

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 Jefferson Bible Rewrite

During the week of November 12, we remember two saints who are intimately connected with the Holy Bible: Gospel writer Matthew, and Saint John Chrysostom.

Matthew's Gospel enlightens readers about Jesus Christ as the promised Savior and fulfiller of the Old Testament prophecies. Writing to his fellow Jews, Matthew presents Christ's life as the completion of God's plan for humanity, worked out over the centuries of Israel's history.

Saint John Chrysostom loved the Bible, and passionately exhorted Christians to read it. He wrote, "If we are willing to examine the Scriptures in this way, carefully and systematically, we shall be able to obtain our salvation." He was particularly concerned about children: "Never deem it an unnecessary thing that [a child] should be a diligent hearer of the divine Scriptures...Do not imagine that the monk alone stands in need of these lessons from Scripture. Of all others, the children just about to enter the world especially need them."

We might imagine that the brilliant Thomas Jefferson also honored the Scriptures and agreed with Chrysostom that they undergird our salvation. But a small book called "The Jefferson Bible" proves that we would be wrong. To create his book, Thomas Jefferson cut, rearranged and pasted the Gospels, leaving out the miracles and other parts he deemed useless. Jefferson admired many sayings of Jesus as displays of "fine imagination, correct morality and the most lovely benevolence." But other sayings were full of "so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same Being."

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

Jefferson blamed the "feeble minds" of the disciples for the problem. They had piled superstitions, fabrications and "things impossible" on top of Jesus' pure moral and ethical teachings. So he removed their additions, leaving the exquisite moral precepts intact.

The resulting book has strange gaps left by Jefferson's editing. One example is Jesus' encounter with the man born blind. The disciples ask Him who sinned, the man or his parents. Jesus answers, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." But the very next verse is, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door of the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." The blind man's healing, the exact thing to which Jesus is referring when He says that the works of God should be made manifest in him, is gone. The sheepfold verses don't even logically follow, and the healing miracle which exemplifies Jesus' divine compassion is consigned to the wastebasket.

There are people today who also cut and paste the Bible, and accuse the followers of Christ of adding to His original teachings. But we are called to take the Bible as the Church has given it to us. Otherwise we are, in Chrysostom's words, merely performing "labors without advantage."

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Matthew Kary**, who celebrates his birthday this Tuesday, and to **Florence Junda**, this Saturday. May God grant all of you and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaya Lita!

Memorial Offering

A new Analoï (wooden stand) that will be blessed at the end of the Divine Liturgy today was custom-made and generously donated by John Palubniak in loving memory of his parents, Helen and Daniel Palubniak. May their Memory be Eternal!



Announcements

◆ This year, during Christmas season, we are adopting a family of a seminarian from St. Tikhon's Seminary. There is a gift bag in the vestibule with a name tag / gift ideas that you can choose from, if you would like to participate. Gifts must be brought in no later than Sunday, December 3, wrapped & tagged. Thank you and may God bless you 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.



November 12, 2017

23rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **8:45am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Eph. 2:4-10
Gospel: Lk. 10:25-37
- **Panikhida** – in memory of the departed Veterans of our parish
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18
6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19
9:00am - Divine Liturgy & Molieben of Thanksgiving