

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

170 Lexington Avenue, Passaic, New Jersey, 07055

www.stjohnspassaic.org

REV. FR. IGOR KSENIUK, Rector

973-473-1928 (Phone/Fax)

646-387-5494 (cell)

fr.igorksn@gmail.com

Department of  
**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**  
ORTHODOX CHURCH in AMERICA

## Remember How Long Your Heart Was Hard

**Today we commemorate Saint John Climacus.**

This saint is known as a worker of miracles and as the writer of the "Ladder of Divine Ascent" in which he showed how a person can work step by step to come closer to God. The "steps" or rungs like those on a ladder were based on his own experience of prayer and asceticism.

Because he did work hard to come close to God, Saint John was given spiritual insight. He could see that even someone who has repented of sin can be led into the trap of sinning again by judging another person. He wrote: "He who is inwardly proud of his own tears and condemns in his own mind those who do not weep, is like a man who begs weapons from the king against the enemy and kills himself with them."

The "Prologue from Ochrid" offers this comment on Saint John's words: "If your heart has been softened either by repentance before God or by learning the boundless love of God towards you, do not be proud towards those whose hearts are still hard. Remember how long your heart was hard."

On March 22 we read Genesis 18:20-33, which begins with God telling His plans to Abraham. God says, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know" (Genesis 18: 20-21).

Abraham is a person whose heart has been softened by "learning the boundless love of God towards" him. His and

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

Sarah's son Isaac, born in their old age after years of prayer and tears, is living proof of that love. So Abraham is ready to intercede even for the notoriously wicked people of Sodom. Having wept over his own sins, he will not "condemn in his own mind those who do not weep."

Standing before God, Abraham draws near and asks a very bold question: "Wilt Thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?" He even proposes terms on which God might base a change of mind: "Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt Thou then destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it?"

Abraham has perfect confidence that his own merciful instincts have their source in the Lord to whom he is standing so close. So he says, "Far be it from Thee to do such a wicked thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" His confidence is rewarded when God agrees to spare Sodom if even ten righteous inhabitants can be found.

Sodom proves too evil to be spared. But Abraham's intercession is the action of a once-hard heart that has been softened. As a result, it seeks only mercy for others.

## Schedule of Services

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### FRIDAY, MARCH 23

6:00pm - Akathist to the Theotokos with prayers for health

### SATURDAY, MARCH 24 - SATURDAY OF THE AKATHIST

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

1:30pm - 3:00pm - Parish Confessions

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

### SUNDAY, MARCH 25 - ANNUNCIATION

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

## Heartfelt Greetings

Happy birthday to **Nicholas Kovalycsik**, who celebrates his birthday this Tuesday; and **Genevieve Bobenko**, this Thursday. Happy Wedding Anniversary to **Robert & Elizabeth Czech**, who celebrated it last Wednesday. May God grant all of you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

## Announcements

◆ A quick "O" Club Meeting will be today following Coffee Hour. All members please plan to attend.

◆ This Wednesday, March 21 at 6:30PM, Holy Apostles parish in Saddle Brook will host joint Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Next Wednesday, March 28, joint Pre-Sanctified Liturgy will be held at Holy Assumption Church in Clifton.

◆ **Deanery Mission Vespers** this Lent (4:00 PM):  
**Tonight, March 18** - Holy Assumption Church, Clifton  
**Mar. 25** - Holy Trinity Church, 830 Jefferson Ave, Rahway; *Celebrant and Homilist: Archbishop Michael*  
**Apr. 11** - Bright Wednesday, **7 PM** - Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus; *Celebrant and Homilist: Archbishop Michael*



March 18, 2018

### FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

#### St. John of the Ladder (Climacus)

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

Epistles: Heb. 6:13-20  
Eph. 5:9-19 (Saint)

Gospels: Mk. 9:17-31  
Mt. 4:25-5:12 (Saint)

- **Panikhida** in memory of **Rose Key Boykas**, and **Julia Labowsky**, on the 40<sup>th</sup> day of their Repose.

- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

- **"O" Club Meeting** after Coffee Hour

## Schedule of Services

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21

6:30pm - Joint Pre-Sanctified Liturgy  
at Holy Apostles Church in Saddle Brook

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