

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

St. Synclctica, Desert Mother & Abbess

We know that monastics practice poverty. They voluntarily give up possessing, owning, and striving to acquire. But on January 5th we remember a monastic saint who cautioned aspiring monastics against being too quick to embrace poverty.

Saint Synclctica (called "Amma" just as the desert fathers were called "Abba") was born to a prominent family in Alexandria in the fourth century, and was one of the women who went to the desert to live a life free from distractions and close to God. Though such women were few in number, they faithfully followed the example of Abba Anthony (Saint Anthony the Great) and others in fasting strictly, praying intensely, and inspiring those who came to them for counsel or to join them in asceticism. Many, like Saint Synclctica, received spiritual gifts of discernment and healing.

Synclctica was approached by great numbers of women who hoped to become monastics. Because she had the gift of discernment she perceived that some of them, though they were full of enthusiasm, were not ready to take on the rigorous discipline of poverty. They had been comfortable and not at all deprived in their lives. Synclctica knew that if they simply threw away their possessions without taking the "proper prerequisites" they would "be like one who squanders her goods without careful deliberation, only to repent of her rashness."

What were the "proper prerequisites" that Synclctica considered to be so important? They were things such as fasting, sleeping on the ground and other bodily hardships. These, she said, must come first. They would prepare a woman for the hard discipline of poverty, which should come last of all. She pointed

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 your prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

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

out that Our Lord, in talking to the rich young man (Mark 10:21), did not ask him to take on poverty first, but instead recounted the commandments. Only when He was sure that the young man had been seriously observing those did He say that the one thing lacking, the next thing to be done, was to become poor. It was Christ who said that poverty was to come last.

Saint Synclctica recognized that poverty is a strong defense against the devil and his temptations, because the devil's great weapon is to make us fear the loss of something we value. Those who have given up everything, who have no attachments to things, can't be threatened with the loss of anything. At the same time, she warned that greed is a terrible sickness, because once we want a little bit of something, our desire grows and grows, so that we always want more. Desire can consume us just as much as the fear of loss can.

Poverty and greed are not things that only monastics should consider, of course. The new year gives all of us a new chance to think about what we have and what we want, and to determine whether our priorities are in line with the teachings of Christ, so memorably reflected in the words of Saint Synclctica.

Schedule of Services

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 7 – Synaxis of St. John the Baptist

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9

5:00pm - Great Vespers followed by general Confession

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10

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

◆ **House blessings** will start on the Feast of Theophany on January 6. The schedule was posted in the last issue of "The Enlightener". Please note a typo: the correct date for Thursday is January 7. 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.

Our Deepest Sympathy

to family and friends of **Anatol Rozanovich**, who passed away on **Thursday, December 31, 2016**. Visitation will be held 10-11am on Wed. January 6 at the Bermingham Funeral Home, 216 S. Main St., Wharton, NJ. A Funeral service will be held 11:30 am at Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, 120 Dover-Chester Rd., Randolph, NJ 07869. Burial service will follow at East Ridgelawn Cemetery in Clifton. May the newly departed Anatol rest in peace in God's Heavenly Kingdom! Memory Eternal! Vechnaya Pamiat!



January 3, 2016

31st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

**Sunday Before the Theophany
Forefeast of the Theophany**

• 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistle: 2 Tim. 4:5-8

Gospel: Mk. 1:1-8

• **Panikhida** – in memory of:

newly departed **Anatol Rozanovich**;

Anna Mae Beckmann, on the 1st

Anniversary of her repose; & **Anna**

Cereques, offered by Patricia Galley

• **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a

fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5

5:00pm - Vigil & Blessing of Waters

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6 – THE THEOPHANY
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

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