

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

## **Sunday, April 10, 2022**

### **The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent** ***St. Mary of Egypt***

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***Apostolic Reading: Hebrews 9:11-14***  
***Gospel: Mark 10:32-45***  
***(Request of the Sons of Zebedee)***

***Tone 1 • Resurrection Gospel 9***

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

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***GREAT LENT.*** Tomorrow marks the start of the sixth week of Lent.

***FR. VASILE AILENI*** and his family have arrived! We'll be able to start to get to know them this coming Sunday. This is a wonderful moment in the life of our parish and a great blessing!

***THE PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY THIS WEDNESDAY, April 13th*** will be hosted by our St. Nicholas Parish. We are responsible for providing a light Lenten meal following the service. Donations of prepared Lenten foods are needed as well as help with set up, serving and clean up. Please talk to [Betty Anderson](#) or [Presvytera Maria](#) during coffee hour today!

***OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL*** is ***Friday, April 15th***. We are grateful to ***Sandra Nedelescu*** who is sponsoring this month's meal in memory her father ***Alexandru***, grandmother ***Ecaterina***, and great-aunt ***Victoria***, as well as ***Hannah Datz and Sam Scavuzzo*** who are sponsoring in honor of their daughter ***Clara Genevieve Datz*** who was recently baptize. ***May our loving Lord bless them!*** If you or your family would like to help with meal preparations, the team is gathering at 1:00 pm on Friday. Please contact [Deb Sedares](#) — by e-mail or phone: 508-509-6678.

***PASCHA DONATIONS.*** The list of items that people may donate to decorate and enhance our Paschal celebration is [available here for download](#). If you'd like to donate anything, please see ***Betty Anderson***, or e-mail her at [bettya16@verizon.net](mailto:bettya16@verizon.net) or call her at: 508-335-9449.

***THE HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE***, from Lazarus Saturday through Pascha, [may be downloaded here](#). This also includes a number of announcements related to Holy Week. ***Please read it.***

***THE GREAT FRIDAY CHILDREN'S RETREAT*** for the younger children will be held on ***Great Friday, April 22nd*** starting at 12:30 pm, and concluding with a celebration of Great Vespers at 2:00 pm. Older children and teens are also welcome. There are many ways each can help. For additional information and offers to assist, contact ***Gina Skaff***. Please ***RSVP by April 16th*** to Gina at [gjaskaff@hotmail.com](mailto:gjaskaff@hotmail.com) or 508-873-9600.

***VESPERS AND CONFESSION*** will be held each Saturday evening at 5:00pm during Great Lent. Fr. Nick will be available for confession each week after Vespers, and before Vespers by appointment ([e-mail Fr. Nick](#)).

***THANKS TO THE BAKERS!*** As we've been carefully ramping up to our pre-pandemic baking levels, we should never forget the dedicated people (mostly ladies, but some brave men) who have been working hard to fill orders for the coming holiday season. We need to especially thank ***Betty Anderson*** who has been tireless in keeping this going. ***God bless her and all those who have stepped up to the plate!***

***THANKS ALSO TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS!*** Each month a dedicated group of our parishioners shops, replenishes the shelves, and distributes food to those in need at our Orthodox Food Center. They do this following the Lord's teachings, and in the name of each of us, to make God's presence known. More help is needed. For those who've done this work the experience it as a great blessing. If you're open to sharing a small part of your Saturday morning once a month, you too can experience

this particular blessing. For more information, contact [Nicole Apostola by e-mail](#). She'll get back to you.

**UKRAINIAN RELIEF.** The **Saint Paraskeva Orthodox Charity** in partnership with our Metropolia is working with the Archdiocese of Suceava and Rădăuți to support Ukrainian war refugees in transit or intending to stay in Romania. This region of Romania is one of the major entry points for persons fleeing the invasion of Ukraine. Funds collected will assist the monasteries and parishes in the diocese that have set up more than 500 fully equipped shelters. If you would like to learn more about this effort and contribute, please [click here for the website of Saint Parascheva Charity](#) or go to their [Facebook page](#).

**OUR ON-LINE GIVING SYSTEM HAS BEEN UPGRADED!** Please check it out by [clicking here](#), or by using the [ON-LINE](#) link on our parish homepage. You may use this option to submit one-time or recurring payments.

**TODAY WE OBSERVE A FORTY DAY MEMORIAL** for the mother of **Dan Manescu, Elizabeta**, who recently fell asleep in the Lord in Romania. We also remember members of Dan and Liana's family who have also fallen asleep. Our deepest sympathies are with the Manescu family. **May God rest Elizabeta among the saints. Veșnica Ponmenire!**

**OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY** is also extended to **Gheorghina Shaheen**, who's mother, **Mariana Heletea**, unexpectedly fell asleep in the Lord this past Sunday, April 3rd. **May our loving Lord welcome her into His Heavenly Kingdom, as He comforts her grieving family! Memory Eternal!**

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## LENTEN RESOURCES

*We are journeying toward Pascha, the Lord's Resurrection. To help along the way, each week we'll be posting some resources and reflections aimed at assisting and informing.*

**THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT.** This corresponds closely to the preceding Sunday: just as the fourth Sunday is dedicated to St. John Climacus, the model of ascetics, so the fifth celebrates St. Mary of Egypt, the model of penitents. Like that of St. John Climacus, her feast has been transferred from the fixed calendar, where she is commemorated on 1 April. Her life, recounted by St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem—it is read, as we have mentioned, on Thursday in the fifth week—sets before us a true verbal ikon of the essence of repentance. In her youth St. Mary lived in a dissolute and sinful way at Alexandria. Drawn by curiosity, she journeyed with some pilgrims to Jerusalem, arriving in time for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. But when she tried to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with the others, an invisible force thrust her back at the threshold. This happened three or four times. Brought to sudden contrition by this strange experience, she prayed all night with tears to the Mother of God, and next morning she found to her joy that she could enter the church without difficulty. After venerating the Cross, she left Jerusalem on that same day, made her way over the Jordan, and settled as a solitary in a remote region of the desert. Here for forty-seven years she remained, hidden from the world, until she was eventually found by the ascetic St. Zosimas, who was able to give her Holy Communion shortly before her death. Some modern writers have questioned the historical accuracy of St. Sophronios' narrative, but there is in itself nothing impossible about such a story. In the year 1890 the Greek priest Joachim Spetsieris found a woman hermit in the desert beyond the Jordan, living almost exactly as St. Mary must have done.

On this Sunday the first Canon at Mattins is based on the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31): like the parable of the Good Samaritan on the previous Sunday, this is applied symbolically to the repentant Christian.

**FASTING RULES.** One question that often comes up is: *What are the Fasting rules?* [We've linked here](#) one of the better explanations of the rules around fasting. It is taken from the *Lenten Triodion*, translated and edited by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware and Mother Mary. If you've never been exposed to the whole discipline of the Fast, reading the rules can seem very daunting. You should seek advice from your spiritual father; no one should try this without guidance.

## HOLY WEEK DONATIONS

*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
1/2 lb Incense .....	\$40.00
Priest's Paschal Candle .....	\$50.00
Rose Oil for Epitaphion .....	\$25.00

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Flowers for Epitaphion .....	\$600.00
Decorations/Plants for Pascha .....	\$250.00
Easter Candy/Gifts for Children .....	\$100.00

*Please see Betty Anderson to make a donation  
call: 508-353-9449 ✦ e-mail: [bettya16@verizon.net](mailto:bettya16@verizon.net)*

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**A MEDICATION TAKE BACK** opportunity will be held on **Saturday, April 30th from 10:00am to 2:00pm**, at the Shrewsbury Senior Center, 98 Maple Ave, Shrewsbury. No fee. No proof of identification. No questions. This is open to the general public. Bring in your expired or unused medications for safe and proper disposal. If you're unable to make it that day, you can search for year-round Pharmaceutical Public Disposal Locations by [clicking here](#).

**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.

## NOTES FROM HOLY TRINITY

**CONGRATULATIONS!** - **Father Milad Selim**, Pastor at St. George Cathedral, was elevated to the rank of Archpriest by Metropolitan Joseph on April 3rd. **AXIOS!**



**DIVINE LITURGY** - The Divine Liturgy is celebrated each Wednesday, morning at 9:30 am for our residents. We welcome volunteers and visitors who would like to attend! Thanks to Frs. Nicholas Apostola and Milad Selim (center) for officiating a special Lenten service on 3/30. Far left and right, are long-time volunteers at the Divine Liturgy, Carol Fotos and Joan Constantinou.

In addition, as part of a donation by Helen Proko in memory of her brother, the chapel ceiling was recently replaced.

**HOLY TRINITY IS HERE TO HELP!** - We have a limited number of beds available, priority is given to our Orthodox members. To inquire about long-term or short-term rehab admissions, please call our **Admissions Director, Mary Charmchi**, on her cell: (774) 502-5745 or, by email: [mcharmchi@htnr.net](mailto:mcharmchi@htnr.net).

**COVID-19 UPDATE** - There are currently no Covid-positive Holy Trinity residents or employees.

**JOB OPENINGS** - Recent grads and people familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are

encouraged to apply. To join our award-winning team and advance your career, [Click here](#) for a full listing of our openings with detailed job descriptions.

**[CHECK OUT THE LATEST ISSUE OF THE HOLY TRINITY BULLETIN!](#)** [Click here to download it.](#)

## 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 you who are serenity and peacefulness itself**, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: When the cares and labors of another day are over, we come to you with our evening prayers. We stand before you and reflect on the day that has passed, and we pray that, by your grace, this lenten season will make a difference in our lives. Do not permit us to be consumed with thoughts of the past or of the future, but teach us to live always in the present. Take our attention off things that perish, and focus our mind's eye on you and the things that last forever. Enable us to attain a share of the peace that only you can give, so that we may one day join the saints in the paschal celebrations of the world to come.

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

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## 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.

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## The Heavenly Liturgy

**With the Fifth Sunday of Great Lent the Church**, through Scriptural readings and hymns, is preparing us to participate in the cornerstone of our faith: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe that his death is no ordinary death, rather, Jesus, innocent and blameless in every respect, consciously and freely offers to take on himself our sin and the resulting consequences of our disobedience: suffering and death. He transforms all of this pain and evil by responding to the fury meted out upon him not in kind, but with love. His sacrifice emptied evil of the power by which we are held captive. And so, we are offered a new way of life.

Today's Gospel lesson from Mark (10:32-45) tells us of the conversation Jesus had with his disciples in which he directly tells them that he will not only be condemned to death, but that he will rise again three days later. The Apostolic reading is from the Letter to the Hebrews (9:11-14) where St. Paul speaks of the animal sacrifices offered under the Old Law, and how this practice was designed to prepare us to understand and appreciate Jesus' sacrifice.

Sacrifice is a basic part of who we are as human beings. If we love we know about sacrifice. Parents constantly sacrifice for their children. Lovers repeatedly sacrifice themselves as a way to demonstrate their love. If we injure or offend someone, we try to find a way to repair what we've done, and it always involves a sacrifice.

Most early religions employed sacrifice of living things to their gods in order to repair and restore their relationship. Sometimes these offerings were acts of thanksgiving — sacrifices of food for a bountiful harvest. Sometimes these were sin offerings and could involve animals and even human beings. God's Covenant with His people, the children of Israel, required such sacrifices, all except human ones. Animals and plants were regularly offered. The Jerusalem Temple was the primary, if not only, place where these offerings were made.

In our modern urban society most of us have had very little experience with slaughtering an animal. The language of blood and offering of blood seems at best an abstraction. (In reality, we'd more than likely rather not think about it at all.) However, the Scriptures are full of this language. The Eucharist, the primary Christian celebration, centers on partaking of the Body and Blood of our Lord. I am sure that most of us have questioned, at least on one occasion, what could possibly be meant by so graphic an image.

Blood is the source of life. The Hebrews believed that being the source of life it was also a sign of the divine within us. This shouldn't be difficult to understand. When we describe someone who has had a mortal wound, we say that "the life is draining out of them." We speak of "the life that courses through our veins." If we are composed mainly of water, most of that water is in the form of blood.

Blood does at least two things in our bodies. It brings the nutrients, including oxygen, to every part of our body that allows our cells to grow and be maintained. It also takes away the waste. It is the medium for feeding and cleansing our body.

When an animal was sacrificed, especially when the animal was sacrificed on the Day of Atonement, its blood was used to purify and sanctify, not unlike the way in which we use Holy Water. The High Priest, when he offered this sacrifice, offered a double sacrifice: one for himself and his family, and the other for the people of Israel. The New Testament refers to Jesus as the High Priest, but unlike other high priests, Jesus had no need for the first sacrifice; he was and is pure. However, we are the ones who need the second sacrifice. Jesus becomes this sacrifice for us. This is the central point in the text of today's reading:

"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:11-14).

It is important to remember that the author of Hebrews is speaking of a Heavenly altar. The earthly temple is modeled on the one in Heaven. In this earthly temple only the High Priest could enter the inner sanctuary, the Holy Place, and just once a year, and only after he had purified himself with a sacrifice. Jesus has no need of this purification. Rather, because he offers himself as the sacrifice, he carries within himself the purifying blood. He is the sacrifice. During the Liturgy in a prayer addressed to Christ, the priest says to Christ: "you are the offerer and the offered, the one who receives and is distributed." This poetic phrase captures the mystery of Jesus' self-sacrifice.

God comes to us in the person of Jesus the Christ, the Word of God. Out of love for us, He offers himself up as the one to be sacrificed. He is both High Priest and Sacrificial Offering.

While not exactly the same, there is an example I can offer that might help illustrate this mystery. During the Communist persecutions, there were people, priests, who knew they were going to be killed for Christ the next day. As is our rule, Liturgies are celebrated on consecrated altars in which the relics of saints (usually martyrs) have been placed. Knowing that they themselves would be sacrificed as martyrs shortly, these men celebrated the Liturgy on themselves. They offered Christ's sacrifice on the altar of their soon-to-be sacrificed bodies.

We no longer offer animals or other humans; those were meant as a preparation for Christ's unique sacrifice. His sacrifice put an end to it. Instead our Lord gave us the sacrifice of bread and wine, the unbloody sacrifice. These he changes, through the Holy Spirit, into his Body and his Blood. When we partake of the life-giving Body and Blood of our Lord, we are redeemed and reconciled to God the Father through Jesus' sacrifice. We are purified and changed.

Moses constructed the earthly Tabernacle after the image given him by God (Exodus 25). When we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, the Eucharist, we participate in the one Sacrifice of the Son of God. Just as Moses' Tabernacle was made according to the image of the Heavenly Tabernacle, so it is with us when we enter into the Divine Liturgy. We celebrated here on earth the model, the icon, of the Heavenly Liturgy where God's Name is continually proclaimed.

It may be difficult for us to envision this Heavenly Liturgy, a place where Christ is enthroned, and the angels and saints unceasingly glorify God, yet it exists. If God should so grace us, we might even catch a glimpse of this Heavenly Liturgy during the celebration of the Eucharist in our own parish. If our hearts are pure we will be given this foretaste of God's promise.

During the coming Paschal celebration, when we are given the opportunity to contemplate Jesus' suffering and sacrifice, let us ask God to give us this vision of the Heavenly Liturgy. At the same time, we should remember the people who out of love continually sacrifice themselves for us. They may be relatives or friends, but they may also be people whom we do not know, who serve us out of duty and love for all.

We should also ask our Lord to strengthen us for the trials and sacrifices that are asked of us. Love requires sacrifice. If we love, especially as Christ loves, we will be asked to show it.

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

Wed, April 13 PreSanctified at [St. Nicholas](#), 6 pm  
Fri, April 15 Mustard Seed Meal  
Sat, April 16 Lazaros Sat, Liturgy 10 am  
Vespers/Confession, 5 pm  
Sun, April 17 Palm Sunday  
(Western Easter)  
April 17-24 [HOLY WEEK](#), Services at 6 pm  
Sun, April 24 Great and Holy Pascha

[St. Nicholas Orthodox Church](#)  
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*Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am*