

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

170 Lexington Avenue, Passaic, New Jersey, 07055
www.stjohnspassaic.org

REV. FR. IGOR KSENIUK, Rector

973-473-1928 (office)
646-387-5494 (cell)
fr.igorksn@gmail.com

Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH in AMERICA

Love Overcomes Fear

During the week of Thomas Sunday, April 19th, we read Acts 4: 13 to 5: 33 in sections. These verses are filled with wonderful evidence of the power of love in the young Church.

The first verses describe the "boldness" of the apostles Peter and John, who preach to growing crowds that there is "salvation in no one else" except Jesus Christ. When the chief priests and elders warn them to stop, their response shows that they are not the same fearful men who hid away when Christ was crucified. They are compelled, they answer, to share the truth they have seen and heard.

The two apostles return to their friends, and everyone prays together that God will look upon the threats made against them, and "grant to Thy servants to speak Thy word with all boldness." The place where they are gathered is "shaken" and they are filled with the Holy Spirit. There will be hostile enemies trying to instill fear in them, but the Spirit will strengthen them to overcome it with love.

The next verses describe the practical results of the love God has enabled them to share. "Great grace" is upon them all, and there "is not a needy person among them." Everyone gives their property or money, laying it at the apostles' feet to be used for the common good.

But the Book of Acts is not a naive description of idealized human behavior. So the very next verses tell us of a married couple, Ananias and Sapphira, who succumb to temptation and betray this communal trust and love. They sell their property and bring what they claim is the total of the proceeds, while actually keeping back some.



April 19, 2015

ANTIPASCHA.
2ND SUNDAY OF PASCHA
St. Thomas Sunday

- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Acts 5:12-20
Gospel: Jn. 20:19-31
- Fellowship – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the Divine Liturgy
- 1:30pm – Blessing of Graves at East Ridgelawn Cemetery

Schedule of Services

THURSDAY, APRIL 23 - ST. GEORGE
9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, APRIL 25
6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, APRIL 26
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:

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

Peter says solemn words to Ananias: "You have not lied to men but to God." He is not pronouncing judgment, but seems to be saying that in the atmosphere of love, deceit cannot survive. Ananias falls dead on the spot. When his wife Sapphira continues to lie to Peter about the price of their property, she too dies immediately.

Following both deaths, we read that "great fear" fell upon those who heard about them, and indeed upon the whole church. But even this fear is overcome by God's love, the love uniting His people. The next verses tell us that "more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women..."

On April 22nd the Church commemorates the Holy Martyr Leonidas, the father of the prominent theologian Origen. Leonidas, a brilliant Christian philosopher, was imprisoned during one of the third-century persecutions of Christians. His wife and seven children, of whom Origen was the oldest, were terrified, especially when all their possessions were confiscated by imperial decree, leaving them in abject poverty.

Yet Leonidas had nurtured in his eldest son a deep love for God. Origen wrote to his father in prison: "Do not worry about us, and do not flee from martyrdom on our account." He was one more person who knew that love centered in God can always overcome fear.



Announcements

◆ **A Heartfelt Thank You** to all of you who in any possible way helped during this Great Lent, Holy Week, and Bright Week with things that were needed to be done. Your labors, time, and offerings did not go unnoticed, but instead are greatly appreciated! May God bless you abundantly for your efforts, granting all of you Many Blessed Years! Mnohaja Lita!

◆ The **Blessing of Graves** at **East Ridgelawn Cemetery** will start with Panikhida at the cemetery chapel today at **1:30pm**. For St. Peter's and other cemeteries please make an appointment with Father Igor. If you have family members that are buried far away and you are not able to visit their graves, please give their names for commemoration at the time of blessing.

◆ Next **Board of Trustees Meeting** will be this coming Tuesday, April 21 at 7pm.

◆ The **Paschal Artos** that was blessed at the end of the Paschal Divine Liturgy last Sunday symbolizes the physical presence of the resurrected Christ among the disciples. The Artos then was placed on a small stand in Royal Doors, where it remained throughout Bright Week. On Bright Saturday the priest says another prayer over the Artos and it is then broken and distributed among the faithful along with the Proskophora. It is a custom among Orthodox Christians to keep a portion of the Artos throughout the year and with due reverence and faith to eat of it in time of illness or distress. This is eaten, often together with a drink of Holy Water, which had been blessed at the Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord.

Our Deepest Sympathy

to Nicholas Kovalycsik and his family on repose of his sister **Diane Byrnes**, whose 40-days Panikhida was served last night. May she rest in peace in God's Heavenly Kingdom! Memory Eternal!