

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
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ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Jealousy That Kills

July 3 is the day the Church remembers a very youthful martyr: a boy named Hyacinthus or Hyacinth, who lived in Caesarea in Cappadocia in the second century.

Raised in a Christian family, Hyacinth had to face a terrible dilemma early in life. He was bright and articulate, and had a friendly, engaging manner. These qualities brought him to the attention of the emperor Trajan, who made him an assistant to the chamberlain in the royal court.

The dilemma, of course, was Hyacinth's faith. The emperor and his other servants were pagans, and Trajan was among those Roman rulers who hated and feared Christians. When Hyacinth stood aside and did not take part in ceremonies of sacrifice to the pagan idols, other court members were quick to notice. They were already jealous that a high position had been given to such a young person, and now they saw their chance to curry favor with the emperor.

They denounced Hyacinth, and had him brought to trial. When he refused to sacrifice to the idols and openly stated his willingness to be sacrificed himself for Christ, the infuriated emperor had him thrown into prison. Trajan also ordered that the only nourishment Hyacinth should be given was food that had been sacrificed to idols. The emperor assumed, of course, that the boy would give in to his hunger when it became too hard to bear, and would eat the food forbidden to Christians.

But Hyacinth did not, and would not, touch the food he was given. He died after a number of days, not yet having quite reached his teenage years. It happened in the year 108.

On this same day we read Romans 14: 9-18. In the first verses

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

of this passage, Saint Paul talks about the danger of passing judgment on other people. But after asking why anyone would judge a brother, he also writes: "Or you, why do you despise your brother?" The "despising" that Paul writes about can be a form of jealousy, an attitude toward someone who is different from us and who might, we fear, have something we do not. This was the jealous fear that motivated Joseph's brothers, in Genesis, to sell him into slavery and what they thought would be his death. And it led Trajan's courtiers to bring about Hyacinth's martyrdom, though they hoped it would cause him to betray his principles when hunger became extreme.

Paul is referring in these verses to those who scrupulously keep religious laws (such as not eating meat) and then judge others who do not keep the same laws. That judgment too is a form of jealousy, a fear that even those who don't keep the laws may be accepted by God. If that happens, what advantage will the law-keepers have?

Paul urges us to abandon such concerns. He asks us "never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother" but to look to the Kingdom where we find "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Congratulation

to **Grayson Edward Petrow**, who yesterday received Holy Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation. May God bless and preserve newly baptized Grayson Edward, his parents, grandparents, and godparents for Many Years!

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Mary Fechisin**, who celebrates her 96th birthday today; and to our Choir Director **Maryann Stagen**, this Tuesday. May God grant both of you and all those celebrating a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Announcements

- ◆ Please note: there will be NO VESPERS this coming Saturday, July 8, 2017. The general confession that was scheduled for this day will be held after the Vespers next Saturday, July 15, 2017.
- ◆ **Enjoy your vacation** but remember to visit the Orthodox Church at your destination. To search for a local parish go to www.orthodoxyinamerica.org and enter your location in the search panel. If you plan to receive Holy Communion, be sure that the priest knows who you are before the Divine Liturgy. It is always good form to approach the Chalice knowing that the priest is informed about you. Have a wonderful and safe summer!

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.



July 2, 2017

4th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Placing of the Honorable Robe of the Most-Holy Theotokos at Blachernae

- **8:45am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Rom. 6:18-23

Gospel: Mt. 8:5-13

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

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, JULY 8
NO VESPERS

SUNDAY, JULY 9
9:00am - Divine Liturgy