

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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CHRIST IS BORN! Glorify Him!

St. Melania the Younger

One of the readings for December 31st is Hebrews 10:35-1:7, which tells us not to "throw away your confidence." We are reminded that we need endurance, and that "we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls." We read about Noah, who was faithful when he was warned by God "concerning events yet unseen."

On this day we remember Saint Melania, who is called "the Younger" to distinguish her from her grandmother, who is also a saint of the Church. The young Melania was raised in Rome as a Christian by her devout and wealthy parents, and did not face government persecution as a believer. Yet she would face other difficulties. She would have need of the "confidence" mentioned in Hebrews, and would need to carry with her the kind of faith that gives us "the assurance of things hoped or, the conviction of things not seen" (11:1).

Melania was strongly influenced by the example of her holy grandmother, who was widowed early and later established a monastery with one house for women and another for men. Melania wanted to dedicate her life to God, and was never interested in marriage. But her parents wanted heirs, and in reluctant obedience, Melania entered into an arranged marriage.

Even though she had not been enthusiastic about marrying, she and her husband Pinianus came to share a deep love. They also shared deep tragedy: the girl and boy born to them both died. For years afterward, Melania wept and grieved in isolation at home. It was a terrible test of her confidence and faith in God.

Finally she was able to turn her profound grief into service to others. Leaving Rome, she and Pinianus traveled to Egypt, Syria,

Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, and we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Please keep in you prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Genevieve Bobenko, Mary Fecisin, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorczyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

and Palestine, helping the poor and building churches and hospitals. Then they sailed to Africa to do the same. As always, she prayed constantly, fasted, and studied Scripture and patristic works. Pinianus had agreed that they would live as brother and sister, devoting themselves to God, and joined her in these spiritual endeavors.

After seven years in Carthage the couple went to Jerusalem. There Melania established a women's monastery on the Mount of Olives. Sorrow struck her again in 432, when Pinianus died. As once before, she retreated into grieving isolation, emerging after four years to establish a men's monastery, partly as a symbol of her love for him. She then went on to Constantinople. There her confidence and faith in God expressed themselves in her ability to convert people to the truth. Many who had accepted Nestorianism found their way back, through her gentle correction, to authentic Christianity. She also converted her pagan uncle.

But Melania never allowed confidence and certainty in her faith to make her self-important. She exhorted the nuns in her monastery to be humble, and she and her sisters were known for "offending none, and being helpers of the whole world."

Schedule of Services

(continued from previous page)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2

5:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Stephen Fabian**, who celebrates his birthday today, and **Helen Kurnewitz**, whose 97th Birthday is tomorrow. May God grant both of you good health and happiness for Many Years!



Announcements

◆ Father Igor, Matushka Anna Maxim and Sofia express their heartfelt Thank you to the Board of Trustees and to our parishioners for the wonderful gifts and cards during this Nativity Season. May the Lord's abundant blessings be also upon you, and upon all your families throughout this Nativity Season and the upcoming New Year!

◆ **House blessings** will start on the Feast of Theophany on January 6. The schedule was posted in the last issue of "The Enlightener". If you would like to make changes, or if you are not scheduled or will not be home when you are scheduled, please call Fr. Igor to arrange or rearrange it.

◆ **Envelopes for 2016** have arrived and are available in the candle room. Please pick up your set and continue supporting our parish – it does rely on your support! And may the Lord bless you hundredfold for your generosity!

◆ Our **parish wall calendars** are available in the narthex. Many thanks to the calendar sponsor – J.C.Fila Lexington Memorial Home.

December 27, 2015

30th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
3RD DAY OF THE FEAST OF THE
NATIVITY OF CHRIST

Sunday After the Nativity of Christ. Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James, the Brother of the Lord.

• 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Gal. 1:11-19

Gospel: Mt. 2:13-23

• **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31

5:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

FRIDAY, JAN. 1, 2016 – THE CIRCUMCISION
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy & Molieben for the beginning of the New Year.

(continued on the next page)