

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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A Closer Look at Monasticism

Christians from various backgrounds are discovering the writings of the early desert monastics, and are finding great spiritual profit in the examples their lives offer.

A book entitled "In the Heart of the Desert: The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers" by the Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis (World Wisdom, Inc. 2003) gives insight into the world of the desert-dwellers, and gently invites the reader to apply that insight in a personal way.

The book also addresses some of the mistaken ideas that people may have about the monastic life. One important aspect of that life, for example, is dealing with the passions. These are understood, by many people, to be feelings and impulses that are completely negative. Monks and nuns are seen as those who spend their lives working to annihilate the passions.

But Fr. Chryssavgis points out that while some monastics did seem to view the passions in this way, others saw them as neutral or positive impulses coming from God. Taking this view, Abba Isaiah of Scetis wrote about three passions: anger, jealousy and lust. We see them as evil, he says, because we have misdirected and misused them: "However, the original purpose of anger is for it to be used against injustice in the world; the proper reason for envy is so that we may seek to emulate the virtues of the saints; and the natural goal of our desire is to thirst for God."

It is possible, Abba Isaiah and others say, first to identify our own personal passions—the things we desire or are strongly drawn to—and then redirect them so they become means of loving others and loving God. This is the long struggle the monastics undertook. They strove to become "dispassionate,"



July 27, 2014

7th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Holy Greatmartyr and Healer
Panteleimon

- **8:55am** – Churaching of newly Baptized
Sofia Kseniuk
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Rom. 15:1-7
2Tim 2:1-10(Saint)
Gospel: Mt. 9:27-35
Jn. 15:17-16:2(Saint)
- **Panikhida** in memory of newly departed
Helen Newell, on the 40th day of her
repose, offered by John Hreno & family.
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for
Coffee Hour following the service.

Schedule of Services

- SATURDAY, AUGUST 2**
5:30pm - Great Vespers
- SUNDAY, AUGUST 3**
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.

which does not mean indifferent, but truly charitable toward the whole world.

Fr. Chryssavgis uses Saint Anthony's example to address the common idea that monastics hated their bodies, and all matter. Anthony, after his intense fights with demons and extreme ascetical effort, was not emaciated or exhausted. He seemed to be in perfect balance, physically and in every other way.

Anthony's very simple way of life seems extreme to us, Fr. Chryssavgis writes, only because "our culture teaches us that the more we have, the better we are; Anthony's taught him that the less he had, the more he was!" The truth is that "we can often manage with a lot less than we would dare to imagine."

What did "obedience" mean to the desert monastics? Not domination, Fr. Chyrssavgis writes. Obedience was a circle, and "was expected of everyone, elders and novices alike!" True spiritual guides didn't seek to be idolized or to be absolute authorities. Mother Amma said that the teacher "ought to be a stranger to the desire for domination, vainglory and pride" and should be "full of concern for others, and a lover of souls."

Beautiful illustrations enhance the richness of this book, which brings the reader closer to the early men and women of the desert who have so much to teach us.



Announcements

◆ **Dormition Fast** starts Friday, August 1 and lasts until August 15. For two weeks we keep fasting in honor of the Falling Asleep of the Most Holy Theotokos. While the details of the dietary prescriptions are indicated on the parish wall calendar, the very important spiritual part of this fast among others is to spiritually prepare and to have a private Confession during this time.

◆ **Parish Confessions** are scheduled for Saturday, August 9 from 1:30pm to 3:00pm. Confessions can also be done after any Vespers service, or before the Divine Liturgy by appointment.

◆ Save the date: **Annual Diocesan Church School Conference** for NJ Deanery is scheduled for Saturday, August 2. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ Save the date: **Annual Diocesan Youth Day** at Six Flags Great Adventure is scheduled for Thursday, August 21, 2014. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Austin Christopher Anderson**, who celebrates his 1st birthday today, and to **Betty Fechisin**, whose birthday is this Tuesday. May God grant both of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

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.