

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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The Icon of the Three Hands

On Tuesday, June 28 we remember this famous icon painted by Saint John of Damascus in thanks to the Theotokos for a miraculous healing.

Saint John lived in a time when it was dangerous to be an outspoken, dedicated lover of icons, as he was. Born in 674 to devout Christians, John always lived under Moslem rule. His father held a high position as the financial officer for the governing caliph. In fact, John would succeed his father in that post. He was also well-versed in theology, astronomy, mathematics and musical composition. His father had bought the freedom of a captive – a very learned monk from Sicily – taken in a raid on the coast of Italy. John's father gave him the position of tutor to John, who made rapid progress as a student.

In 726, perhaps influenced by Moslem thinking, the Byzantine Emperor Leo III "the Isaurian", issued an edict prohibiting the veneration of icons. He ignored the protests of the Patriarch of Constantinople, a slight which showed how influential iconoclasm had become in the Byzantine court.

John, in response, wrote the first of three treatises "against those decrying the Holy Images." When the emperor followed his first edict with another forbidding not only veneration but even the public display of icons, John wrote his second treatise, and then a third.

What made John's writing especially effective was his ability to put his thoughts in simple language. Though his thinking was brilliant, he managed to make it understandable to anyone willing to pay close attention. His writings rallied many people to the cause of preserving icon veneration, which the nervous iconoclast emperor rightly perceived as a threat.



June 26, 2016

1st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
All Saints

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy & Blessing of the newly elected Board of Trustees
Epistle: Heb. 11:33-12:2
Gospel: Mt. 10:32-33, 37-38; 19:27-30
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

TUESDAY, JUNE 28

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29 - Ss. PETER & PAUL

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, JULY 2

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JULY 3

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, Andrew Fabian, Edward Fedush, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorczyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

Emperor Leo acted quickly and deviously. He accused John to the caliph, calling his writings "treasonous." The caliph ignored John's protests of innocence, and ordered that his right hand – his writing hand – be cut off.

In agony, John begged to be given his cut-off hand. Holding it close to his wrist, he prostrated himself before the icon of the Mother of God and implored her to heal him. After hours of intense prayer he fell asleep, and dreamed that the Theotokos promised to heal him, and urged him to work hard with his restored hand. When he awoke his hand was healed, with only a red scar at the wrist.

The "Icon of the Three Hands" was John's expression of thanks to the Theotokos. To the usual depiction of Christ and His Mother, John added a third hand made of silver.

John also honored the Mother of God's directive to work hard. He retreated to a monastery near Jerusalem, and continued to write commentaries, theological treatises and hymns. One of the best-known of his hymns is "All of Creation Rejoices in You, O Full of Grace." Each time we sing it, during the Liturgy of Saint Basil, we join John of Damascus in his grateful dedication to the Mother of Our Lord.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Mary Ann Dolak**, who celebrated her birthday last Wednesday, and **Mary Fechisin**, this coming Saturday. May God grant both of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ **Congratulation** to all members of the Board of Trustees of our parish on your re-election! May God grant you good health and wisdom throughout the coming year for the building up of our parish, and unto the glory of Almighty God. The **Appreciation Dinner** for the Board of Trustees will be held today at **La Riviera Trattoria**, 421 Piaget Avenue in Clifton.

◆ The **Apostles'** (Ss. Peter and Paul) **Fast** begins tomorrow, Monday, June 27.

◆ **Enjoy your vacation** but remember to visit the Orthodox Church at your destination. To search for a local parish go to www.orthodoxyinamerica.org and enter your location in the search panel. If you plan to receive Holy Communion, be sure that the priest knows who you are before the Divine Liturgy. It is always good form to approach the Chalice knowing that the priest is informed about you. Have a wonderful and safe summer!

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.