

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

On Not Second-Guessing God

The Epistle reading for June 23, which is Romans 9:6-19, contains some uncompromising words of Saint Paul.

Paul writes that it is God's prerogative to treat people as He wishes to, even when that treatment seems unfair to us human beings. He cites God's words to Moses: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and compassion on whom I will have compassion." Paul comments that "it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy."

Then Paul acknowledges the injustice that some people might see in this. He writes, "You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who can resist His will?' " In other words, why does God judge us if our actions, good or bad, have no effect on our salvation anyway?

Paul's answer in the next verses (read on June 26) is unequivocal: "But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me thus?' " In the chapters that follow, Paul will make clear his certainty that everything God does, including things so hard for us to understand, are part of His plan to bring every willing person to salvation. But for now it is not our place to question or second-guess what He does.

On June 23rd we also remember a sixteenth-century saint, Artemius, who is referred to as a "righteous child wonderworker" and who lived in the Russian village of Verkola. The story of his life is another reminder that we shouldn't second-guess God.

Even as a small boy, Artemius had been kind, contemplative and quietly cheerful, so that many people called him a child of God. But tragedy struck when he was just twelve. He was

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, Michael Bzik, Mary Fehisin, Andrew Fabian, Mary Hadginske, Barbara Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

helping his father in the open fields when a thunderstorm came up so quickly that the two had no time to run for shelter. A bolt of lightning struck Artemius dead.

Instead of remembering Artemius' godly qualities as signs of God's love, the villagers adhered to the old superstition that his manner of death, at so young an age, was a sign of God's displeasure. They denied him a proper funeral and burial, and his body was left in the forest, covered only by tree branches.

But many years later, people noticed a light shining over the place where he was lying, and when his body was uncovered it was just as it had always been – there was no corruption or ruin. Realizing that God had shown His young child to be a saint, the villagers took his body to church, and his relics were a source of healing for many. Later, a monastery was built with Saint Artemius as its patron.

Though the Bolsheviks hacked the young saint's relics to pieces in 1918 and threw them into a well, the power of his example stays strong. We needn't second-guess God about our own destinies, or about those whom He has chosen as His saints.

Birthday Greetings

Happy 4th birthday to **Xenia Kary**, and happy birthday to **Fred Beckmann**, both celebrating tomorrow, and to **Mary Ann Dolak**, whose birthday is this Thursday. May God grant all of you and all those celebrating a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Announcements

◆ **Father's Day Greetings** to all fathers, grand-fathers, great grandfathers, godfathers and uncles of our Parish. Let us honor our fathers by praying for them and showing our love and respect. May God bless all fathers with good health, joy, peace for Many Years! Let us also not forget to pray for our departed fathers who have entered Eternal Life. May their Memory be Eternal!

◆ We are in the **Apostles' Fast**, which ends on the Feast of Holy Apostles Peter and Paul on June 29.

◆ **Next Sunday, June 25**, the **Parish Council Conference** will take place at Ss. Peter & Paul Church, 76 Whitehead Avenue, South River, NJ from **2pm - 6pm**. Judge Ray Lanier will be the presenter. He will guide all through the changes, emphasize the reasons for and the importance of the Diocesan By-Laws, and will be available to answer all related questions on this topic. All Board of Trustees' members, please plan to attend this conference. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

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.



June 18, 2017

2nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
All Saints of America

• 8:45am – Hours

• 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistles: Rom. 2:10-16

Heb. 11:33-12:2 (Saints)

Gospels: Mt. 4:18-23

Mt. 4:25-5:12 (Saints)

• **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

FRIDAY, JUNE 23

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

SATURDAY, JUNE 24

NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JUNE 25

9:00am - Divine Liturgy