

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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Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Married Saints

On May 3, the Church honors a married couple whose names were Timothy and Maura.

They grew up in the same small Egyptian village in the third century. Timothy was the son of a priest and owned many books used in church, as well as his most prized book—a copy of the Scriptures. He also could read, and after a day's work people would gather around him to hear the sacred words. The Bishop of the Thebaid ordained him a reader, and the villagers hoped that one day he would be their priest.

Maura was a pious young woman whose Christian kindness and happy nature made her a favorite in the village, so people were delighted when she and Timothy planned to wed. But they had been married for just twenty days when their joy was threatened by the poison of jealousy.

A group of pagans near the village, already envious of Timothy's ability to read and to gather people around him, worried that with Maura by his side his influence would only increase. They denounced him to the pagan governor Arianus, saying that he and his new wife were drawing the worshippers of the gods away from their faith.

Arianus demanded that Timothy turn over his sacred books, but Timothy refused and said that because the books supported his faith and that of the villagers, "the angels of the Lord guard them and us."

Timothy was tortured so severely that he lost his eyesight, but even then he wouldn't renounce his faith. So Arianus put pressure on Maura, pretending to be concerned for her youth and telling her it was a shame to give up the future years of married happiness she and her husband were sure to have. He urged her to convince Timothy to be sensible and sacrifice to the

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 Lazarczyk, Emil Mikulik, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

gods so that they could continue their new life together.

Maura agreed to encourage her husband, but what she encouraged him to do was to stand firm, no matter what was done to him. She finally joined him in martyrdom, and together they are remembered as great champions for the faith.

There are many other married saints whose stories are beautiful and inspiring. The book "Marriage as a Path to Holiness" (St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1994) contains many of these stories, well-told by the authors, Drs. David and Mary Ford. In addition, the book offers commentaries of Saint John Chrysostom and others, and excellent explanations of the marriage service and its meaning. There are copious and helpful notes.

The authors also include important historical information. For example, they tell us that mandatory clerical celibacy came up at the Council of Nicaea. It was Saint Paphnutius of Egypt who defended the Church's practice of married clergy so convincingly that it has never been questioned since in the Eastern Church.

The book acknowledges the importance of monasticism as a way of life that can lead many to the Kingdom, but as its title makes clear, marriage is also a path to holiness.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Anna Mikola**, who celebrates her birthday this Thursday, and **Marion Nagel**, who celebrates her birthday this Saturday. May God grant both of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Announcements

◆ **A Heartfelt Thank You** to all of you who in any possible way helped during this Great Lent, Holy Week, and Bright Week with things that were needed to be done, like serving, singing, decorating, cleaning, preparing meals, etc. Your labors, time, and offerings did not go unnoticed, but instead are greatly appreciated! May God bless you abundantly for your efforts, granting all of you Many Blessed Years! Mnohaja Lita!

◆ **The Blessing of Graves at East Ridgelawn Cemetery** will start with Panikhida at the cemetery chapel today at **1:30pm**. For St. Peter's and other cemeteries please make an appointment with Father Igor. If you have family members that are buried far away and you are not able to visit their graves, please give their names for commemoration to Father at the time of blessing.

◆ **Wedding Bann:** The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony of our parishioner **Robert Michael Czech & Emily Smith McDonald** is scheduled for **Sunday, May 4, 2014**. Anyone who wants to express any concerns or protests please speak to Fr. Igor.

◆ **The Paschal Artos** that was blessed at the end of the Paschal Divine Liturgy last Sunday symbolizes the physical presence of the resurrected Christ among the disciples. The Artos then was placed on a small stand in Royal Doors where it remained throughout Bright Week. On Bright Saturday the priest says another prayer over the Artos and it is then broken and distributed among the faithful along with the Prospora. It is a custom among Orthodox Christians to keep a portion of the Artos throughout the year and with due reverence and faith to eat of it in time of illness or distress. This is eaten, often together with a drink of Holy Water, which had been blessed at the Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord.



April 27, 2014

**ANTIPASCHA.
2ND SUNDAY OF PASCHA
St. Thomas Sunday**

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Acts 5:12-20
Gospel: Jn. 20:19-31
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the Divine Liturgy
- **1:30pm** – Blessing of Graves at East Ridgelawn Cemetery

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, MAY 3
5:30pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MAY 4
9:00am - Divine Liturgy
3:30pm - Holy Matrimony of Robert Michael Czech & Emily Smith McDonald