

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
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The Greatest Conqueror is Conquered

Today is the Feast of the Exaltation (or Elevation) of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross.

There are two events in history to which this feast takes us, as Eugen J. Pentiuic writes in his book "The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition" (Oxford University Press 2014). The first took place in the year 335, when the church built by Constantine over the traditional site of Christ's tomb was consecrated in Jerusalem. It was named the Church of the Resurrection; it is now known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The second event occurred in 629, fifteen years after the Persians had sacked and looted the church, taking as part of their spoils a relic of the True Cross. In 629 the Byzantine emperor Heraclius was able to recover the relic, and to bring it to Constantinople. There he carried it into the great church of Hagia Sophia, and elevated it as a sign of victory.

Father Pentiuic notes that one of the readings for the Great Vespers of the feast is Exodus 15:22-16:1. This is the account of Moses leading the people of Israel on from the Red Sea, after the exodus from Egypt, into the wilderness of Shur. They come, thirsty and tired, to the waters of Marah, only to find that the water is too bitter to drink. As so often, the people complain and "murmur against" poor Moses.

He, in turn, cries out to God. The Lord shows him a tree, which he flings into the water. At once the water becomes sweet enough to drink. Soon the people come to Elim where they encamp under seventy palm trees, surrounded by twelve springs



September 14, 2014

14th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS.

Strict Fast Day

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Cor. 1:18-24
Gospel: Jn. 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
5:30pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21
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 Lazorczyk, Emil Mikulik, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

and buoyed by God's promise that if they will keep His statutes, He will spare them the diseases He has used to chastise the arrogant, heedless Egyptians.

Reading this passage reminds us that the Old Testament often prepares us for what happened to Jesus Christ. The tree at Marah is like the wood of the Cross, which sweetens everything bitter because it gives us eternal life. The crucified Christ rises from the dead, "upon those in the tomb bestowing life."

One of the stikhera for the festal Great Vespers speaks about another tree: "Come, all you nations, let us worship the blessed Tree through which was wrought the everlasting righteousness. For he who by a tree beguiled our forefather Adam is himself ensnared by the Cross." Here the blessed Tree is the cross, but the tree with which Satan beguiled Adam is the tree in the Garden.

Saint John Chrysostom also makes reference to Satan, as the one who conquered Adam by tempting him to eat of the forbidden tree in Paradise. But the conqueror is conquered by the Resurrection, which robs Satan of his fatal power over humankind.

The tree in the Garden, the tree at Marah, and in fact the whole Old Testament, lead us to the Tree by which Jesus Christ will conquer death once and for all.



Announcements

◆ Just a reminder: the next **Trustees meeting** is this Tuesday, September 16 at 7:00pm.

◆ A **Diocesan Girls Retreat** for those in grades 7-12 will take place at Saint Basil's Academy in Garrison NY from Friday-Sunday, November 14-16, 2014. For more information please go to our Diocesan website www.nynjoca.org.

◆ The **Passaic "O" Club** will be hosting the New Jersey District Convention of the F.O.C.A. on November 1st and 2nd. His Grace, Bishop Michael will join us for both days. A banquet will be held at The Brownstone Restaurant following Divine Liturgy. We would appreciate your support by purchasing a patron or booster or by taking an ad. If you would like more information, please contact Betty Czech.

◆ The **Annual Diocesan Assembly** will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, **November 11 & 12, 2014** at the Saints Peter and Paul Church, Endicott, New York. More information on our Diocesan website nynjoca.org.

◆ We've passed already Labor Day and that is a reminder to start thinking about **Thanksgiving Baskets**. Just keep in mind that store specials between now and Thanksgiving can help a lot. May the Lord pay you back hundredfold for your thoughtfulness and generosity.

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 in the school building next door.