

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

Where Forgiveness May Be Needed Most

During the week that includes Forgiveness Sunday and the beginning of Great Lent, we remember a saint who confronted power in a most unusual way. He is Nicholas, the Fool for Christ, whose memory is celebrated on February 28th.

Nicholas lived in the town of Pskov in the 16th century, during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. This tsar, who began his reign as a reformer determined to improve Russia, had become an unbalanced, murderous tyrant. He would order mass killings, and then would seclude himself in a monastery and pray intensely.

The best-known story about the blessed Nicholas is set in a time when the feared Tsar Ivan visited Pskov. The inhabitants were terrified, and though they presented the customary welcome of bread and salt, they were not eager to encounter their ruler themselves.

But Nicholas, already known as a fool for Christ, was not afraid. He came dancing into the tsar's presence riding a stick like a toy horse and chanting, "Little Ivan, little Ivan, eat the bread and salt! Eat no more of the blood of your people!" He ran away and hid before the tsar's soldiers could grab him, but his words had made an impression on the tsar, who made an effort to find him and then visited him in his shabby hut.

Nicholas made special preparations for this visit, which the whole town was talking about. It was the first week of Great Lent, but he managed to find a piece of raw meat. When Tsar Ivan entered his hut, he bowed and offered the meat and said, "Eat, little Ivan!"

The tsar replied with indignation, "I am a Christian and I do not

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.

eat meat during the Great Fast." His statement gave Nicholas the chance he had been waiting for. Nicholas said, "You do much worse than that; you consume the flesh and blood of your people. You not only forget the fast but God too." Once again, Nicholas' words had a deep effect on the tsar, who abandoned his plans to devastate the town.

Nicholas had diverted the ruler from his destructive plans. But, like all Holy Fools, his primary goal was others' salvation. His "odd" behavior was meant to give Ivan a strong message. He risked the tsar's unpredictable violence, but took that chance because he cared for Ivan's soul, and knew that this powerful but deeply scarred man needed forgiveness more than most. We can imagine that he prayed with all his spiritual energy that God would grant that forgiveness.

On this day we read from Proverbs 1:20-33: "Wisdom cries aloud in the street; in the markets she raises her voice, 'Give heed to my reproof.'"

Nicholas "cried aloud" very publicly, and called on Ivan to "heed his reproof." As we are called to forgive each other on this Sunday, we have Nicholas' example of personal risk for another person's salvation. He took that risk because of his certainty that even the greatest sinners can find forgiveness in God.

Schedule of Services

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27

6:00pm - Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew - part 1

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

6:00pm - Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew - part 2
His Eminence, Archbishop Michael will preside.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

6:00pm - Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew - part 3

THURSDAY, MARCH 2

6:00pm - Great Compline & Canon of St. Andrew - part 4

SATURDAY, MARCH 4 - ST THEODORE TYRO (THE RECRUIT)

9:00am - Divine Liturgy & Blessing of Kolyvo

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MARCH 5 - SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

9:00am - Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

4:00pm - Mission Vespers at St. Nicholas Antiochian

Orthodox Cathedral, 355 State Street, Brooklyn, NY.

Birthday Greetings

Our best wishes to **Evgenia Kozlenko**, who celebrates her Birthday today, **Rose Marie Petrow**, this Thursday, and **Sonya Finno**, this Friday. May God grant all of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Многая Лета!

Announcements

◆ Please note: **Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers** on March 5, 2017 will be celebrated at St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral, 355 State St, Brooklyn, NY at 4 PM. Concelebrating will be: His Beatitude TIKHON, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH of Antiochian Archdiocese, His Eminence Archbishop Michael of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey. Everyone is invited for this Pan-Orthodox celebration of our Faith. Alternatively, for those who cannot make it to Brooklyn, a Deanery Mission Vespers will be served at Ss. Peter & Paul Church in South River, NJ at 5 PM.



February 26, 2017

SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE

**The Expulsion of Adam from Paradise.
Forgiveness Sunday.**

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Rom. 13:11-14:4
Gospel: Mt. 6:14-21
- **Maslenitsa** – everyone is invited to celebrate the beginning of our Lenten journey. During Maslenitsa, a video lecture with a title "**Lent: Our Personal Journey**" by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware will be shown.
- **Forgiveness Vespers** with the Rite of Forgiveness. The service will start after Maslenitsa.

BEGINNING OF LENT – STRICT FAST