

# 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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## Discovering the Wonder of Jesus Christ

**On December 24, the eve of the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, the Church commemorates Saint Eugenia of Rome.**

Born in 280, she belonged to a noble pagan family. Though Roman by birth, she lived in Alexandria, Egypt, where her father Philip had been sent by the emperor to govern.

Philip not only worshipped pagan gods, but strongly opposed Christianity. Like many highborn Romans, he distrusted this new religion that seemed to exalt the humble and weak. Rome had built its empire on brute power and conquest—ideals very different from those the itinerant preacher from Palestine taught. The preacher's teachings were spreading far and wide, and Philip worried that they threatened traditional Roman society.

The account of Eugenia's life tells us that she discovered Jesus Christ by reading the words of Saint Paul. How thrilled she must have been by the stirring description of Him in one of this day's readings, Hebrews 1:1-3:

*"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high..."*

Eugenia was determined to follow this wonderful Lord who so loved human beings that that He had "by Himself purged our sins." She fled her home, accompanied by two male servants. They accompanied her to a place far enough away that she could escape being found out.

## 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:

Genevieve Bobenko, Pauline Bodnar, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, John Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazarczyk, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

*Nearby was a men's monastery. Eugenia looked at it with a mixture of joy and sadness; joy because it was a place where her newly-discovered God was truly worshipped, and sadness because, as a woman, she could not join that worship.*

*But she was a resourceful, courageous woman, and so she decided to disguise herself as a man and apply to enter the monastery. Her servants hesitated to help her – cutting her hair, and putting together loose-fitting garments –but she convinced them, and in her disguise she approached the abbot.*

*Abbot Helenon saw at once that this delicate-featured person was not a man, even though she lowered the pitch of her voice. But he didn't turn her away, or reproach her. Seeing her sincere spiritual desire, he gave her an isolated cell, where she would spend many years in monastic effort.*

*Saint Eugenia saw the wonder of Christ in her own life. She was given the gift of healing, and had the joy of converting her adamantly-pagan father to the faith.*

*Both Philip and Eugenia were ultimately martyred. Like the shepherds who "made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child" (Luke 2: 17a) they had bravely spread the Gospel, and unflinchingly faced His enemies, who killed their bodies but not their souls.*

## Schedule of Services

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**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26** – 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY – **SYNAXIS OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27** – 3<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY – **HOLY PROTOMARTYR AND ARCHDEACON STEPHEN**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

6:00pm - Great Vespers

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

## Announcements

◆ Save the date: New Jersey Deanery is sponsoring a **bus trip to the "March For Life" in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, January 22, 2015.** The motor-coach bus will depart at 6:15am from Holy Assumption Church, 29 Huron Ave., Clifton NJ, and return to the church that evening at approximately 9:45pm. Clergy and faithful from throughout the diocese are invited to participate. Seat reservations may be made by contacting Fr. John Diamantis by phone at (609) 393-1234, or by email at [frjohndiamantis@gmail.com](mailto:frjohndiamantis@gmail.com). There is no charge for this trip. **The deadline for reservations is December 31, 2014.**

◆ Save the date: on **Sunday, January 18, 2015,** Chapter #82 of the F.O.C.A. will host the 78<sup>th</sup> Novogodny Ball in Cherry Hill, NJ. For reservation please call Paul Fedoronko at 610-328-6911. For more information please see a posted flyer.

◆ 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.



## December 21, 2014

**28<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ  
SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY**

• **8:50am** – Hours

• **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy

*Epistle: Heb. 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40*

*Gospel: Mt. 1:1-25*

• **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the service.

## Schedule of Services

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24** – EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

4:30pm - Great Compline & Matins

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25** – THE NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy, followed by Festal Luncheon in the church hall. Please join us.

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