

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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Joshua, an Old Testament Saint

September 1st is the first day of the Orthodox Church calendar. On this day we remember Joshua, the son of Nun, who succeeded Moses as Israel's leader and took the people into the Promised Land. The Book of Joshua describes his exploits as commander of the armies of Israel that marched into Canaan and followed God's instructions: "But in the cities...that the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, but you shall utterly destroy them, the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites...that they may not teach you their abominable practices which they have done in the service of their gods" (Deuteronomy 20:16-18a).

Some commentators see these verses as examples of the "bloodthirsty" Old Testament God who is so different from the merciful God of the New Testament that they can hardly be the same deity. Joshua, to these commentators, is a killer and no hero.

But archaeological research has shown that the Canaanite civilization was deeply decadent. Child sacrifice, sexual perversion and gruesome cruelty to slaves and conquered enemies were common. We know that the Israelites were susceptible to the influence of their neighbors. For example, they wanted a king, as we read in I Samuel 8: 5, because all the other nations had kings. There was a real danger of Canaanite practices and attitudes infecting and eventually consuming Israel, a danger that Canaan might "teach you their abominable practices."

The Canaanites had had plenty of warning about what Israel could do. We know this from the words of Rahab, a harlot who

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.

lived in the big Canaanite city of Jericho and who had sheltered the two spies Joshua sent to "spy out" the land before Israel attacked. (The fall of Jericho is famously described in Joshua 6:20). Rahab says, "For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed" (2: 10). She asks Joshua to let her family escape, and he honors his promise to do so. Hebrews 11:31 mentions Rahab as a woman of faith who "did not perish with those who were disobedient." Unlike the repentant Ninevites in the Book of Jonah, the disobedient Canaanites chose not to change their ways.

Joshua saw his duty to God in total obedience. He seems to acknowledge, speaking shortly before he dies, that it is not always an easy choice to obey God. But his own decision is unequivocal: "And if you be unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (24:15).

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Betty Czech**, who celebrates her birthday this Tuesday. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ As part of a "Vision for Our Future," Bishop Michael launched the **Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors (DDB)** program in January 2011. He called upon the faithful of the diocese to voluntarily support this program through their financial gifts. The donations to this fund were used to support mission parishes, help seminarians, and assist existing parishes in their need. The program continues to be a vital force in our diocese and mission parishes are being established, seminarians are receiving scholarships, and struggling parishes are being revitalized. Please consider joining in this good work. You can donate through the Diocesan website: www.nynjoca.org.

◆ **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. Have a wonderful and safe rest of the 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.



August 30, 2015

13TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
St. Alexander Nevsky

- 8:50am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Gal. 6:11-18
Gospel: Jn. 3:13-17
- Coffee Hour – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

6:00pm - Great Vespers, followed by
General Confession

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

9:00am - Divine Liturgy