

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

Conversations With God

On June 27 we remember a saint who was given the precious and rare privilege of traveling, hearing and speaking with Jesus Christ as He lived on earth. She is Joanna, one of the Myrrh-Bearing Women who witnessed the empty tomb on Pascha morning. Joanna, as a contemporary and follower of the Messiah, truly had "conversations with God."

For Joanna, following Jesus was a risk. She was the wife of Chuza, steward to King Herod who was one of the Jesus' powerful enemies. She displayed courage in staying with the Lord, and her doing so shows us that those "conversations" with Him were filled with a truth she could not abandon or ignore, no matter how great the risk.

A fairly recent (1996) book called "Conversations with God" is said by its author, Neale Donald Walsch, to be the record of his own dialogue with God, in which his pen began to move on its own, and he found himself not so much writing as taking dictation.

Yet early in the book, Walsch "quotes" God as saying that words are the least effective communicator, open to misinterpretation, unreliable as a purveyor of Truth. If that's the case, why should we take this book, which is a long collection of words, as a reliable source of God's message to us? Why would God choose to communicate with Walsch in this least effective of media?

But "Conversations with God" has even deeper flaws than this. When Walsch asks God to reveal Himself (though Walsch ascribes no gender to God) the answer he gets is that God has "no form or shape you understand." This flatly contradicts the



June 25, 2017

3rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- 8:45am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Rom. 5:1-10
Gospel: Mt. 6:22-33
- Coffee Hour – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

THURSDAY, JUNE 29

HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, JULY 1

11:00am - Baptism of

Grayson Edward Petrow

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JULY 2

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

bedrock Christian teaching that God became Man in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. In fact, Walsch makes his disdain for the Incarnate Lord very clear: "So who said Jesus was perfect?" God also assures Walsch that the two of them share the same essence, and possess the same qualities, including the ability to "create physical reality out of thin air." So much for the unique divinity of the Son who co-created us and came to save us.

Truth with a capital "T" comes up often in Walsch's writing, so we might expect God to offer a clear definition of it. But here's what we get: "My Truth is in the whisper of the wind, the babble of the brook, the crack of the thunder, the tap of the rain. My Truth – and your surest help in time of need – is as awesome as the night sky, and as simply, incontrovertibly, trustful as a baby's gurgle." Does this mean that Truth is "trustful" or, in other words, trusting? The statement makes no sense, especially when Truth is compared to a baby's gurgle.

A world in which this sort of book can become widely popular needs the Truth that Saint Joanna found and followed. We can ask her to guide seekers to the One who provides, and actually is, that Truth – the only One who merits a capital "T."

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **George Hook**, who celebrates his birthday is this Tuesday. May God grant you and all those celebrating a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

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

◆ The **Parish Council Conference** will take place this afternoon, from 2pm - 6pm at Ss. Peter & Paul Church, 76 Whitehead Avenue, South River, NJ. 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.

◆ 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.

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.