

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, May 30, 2021

The Sunday of the Samaritan Woman (The Fifth Sunday of Pascha)

Apostolic Reading: Acts 11:19-30
Gospel: John John 4:5-42

Tone 4 • Resurrection Gospel 7

➔ **For Live Streaming Link, [click here](#)**

[\(Click here for a PDF version of this week's news\)](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MASK-WEARING IS STILL REQUIRED. The news reports on the CDC's announcement regarding mask-wearing did not contain all of the details. For the time being, the Commonwealth's protocols regarding masks are still in effect. The Parish Council is keeping up to date with the latest guidance from the State and will follow those protocols.

MEMORIAL DAY is Monday, May 31st. Fr. Nick will be at Hope Cemetery from 10:00 am. The common Memorial Service will be at noon at the Altar in Hope. If you would like Fr. Nick to visit a grave at another cemetery, [please contact him](#) to make arrangements: 508-335-7378.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center, **NEXT Saturday, June 5th 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. Help is also needed during the week for shopping and stocking the Pantry. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please e-mail Nicole Apostola at nicole.apostola@gmail.com.

ALL THINGS ORTHODOX is a weekly show hosted by Fr. Christopher Stamas of St. Spyridon Cathedral. Fr. Chris interviews people active in the life of the Church on questions of faith and action. It is aired on the **Worcester Cable channel 194** on **Mondays** at 7 pm, **Saturdays** at 8 pm and **Sundays** at 9 pm. Also look for it on the Cable website: wccatv.com, or the **Worcester TV** Roku app.

LOOKING FOR THIS YEAR'S HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE GRADUATES in our Parish so that we might recognize their achievements. If you know of a soon-to-be graduate, please inform either [Fr. Nick](#) or [Tim Rucho](#).

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING HAS BEEN RESCHEDULED. It will now be held on **Saturday, July 10th** from 9 am to 2 pm. Gerry Belba is coordinating, and we need about 3 people to help with traffic and coordination. Please contact him at: vgbelba@msn.com.

WE WILL CELEBRATE A MEMORIAL today for the servant of God **Mary Tsoules** fallen asleep three years. Mary is the sister of Dr. Evans Tsoules. **May her memory be eterhal!**

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

COVID-19 UPDATE - Holy Trinity continues to be Covid-Free at this time. We continue to offer vaccination thru DPH for any resident who would like to receive one, and we assist all employees in setting up vaccination appointments.

VISITORS - Holy Trinity families and friends are now able to visit in our designated areas, in resident rooms and outdoors. Per the guidance, visitation may vary based on individual status. All visitors are required to do a temperature check, sanitize their hands, and wear a new medical grade mask upon entry. Please schedule your visit in advance with [Donna](#) in the Activities department by calling (508) 852-1000.

NEW ADMISSIONS - Holy Trinity is open for admissions. To inquire about admissions, for either long-term or short-term rehab,

please call (508) 852-1000.

VOLUNTEERS – We are especially excited to invite back our church groups who may be interested in hosting a luncheon or coffee social or assisting with liturgy. We also appreciate those who would like to share a special skill or activity with our residents. Those who are fully vaccinated may be considered to volunteer. Please call [Donna](#) with the Activities department at (508) 852-1000 to discuss one of the many ways you can lend a helping hand.

JOB OPENINGS - Come join the amazing team at Holy Trinity! We are seeking a Director of Admissions, and there are also openings for nurses and CNAs for all shifts, including sign on bonuses and great benefits. [Click here](#) for a full listing with detailed job descriptions. If you have questions, please contact the Human Resources Generalist, [Kimberly Hescocock](#). Recent grads and people familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

REHABILITATION – Is your loved one sitting for longer periods of time because they have difficulty moving between a sitting and standing position? Have you noticed weight loss or decline in their appearance due to a limitation in their cooking and hygiene abilities? In choosing Holy Trinity for short-term rehab services, our skilled team works with both the patient and the family to provide individualized treatment plans so they can safely return home and maintain a better quality of life. For more information, please contact our Director of Rehab, [Heather Walsh](#).

DIVINE LITURGY is celebrated in-person for residents each Wednesday mornings.

STAY CONNECTED - Be sure to like our [Facebook page](#) for frequent updates and photos of our resident activities. This week, our residents are celebrating May birthdays with a party and look forward to pet therapy with Nova and a Memorial Day social.

Orthodox Links

[Romanian Orthodox Metropolia](#) of the Americas
[Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America](#) (Assembly of Bishops)
[International Orthodox Christian Charities](#) (IOCC)
[Orthodox Christian Mission Center](#) (OCMC)
[Orthodox Christian Radio Network](#) (OCN)
[Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches of Central Mass.](#) (CEOC)

A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord

O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God and master! It was your good pleasure to become one of us by taking flesh of the holy virgin, to be born into this world, to lie speechless in a manger, and to be baptized by John, though you had no need of any sort of purification. At the time of midpentecost, you went up to the temple and taught the crowds, who were in utter amazement at your wisdom when they knew you had no teachers. They did not know that you are in fact the wisdom of the Father and the creator of all things. On this day, O lover of mankind, make us, your sinful and unworthy servants, worthy of worshipping you and glorifying you, and of joyfully sharing in your holy mysteries. Inspire all our authorities with your wisdom and understanding, and lead them always to serve your people in justice and love. Support our brothers and sisters in all their troubles, wherever they may be, and give rest to all the departed. Keep all those here present in unity of mind and heart, and preserve us all from enslavement to our enemies, visible or invisible. When you come to judge the living and the dead, grant us the gift of meeting you freed of the burden of our sins and without fear of condemnation.

For you are the king of peace and the saviour of our souls, and to you we give glory, together with your eternal Father and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages.

The Feast of Mid-Pentecost

After the Saviour had miraculously healed the paralytic, the Hebrews, especially the Pharisees and Scribes, were moved with envy and persecuted Him, and sought to slay Him, using the excuse that He did not keep the Sabbath, since He worked miracles on that day. Jesus then departed to Galilee. About the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles, He went up again to the Temple and taught. The people, marveling at the wisdom of His words, said, "How knows this man letters, having never learned?" But Christ first reproached their unbelief and lawlessness, then proved to them by the Law that they sought to slay Him unjustly, supposedly as a despiser of the Law. Therefore, since the things spoken by Christ in the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles are related to the Sunday of the Paralytic that just passed, and since we reached the midpoint of the fifty days

between Pascha and Pentecost, the Church appointed this feast to tie the two great feasts into one. Therefore today's feast is called Mid-Pentecost.

It should be noted that there were three great Jewish feasts: the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Passover was celebrated on the 15th of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish calendar, which coincides with our March. This feast commemorated that day on which the Hebrews were commanded to eat the lamb in the evening and anoint the doors of their houses with its blood. Then, having escaped bondage and death at the hands of the Egyptians, they passed through the Red Sea to come to the Promised Land. It is also called "the Feast of Unleavened Bread," because they ate unleavened bread for seven days. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the Passover, first of all, because the Hebrews had reached Mount Sinai after leaving Egypt, and there received the Law from God; secondly, it was celebrated to commemorate their entry into the Promised Land, where also they ate bread, after having been fed with manna forty years in the desert. Finally, they also celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles from the 15th to the 22nd of "the seventh month," which corresponds to our September. During this time, they live in booths made of branches in commemoration of the forty years they spent in the desert, living in tabernacles, that is, tents (Ex. 12:10-20; Lev. 23).

About Jacob's Well

One of the most ancient cities of the Promised Land was Shechem, also called Sikima, located at the foot of Mount Gerazim. There the Israelites had heard the blessings in the days of Moses and Jesus of Navi (Joshua). Near to this town, Jacob, who had come from Mesopotamia in the nineteenth century before Christ, bought a piece of land where there was a well. This well, preserved even until the time of Christ, was known as Jacob's Well. Later, before he died in Egypt, he left that piece of land as a special inheritance to his son Joseph (Gen. 49:22). This town, before it was taken into possession by Samaria, was also the leading city of the kingdom of the ten tribes. In the time of the Romans it was called Neapolis, and at present Nablus. It was the first city in Canaan visited by the Patriarch Abraham. Here also, Jesus of Navi (Joshua) addressed the tribes of Israel for the last time. Almost three hundred years later, all Israel assembled there to make Roboam (Rehoboam) king.

The Repentance that Leads to Life

This is the fifth Sunday of Pascha. Today's Gospel lesson is the Lord's encounter with the Samaritan Woman at the well (John 4:5-42). In today's Apostolic reading from Acts (11:19-30), we learn about the beginning of a missionary movement that will transform the fledgling Church from a small group of Jewish followers of Jesus Christ into a Spirit-filled force that will change the world.

There were two catalytic events that led to this development. The first was the persecution of Jesus' disciples following the stoning and martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:2 ff), especially in and around Jerusalem (v. 19). The second was the conversion and baptism of the Gentile centurion Cornelius by the Apostle Peter (Acts 10:1 ff).

Cornelius was a devout man. Like a number of non-Jews in this period, he was attracted to the God revealed to the Patriarch Abraham. He believed that this God was the one true God. He prayed regularly and constantly, asking for a sign. God would give him a sign.

During his stay in Joppa (remember last week's reading and the raising of Tabitha), Peter had a vision while at midday prayer. He fell into a trance and saw a large sheet lowered from heaven containing every kind of unclean animal. Then he heard a voice saying, "Kill and eat!" Peter protested that he had never eaten anything unclean. The reply came that what God has made clean, he had no right to call profane. The same vision came to him twice more.

At the same time, Cornelius, while at prayer in Caesaria, had an angelic visitation saying his prayer had been answered and that he should send for Peter in Joppa. When Peter arrived in Caesaria, the meaning of his own vision became clear: he was to accept the Gentiles into the Church. He received a warm welcome by the growing Gentile community of Jesus' followers, who, like Cornelius and his family, were believers. This was a revolutionary moment.

Simultaneously, communities were forming far from Jerusalem. The martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution that followed had the unintended effect of scattering the Apostles and other members of the Jerusalem community throughout the world. The opening verse of today's reading mentions Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. But, we know that the Apostles themselves eventually traveled throughout the known world, even as far as India. When arriving in a new city, they would usually go first to the local Jewish synagogue to preach Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah who had now come. Then they would reach out to others, often Gentile believers like Cornelius, and proclaim to them the Good News of salvation as well. Today's reading from Acts shows us how this missionary process actually worked.

Disciples from Cyprus and Cyrene (a city on the North African coast in present-day Libya) went to Antioch to preach. Antioch was a city on the Mediterranean coast located in present-day southern Turkey. It was a well-positioned place from which Christianity could spread. It had been the capital of the Seleucid Empire and was one of the major cities of the Roman world,

rivaling Alexandria. It had a large Jewish community, as well as groups of other peoples from throughout the Empire. The disciples mentioned in today's reading began to preach not only to the local synagogue, but also to the Greeks, that is, the Gentile population. They were enormously successful. St. Luke says, "The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord." (v. 21) News of this phenomenon reached the Apostles in Jerusalem and they decided to send Barnabas to investigate.

When Barnabas arrived in Antioch he was overwhelmed by what he saw. With his own eyes he witnessed the work of the Holy Spirit and rejoiced. St. Luke describes Barnabas as "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (v. 24), and we can see evidence of this in the next thing he does. After spending a little time with this new community, he goes to look for Saul (Paul) in Tarsus. His immediate instinct is to enlist the most skilled person for this kind of mission. Once he finds him he brings him to Antioch and together they meet with the Church there, teaching, encouraging and converting many. It was the starting point of the Church's missionary effort.

St. Luke captures this important moment with a small phrase: "It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians' " (v. 26).

While Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch a number of prophets came from Jerusalem. One of them in particular, Agabus, full of the Holy Spirit, predicted that there would be a severe world-wide famine. The disciples in Antioch decided on the spot that they would send relief to the brethren in Judea (v. 29) through Paul and Barnabas. Paul made it his practice that in each place where he preached and established Churches, he would make this same act of charity — to assist the brothers and sisters in Judea — part of the mission of these new communities.

So as with Peter in Joppa and Cæsaria, and Paul and Barnabas in Antioch, the Christian communities are growing beyond their Jewish roots to include every type of person who accepts Jesus.

From this passage in Acts we learn two fundamental Christian duties: to share the Good News with everyone we meet, and always to be ready to help those in need. These principles are at the heart of the Life in Christ. Our faith came by way of people who took up this call, and shared their joy with us. It is our turn to share with those around us; to impart to them the words that many long to hear, the words of "the repentance that leads to life" (v. 18).

Christ is indeed Risen!

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, May 31 Memorial Day, noon at Hope Cemetery
Sat, June 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
Thurs, June 10 Feast of the Lord's Ascension
Fri, June 18 Mustard Seed Meal, 5:00pm
Sat, June 19 Saturday of Souls, Liturgy, 10:00am
Sun, June 20 PENTECOST
Thurs, June 24 Parish Council Meeting, 7pm
Mon, June 28 Apostles Fast Begins
Sat, July 10 e-Recycling and more 9am-2pm

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