

# 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

## The Fiery Ordeal

On Thursday February 18 we read these words from I Peter 4:12-13: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when His glory is revealed."

Peter here reminds us that if we are to share life forever with Christ, we must expect that first we will be tested in this world that rejects Him. Peter goes on, "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you." In January we remember two Christians who lived centuries later than Peter, and who underwent their own "fiery ordeals" and tests of faith.

The first, Saint Agnes, was a Roman maiden born to a Christian family in the late third century, when the Christian-hating Diocletian reigned as emperor. Agnes refused to marry a pagan and give up her faith, and so at a very young age she was brutally tortured and finally died. Her story is similar to those of other female martyrs.

Maximus the Confessor, who lived in seventh-century Constantinople, had a brief career in public service, and then chose to enter a monastery. Political upheaval forced him to flee to Carthage, where he became embroiled in a controversy about the divine and human wills of Jesus Christ. He insisted that Christ had two wills, and not just His divine will, as some were asserting. Without a human will, Maximus said, Christ could not be truly human.

## 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.

In the year 658, Maximus' position endangered him. The Patriarch of Constantinople accepted the one-will teaching, and the Emperor had been persuaded to do the same. Maximus was exiled as a heretic. Four years later his tongue was cut out and his hand was cut off so that he could no longer speak or write his "false" teachings. He died a few years later.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council, convened in 680, declared that Christ being perfect God and perfect Man did have both a divine will and a human will. All charges against Maximus were posthumously dropped. He would become a saint of both the Eastern and Western Churches.

To be misunderstood, as Maximus was, is a painful human experience that many of us may share, though not at so great a price as the one he paid. Or we may find ourselves in a hostile environment, as Agnes did, though it may not take our life as it took hers.

We will have our own ordeals, and they'll seem fiery enough. It will be hard, when we are going through them, to believe that one day we will "shout for joy." Perhaps it was hard for Agnes and Maximus too, but now they stand ready to shout with us when the great day comes.

## Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Chris Finno**, who celebrates his Birthday today. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years!



## Announcements

◆ Our **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held next **Sunday, February 21** following the Divine Liturgy and coffee hour. A light lunch will be served. It is important that all parishioners attend, if possible, to help in the operation of our church.

◆ The **New Jersey District FOCA** will host a **Beefsteak Dinner** this Saturday, **February 20** at **6:30p.m.** at the Ss. Peter & Paul Cultural Center, 200 Third St, Passaic, NJ. For tickets (\$40 for adults, \$25 for juniors), e-mail or call: Daria at 973-460-0243 or [dgem45@gmail.com](mailto:dgem45@gmail.com) There will be raffles and a 50/50.

◆ The **New Jersey Deanery Appreciation Dinner** for the 2015 Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors of our Diocese will be held at the Holy Assumption Church in Clifton today, Sunday, February 14, at 5:00 p.m.

◆ **29<sup>th</sup> Annual Beefsteak Dinner** at Holy Assumption Church in Clifton is planned for **Saturday, March 5**. For reservations please call Barbara Polk @ 973-452-1233. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

## 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.



February 14, 2016

37<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
Sunday of Zacchaeus

- 8:50am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy  
Epistle: 1Tim. 4:9-15  
Gospel: Lk. 19:1-10
- Coffee Hour – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

## Schedule of Services

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20**  
5:00pm - Great Vespers

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21**  
9:00am - Divine Liturgy, followed by  
Annual Parish Meeting