

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

Exalting the Cross

The readings for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on Wednesday of this week give us many insights into the meaning of the cross.

The "story" of the Feast concerns the Empress Helen, mother of Constantine. For 200 years, pagan emperors had tried to wipe out all evidence of the places where Jesus Christ died and was resurrected. The Emperor Hadrian had been particularly determined, building a pagan temple on Golgotha.

After seeing the sign of the cross in the sky, Emperor Constantine sent his mother on a quest to find the true cross, which she did despite advanced age. The year was 326. Nine years later, by Constantine's order, the Church of the Resurrection was built on the site of Golgotha and the Lord's tomb.

The day's epistle is I Corinthians 1:18-24. Saint Paul acknowledges that the story of a God who becomes man, only to die on a cross, is "folly" to some. That is still true for some today. But it's equally true that for others, then as now, it is the opposite of folly. For believers, this story and this cross are the power of God. Paul cannot give a cogent explanation or irrefutable proof of this, and doesn't try. He only says that the "foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

The Gospel readings are from the 19th chapter of John's Gospel. Verse 7 gives reason why Jesus was put to death – He scandalized the Jewish leaders by claiming to be the Son of God, breaking Jewish law. The cry rings out, "Crucify him!"

Pilate becomes fearful, hearing this, and asks Jesus, "Where are you from?" Who is this man with such an ability to upset

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.

people, and who is unafraid to claim divine sonship? Pilate attempts to assert his own power, and reminds the prisoner that he can either free or crucify Him.

Jesus' answer shows His absolute intention to do His Father's will: "You would have no power unless it had been given you from above." By saying this He demonstrates His submission to the power, put by God into men's hands, that will lead Him to the cross. But he also refuses to absolve human beings of responsibility. He accuses those who have handed Him over of "a greater sin." They have perverted their authority, ordained by God, in condemning a righteous man.

In the last painful moments of His earthly life, Jesus commends His mother to the care of the apostle John. This is a pure act of love in the midst of agony, necessitated by the death on the cross because she will be deprived of His care.

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross leads us to reflect on many aspects of the cross. Most of all it calls us to gratitude for the gifts bestowed on us by Christ's willingness to accept the cross and to break the bonds of death by its power.



Memory Eternal

to all innocent victims of September 11 terrorist attack and to all who lost their lives from terrorism in our country and around the world. May the Lord rest their souls in His Heavenly Kingdom! Vechnaya Pamyat!

Announcements

◆ The next **Board of Trustees' Meeting** is scheduled for Tuesday, September 20, 2016. All members please plan to attend.

◆ Save the date: on **Saturday, October 15 & Sunday, October 16, 2016**, His Eminence Archbishop Michael will be visiting our parish with Archpastoral visitation. Great Vespers on Saturday and Divine Liturgy on Sunday will be served at their usual times - 6:00pm and 9:00am respectively.

◆ Save the date: on **Friday, Sept. 23, and Saturday, Sept. 24 at 7:00pm** at the Holy Assumption Church in Clifton the youth of our Diocese will perform "Godspell", a musical based on the Gospel of Matthew. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ Save the date: **Orthodox Education Day** at St. Vladimir's Seminary this year is **October 1**. The theme is "Celebrating Mary," centering on the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. The day begins with the Divine Liturgy at 8:00am.

◆ Save the date: on **Sunday, October 2**, we are going to Hunterdon Hills Playhouse to see "Squabbles," a comedy about a young couple with live-in in-laws. Tickets are still available and cost \$61.50 per person (choose from 7 entrees). For more information and tickets, see Kathy Petrow, or call her at 201-796-6958. Dinner starts at 2:00pm.

◆ The **Food Pantry** is always in need of food items. Please keep those less fortunate in mind and help us to feed those in need. A basket is in the vestibule of the church for your convenience. May God bless you abundantly for your generosity.



September 11, 2016

12th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Sunday Before the Elevation of the Cross. Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistles: Gal. 6:11-18; 1Cor. 15:1-11
Gospels: Jn. 3:13-17; Mt. 19:16-26
- **Panikhida** - in memory of all victims of September 11 terrorist attack.
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 - ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

6:00pm - Great Vespers