

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

Now and Then

Two of the readings for January 20th are Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9 and Luke 6:17-23.

Though one is from the Old Testament and the other is from the much later time of the New Testament, they both tell us that the "now" of the present life is a passing reality. The "then" of eternity, and its everlasting reality, is what matters.

The reading from the Wisdom of Solomon describes the deaths of righteous people living among ungodly and powerful people, as the Jews of Alexandria were doing at the time the book was probably written. The author makes clear the difference between what appears in this world to be the fate of the righteous, and what constitutes the true reality of their lives. First he writes, "In the eyes of the foolish they seem to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going forth from us to be their destruction."

Even to the other Jews, apparently, these deaths were a disaster, and the final destruction of life. The following verses, however, show that another reality was actually being worked out: "But they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive a great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of Himself."

In the passage from Luke, often called the Sermon on the Plain, Christ Himself tells us that this world's painful difficulties fade into nothing when we know the glory of the future with God: "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is

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, John Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorczyk, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets." Not only does Christ reassure us about our own lives; He also reminds us that others—such as the righteous people described in Wisdom of Solomon—experienced the same things.

On this day the Church honors the New Martyr Zachariah of Patras, who lived in the late eighteenth century. He was born a Christian, but converted to Islam. Living as a Muslim for many years, he still kept and read a book called "The Salvation of Sinners." The book's powerful words finally convinced him that he had made a dreadful mistake.

Zachariah publicly declared his intention to return to Christianity, having received absolution from a Christian elder. For this he was tortured so severely that he died. When the local Christians asked permission to bury him, the Muslim ruler said he was unworthy of burial, having betrayed two faiths. His body was dragged through the streets and unceremoniously tossed into a dry well.

Yet people approaching the well saw an unearthly light shining above it. This man, who in life was pronounced unfit even for a proper burial, had found the "then" of God's forgiving and welcoming love.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Barbara Kary** and **Eva Stashitsky**, who celebrate their birthdays today, to **Nicholas Alexander Silvestre**, January 22, and **Christ Baron**, January 23. May God grant all of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Floral Offerings

Two beautiful baskets of flowers were given by Maryann Stagen in memory of her mother Mary, on the 25th Anniversary of her Repose. May her Memory be Eternal!



Announcements

◆ Please, note: The next **Trustees' Meeting** will be on Tuesday, **January 20th** at 7pm.

◆ Save the date: the New Jersey Deanery is sponsoring a **bus trip to the "March For Life" in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, January 22, 2015**. The motorcoach 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. Seat reservations may be made by contacting Fr. John Diamantis by phone at (609) 393-1234, or by email frjohndiamantis@gmail.com. There is no charge for this trip. **The deadline for reservations is extended to January 20, 2015.**

◆ 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.



January 18, 2015

32nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Ss. Athanasius the Great and Cyril of Alexandria

Sanctity of Life Sunday

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Tim. 1:15-17
Gospel: Lk. 18:35-43
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24
6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25
9:00am - Divine Liturgy