

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

Wisdom for Today from the Early Church (Book Review)

During this week the Church commemorates some of the great Fathers of the early Church, particularly Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, and Basil the Great.

These three bishops and theologians of the late fourth century, who lived in Asia Minor and Constantinople, grace the cover of a new book entitled *Wisdom for Today from the Early Church: A Foundational Study* by Dr. David C. Ford (St. Tikhon's Monastery Press, 2014). The author says that he chose to feature them there "as being representative of all the Saints of the first several centuries of the Christian era – who together, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, made possible the forging of the Christian world."

The first chapter of the book is entitled "An Orthodox Understanding of the Book of Acts." This chapter gives the Orthodox reader an invaluable perspective, showing how Acts is the basis of the Church's practice and physical structure. Going verse by verse, Dr. Ford provides insights that won't be found in many other commentaries on Acts. For example, he writes about verses 3:1-3, in which Peter and John go to the temple at hour of prayer, that the ethnically-Jewish early Christians continued their venerable practice of worshipping four times a day. He then adds that the Orthodox Church, to this day, "has services called the Hours, one for each of these four times."

Dr. Ford deftly interweaves events in the contemporary Church with Acts, as well. Writing about verses 9:3-6, in which Christ appears to Saul on the road to Damascus, he describes the vision of Christ experienced by Daniel Byantoro, a young Muslim, who became the first Indonesian Orthodox convert and later priest and apostle to his homeland.

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,

Chapter 2 carries on the story of the early Church after Acts, and is called "The Apostolic Fathers Encourage and Teach the Faithful." Dr. Ford describes and quotes from several of these early Fathers, again giving insights that may be new to many readers, and will be valuable to all. From "The Letter to Diognetus", written by an unknown author to someone inquiring about the Christian faith, he takes these words describing the life of believers: "For they dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers ...They marry like all other men and they beget children, but they do not cast away their offspring. They have meals in common, but not their wives." The "otherness" of Christians has often been described, but this description is particularly memorable.

The remaining chapters, taking the reader through several more centuries of Church history, are filled with relevant quotations and comments. The writing is appealingly simple but still scholarly, telling the Church's story in ways that encourage reflection and further study. The book's Orthodox perspective adds another layer of enjoyment and value for those who want to learn more about the complicated, fascinating history of the Church.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Mary Hadginske** who will celebrate her 94th birthdays tomorrow, January 26. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ Please, note: Our **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on **Sunday, February 15** following the Divine Liturgy. Please plan to attend this meeting.

◆ The **New Jersey Deanery Appreciation Dinner** for the 2014 Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors of our Diocese will be held at the Holy Assumption Church in Clifton on **Sunday, February 8** at 5:00pm.

◆ Save the date: **Annual Pre-Lenten Celebration** (Maslenitsa) will be held at the Holy Assumption Church in Clifton on **Sunday, February 15** starting at 3pm. For more information and tickets please contact Donna at 973-365-1473. Tickets will not be sold at the door.

◆ **Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors Program (DDB)**, entitled "A VISION FOR OUR FUTURE", was initiated by His Grace bishop Michael. By participation in this program, we can help our diocese in three very important initiatives each year: 1) support for the new mission parishes; 2) scholarships for our seminary students; 3) assistance for an established parish that may be struggling in these difficult economic times. To learn more about this Vision and the DDB Program, visit the diocesan website at www.nynjoca.org.

◆ 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 25, 2015

33rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Sunday of Zaccaeus.
St. Gregory the Theologian

- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Tim. 4:9-15; 1Cor. 12:7-17
Gospel: Lk. 19:1-10; Jn. 10:9-16
- Fellowship – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the service.

Schedule of Services

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30 – THREE HIERARCHS

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya