

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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A Bishop Unafraid of Beauty

On October 8 we remember Saint Pelagia, who lived in Antioch in the third century. As a young woman she was the most beautiful and desirable and best-known harlot in the city, a person who couldn't help attracting attention. With her fabulous jewels worn as part of everyday dress, her exotic scents that perfumed the air as she walked, and the cosmetics she artfully applied to enhance her beauty, Pelagia was an unforgettable figure.

Her story is closely intertwined with that of Bishop Nonnos, who was also well-known in Antioch for his gentle manner and his excellent sermons steeped in profound knowledge of the Scriptures and the Church's Tradition. Most of all he was renowned and respected for his ability to bring sinners to repentance by loving them and never humiliating them.

One day Bishop Nonnos and other bishops were meeting in a garden to discuss Church matters. As they talked together, Pelagia rode by, accompanied by servants and doting admirers. Several bishops turned their heads away to avoid the sight of the bold, laughing woman whose beauty only seemed to emphasize her immodesty. But one of them, Nonnos, did not turn away. He looked after her as she rode by, and it was clear to his companions that he was deep in thought.

Later, he told the other bishops what he was thinking. Pelagia was so diligent about adorning her outward self, he said, in order to please men. But how much time or energy did he and others who claimed to love God spend in adorning their souls, in order to please Him? Why, Nonnos asked, were they so easily distracted from what should have been their only purpose – to

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.

make themselves a fitting habitation for their Lord? That night he prayed with tears that God would not condemn him, even though his soul was so poorly adorned.

A few days later, Bishop Nonnos was delivering one of his wonderful sermons to a large gathering. Pelagia, out shopping, found herself in the crowd. She paid little attention to the bishop's words, but in spite of herself she was drawn to what he was saying about God's judgment and the beauty of each person's immortal soul. She began to long for the true, pure love of the divine Bridegroom. What she'd had with her lovers seemed empty and ugly.

Pelagia's desire for closeness to God grew, and she sent a letter to Nonnos requesting baptism. He hesitated, but seeing her sincerity he granted her wish. She gave him her numerous possessions to be used for the poor, and then quietly left for Jerusalem. There she lived in deep seclusion, disguising herself as a man to avoid attention, near the Mount of Olives. Nearby monks came to know about the pious "Father Pelagios" and when she died they buried her, after overcoming their surprise that she was a woman, with great respect. The beauty that Bishop Nonnos was not afraid to look at had become even more beautiful, having been turned toward the Lord

Heartfelt Greetings

Congratulation to our Choir Director Maryann Stagen and all choir members, recent and former on the occasion of the **Diocesan Church Musician Appreciation Day**. May the our Lord on this day of recognition of all of you, who give time and musical talent to sing in our church choir, leading us in prayer, singing to the Lord, blessing His name and proclaiming His salvation, will ever strengthen and inspire you and grant you a long life, peace, good health, salvation, visitation, good hastening in all things, and may He protect and preserve you for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Congratulation!

Our best wishes to **Diana Nehrebecki** who got engaged to **Carlos Alexander Cordova** and plan their Wedding for 2016. May the Lord bless both of you with good health and joy as you prepare for this very important event in your lives. Many Years! Mnogaya Leta!

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Nancy Filak** whose birthday is tomorrow, and **Daniel Kary**, whose birthday is this Saturday. May God grant both of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Announcements

◆ Please help us to fill **Thanksgiving Baskets** for those in need. Turkeys, stuffing, gravy, and cans of vegetables, fruits, soup, and cranberry sauce are needed. Or, you may prefer to give a monetary donation, and we will shop for you. Please bring in your donations by Sunday, November 15, to give us enough time to put the baskets together and prepare them for distribution to our neighbors in need. It is important that we all be a part of this ministry, and show that we are true followers of Jesus Christ and follow His teachings.



October 4, 2015

18TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Church Musician Appreciation Day

- 8:50am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 2Cor. 9:6-11
Gospel: Lk. 6:31-36
- Coffee Hour – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10
6:00pm - Great Vespers followed by General Confession

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11
9:00am - Divine Liturgy