5:1-6).

Next week I will speak more of Melchizedek. Today, I would like us to reflect on this glimpse that St. Paul gives of the Heavenly Liturgy. St. John in his Revelation (chapter 4) gives us a similar picture of the continual worship taking place in Heaven. Our Eucharist celebration is an image, an icon, of this Liturgy. In the Liturgy, just before the Lord's Prayer, we thank our loving God for the fact that the gifts of bread and wine we offered have been received "at His holy, heavenly, and spiritual altar as an offering of spiritual fragrance," and ask that he "may in return send upon us divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit." It is the heavenly Altar before almighty God to which the prayer is referring.

Next Sunday, when we wake up and are thinking about being late for Liturgy, or even skipping it entirely, let us recall this image of the Heavenly Liturgy, and, hopefully, reconsider.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA



**PRE-SANCTIFIED
LITURGIES**

2019

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

St. Spyridon

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

St. Nicholas

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

St. Mary

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

St. George

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

St. Nicholas

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Sts. Anagyroi

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.

EXPLANATIONS FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

THE THIRD SUNDAY (THE SUNDAY OF THE CROSS). On this day the service of Mattins concludes with the solemn veneration of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross; the ceremonies are closely parallel to those at the feasts of the Exaltation of the Cross (14 September) and the Procession of the Cross (1 August). The veneration of the Cross on this third Sunday in Lent prepares us for the commemoration of the Crucifixion which is soon to follow in Holy Week, and at the same time it reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ: as the Synaxarion at Mattins

says, 'Through the forty-day Fast, we too are in a way crucified, dying to the passions'. The dominant note on this Sunday, as on the two Sundays preceding, is one of joy and triumph. In the Canon at Mattins, the irmoi are the same as at Easter midnight, 'This is the day of Resurrection ...', and the troparia are in part a paraphrase of the Paschal Canon by St. John of Damascus. No separation is made between Christ's death and His Resurrection, but the Cross is regarded as an emblem of victory and Calvary is seen in the light of the Empty Tomb.

DONATIONS FOR HOLY WEEK

General donations in any amount to defray the cost of decorations for the Paschal Feast are most appreciated. Some specific needs are:

Flowers for Palm Sunday Icon	\$50.00
Palms	\$100.00
Flowers for Bridegroom Icon	\$50.00
Holy Thursday Gospel Candles	\$60.00
Wreaths for Cross (Great Friday)	\$75.00
(Resurrection)	\$75.00
Resurrection Icon	\$50.00
Bay Leaves for Holy Saturday	\$100.00
1 Gallon of Olive Oil	\$25.00
½ lb Incense	\$40.00
Priest's Paschal Candle	\$50.00
Rose Oil for Epitaphion	\$25.00

Flowers for Epitaphion	\$600.00
Decorations/Plants for Pascha	\$400.00
Easter Candy/Gifts for Children	\$100.00

Please see Betty Anderson to make a donation