

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

Wisdom from the Book of Proverbs

Monday March 26 begins the last of four weeks of weekday readings from Proverbs. One theme that runs through the readings for this week is justice. In 21:3 we read, "To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."

This verse may sound familiar, since it is similar to verses from Psalm 51 (50), which is part of many Orthodox worship services: "For You have no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering You would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

These passages reflect a question that the people of Israel took very seriously. They were surrounded by nations whose inhabitants worshipped gods that, in some cases, demanded human sacrifice. These gods seemed to care little for the welfare of human beings or for justice among them. So the question arose of how the people of Israel were to approach their God. Was it with sacrifices and close attention to ritual? Or was it, as the two passages suggest, with contrite hearts that strove to be righteous and just? The prophet Micah presented the question, and gave the answer:

"With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord

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 you prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Genevieve Bobenko, Michael Bzik, Andrew & Dorothy Fabian, Mary Hadginske, Barbara Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Kathleen Lazorczyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky.

require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (6:6-8).

The emphasis Micah places on justice is echoed in many other parts of the Old Testament. For example, this week we read a warning in Proverbs 21: 7 that those who are unwilling to be just bring destruction on themselves: "The violence of the wicked will sweep them away, because they refuse to do what is just." A few verses later (21:15) comes a description of two different reactions to justice: "When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous, but dismay to evildoers."

Isaiah's prophecy in 28: 16-17a reveals God's concern for, and love of, justice not only for the present, but in the glorious future as well: "Behold, I am laying in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: He who believes will not be in panic. And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet."

The First Letter of Peter, written to encourage persecuted Christians in the early Church, quotes this passage. The letter invites us to come to the "living stone" that is so precious in God's sight: Jesus Christ, the One who brings true justice to the whole world.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Grayson Edward Petrow**, who celebrates his 1st birthday this Tuesday; and **Cris Bzik**, this Wednesday. May God grant both of you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ **Deanery Mission Vespers Tonight (4PM)** will be held at Holy Trinity Church, 830 Jefferson Ave, in Rahway. His Eminence Archbishop Michael will be main Celebrant and Homilist.

◆ **This Wednesday, March 28**, Holy Assumption Church in Clifton will host the last **joint Pre-Sanctified Liturgy** this year, starting at 6:30pm.

◆ As it was in previous years, **next Sunday, April 1 (Palm Sunday)**, there will be a second collection for the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (F.O.C.A.) and their "**Gifts of Love**" program. For more information about this year program please see an insert in this bulletin. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated. May God grant you Many Years!

Our Deepest Sympathy

to the family and friends of newly departed **Mary Fechisin**, who passed away on **Saturday, March 24, 2018**. Viewing will be at Bizub-Quinlan Funeral Home (Van Houten Ave.) on Tuesday, March 27 from 4-8pm with Panikhida at 4:30pm. Funeral will be in our Church on Wednesday, March 28 at 10am. Burial service will follow at East Ridgelawn Cemetery. Memory Eternal! Vichnaya Pamiat!



March 25, 2018

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY, THEOROKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY

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

Epistles: Heb. 9:11-14

Heb. 2:11-18 (Feast)

Gospels: Mk. 10:32-45

Lk. 1:24-38 (Feast)

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

Schedule of Services

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

6:30pm - Joint Pre-Sanctified in Clifton

SAT., MARCH 31 - LAZARUS SATURDAY

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

6:00pm - Vespers & blessing of palms

SUNDAY, APRIL 1 - PALM SUNDAY

9:00am - Divine Liturgy & blessing of palms and willows