

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

170 Lexington Avenue, Passaic, New Jersey, 07055
www.stjohnspassaic.org

REV. FR. IGOR KSENIUK, Rector

973-473-1928 (office)
646-387-5494 (cell)
fr.igorsn@gmail.com

Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Keep Hold of Good Instructions

On Wednesday of this week we remember the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. They are an appealing group because of their youthful energy and courage, and their unyielding faith.

The story is well-known to many of us. The forty were brave and disciplined soldiers in the Roman army, and were sometimes referred to as the "Thundering Legion." They also were Christians. When a persecution of Christians began, the young men staunchly refused to deny Christ, even when threatened with being stripped of their military status.

Such an act of defiance could only be bad for army morale. Their commander decided to make an example of them. On a cold winter night he had them bound and thrown into a lake. He also had built, in their sight, warm fire-lit baths, and told them they could escape to the warmth if they would pay homage to Rome's idols.

We read in the soldiers' story that throughout the terrible night they didn't curse their captors or blame God, or express self-pity. They sang hymns, recited prayers, and called out encouragement to one another.

What enabled these young men to sustain their faith in such extremity? One of the readings from the book of Proverbs (3:34-4:22) gives us some clues. We read there, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live; get wisdom, get insight. Do not forsake her (wisdom), and she will keep you. Keep hold of [good] instruction; do not let go."

In these words a father exhorts his son to "keep hold" of what he has been taught and not let go, and that is precisely what these young men did in their ordeal. We have the similar but much more recent story of a man consigned to hard labor in a

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 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.

Soviet prison camp with Father Arseny, the priest who comforted and saved from despair so many fellow prisoners. As he watched Father Arseny save another man's life, he writes, he unexpectedly remembered the long-forgotten prayers his mother had taught him, and he rediscovered his faith in that awful place.

The reading from Proverbs also contains these words: "She [wisdom] will honor you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a fair garland." This was exactly the experience of the forty soldiers. A light shone from heaven and wreaths appeared above their heads. Though one of them denied Christ for the warmth of the baths, a guard was overwhelmingly drawn to the heavenly sign, and ran to take his place and join the others in martyrdom.

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy, first Sunday of Great Lent, we also remember many who gave their lives for the faith. Perhaps, like the forty, they were strengthened by the Christian instruction they had received. If we are granted the privilege, as parents or teachers or friends, of instructing others, let's be sure that we have learned the truths of our faith. Then we can provide to others sound teachings they can "keep hold" of no matter how dark the times.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Amy LeBorgne**, who celebrates her birthday this Friday. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnogaya Leta!



Announcements

◆ **A note from the Rubrics book** regarding fasting this week: After this Sunday of Meatfare, no more meat is eaten until the Sunday of Pascha, but otherwise there is no fasting this week, so that eggs, cheese, butter, milk and fish are permitted each day, including Wednesday and Friday.

◆ **Next Sunday, March 13** is the Cheesefare Sunday. It is the last day when we are allowed to have dairy products and eggs before Pascha. After the Divine Liturgy we will have **Maslenitsa** in our church hall, followed by the Forgiveness Vespers. Please plan to attend. Delicious blintzes and other meet-free foods are in the menu. Let us have a little celebration before we start Great Lent.

◆ **Daylight Saving Time** this year starts this coming Sunday, March 13. Please do not forget to **turn your clocks forward** one hour. Please also keep in mind that starting Saturday, March 19, we will return back to our normal Vespers schedule so that **ALL Vespers services will begin at 6:00pm.**

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.



March 6, 2016

SUNDAY OF MEATFARE

Sunday of the Last Judgment

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Cor. 8:8-9:2
Gospel: Mt. 25:31-46
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, MARCH 12

5:00pm - Great Vespers & general Confession

Daylight Savings Time begins

SUNDAY, MARCH 13 - CHEESEFARE SUNDAY

9:00am - Divine Liturgy followed by Maslenitsa & Forgiveness Vespers