

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

Being on the Side of God

On January 27 we read one of the New Testament's starkest descriptions of the tribulations that Christ and His followers will face in this world. The words, in Mark 8: 30-34, come directly from the Lord's lips.

In the verse just before these, Peter has acknowledged Jesus as the Christ. Then Jesus, referring to Himself as "Son of Man" to emphasize His humanity, describes the suffering He must undergo – He will be rejected and killed before rising from the dead after three days. He rebukes Peter, who speaks out against this unexpected idea of a Messiah who will suffer rather than conquer Israel's enemies. Jesus expresses the rebuke in the simplest terms, referring to something children do when playing together: choosing sides. He makes it clear that every person is either on God's side or the side of men, meaning the side of those who cannot accept a Savior who suffers and submits. He tells not just His disciples but "the multitude" that each of them will have to "deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

We often think of these words as applying to the early Christian martyrs, but on January 19 the Church remembers a 15th-century Byzantine saint who denied himself and carried his heavy cross for many years. Saint Mark of Ephesus was firmly on God's side.

In 1437 the faltering Byzantine Empire was threatened by the Muslim Turks, and the Emperor turned for help to the Roman Catholic West, which was more economically and politically stable. A council was convened in Florence, Italy. Many of the Greek Orthodox delegates, led by the Byzantine Emperor, were ready to acquiesce in whatever the West (represented by the Pope) asked, in exchange for aid in defending Byzantium.



January 24, 2016

34th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- 8:50am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Col. 3:4-11
Gospel: Lk. 18:35-43
- Coffee Hour – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

FRIDAY, JANUARY 29

5:00pm - Great Vespers

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30 - THREE HOLY HIERARCHS

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

5:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

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

The Pope, seeing his advantage, offered help on condition that the Orthodox accept all Roman Catholic teachings, and be governed by Rome. Because of their dire situation, the Orthodox delegates were ready to agree—except for Mark of Ephesus. He saw that the Orthodox faith would be severely compromised, and refused to sign the agreement despite intense pressure and harassment from both sides. The Emperor was so angry that he put Mark under house arrest, where the exhausted man became severely ill. But nothing would keep him from defending the Orthodox faith unchanged and in its fullness.

Later, the agreement that had been signed at the Council of Florence was repudiated, and the Orthodox leaders at that time refused to abide by it. Mark, finally released and allowed to go home, was cheered for his steadfastness, though he still had to fight to preserve the faith against those who wanted to compromise.

Saint Mark of Ephesus was not afraid of suffering for the sake of being on God's side. He once wrote, "If there had been no persecution, the martyrs would not have shone, nor would the confessors have received the crown of victory from Christ and by their exploits strengthened and gladdened the Orthodox Church."

Birthday Greetings

Happy 95th Birthday to **Mary Hadginske** who celebrates her Birthday this Tuesday. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years!



Announcements

- ◆ Save the date: Our **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on **Sunday, February 21** following the Divine Liturgy. Please plan to attend this meeting.
- ◆ Registration is still open for the **6th Annual Diocesan Altar Servers Retreat**, which will be at St. Basil's Academy, Garrison NY on February 12-14, 2016. More details at our Diocesan website: www.nynjoca.org
- ◆ **29th Annual Beefsteak Dinner** at Holy Assumption Church in Clifton is planned for Saturday, March 5, 2016. For reservations please call Barbara Polk @ 973-452-1233. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.
- ◆ If you would like to share some **information**, like announcements, Anniversaries/Birthdays/events etc. **in the weekly bulletin**, please call the Rectory or email it by Tuesday of the week that you would like to have it printed to fr.igorksn@gmail.com

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.