

# 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

## Christ is Born! Let Us Glorify Him!

We know that monastics practice poverty. They voluntarily give up possessing, owning, and striving to acquire. But on January 5<sup>th</sup> we remember a monastic saint who cautioned aspiring monastics against being too quick to embrace poverty.

Saint Synclctica (called "Amma" just as the desert fathers were called "Abba") was born to a prominent family in Alexandria in the fourth century, and was one of the women who went to the desert to live a life free from distractions and close to God. Though such women were few in number, they faithfully followed the example of Abba Anthony (Saint Anthony the Great) and others in fasting strictly, praying intensely, and inspiring those who came to them for counsel or to join them in asceticism. Many, like Saint Synclctica, received spiritual gifts of discernment and healing.

Synclctica was approached by great numbers of women who hoped to become monastics. Because she had the gift of discernment she perceived that some of them, though they were full of enthusiasm, were not ready to take on the rigorous discipline of poverty. They had been comfortable and not at all deprived in their lives. Synclctica knew that if they simply threw away their possessions without taking the "proper prerequisites" they would "be like one who squanders her goods without careful deliberation, only to repent of her rashness."

What were the "proper prerequisites" that Synclctica considered to be so important? They were things such as fasting, sleeping on the ground and other bodily hardships. These, she said, must come first. They would prepare a woman for the hard discipline of poverty, which should come last of all. She pointed

## 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 & Dorothy Fabian, Mary Hadginske, Barbara Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Kathleen Lazorzcyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

out that Our Lord, in talking to the rich young man (Mark 10:21), did not ask him to take on poverty first, but instead recounted the commandments. Only when He was sure that the young man had been seriously observing those did He say that the one thing lacking, the next thing to be done, was to become poor. It was Christ who said that poverty was to come last.

Saint Synclctica recognized that poverty is a strong defense against the devil and his temptations, because the devil's great weapon is to make us fear the loss of something we value. Those who have given up everything, who have no attachments to things, can't be threatened with the loss of anything. At the same time, she warned that greed is a terrible sickness, because once we want a little bit of something, our desire grows and grows, so that we always want more. Desire can consume us just as much as the fear of loss can.

Poverty and greed are not things that only monastics should consider, of course. The new year gives all of us a new chance to think about what we have and what we want, and to determine whether our priorities are in line with the teachings of Christ, so memorably reflected in the words of Saint Synclctica.

## Schedule of Services

(continued from previous page)

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

6:00pm - Vigil & Blessing of Waters

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 6 - THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

6:00pm - Great Vespers

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

## Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Stephen Fabian**, who celebrates his birthday this Wednesday; **Helen Kurnewitz**, whose 99<sup>th</sup> Birthday is this Thursday; and **Joyce Cifaldi**, this Saturday. May God grant all of you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

## Announcements

◆ **House blessings** will start on the Feast of Theophany, Jan. 6, 2018. A proposed schedule is attached to this bulletin - please let Fr. Igor know if you need to make any changes. If your name is not included but you would like to have your house blessed this year, please contact Fr. Igor or use a sign-up sheet in the church vestibule.

◆ **Winter weather alert:** in case of necessity to cancel or delay any particular service at the church due to weather conditions, the information about cancellation will be posted on the parish website as well as on our Facebook page at least 1 hour before the scheduled time; or you can call rectory to verify.

😊 **Winter Weather Wisdom** 😊

The Church is close,  
but the streets are so slippery...  
The bar is far,  
but I'll walk very carefully...

**HAVE A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!**



December 31, 2017

### 30<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

#### Leavetaking of Nativity

**Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James, the Brother of the Lord.**

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy  
*Epistle: Gal. 1:11-19; Gospel: Mt. 2:13-23*
- **Panikhida** – in memory of **Anatol Rozanovich**, offered by Anna Rozanovich and the family
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service
- **12:30pm** – **Great Vespers** for the Feast of Circumcision & St. Basil

## Schedule of Services

### MONDAY, JAN. 1, 2018 - CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST. ST. BASIL THE GREAT.

9:00am - Divine Liturgy, Molieben for the beginning of Civil New Year & Blessing of Vasilopita (continued on the next page)