

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 (Phone/Fax)
646-387-5494 (cell)
fr.igorksn@gmail.com

Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Honoring or Abusing the Promise of God

During the week of February 5th we read New Testament passages that describe contrasting groups of people: those who honor God's promise of salvation, and those who abuse it for their own purposes.

Mark 13:1 warns believers to "take heed to yourselves; for they will deliver you up to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them."

But when they stand before hostile powers, believers should not be anxious beforehand about what to say. Instead they should "say whatever is given to you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit." Those who do bear testimony, and preach the true Gospel, will be "hated by all for My name's sake." Yet even then there is no reason to turn away from Christ, because God's promise is that "he who endures to the end will be saved." Honoring that promise will lead to the Kingdom, even though the road is rough.

II Peter 2 and 3 describe those who abuse rather than honor God's promise. In the previous chapter, Peter has reiterated the assurance that the Holy Spirit inspires those who preach the Gospel in the right way: "...no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." But he goes on to warn that just as false prophets put forth their destructive teachings in earlier days, "there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their licentiousness, and because of them the way of truth will be reviled."



February 5, 2017

33rd Sunday After Pentecost

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

- 8:45am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 2Tim. 3:10-15
Gospel: Lk. 18:10-14
- Panikhida - in memory of **Deborah Ann Kovalycsik**, offered by Eva Stashitsky
- Coffee Hour – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

6:00pm - Great Vespers followed by general confession

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

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

Peter says that these false teachers have "hearts trained in greed." They are exploiters of others who "despise authority." They are scoffers who cynically ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" So rather than honor the promise, they abuse it by their ridicule, encouraging others to doubt it. They "entice unsteady souls" to revere them instead of Christ.

What motivates these scoffers? Peter answers when he writes about their greedy hearts and their attitude toward authority. Christians must place God at the center of their lives. They can't be greedy for notoriety, trying to gather personal followers. They can't despise authority, because God asks His people to submit freely to His loving authority. For people greedy for acclaim and who despise authority, submission to God is impossible. It's equally impossible for them to believe God's promise, and honor it.

Peter warns us against these people who he says are like "waterless springs." He acknowledges that some things are hard to understand, including Paul's teaching. But knowing this, and knowing that some people will twist the teachings, we can leave their wrong ideas aside and concentrate on growing in the "grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Jeffrey Rahnefeld**, who celebrates his birthday this Wednesday; **Christopher Kary**, this Friday; and **Alissa Pecoraro**, this Saturday. May God grant all of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaya Lita!



Announcements

◆ **Note from Rubrics:** Throughout the following week there is a general dispensation from fasting, so there is NO FASTING this Wednesday and Friday.

◆ Next **Sunday, February 12**, the Passaic "O" Club will be hosting a "**Pot Luck**" Lunch for all our parishioners and their families at approximately 11:30am following coffee hour. Cost is \$5 for adults and free for children. During the lunch, a video presentation of church life at St. John's will be shown. For more information contact any "O" Club member.

◆ Our **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on **Sunday, February 19** following the Divine Liturgy and coffee hour. It is important that all parishioners attend, if possible, to help in the operation of our church.

◆ Save the date: the **New Jersey Deanery Appreciation Dinner** for the 2016 Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors of our Diocese will be held at the Holy Resurrection Church, 285 French Hill Road, Wayne, NJ 07470 on Sunday, February 19, at 5:00PM.

◆ **Winter weather alert:** in case of necessity to cancel or delay any particular service at the church due to weather conditions, the information about cancellation will be posted on the parish website as well as on Facebook page at least 1 hour before the scheduled time. If the weather is bad and you are not sure if the service will be served, please call rectory to verify.