

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST 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

Never a Deserter

On June 24th the Church celebrates the Nativity of John the Baptist.

John grew up to be more than an energetic servant of God, preaching and baptizing. He also attracted numerous followers with his strong faith and absolute integrity. He fearlessly challenged people to "bear fruits of repentance" and he had a message for each person. He told tax collectors to take no more than the prescribed amount of revenue. Soldiers were admonished to be satisfied with their pay and never extort money through threats or false accusations.

But despite his ability to draw loyal crowds to himself and effectively challenge their behavior, John was a profoundly humble man. When he recognized Jesus Christ as the Savior, he didn't hesitate to withdraw and say, "I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." He was astonished, but obedient, when Jesus requested baptism in the Jordan at his hands.

During this week when we celebrate John's birth, we read Chapter 11 of Matthew's Gospel. It contains Jesus' words about John: "...among those born of woman no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist."

The chapter begins with John in prison. He sends word to Jesus to ask, "Are you the One who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" It seems a strange question, coming from John. Having done so much and given up so much to prepare the world for the Messiah, is he still unsure that Jesus is the One? Must he die at Herod's hands without certainty?

Jesus' answer at first seems merely a statement of the obvious. He tells the inquirers to share with John what they "hear and see"—His healings and the good news He brings to the poor.



June 21, 2015

3RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Nativity of St. John the Baptist
(commemorated on June 24)

Happy Father's Day!

• **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Rom. 5:1-10

Rom. 13:11-14:4(Forerunner)

Gospel: Mt. 6:22-33

Lk. 1:5-25, 57-68,76,80 (Forerunner)

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

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JUNE 28 - Ss. PETER AND PAUL

(COMMEMORATED ON JUNE 29)

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.

But there is deep significance in Jesus' response. He describes the things He is doing in words that reflect Isaiah's description of the coming Savior (Isaiah 35:5, 26:19, 29:18 and 42:7). He is assuring John, who is intimately familiar with Isaiah's words, that He is their fulfillment.

Then Jesus adds a word of encouragement: "Blessed is anyone who takes no offense at Me." The phrase "take offense" can also be translated as "fall away" or "desert." Jesus is telling John not to lose heart; since he has not fallen away or deserted Jesus, as even the disciples of Jesus will, he is blessed.

In the same chapter, Jesus describes people who have fallen away and deserted. They weren't satisfied with John who "came neither eating nor drinking," nor with Jesus who came "eating and drinking" and who could therefore be rejected as "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!"

People still find fault with Jesus and those who serve Him, and use their fault-finding as an excuse to desert Him. But John the Baptist, despite being required to give his life, didn't fall away or desert the Lord. And despite the firm way Jesus describes fault-finding "deserters" in Matthew 11, the chapter ends with His wonderful invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Mary Ann Dolak**, who celebrates her birthdays tomorrow. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Announcements

◆ **Father's Day Greetings** to all fathers, grand-fathers, great grandfathers, godfathers and uncles of our Parish. Let us honor our fathers by praying for them and showing our love and respect. May God bless all fathers with good health, joy, peace for Many Years! Let us also not forget to pray for our departed fathers who have entered Eternal Life. Memory Eternal!

◆ Fr. Igor is away for vacation until July 9. In his absence, Archpriest Fr. John Nehrebecki will serve Saturday Vespers and the Divine Liturgies on Sundays. In case of emergency, please contact Fr. Stephen Evanina at 973-777-2906.

◆ **Enjoy your vacation** but remember to visit the Orthodox Church at your destination. To search for a local parish go to <http://orthodoxyinamerica.org> and enter your location in the search panel. If you plan to receive Holy Communion, be sure that the priest knows who you are before the Divine Liturgy. It is always good form to approach the Chalice knowing that the priest is informed about you. Have a wonderful and safe summer!

Welcome Visitors

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 in our Church Hall after the service.