

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

Of Gods and Men

Monks have faced persecution many times in the history of the Church. We know countless stories of monastic courage, unshakable faith and martyrdom from earlier centuries. The 2010 movie "Of Gods and Men" is a story about modern monastics. They are eight French-born Cistercian Trappist monks, living and serving in an old abbey in Algeria. The monks are good neighbors to the surrounding Muslim populace, working side by side with them, attending their family celebrations, and offering them spiritual and emotional support. The abbot, Brother Christian, studies the Quran in an effort to understand their faith. Another monk, an older man named Brother Luc, is a doctor and sees as many as 150 patients a day. He treats each one with love and respect even though he is exhausted, has limited supplies of medications, and worries that he cannot keep up with the latest advances in medicine.

The movie shows the monks' daily life, and much of it will be familiar to Orthodox viewers, especially if they have visited monasteries. The men chant psalms, come together for prayer at prescribed times, and eat meals in silence while one member reads from spiritual writings. They also keep bees and sell homemade honey at the local market.

But the serene life of the monastery is soon to be violently interrupted. The movie is set in the 1990's, when Algeria was being torn apart by civil war between Islamist revolutionaries and the government's forces. Atrocities have become commonplace, and the simple villagers living near the monastery are terrified. Foreigners are suspect; a group of Croatian day workers have had their throats slit by the revolutionary terrorists for no apparent reason.

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.

Because the monks are natives of the country that colonized and, in the view of the terrorists, plundered Algeria, they are potential targets. The central theme of the movie becomes their agonizing decision about whether to leave for a safer place, or stay to continue their ministry and face possible death.

Their position becomes increasingly precarious and uncomfortable. When Brother Luc treats an injured revolutionary, the government army commander considers it an act of treason. His hostility is matched by that of the local governor, who keeps urging the monks to leave so that he will not have their blood on his hands and is bewildered and frustrated when they continue to refuse.

The movie has an element of suspense – will the revolutionaries invade the monastery? – but the climax is the monastic brothers' decision that they will follow the path of Christ's martyrdom and will stay where God has put them. Brother Christian writes to a friend that he looks forward, after death, to seeing God's "children of Islam" as God Himself sees them.

"Of Gods and Men" is based on a true event. A group of monks were abducted and beheaded by Algerian terrorists in 1996. The

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Betty Czech**, who celebrates her birthday this Friday. May God grant you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Многая Лета!

Congratulation

Our heartfelt greetings to the newlyweds **Evgeniya and Yuniel Jimenez**, who united their lives in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony this passed Monday. May God bless both of you with abundant health, peace and prosperity for Many Years to come! Многая Лета!



Announcements

◆ Save the date: St. John the Baptist parish in Little Falls, NJ invites everyone to their Parish picnic on **Sunday, September 17** (with a rain date on Sept. 24). The picnic will begin at 12pm and run until 7pm. 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.

movie's end shows them as they must have been – fearful, but steadfast, walking laboriously up a hill followed by their captors, and disappearing into the mist.



August 27, 2017

12th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **8:45am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Cor. 15:1-11
Gospel: Mt. 19:16-26
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

MONDAY, AUGUST 28

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

TUESDAY, AUGUST 29 - BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

9:00am - Divine Liturgy