

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

The Mother of God

On July 2nd the Church commemorates a saint and an event, both of which remind us of the central place in our theology of Mary the Theotokos.

The event is the "Placing of the Honorable Robe of the Most Holy Mother of God at Blachernae." It took place in the year 458 at the church in Blachernae, a suburb of Constantinople. The saint is Juvenal, who served as Patriarch of Jerusalem from 420 to 458.

The story of the Theotokos' robe begins with two brothers from Constantinople named Galbuis and Candidus. They set out for Palestine to venerate the holy places there, and near Nazareth they stayed with a devout elderly woman. She told them she'd been caring for a sacred item in her home: the Theotokos' robe. Near the end of her life, the Mother of God had given it to a pious maiden, and it had been passed down through generations of that maiden's family. Many people in ill health or distress, she said, received healing by prayerfully touching the robe.

Knowing the sacred relic belonged in a church, the brothers took it back with them to Constantinople and informed the Emperor and the Patriarch about it. In June of 458, it was placed in the Blachernae church, which is dedicated to the Mother of God. Almost 900 years later, a Russian pilgrim described seeing it: "We arrived at Blachernae, where the Robe lies upon an altar in a sealed reliquary."

Saint Juvenal was an excellent theologian who attended both the Third and Fourth Ecumenical Councils. At the Third Council, in Ephesus, he insisted on the term "Mother of God" to describe Mary against those who claimed that she could only be called the mother of Christ. Giving her that diminished title, he argued,

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.

would be denying that Jesus is truly the Christ, both God and Man in one Person.

Saint Juvenal had to defend the Church's teachings at both Councils, and did so successfully. But his opponents in Jerusalem continued to spread their wrong beliefs, and managed to have Juvenal removed from his position as Patriarch. They installed a man named Theodosius, who at first had the support of the empress Eudoxia. Fortunately she was convinced by Saint Simeon the Stylite to adhere to the Councils' decisions. Juvenal's position was restored, and he served the Jerusalem church as patriarch for 38 years.

On July 1st we read Jesus' own words about seeking the truth. He says, "The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!" (Matt. 12:42).

The Queen of Sheba made a great effort to hear truth from Solomon. God has given us ways to know the truth, too. Those at the Councils used their God-given minds to work out that Mary is rightly called Mother of God because her Son is the Divine and Human Savior.

God also gave us a tangible proof of Mary's holiness: a Robe that drew people to Christ by healing and renewing His people.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Stephanie Kibitelsky**, who celebrates her birthday July 1, and **Mary Fechisin** - July 2, and **Maryann Stagen**, July 4. May God grant each of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Announcements

◆ 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.

◆ The **Oath of Office** for our newly elected Board of Trustees will be at the end of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 12.

◆ The **Trustees' Appreciation Dinner** will be held on July 14. Place and time TBA. For more information, please see Bob Czech.

◆ **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.



June 28, 2015

4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Holy Apostles Peter and Paul
(commemorated on June 29)

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Rom. 6:18-23
2 Cor. 11:21-12:9 (Apostles)
Gospel: Mt. 8:5-13
Mt. 16:13-19 (Apostles)
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for
Coffee Hour following the service.

Schedule of Services

- SATURDAY, JULY 4**
6:00pm - Great Vespers
- SUNDAY, JULY 5**
9:00am - Divine Liturgy