

# **News from St. Nick's**

## **Sunday, August 29, 2021**

### **The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost** **The Beheading of St. John the Baptist**

***A Day of Strict Fasting***

---

***Apostolic Reading: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16***  
***Gospel: Matthew 17:14-23***

***(Readings for the Beheading)***  
***Apostolic Reading: Acts 13:25-33***  
***Gospel: Mark 6:14-30***

***Tone 1 • Resurrection Gospel 10***

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

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

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***FOOD PANTRY THIS COMING SATURDAY.*** Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center, ***THIS Saturday, September 4th from 9 am - noon.*** It is a great blessing to help those who could use the help. So, if you're open like to sharing a small part of your Saturday morning, please e-mail Nicole Apostola at [nicole.apostola@gmail.com](mailto:nicole.apostola@gmail.com). She can give you more details. You'll see what a difference it makes.

***RELIGIOUS EDUCATION*** will begin ***Sunday, September 12th.*** We'll open with a short prayer and the new school year will get underway. Every child is welcomed! Our youth are not the future of our parish, they are our present. Parents, if you have questions please contact either [Gina Skaff](#) or [Fadi Girgis](#). ***Also, please be sure to let them know if your child will be participating!***

***A MEMORIAL SERVICE*** will be celebrated today for the servant of God ***Theodore Belba***, fallen asleep two years. ***May his memory be eternal!***

***THE CDC HAS REVISED ITS MASKING GUIDELINES*** due to the increase in infections because of the highly contagious Delta variant. It recommends that ***people vaccinated against the coronavirus resume wearing masks*** in public indoor spaces and schools where the virus is surging, and that ***unvaccinated persons seek a vaccine*** as soon as possible. Following this recommendation, we are now asking that all persons attending the Divine Services wear masks until the numbers are more favorable.

## **COMMUNITY NEWS**

***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](http://wccatv.com), or the ***Worcester TV*** Roku app.

***STS. ANARGYROI*** in Marlborough will be holding their annual Greek Festival, Labor Day weekend: September 4th-6th. For more information check out their [website](#).

***STS. CONSTANTINE & HELEN*** in Webster will be holding their annual Greek Festival, Saturday and Sunday, September 11th-12th. For more information check out their [website](#).

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**COVID UPDATE.** Per the new DPH guidelines, all visitors to the building will continue to be screened and offered a rapid Covid test. If a visitor is fully vaccinated and their loved one is fully vaccinated, as well as their roommate, you may visit in the room. Masks must be worn at all times, regardless of vaccination status. If you are not vaccinated, you may visit outside or in a designated space. We also continue to offer virtual and electronic communication. All Holy Trinity employees will be fully vaccinated by October 10th in accordance with the state mandate.

**ADMISSIONS.** Both long-term and short-term admissions continue to increase at Holy Trinity. See for yourself what makes us a top choice for your loved one's care. To inquire about admissions or to schedule a tour, please e-mail Director of Admissions [Karen Barry](#) or call (508) 852-1000, ext. 213.

**ANNUAL MEETING ANNOUNCED.** The General Assembly for the Eastern Orthodox Management Corporation, which operates Holy Trinity, is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 30th at 6:00 pm.** It will be held virtually, and is open to all CEOC parish members, who are encouraged to attend. Please [click here](#) for details, or e-mail [Steve Fotos](#) with any questions.

**HOLY TRINITY IS SEEKING NEW BOARD MEMBERS** as we have a few terms ending in September. If you are interested in learning more about the opportunity to volunteer for one of these positions, as we guide Holy Trinity into the future, please e-mail Board Chair, [Steve Fotos](#).

**REHABILITATION. You have the choice when it comes to short-term rehab.** We offer outstanding services in our extraordinary, Medicare-certified center, including physical, occupational, and speech therapies. For nearly 25 years we've been helping patients restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain and prevent or limit physical disabilities from injuries or disease. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact our Director of Rehab, [Heather Walsh](#).

**JOB OPENINGS.** Holy Trinity is actively seeking a Staff Development Coordinator. Must have valid and current RN or LPN state licensure and experience in gerontological nursing. [Click here](#) for a full listing with detailed job descriptions. If you have questions, please contact the Human Resources Generalist, [Kimberly Hescoek](#). Recent grads and people familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

**DIVINE LITURGY** continues in-person for residents on Wednesday mornings. We welcome volunteers and visitors who would like to be involved.

**STAY CONNECTED.** Be sure to like our Facebook page for frequent updates and photos. The highlight of this week's activities was a cookout for residents, including live music by Bill McCarthy. If your parish, social group, or family may be interested in sponsoring an activity or funding a specific need for our residents, please contact our Director of Development & Communications, [Mackenzie Koch](#).

**HOLY TRINITY HAS RECEIVED A DEFICIENCY-FREE SURVEY** result from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). The deficiency-free rating is one of the top indicators of excellence for nursing and rehabilitation facilities.

### ***The Beheading of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John***

**The Beheading of the Prophet,** Forerunner of the Lord, John the Baptist: The Evangelists Matthew (Mt.14:1-12) and Mark (Mark 6:14-29) provide accounts about the martyric end of John the Baptist in the year 32 after the Birth of Christ.

Following the Baptism of the Lord, Saint John the Baptist was locked up in prison by Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch (ruler of one fourth of the Holy Land) and governor of Galilee. (After the death of king Herod the Great, the Romans divided the territory of Palestine into four parts, and put a governor in charge of each part. Herod Antipas received Galilee from the emperor Augustus).

The prophet of God John openly denounced Herod for having left his lawful wife, the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas, and then instead cohabiting with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip (Luke 3:19-20). On his birthday, Herod made a feast for dignitaries, the elders and a thousand chief citizens. Salome, the daughter of Herodias, danced before the guests and charmed Herod. In gratitude to the girl, he swore to give her whatever she would ask, up to half his kingdom.

The vile girl on the advice of her wicked mother Herodias asked that she be given the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod became apprehensive, for he feared the wrath of God for the murder of a prophet, whom earlier he had heeded. He also feared the people, who loved the holy Forerunner. But because of the guests and his careless oath, he gave orders to cut

off the head of Saint John and to give it to Salome.

According to Tradition, the mouth of the dead preacher of repentance once more opened and proclaimed: "Herod, you should not have the wife of your brother Philip." Salome took the platter with the head of Saint John and gave it to her mother. The frenzied Herodias repeatedly stabbed the tongue of the prophet with a needle and buried his holy head in a unclean place. But the pious Joanna, wife of Herod's steward Chuza, buried the head of John the Baptist in an earthen vessel on the Mount of Olives, where Herod had a parcel of land. (The Uncovering of the Venerable Head is celebrated February 24). The holy body of John the Baptist was taken that night by his disciples and buried at Sebastia, there where the wicked deed had been done.

After the murder of Saint John the Baptist, Herod continued to govern for a certain time. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, later sent Jesus Christ to him, Whom he mocked (Luke 23:7-12). The judgment of God came upon Herod, Herodias and Salome, even during their earthly life. Salome, crossing the River Sikoris in winter, fell through the ice. The ice gave way in such a way that her body was in the water, but her head was trapped above the ice. It was similar to how she once had danced with her feet upon the ground, but now she flailed helplessly in the icy water. Thus she was trapped until that time when the sharp ice cut through her neck.

Her corpse was not found, but they brought the head to Herod and Herodias, as once they had brought them the head of Saint John the Baptist. The Arab king Aretas, in revenge for the disrespect shown his daughter, made war against Herod. The defeated Herod suffered the wrath of the Roman emperor Caius Caligula (37-41) and was exiled with Herodias first to Gaul, and then to Spain.

The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, a Feast day established by the Church, is also a strict fast day because of the grief of Christians at the violent death of the saint. In some Orthodox cultures pious people will not eat food from a flat plate, use a knife, or eat food that is round in shape on this day.

## 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 God our God:** Did you make us for nothing? Did you make our nature slow and feeble to confound and frustrate us? Remember our weaknesses and the shortness of our lives. Yet, we know that you provide us with what we need to reach you. In our deepest selves, we know we cannot escape death; yet we seek only to live. Therefore, enable us to live as we should, seeking your will in all things.

For you are a merciful and loving God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## Be Imitators of Me

**This is the tenth Sunday after Pentecost**, and we resume our reading from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. We begin almost where we left off last week, at chapter 4:9-16. After reprimanding the Corinthians for their factionalism and childish behavior, St. Paul now uses sarcasm and irony to shock them into repentance. Even though babes in Christ, many in the Corinthian community have come to see themselves as more spiritually advanced than the Apostles themselves. He is looking for a way to put them back on the correct path.

The first thing he does is set the stage. "For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men" (v. 9). St. Paul tells them that in his opinion God is giving the world the Apostles as an example of what it means to be a Christian — not just on earth, but in heaven as well. God has made them like the lowliest of persons — as last of all; like men sentenced to death, in order to show how followers of His Son should behave.

"We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute" (v. 10). St. Paul's sarcasm rings true to the Corinthians. Here he echoes what he said earlier in the letter: "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (v. 1:25). The fool for Christ is the one who returns good for evil and a blessing for a curse. This kind of real strength only appears to be weakness. It is incomprehensible to people who only know the ways of this world.

He now changes his tone. He is no longer being sharp, but rather descriptive of what he and the other Apostles endure in order to preach the Gospel. "To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all things" (v. 11-13). We should stop and ponder this image of a Christian that St. Paul is presenting us. Just as in first century Corinth, there are people today who understand Jesus and the path toward Him very differently than the picture St. Paul is painting.

In our day there are those preaching a "Gospel of Prosperity" — God wants us to be rich; or a "muscular Jesus" — Jesus and Christians are not wimps; or a gleeful, smiling Jesus — personal happiness is what the Faith is all about. These as well as many other perversions of the Gospel corrupted Corinth and corrupt our time as well. Paul wanted to open the eyes of the Corinthian Christians to really see these preachers who were distorting the Gospel for what they were. He wanted to protect the people that he had nurtured and formed. He wanted them to appreciate how a true minister of the Gospel lives.

Our own experience matters. Many of us have had the experience of a true disciple of the Lord. We have known and experienced humble priests, monks, and nuns who have given their whole lives to the Lord's Gospel: the bishop or the lay person who is nothing, or lower than nothing in the eyes of the world, but shines with God's brightness to those with eyes to see. Some may dress shabbily or appear unlearned, but radiate with God's wisdom and love to those who care to look beyond surface appearances. There are many who claim to understand the Lord's teachings, but very few who really do.

Having said things that St. Paul knew would cut the Corinthians to their heart, he tries to comfort them. "I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (v. 14-15). Rather than use his status as Apostle and founder of their Church, or to speak condescendingly to them, as might a teacher to students, he calls them his "children." He says that he considers himself to be their "father," in Christ Jesus. In this one word he expresses the depth of his concern and love in such a way as to encourage them to open their hearts toward him.

He tells them that he has spoken so openly about the "price" of preaching the Gospel not to make them ashamed of him and themselves, but rather to admonish them, to correct them, as a loving father would to his own children.

Notice how careful he is not to speak disparagingly of the other preachers who have been working in the Corinthian community. He distinguishes himself without impugning them. He says to them, "though you have countless guides [or teachers] in Christ, you do not have many fathers." He points to the qualitative difference in their relationship, without directly challenging their authority.

In order to strengthen what he is saying, he tells them: "I urge you, then, be imitators of me" (v. 16). St. John Chrysostom seems to have a text that adds the words: "as I also am of Christ." The text we have does not contain this phrase, but St. John's reading is echoed later on in the Letter where St. Paul tells them: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (v. 11:1).

St. Paul isn't being conceited; he's being truthful. He's offering himself as an example to them in order to encourage them. For if Paul is able to follow Christ — and that is how we should understand what he said in verses 11-13 — then surely the Corinthian Christians, and we too, will be able to follow our Lord's example and his life.

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Sat, Sept 4** Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon  
**Sept 4-6** Marlboro **Greek Festival**  
**Sun, Sept 12** Religious Ed Classes Begin  
**Sept 11-12** Webster **Greek Festival**  
**Thurs, Sept 16** Parish Council Meeting, 7pm  
**Tues, Sept 30** Holy Trinity Gen Assembly, 6pm  
**Sat, Oct 2** Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon  
**Fri, Oct 15** Mustard Seed Meal

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church  
34 Gold St | Shrewsbury MA 01545-6238  
508-845-0088 | fax: 508-845-8850 | email: [info@StNicholasChurch.org](mailto:info@StNicholasChurch.org)  
[www.StNicholasChurch.org](http://www.StNicholasChurch.org)  
*Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am*