

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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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

The Bible and the Liturgy (Part 1)

One of the readings for October 5th offers us a chance to see how closely the prayers of the Divine Liturgy are based on the words of Scripture.

The reading is Ephesians 3:8-21. Like the rest of the letter to the Ephesians, these verses emphasize God's eternal plan to offer salvation and eternal life to every person. The Lord wants not only His chosen people, Israel, to find their way to the Kingdom, but the Gentiles as well. In fact, Paul begins the third chapter of the letter by referring to himself as "Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles."

In 3:8, the first verse of this day's reading, Paul describes himself as "the very least of all the saints." The same recognition of personal unworthiness is reflected in the words of the Divine Liturgy. As the priest partakes of the bread and then the cup of Holy Communion, he says that the Most Holy Body and the Most Holy Blood of Jesus Christ are "given to me, the unworthy priest" and then inserts his own name.

The Communion Prayer said by the congregation expresses a similar idea. Each person who is to receive the Eucharist confesses belief in Christ as the Son of the living God, who came into the world to save sinners, "of whom I am first" or "of whom I am chief."

Some people wonder a little about these words. Do we really have to say that we are worse than everybody else? Surely there are people who have sinned more seriously than we have.

But Paul's next words show us the true significance of these self-accusations. He writes that though he is the least of all the

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.

saints, "to me this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things." In other words, not only does God have a wonderful plan for us, but Paul has been given the grace to know the plan and to reveal it to others. The privilege of being given this grace is so overwhelming that Paul can only feel awe at its immensity and his unworthiness.

In the prayers of the priest and the congregation receiving the Eucharist, the sense of privilege is the same. The priest and people are about to enter into the Mysteries of God Himself. They are about to be given the precious Body and precious Blood that are foretastes of life everlasting, of heaven itself. For them, as for Saint Paul, the only possible response is awe at the immensity of such a gift. That is why each person saying the Communion Prayer asks God to "make me worthy" to receive such a gift — no human being is capable of earning it.

Each one of us is the first among sinners, but God offers Himself to us anyway. Saint Paul shares our wonder at such generosity and grace.

Heartfelt Greetings

Congratulation to our Choir Director Maryann Stagen and to all our choir members on the occasion of the **Church Musician Appreciation Sunday**. Our best wishes are extended to: **Maryann Stagen** - 38 years of directing and singing; **Matushka Anna Kseniuk** - 26 years of directing and singing; **Barbara Kary** - 68 years of singing; **Helen Baron** - 61 years of singing; **Vladimir Nehrebecki** - 51 years of directing and singing; **Andrea Shaker** - 36 years of singing; **Nicholas Kovalycsik** - 32 years of singing; **Sonya Finno** - 26 years of singing; **Elena Nehrebecki** - 23 years of singing; **Kerri Czech** - 4 years of singing; **Daniel Kary** - 1 year of singing.

We also greet our former choir members: **Michael Bzik**, **Maryann Dolak**, **Dorothy Fabian**, **Mary Hadginske**, **Helen Rahnefeld**, and **Effie Stankovci**.

Our prayers are also for the deceased choir members who throughout more than 90 years of our parish's existence glorified God with their beautiful voices.

May the Lord our God on this day of recognition of all of you, who give your time and musical talent to sing in our church choir, leading us in prayer, singing to the Lord, blessing His name and proclaiming His salvation, will ever strengthen and inspire you and grant you a long life, peace, good health, salvation, visitation, good hastening in all things, and may He protect and preserve you for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Choir Appreciation Dinner will be held on Sunday, October 15 at 2:00pm at Buco Ristorante in Clifton. For more information please see Maryann Stagen.

Our Deepest Sympathy

to the family and friends of our long time parishioner, **Edward Junda**, who passed away on **Wednesday, September 27, 2017**. Viewing will be at J.C. Fila Funeral Home tonight, Sunday, Oct. 1 from 4-8pm with Panikhida at 7pm. Funeral will be on Monday, Oct. 2 at 10am in our Church. Burial service will follow at East Ridgelawn Cemetery. Memory Eternal! Vechnaya Pamiat!



October 1, 2017

17th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST THE PROTECTION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

Ven. Romanus the Melodist, "Sweet-Singer" – Church Musician Sunday

• 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistles: 2Cor. 6:16-7:1; Heb. 9:1-7

Gospels: Lk. 6:31-36;

Lk 10:38-42; 11:27-28

• Coffee Hour – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

• "O" Club Meeting during coffee hour - all members are urged to attend

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14

6:00pm - Great Vespers followed by
General Confession

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15

9:00am - Divine Liturgy