

# 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

## Saint Thecla

**September 24 is the feast day of Saint Thecla, a contemporary of Saint Paul who became an evangelizer, as Paul was, after hearing his teachings.**

Thecla was born to a rich family in Iconium, a town in Asia Minor. She was expected to marry, and marry well. In fact, her mother had a young man picked out for her. He had an excellent position, and could offer Thecla a secure life. This was important in Thecla's day. An unmarried woman could find herself with no support and no money. Marriage assured a stable place in society, with children to carry on the family name.

But something happened to Thecla that made her turn away forever from her mother's dream. The apostle Paul, who had been in Antioch, traveled to Iconium and began teaching at a house near Thecla's. She sat in her open window for three days and nights, listening as Paul spoke about the blessings of giving everything to God. Thecla decided not to marry, and to devote her life to Jesus Christ.

Her fiancé Thamyris was furious, and complained to the local governor that Paul was a bad influence. Because Thamyris was so prominent, Paul was arrested and imprisoned.

Late at night, Thecla secretly went to the prison, bribed the guards, and stayed to hear Paul's teachings. When her family found her, they turned her and Paul over to the authorities. Paul was driven from the city, and Thecla was sentenced to death. Her mother was so angry at her daughter's disobedient "madness" that she wouldn't intervene.

Thecla was tortured, but God delivered her from death. She found her way to Antioch, and soon met Paul there. She helped

## 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.

him preach, and together they did good work for the Lord.

Once again, though, a powerful man – the city governor – tried to turn Thecla toward marriage, and when she hurt his pride by refusing, he denounced her to the authorities. She was arrested and sentenced to die in the arena. But the wild beasts wouldn't harm her, and when their attempt to drown her also failed, the officials were so frightened that they let her go. She retreated to a rocky desert cave in the mountains near the town of Ma'aloula, Syria. Through her prayer she converted many and gathered other women monastics around her. She counseled people and healed the sick, never asking for money.

Even here, though, she was pursued. Jealous pagan doctors sent young men to harm the saint, now an old woman. But God, hearing her prayers, opened up a fissure in the rock of the cave. Thecla rushed into the space, which immediately closed up again.

Today you can visit Thecla's cave, and see in it the still-running spring that provided water for her. The nuns who live in the "Mar Thecla" monastery there will tell you her story, and show you the fissure in the rock where this saint, "Equal to the Apostles", left the world and joined her Lord in the Kingdom.

## Heartfelt Greetings

Congratulation to **Chris and Sonya Finno** who celebrate their Wedding Anniversary tomorrow. Happy birthday to **Ed Fedush**, who celebrates his birthday tomorrow as well. May God grant all of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



## Announcements

◆ The **Annual Orthodox Education Day** at St. Vladimir's Seminary will be held on **Saturday, Oct. 3**. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ The Diocesan **Church Musician Appreciation Day** this year is on **Sunday, October 4**. We will honor our choir directors and singers with special prayers added during the Augmented Litany and with our special thanks to them.

◆ The **Annual Diocesan Assembly** will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, **November 10 & 11, 2015** at Saints Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ. As a special guest, His Eminence has invited His Beatitude, Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and Canada to the Assembly. For more information visit our Diocesan website [nynjoca.org](http://nynjoca.org).

## 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.



September 20, 2015

**16<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross**  
**Sunday After the Elevation**

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy  
Epistle: 2Cor. 6:1-10  
Gospel: Mt. 25:14-30
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service.

## Schedule of Services

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26**  
6:00pm - Great Vespers

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27**  
9:00am - Divine Liturgy