

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

170 Lexington Avenue, Passaic, New Jersey, 07055
www.stjohnspassaic.org

REV. FR. IGOR KSENIUK, Acting Rector 973-473-1928 (office)
646-387-5494 (cell)
fr.igorksn@gmail.com

Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH in AMERICA

Fearless Love

On February 17 and 18 we read a long passage from the First Epistle of John (2:18 to 3:20), in which he writes about many aspects of love.

The first verses express both sorrow and urgency. John reminds his readers that they have heard that the "antichrist is coming." In the next verses he describes the "antichrist" as people who "went out from us." They left the body of believers to which they once belonged, and now teach falsehoods, denying "that Jesus is the Christ."

Of course John is sorrowful because these souls have abandoned the faith, but he is also reminding his readers, who have continued to be followers of Christ, that they were "anointed by the Holy One." He urgently warns them to "let what you heard in the beginning abide in you." This is essential for us if we are to "have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming."

The Greek word translated as "confidence" means a kind of boldness, the kind we ask for in the Divine Liturgy when we pray that God will enable us to say the Lord's Prayer "with boldness and without condemnation." Only those who love Christ enough to accept Him as what He says He is – God's divine Son – can have this boldness or confidence. They trust Him and believe He tells the truth. Their love is not shadowed by the doubt that turned the "antichrists" away from Him. Doubt creates fear, but their love is a fearless love.

Chapter 3 begins with a wonderful declaration: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God." Then, immediately following these stirring words, John



February 16, 2014

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

- 8:50am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Cor. 6:12-20
Gospel: Lk. 15:11-32
- Annual Parish Meeting – a light luncheon will be available.

Schedule of Services

- SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22**
9:00am - Divine Liturgy with commemoration of the departed
4:00pm - Great Vespers
- SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23**
9:00am - Divine Liturgy

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, Genevieve Bobenko, Pauline Bodnar, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorzcyk, Emil Mikulik, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

writes that if we accept this incredible love, the world will not know us, because it does not know God.

For some people, the idea of being "unknown" by the world causes great fear. They take pride in their worldly position and achievement, and would fear losing those things if they focused on the life to come. They are too fearful to have fearless love.

Next John writes that "we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when He is revealed, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is." These words call us to trust God, like children, and leave the future to Him rather than try to figure it out. But this lack of control causes fear in some people. They attempt to determine the date of the Second Coming, or the day the world will end.

On the 17th we celebrate a saint who is an example of fearless love. She is Mariamna, the sister of the apostle Philip. She accompanied her brother as he traveled to spread the Gospel, and preached with him. Even when he was killed, she didn't give up, she didn't become angry at God, or embittered by her loss. She continued to trust God's plan, and went on preaching for many more years.

That is fearless love.



Announcements

◆ Our Annual Parish Meeting is today after the Divine Liturgy. A light luncheon will be available. Please plan to attend. Important subjects are listed on the agenda.

◆ Saturday, February 22 is the first Memorial Saturday this year. Please come for the Divine Liturgy and offer your prayers for your departed loved ones. Their souls are waiting for the best spiritual present they can receive – your prayers! Names for commemoration can be submitted prior to the service.

◆ Annual "Maslenitsa" at Holy Assumption Church in Clifton is next Sunday, February 23, 2014, at 3:00pm. For reservations call Donna Betza: 973-365-1473. Flyer of the event is posted at the bulletin board.

◆ Save the date: Sunday, March 2 is the Cheesefare Sunday. It is the last day when we are allowed to have dairy products and eggs before Pascha. After the Divine Liturgy we will have Maslenitsa in our church hall, followed by the Forgiveness Vespers. Please plan to attend. Delicious blintzes and other meet-free foods are in the menu. Let us have a little celebration before we start Great Lent.

◆ Food items are always in need for our food pantry. St. Peter's Heaven informed us that now they are exceptionally low on cans of tuna fish, mashed potatoes and macaroni & cheese. Also needed are coats and heavy sweaters.

Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy. It is our joy to have you with us today. If this is your first visit to our parish, we welcome you and invite you to return as often as you are able. While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to join us in venerating the Cross, receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and for fellowship in our Church Hall after the service.