

# Rector's Letter, September, 2019

Dear brothers and sisters:

What is the meaning of life? That's a big question that folks like to toss around. But there's another big question that's closer to home: what is the meaning of my life? We all wonder about that, especially when we are most confused, most unhappy with our direction and circumstances. On sleepless nights, we may find ourselves endlessly wrestling with our past decisions, with our priorities and goals, with our relationships.

We can never completely answer that question, because the meaning of a life only becomes clear when it is complete, when we die. Not only that, there is only One who judges the meaning of each life: Jesus Christ our Lord. Until all is revealed at the Last Day, we just try the best we can, using the measure of Christ's own life as our guide for what is true and good and worthy.

On September 1, the new Church Year begins. It is the time to give thanks to the Lord for all the blessings he has provided for us, and to ask for his protection and guidance in the year to come. We should not let this opportunity pass by in our own lives, to reflect on the meaning of the year just past: what has born fruit and what has withered? What was of lasting worth and what was a waste of time? And what hopes and fears need to be brought before the Lord for the com-

ing year? If we do not take the time to reflect, how will we hope to live our lives in a meaningful, worthy, Christ-like way? How will we prepare to meet the Lord on the Day of Judgment?

Not by accident, the Church Year begins with the Nativity of Our Most-Holy Lady Theotokos and the Conception of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist, and it ends with commemorations of the end of each of their lives (the Falling-Asleep of the Theotokos and the Beheading of St. John).

The Lord marked these two holy people as the best examples for all of us to follow, because from beginning to end both dedicated their lives to what truly matters. The Theotokos shows us the joy it is to "hear the word of the Lord and keep it." St. John reminds us to "repent, for the Kingdom of God is close at hand." How could our lives be summed up? How do we want to be remembered? Would the examples of our lives speak a good word to those who follow after us?

As we enter into this new Church Year, we can find new meaning for our life in giving thanks for what has already come to pass. We can also find renewed purpose by learning better what is God's will for our lives— "hear the word of God and keep it." And by commending ourselves, and each other, and all our life to Christ our God, we can find the meaning of life in getting to know Life itself: Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Yours in Christ,



## Around the Parish

Last month, **Helen Pfeiffer** fell asleep in the Lord. May her memory be eternal!

On Sunday, Sept. 8, following our fellowship hour at 12:30 PM, **Anthony Sambat will be baptized.** Anthony's mother Lavinia has been bringing him to church in recent weeks. May God grant Anthony and his family many years!

We will celebrate the **Nativity of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary** on Sunday, Sept. 8. The birth of the Theotokos was the fulfillment of promises made by God to her righteous parents, and also the fulfillment of the hope of generations of people who put their trust in God, from Noah to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to King David and his line. The birth of the Theotokos represents the best the human race has to offer to our Creator, and God accepts this gift and returns her to us as the mother of our Savior. Come celebrate this birthday of the beginning of our salvation!

The feast of the **Elevation of the Cross** is on Sept. 14. This feast honors first the finding of the Cross of our Lord by St. Helen, and then its recovery years later, after it had been captured by the Persians. In celebration, we lift up the life-giving Cross, so that we may bow down before the crucified Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we put all our trust. We will observe the feast with Great Vespers on the eve, Friday, Sept. 13, at 6:00 PM,

and Divine Liturgy on Saturday, Sept. 14, at 9:30 AM.

**Children's Education Sessions** begin on Sunday, Sept. 22.

We gratefully received **a new Tomb** in our church, made possible by donations from the parish community and especially the Gucwa family in memory of Helen and Joseph Gucwa. Thanks also go to John Barone for the labor of love in constructing both the Tomb and the matching Crucifixion. The Tomb will stand as our memorial table during the year, and it will be brought to the middle of the church in Holy Week to receive the Shroud of the Lord.

The **2019 FORCC Benefit Dinner** will be on Sunday, October 6, at 1 PM, held at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Bridgeport. The guest speaker is Fr. Archimandrite Sergius, Abbot of St Tikhon's Monastery. For tickets, please speak with Alexia Tassmer, our FORCC Representative—reservations are required by September 26. Dinner choices are chicken or stuffed fish fillet. Tickets cost \$35 for Adults and \$10 for children up to 12 years of age.

His Eminence, our **Archbishop Nikon has moved** to a new rehab facility to rebuild his strength after surgery and a lengthy illness. He welcomes cards at Newbridge On the Charles, 7000 Great Meadow Road, Dedham, MA 02026.