

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, Rector

973-473-1928 (office)
646-387-5494 (cell)
fr.igorksn@gmail.com

Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

No Pity and No Fear

August 10 is the feast day of the Hieromartyr Sixtus, who became Bishop of Rome at a time when having that position meant almost certain death

Sixtus was born in Athens, and served the Church in Spain before settling in Rome. Competent and well-liked, he was an obvious choice to become Bishop of Rome.

But in the third century the Church had to contend with an emperor, Valerian, who hated Christianity and feared the growing influence and social position of its followers. So strong was Valerian's opposition to the faith that any Christian matron who would not worship the gods was, by his decree, to be banished. Any Christian member of the imperial household who would not renounce the faith was to be enslaved and put to menial work on the imperial estates.

The Bishop of Rome, as the most visible and influential Christian, was the special object of Valerian's hatred. Several men who preceded Sixtus in the position had been martyred, and that is why an appointment as Rome's bishop was seen as a death sentence.

People must have felt pity for Sixtus, who by obeying his calling in the Church was put in such a terrible position. They weren't surprised when the pattern continued and he was arrested and later martyred.

But what about Sixtus himself? If he felt fear, he overcame it and comforted those around him. He didn't feel deserving of pity, because he looked forward to his eternal life with God.

The readings for this day and the next have something to say about both fear and pity. Matthew 14:22-34 is the story of Jesus



August 10, 2014

9th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Afterfeast of Transfiguration

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Cor. 3:9-17
Gospel: Mt. 14:22-34
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for
Coffee Hour following the service.

Schedule of Services

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya and Blessing of Flowers and Herbs

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6 – DORMITION OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS

9:00am - Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Flowers and Herbs

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16

5:30pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17

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.

Christ walking on the water, and telling His disciples to "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." Then, because He wants to share everything with them, He gives Peter a chance to walk on water too, and when Peter is too afraid asks him, "Why did you doubt?"

In Matthew 21:18-22 the Lord withers a fig tree that isn't bearing fruit. When the disciples marvel at this, He tells them. "...if you have faith and never doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will be done." He wants them to cast away fear when they face the huge challenges that will come.

In I Corinthians 15:12-19, Saint Paul tells us there is only one reason why we should ever be pitied: "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied."

Bishop Sixtus did not hope in Christ "for this life only." His hope was based on his confident anticipation of a life that would never end, and which no emperor could take away.

Nobody who shares his anticipation needs pity. Nobody who faces fearful things needs to be totally overcome by them. That's the message of Sixtus' life and of the words we read in these days.



Announcements

◆ **Dormition Fast** started Friday, August 1 and will last until this Friday, August 15, which is the Feast of Dormition of the Most-Holy Theotokos. For two weeks we keep fasting in honor of the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God. If you did not have a chance to have your private confession yet, please speak to Father Igor, or have it after any Vespers service. Flowers and herbs for the Feast of Dormition will be blessed at the Vespers service as well as at the end of the Divine Liturgy on the day of the Feast.

◆ Save the date: **Annual Diocesan Youth Day** at Six Flags Great Adventure is scheduled for Thursday, August 21, 2014. For more information please go to our Diocesan website www.nynjoca.org.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Kathy Lazorzcyk**, who celebrates her birthday today, **Gregory Kary**, this Tuesday, and **Marilyn Stagen**, this Friday. May God grant all 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 after the service in our Church Hall next door.