

# 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

## Our Ladder from Earth to Heaven

**The Feast of the Dormition (or Falling Asleep) of the Theotokos is celebrated each year on August 15<sup>th</sup>.**

A hymn of the feast tells us that Mary, after dying as we all do, had the unique experience of being "translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb." Mary was taken to paradise by her Son. She immediately entered the eternal life that has been prepared for the future of everyone who follows her example of faithful obedience to God.

Having lived as a human being like us, the Mother of God now shows us the way to everlasting life with God. The festal hymns also tell us that as heaven receives her, the angels join the apostles in gazing at her with awe.

A different view of angels is depicted in a 1987 German movie entitled "Wings of Desire." The recently-deceased actor Peter Falk, probably best known as the TV detective Columbo, was featured in the movie, and obituaries have included discussion of its content and meaning.

The movie's lead character is Damiel, an angel who (invisibly) watches with loving care over the human inhabitants of Berlin. He helps and comforts people when he can, and pays close attention to the things they do and feel. But Damiel is not happy. He tells another angel that he has become dissatisfied with his inability to share in human life, to physically feel the weight of an object in his hand, or to bleed from a cut.

The dissatisfaction grows after a conversation with Falk, whose unnamed character can see Damiel as others cannot because he himself is a former angel. Falk's character tells him how good it feels to rub one's hands together to warm them, or to

## 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.

enjoy a cup of coffee with another person. He encourages Damiel to make the change from angel to human. Damiel does so, and finds love with a trapeze artist to whom he has always been attracted while keeping watch over her life.

"Wings of Desire" seems to be making the point that a purely spiritual life, the life of angels, could never be as satisfying as human life with all its "real" problems and joys. But the Church is telling us something quite different in the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos.

We will never be angels, and should refrain from telling children that a person who has died is now an angel; that is not the Church's teaching. Rather, we are called to life in its fullness. Having completed our life on earth, we are offered the greater gift of eternal life with our Creator.

It's not for us to speculate that angels are dissatisfied with their lives. But we needn't be dissatisfied with ours. The Theotokos did what God asked her to do, as we all can. And for doing that she is called "more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim" – the highest angels of all.

## Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Patricia Galley**, who celebrates her birthday tomorrow, **Marilyn Stagen**, this Tuesday, and **Samuel Czech**, this Thursday. May God grant all of you and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



## Announcements

◆ Save the date: **Annual Diocesan Youth Day** at Six Flags Great Adventure is scheduled for **Thursday, August 24, 2017**. For more information and how to register, please see a flyer at the bulletin board or go to our Diocesan website [www.nynjoca.org](http://www.nynjoca.org)

◆ **St. Andrew's Camp Annual Bicycle Ride Fundraiser**: Do a charity bike ride this year! Mark your calendar for Saturday, August 26, 2017 and bike for St. Andrew's Camp. This ride is ideal for the person who has never attempted a charity bike ride. The Ride offers 3 distances from which to choose, each on flat to rolling terrain. Overnight accommodations are available at the camp. Reach out and ask a friend to bike with you and support the Camp at the same time. For additional information visit [www.saintandrewscamp.org](http://www.saintandrewscamp.org).

◆ 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.

◆ **Enjoy your vacation** but remember to visit the Orthodox Church at your destination. To search for a local parish go to [www.orthodoxinamerica.org](http://www.orthodoxinamerica.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!



August 13, 2017

10<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
Leavetaking of the Transfiguration.  
St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy  
Epistle: 1 Cor. 4:9-16  
Gospel: Mt. 17:14-23
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

## Schedule of Services

### MONDAY, AUGUST 14

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya and Blessing of Flowers and Herbs

### TUESDAY, AUGUST 15 - DORMITION

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

### SATURDAY, AUGUST 19

6:00pm - Great Vespers

### SUNDAY, AUGUST 20

9:00am - Divine Liturgy