

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

No Free Pass

Isn't it possible to be saved even if you consciously sin throughout your life and never bother to repent? Couldn't you plan to live as you please and then confess everything on your deathbed, and gain salvation that way?

Some people claim that this kind of cynical plan could work. But on August 24 we remember a saint who shows us that it definitely cannot work. He is Saint Cosmas the Aetolian.

Born in the mountainous region of Aetolia, Greece in 1714, Cosmas was tutored in the Orthodox faith by an archdeacon during his childhood. Drawn to monasticism, he went to live in the Philotheou Monastery on Mount Athos.

Cosmas saw the effects of centuries of Turkish rule over Greece. The Church had been oppressed, and many people had had no churches, no spiritual teachers, and no priests to baptize them.

Cosmas received permission to travel around Greece, going on foot or by donkey to remote areas, and by ship to the islands. He taught the people, and established churches, schools, and charitable centers. The Orthodox Church declared Cosmas a saint in 1961.

Saint Cosmas taught that to be saved we must love each other. But he insisted that God is not satisfied with superficial love. He said: "If you want to find perfect love, sell all your belongings, give them to the poor, and then go find a master and become a slave. Can you do this and be perfect?"

"You say this is too heavy? Then do something else. Don't sell yourself as a slave. Just sell your belongings and give them to the poor. Can you do it? Or do you find this too heavy a task?"



August 20, 2017

11th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Afterfeast of Dormition

Prophet Samuel

- 8:45am – Hours
 - 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
- Epistle: 1 Cor. 9:2-12
Gospel: Mt. 18:23-35
- Coffee Hour – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

MONDAY, AUGUST 21

1:00pm - Holy Matrimony of **Evgenia (Eva) Kozlenko & Yuniel Jimenez Valdes**

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27

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

"All right, you cannot give away all your belongings. Then give half, or a third, or a fifth. Is even this too heavy? Then give one tenth. Can you do that? Is it still too heavy?"

"How about this? Don't sell yourself, or give a penny to the poor. Only do this: don't take your poor brother's coat, don't take his bread, don't persecute him, don't eat him alive. If you don't want to do him any good, at least do him no harm. Just leave him alone. Is this also too heavy?"

"You say you want to be saved. But how? How can we be saved if everything we are called to do is too heavy? We descend and descend until there is no place further down. God is merciful, yes, but He also has an iron rod."

So, according to Saint Cosmas, the "plan" of living as we please, sinning without repenting, and counting on a deathbed confession to save us, can't work. Living selfishly only means we will "descend and descend until there is no place further down." We will no longer be able to love God, or the people around us, because we are so used to caring only for ourselves. As for repenting, if we haven't practiced during our life, the time will come when we have simply forgotten how.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Peter Czech**, who celebrates his birthday this Tuesday, and **Andrea Shaker**, this Saturday. May God grant both of you and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ Please note: Unfortunately, due to unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances, the **Bike Ride at Saint Andrew's Camp** (August 26) has been **canceled**. All registrants will be informed and fees refunded. The Camp staff apologizes for this change in plans and looks forward to future events.

◆ The annual **Diocesan Assembly** this year will be at **Saints Peter & Paul Church in Endicott NY on 1-2 November 2017**. The initial letter announcing the Assembly, with important information, from the Chancellor is available on the diocesan website. Additional information will be coming soon.

◆ 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.