

# 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

## A Desert Meeting

**Saint Mary of Egypt immediately recognized the holiness of a man she'd never seen before--the monk Zossimas--when he encountered her in the desert. She had come a long, long way to achieve that recognition of holiness in a man.**

Mary ran away from her miserable home at age twelve, and took to the streets. She had been abused, neglected, and deprived of the love that would have helped her see her own worth.

Mary was strongly but darkly attracted to men. Unable to see the worth in others any more than in herself, she took perverse delight in enticing and then mocking men. For seventeen years she sold her body to any man who interested her. As Dr. Kyriaki FitzGerald has written, Mary convinced herself that she was free and living on her own terms. Yet she felt contempt and disgust for men, even as she avidly sought their embraces.

Curiosity, and possible new customers, impelled Mary to join the crowd boarding a ship for Jerusalem. Once there, she continued to follow the crowd to the cathedral. It was the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Mary tried to enter the church, but at the threshold found herself thrust back as if by powerful arms. Shocked and distressed, she suddenly confronted the emptiness of her life. But almost at the same moment, she felt the loving gaze of the Theotokos in the icon. She begged the Mother of God to help her, to show her what her life should be. Approaching the threshold again, she felt herself drawn in rather than pushed out. Like other pilgrims, but now with her whole heart rather than idle curiosity, she worshipped at the foot of the



April 17, 2016

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

St. Mary of Egypt

- **8:55am** – Churching of newly baptized Brielle Hope Anderson
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy of St. Basil  
Epistle: Heb. 9:11-14; Gal. 3:23-29  
Gospel: Mk. 10:32-45; Lk. 7:36-50
- **Panikhida** – in memory of **John Galley** offered by his sister Patricia Galley.
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

## Schedule of Services

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20**

6:00pm - Presanctified Liturgy

**SATURDAY, APRIL 23 - LAZARUS SATURDAY**

**Holy Greatmartyr George**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

6:00pm - Great Vespers & Blessing of palms and willows.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 5 - PALM SUNDAY**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy & Blessing of palms and willows.

## 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, Edward Fedush, 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.

cross. And in the midst of the throng, the Theotokos spoke words directed only to her: "Cross the Jordan, and you will find peace."

By sunset of that day, Mary had reached the Church of St. John by the Jordan, where she was baptized and received Holy Communion. The next day she crossed the Jordan, and then began her forty-seven solitary years of struggle and intense prayer.

When the monk Zossimas came upon her in the desert, Mary knew who he was at once. A beautiful scene of mutual humility and respect followed. Zossimas prostrated himself and asked for her blessing; she in turn bowed down to him and asked for his. This went on until Mary said that he, as a priest, should bless her. He answered that it is not by one's rank but by the gifts of the Holy Spirit that grace is recognized. As recipient of those gifts, the monk said, Mary should bless him. So she finally did so.

This woman who had once seen men only as objects of her lust was now able to recognize the holiness of a man she was seeing for the first time. By God's grace, Saint Mary of Egypt had, in the words chosen for this day, purified her conscience "from dead works to worship the living God" (Hebrews 9:14b).

## Congratulation

to **Brielle Hope Anderson**, who yesterday received Holy Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation and today her first Communion. May God bless and preserve you, your parents, grandparents, and godparents for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



## Announcements

◆ Today, after the Divine Liturgy, all **choir members** are asked to stay for a brief meeting.

◆ **Deanery Mission Vespers** tonight will be at the Holy Trinity Church, 120 Dover-Chester Rd, Randolph, NJ at 4PM. **Wed. May 4, Bright Wednesday, 7:00pm** - Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus, NJ. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ Please note: the **Board of Trustees' Meeting** that was scheduled for April 19 is postponed to **May 17**.

◆ On **Tuesday, April 19 at 7:00pm** the **Sacrament of Holy Unction** will be served at the Holy Transfiguration Church in Pearl River, NY. Invite you family and friends. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ This **Wednesday, April 20** the last Presanctified Liturgy of this Lent will be served, followed by a potluck dinner. Please feel free to bring a dish to share if you wish.

◆ The **Gifts of Love** collection this Palm Sunday will raise funds to print Yupik language Orthodox Coloring Books for the children of Alaska (please see the insert). Please help us to help Bishop David (Mahaffey) of Alaska in this outreach program. Your donation will be greatly appreciated.

◆ **2016 Palm Sunday Vespers** will be hosted by F.O.C.A. chapter #30 at Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, 200 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Passaic, NJ next Sunday, April 24. The service begins at 4:00pm.