

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

Parables of Patience

The Gospel readings for the week of July 5th include Matthew 13:10-43.

These verses come after Jesus has just told the crowd the Parable of the Sower. It describes various kinds of ground, and the seeds that fall on the ground as the sower works. Some seeds die because they are scorched by the sun or choked by thorns, eaten by birds or withered in soil that isn't deep enough to sustain them. But the seeds that fall on good soil bring forth abundant grain.

In verse 10, the disciples ask Jesus why He speaks to the people in parables. He answers: "The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.'" His words are close to the message the prophet Isaiah is commanded to give the people (Isaiah 6: 9-10).

Commentators on this passage note that the Lord's words have different meanings for different kinds of people. Those who are willing to hear and spiritually sensitive will gain understanding. But those who are hard-hearted, who are unwilling and spiritually insensitive, will only hear a story. They won't heap up condemnation on themselves by rejecting the message Christ is giving in the parable. So Christ makes His point in this way as an act of mercy toward those who do not want to hear Him. They are represented, in the parable, as the seeds that fall "by the wayside" as the King James Version has it.

The following verses include the Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Parable of the Leaven (or Yeast). Biblical scholar Joachim Jeremias writes in his book "The Parables of Jesus" that

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

the words of these parables are often mistranslated. Jesus is not saying that the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, or like yeast that a woman mixes with flour. He is saying that it is the same way with the Kingdom that it is with a mustard seed or a morsel of yeast. Jeremias writes that the meaning of both parables is that "out of the most insignificant beginnings, invisible to [the] human eye, God creates His mighty Kingdom, which embraces all the peoples of the world."

Jeremias goes on to say that with these words about the mustard seed and yeast, Jesus is actually talking about His disciples, who will spread the Gospel and build up the Kingdom. He knows that doubtful people are asking whether this "wretched band, comprising so many disreputable characters" can actually "be the wedding-guests of God's redeemed community." Jesus' answer is that the Father will "cause My small band to swell into the mighty host of the people of God in the Messianic Age, embracing the Gentiles."

But to see this miracle, a person must be patient. The miracle only happens over time, just as a small, frail seed can grow into a lush plant only with time and with patient, unhurried tending by the sower.

To us, who read and listen to these words, Jesus says, "He who has ears, let him hear."

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Kathy Cahayla**, who celebrates her birthday July 10, and **Peggy Kovalycsik**, July 11. May God grant both 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.



July 5, 2015

5TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Rom. 10:1-10
Gospel: Mt. 8:28-9:1
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, JULY 11
6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JULY 12
9:00am - Divine Liturgy