

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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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

The Threat of the Glorious Ones

On February 4th we read the entire third chapter, verses 1 to 18, of 2 Peter. The letter was probably written between the years 80 and 90.

Part of the second chapter, verses 9 to 22, is read on February 3rd. Here we find a strong warning against false teachers. These are people who, though they accepted the Christian faith themselves, are now finding it difficult to adhere to Christianity's strict moral teachings while living in a far more permissive pagan society. So they are attempting to downplay those teachings, minimizing their importance. They are working to convince other Christians to go along with their ideas.

The words Peter uses to describe them and their efforts are unequivocal. They are "waterless springs and mists driven by a storm," and they speak "bombastic nonsense." He compares them to a sow that is washed, only to wallow in the mud. They are "blots and blemishes, reveling in their dissipation." The danger of their malicious behavior is that they "entice unsteady souls."

To emphasize the danger, Peter writes of them that "bold and willful, they are not afraid to slander the glorious ones." At first reading, we might think that he is saying that they defame the angels who do God's will. But in fact, he is accusing them of doing something even more serious. The "glorious ones" here are the powers that work against God. By slandering them, or disrespecting their power, the false teachers do something that even God's angels fear to do: "The angels, though greater in might and power, do not bring against them a slanderous judgment from the Lord." The false teachers "slander what they

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 Lazarczyk, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

do not understand," and in so doing they bring a terrible penalty not only on themselves but on those they can lure into following them.

In describing their fate, Peter reminds his readers of the story, in Numbers 22, of a soothsayer named Balaam. He is hired by the Moabite king to pronounce a curse on the Israelites.

Balaam is riding on his donkey and doesn't see the angel of the Lord standing in his path with a sword. But the donkey sees the angel three times, and stops. Balaam strikes the animal, still failing to see the angel blocking his path. Finally God makes the donkey speak, and makes Balaam realize that he is to bless, not curse, the people of Israel.

In the letter's third chapter, Peter writes that some scoff at God because they don't see the fulfillment of the "promise of His coming." But Peter says that God is not slow. Rather, He is patiently giving all of us time to repent. We can trust Him to know when the "Day of the Lord" should come.

There are still "glorious ones" in the world that beckon us with power beyond our ability to understand. Scoffing at that power is still mortally dangerous. But God will always try to save us, even by the embarrassing strategy of making a donkey smarter than we are.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Stacy Baron Anderson**, who celebrates her birthday tomorrow. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Floral Offerings

Flowers for the icon of the Three Holy Hierarchs were donated in memory of **Barbara & Michael Evanina, Mary & Valentine Firmender, and Andrew Stankovci**, from Effie, Sonya and family. Memory Eternal! Vichnaya Pamiat!



Announcements

◆ Throughout the following week there is a general dispensation from fasting, so there is **no fasting** this Wednesday and Friday.

◆ There will be a short **meeting of the Board of Trustees** after the Liturgy next Sunday, February 8 to review a budget for the Annual Meeting. All members are urged to attend.

◆ 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.

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

◆ **Sunday, February 22** is the Cheesefare Sunday. It is the last day when we are allowed to have dairy products and eggs before Pascha. After the Divine Liturgy we will have **Maslenitsa** in our church hall, followed by the Forgiveness Vespers. Please plan to attend. Delicious blintzes and other meet-free foods are in the menu. Let us have a little celebration before we start Great Lent.



February 1, 2015

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE

Forefeast of the Meeting

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 2Tim. 3:10-15
Gospel: Lk. 18:10-14
- **Panikhida** – in memory of **Eugenia**, mother of Walentyna Szestawicka, on the 1st Anniversary of her Repose.
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the service.
- **6:00pm** – Great Vespers with Litya

Schedule of Services

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

9:00am - Divine Liturgy