

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

We Do Not All Need the Same Things

Gifts, those we give and those we receive, are on our minds during this season of Christmas and the days following. On December 31 the Church remembers one of the all-time great givers of gifts, Melania of Rome.

She used her great wealth to give personal help to countless needy people, as well as supporting the institutions of the Church. Her gifts were gratefully accepted, especially because she gave them in humility, without any expectation of praise or special honor.

But one story about Melania describes a time when her monetary gifts were not welcome. It happened at an Egyptian men's monastery she was visiting. Rich as she was, Melania chose not to live in luxury and ease. Yet even the simplicity of her life must have seemed lavish compared to what she saw in the monastery. She was amazed at the monks' life, making do with only the barest essentials and letting nothing of the world distract them from their constant attention to prayer.

Melania soon understood that the men were unwilling to accept any money from her. But while paying a visit to one monk whose name was Ephestion, she saw that in his cell there was almost nothing--only a bit of bread and water, the mats he wove, and a salt pot. Determined to give him something, she hid a few gold coins in the salt pot, and went on her way.

A few moments later, she heard the footsteps of someone running after her. It was Ephestion, clutching her coins in his hand and shouting, "I don't need this; it is yours so take it back!"

Melania answered, "If you don't need it, surely you can give it to someone who does."

December 29, 2013

**27th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday After the Nativity of Christ
Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James, the Brother of the Lord.**

The 14,000 Holy Innocents slain by Herod

• **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Gal. 1:11-19 (Sun. After)

Gospel: Mt. 2:13-23 (Sun. After)

• **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the Divine Liturgy

Schedule of Services

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31

6:00pm - Great Vespers & Litya

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 1 – THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST. ST. BASIL THE GREAT

9:00am - Divine Liturgy & Molieben for the beginning of the New Year.

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Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, but we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Among them are:

Michael, Mary and Max Bakaletz, Genevive Bobenko, Pauline Bodnar, Nancy Filak, Dorothy Gentner, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Emil Mikulik, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadine Sojka, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

"No, no," the monk insisted. "Nobody around here would have any use for it." And with that, because Melania resisted taking them back, he flung the coins into the river and went back to his cell. Money was something that he and his brother monks didn't need. They didn't even want it, knowing the power of money to become a temptation to sin.

It takes time and effort to know and discern what we need, because we don't all need the same things. The Church's prayers reflect this. In the Litany of Supplication, for example, the priest prays for us to be granted "all things that are good and profitable for our souls." Not that we be granted what we may want or think we need, not just things that will help us "keep up with" everyone else, but the things that truly are good and profitable for us. In a similar way, before he elevates the Gifts for Holy Communion, the priest asks God to distribute them "unto all of us, for good, according to the individual need of each." Many of us wouldn't throw a gift of gold coins into the nearest river. But if we work to discern what we really need, and trust God to give it, we can discard a lot of things that are just taking up space.

Schedule of Services

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

4:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

6:00pm - Great Compline & Matins. Blessing of Waters

MONDAY, JANUARY 6 - THEOPHANY OF CHRIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Stephen Fabian**, who celebrates his birthday this Friday, and **Helen Kurnewitz**, who celebrates her **95th birthday** this Saturday. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ Father Igor, Matushka Anna and Maxim would like to express their heartfelt Thank you to the Board of Trustees and to our parishioners for the wonderful gifts and cards during this Nativity Season. May the Lord's abundant blessings be also upon you, and upon all your loved ones throughout this Nativity Season and always!

◆ From now on, Sunday bulletins are available on our parish website, which is always updated, thanks to Betty Czech, who is doing amazing job of keeping it up to date. If you miss some Sunday in Church, just go to www.stjohnspassaic.org and click on the "Bulletins" tab.

◆ The house blessing schedule was posted in the last issue of "The Enlightener". If you would like to make changes, or if you did not have your house blessing scheduled yet, please call Fr. Igor to schedule it.