

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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CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

Today, April 15 is St. Thomas Sunday, when we read the well-known story of the apostle Thomas' encounter with the risen Christ. But on this day we also read a passage that reveals the extraordinary spiritual growth of another apostle, Peter.

This passage, Acts 5:15, tells us that the Spirit-filled apostles were doing many signs and wonders among the people, in a part of the Temple in Jerusalem called Solomon's Portico. The leader in this exciting work was none other than Peter, once so afraid and craven that he denied knowing Christ. But now, people "carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, so that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them."

Some might question the idea that Peter's shadow could have an effect. But Luke makes two other references to such healing power. One is in his Gospel, where we read (8:43-44) about the woman who has had flow of blood for twelve years. She comes up behind Jesus, obviously in fear and trembling, and touches the fringe of His garment. The flow of blood ceases at once. Far from rebuking her or criticizing what she has done, the Lord receives her humble declaration "in the presence of the people" that she has been healed of a terrible affliction by touching His clothing. He says, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

Luke also tells us, in Acts 19:11, that God "did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul." The apostle was so revered and trusted as a healer that people took handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his body to the sick, and "diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them."



April 15, 2018

ANTIPASCHA.

2ND SUNDAY OF PASCHA

St. Thomas Sunday

- **8:45am** - Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Acts 5:12-20
Gospel: Jn. 20:19-31
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the Divine Liturgy
- **1:30pm** – Blessing of Graves at the East Ridgelawn Cemetery (weather permitting, or next Sunday, April 22 at 1:30pm)

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, APRIL 14

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, APRIL 22

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

Some people still have difficulty in understanding this working of God's grace through human beings. Visitors to an Orthodox Liturgy may express discomfort at seeing worshippers venerate the hem of the priest's garment. But the examples in Luke and Acts give us a good basis to explain what is going on. The same explanation could apply to kissing the hand of a priest and asking for a blessing; the grace that comes is only in God, but it comes through the hand of His ordained servant.

Peter's new courage as he and the apostles worked among the people would soon be needed, as today's passage from Acts reveals. The jealous Sadducees arrested and imprisoned him and the others. They were rescued and released by an angel, but their release didn't mean that they could go home and relax. The angel gave specific instructions: "Go and stand in the Temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." The apostles were to return to the very place where opposition to their message was strongest and most concentrated, and were to continue delivering that message.

It was not an easy assignment, but they carried it out admirably, creating the foundation of the Church to which we can now belong.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Walentyna Szeszawicka**, who celebrates her birthday tomorrow. May God grant you, and all who celebrate their birthdays this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ The **Paschal Artos** that was blessed at the end of the Paschal Divine Liturgy last Sunday symbolizes the physical presence of the resurrected Christ among the disciples. The Artos then was placed on a small stand in Royal Doors, where it remained throughout Bright Week. On Bright Saturday the priest says another prayer over the Artos and it is then broken and distributed among the faithful along with the Prospora. It is a custom among Orthodox Christians to keep a portion of the Artos throughout the year and with due reverence and faith to eat of it in time of illness or distress. This is eaten, often together with a drink of Holy Water, which had been blessed at the Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord.

Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to the Paschal Divine Liturgy this morning. 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.