

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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ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A Bishop Unafraid of Beauty

On October 8 we remember Saint Pelagia, who lived in Antioch in the third century. As a young woman she was the most beautiful and desirable and best-known harlot in the city, a person who couldn't help attracting attention. With her fabulous jewels worn as part of everyday dress, her exotic scents that perfumed the air as she walked, and the cosmetics she artfully applied to enhance her beauty, Pelagia was an unforgettable figure.

Her story is closely intertwined with that of Bishop Nonnos, who was also well-known in Antioch for his gentle manner and his excellent sermons steeped in profound knowledge of the Scriptures and the Church's Tradition. Most of all he was renowned and respected for his ability to bring sinners to repentance by loving them and never humiliating them.

One day Bishop Nonnos and other bishops were meeting in a garden to discuss Church matters. As they talked together, Pelagia rode by, accompanied by servants and doting admirers. Several bishops turned their heads away to avoid the sight of the bold, laughing woman whose beauty only seemed to emphasize her immodesty. But one of them, Nonnos, did not turn away. He looked after her as she rode by, and it was clear to his companions that he was deep in thought.

Later, he told the other bishops what he was thinking. Pelagia was so diligent about adorning her outward self, he said, in order to please men. But how much time or energy did he and others who claimed to love God spend in adorning their souls, in order to please Him? Why, Nonnos asked, were they so easily distracted from what should have been their only purpose – to make themselves a fitting habitation for their Lord? That night he

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 Lazorzcyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

prayed with tears that God would not condemn him, even though his soul was so poorly adorned.

A few days later, Bishop Nonnos was delivering one of his wonderful sermons to a large gathering. Pelagia, out shopping, found herself in the crowd. She paid little attention to the bishop's words, but in spite of herself she was drawn to what he was saying about God's judgment and the beauty of each person's immortal soul. She began to long for the true, pure love of the divine Bridegroom. What she'd had with her lovers seemed empty and ugly.

Pelagia's desire for closeness to God grew, and she sent a letter to Nonnos requesting baptism. He hesitated, but seeing her sincerity he granted her wish. She gave him her numerous possessions to be used for the poor, and then quietly left for Jerusalem. There she lived in deep seclusion, disguising herself as a man to avoid attention, near the Mount of Olives. Nearby monks came to know about the pious "Father Pelagios" and when she died they buried her, after overcoming their surprise that she was a woman, with great respect. The beauty that Bishop Nonnos was not afraid to look at had become even more beautiful, having been turned toward the Lord.



Announcements

◆ 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.

◆ **Church Musician Appreciation Sunday** will be celebrated on Sunday October 30, 2016. Additional prayers will be added during the Divine Liturgy for all choir members of our wonderful choir. We will also pray for the deceased choir members of our parish who used to glorify God with their beautiful voices. The Choir Appreciation Dinner will be held at 2:00pm at **Buco Ristorante** in Clifton. For more information please see Maryann Stagen.

◆ Holy Apostles Church in Saddle Brook, NJ is hosting the **Konevets Quartet** for a concert on October 4th at 7:00PM. A Donation of \$10 will be collected at the door to help the quartet raise funds for the Konevets Monastery in Russia. The concert will include both folk songs and sacred music. There will be an intermission and refreshments in the parish hall afterwards. The event is open to the public and is an excellent opportunity to share Orthodox culture and faith with family and friends.

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.



October 2, 2016

15th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 2 Cor. 4:6-15
Gospel: Lk. 6:31-36
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

6:00pm - Great Vespers followed by general confession

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

9:00am - Divine Liturgy