

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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The Outer Signs are Only to Remind Us of the Inner Things

The words in this article's title were written by the Nun Martyr Grand Duchess Elizabeth. On Wednesday of this week we remember her martyrdom and that of her companion, Nun Barbara.

Because Saint Elizabeth was born into Western European royalty and raised as a Protestant, she struggled to explain her conversion to Orthodoxy to her relatives, among them Queen Victoria. Some of them believed that her Russian husband, the Grand Duke Sergei, had compelled her to convert. Others, apparently, thought that she had been dazzled by the splendor of Orthodox worship. It was to them that she wrote, according to Ludmila Koehler's book "Saint Elisabeth the New Martyr", these words: "You tell me that the outer brilliance of the church charmed me...in that you are mistaken – nothing in the outer signs attracted me. The outer signs are only to remind us of the inner things."

Many people do not understand why churches, vestments and sacred vessels should be beautiful. They consider these things to be unnecessary "trappings." Yet God Himself gave instructions for the building of a richly-furnished tabernacle, and vestments for the "glorious adornment" of the priests, in Exodus 25.

Jesus reproved the disciples when they questioned the "waste" of costly oil used by a woman to anoint Him. They complained that it could have been sold for a good deal of money which would help the poor. But He said, in Matthew 26:11, "For you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have Me." The Church understands from this that when we have the privilege of being with the Lord in church, everything from the choir's singing

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.

to the well-polished candlestands should be as beautiful as we can make it. Near the end of every Liturgy we ask God to "sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house."

But beautiful things are not ends in themselves. They are there to "remind us of the inner things" as Saint Elizabeth wrote. We are not meant to get caught up in beautiful externals, but we are meant always to remember the glory of the Kingdom of God, toward which the beauty of those externals points us.

Saint Elizabeth understood that, and she also understood what Jesus meant by saying, "For you always have the poor with you." Creating beauty in the church doesn't exempt us from taking care of those in need; we are supposed to do both. The women's monastery founded by Saint Elizabeth served some of the most destitute people in Moscow while at the same time holding services in a beautifully-appointed chapel.

We should always be able to answer critics of the "fancy trappings" of Orthodox worship by truthfully saying that we do serve and care for our needy sisters and brothers, but that we also make the church a beautiful place so as to "remind" worshippers of the "inner things." Saint Elizabeth shows us how to do both.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Vladimir Nehrebecki**, who celebrates his birthday today. May God grant you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ Save the date: **2018 Church School Workshop** for our Diocese is planned for **Saturday, August 25** at Christ the Saviour Church, in Paramus from **10AM - 2PM**. For more information and to register please see a flyer at the bulletin board or visit our Diocesan website: nynjoca.org

◆ **Enjoy your vacation** but remember to visit the Orthodox Church at your destination. To search for a local parish, go to orthodoxyinamerica.org and enter your location in the search panel. If you plan to receive Holy Communion, be sure that the priest knows who you are before the Divine Liturgy. It is always good form to approach the Chalice knowing that the priest is informed about you. Have a wonderful and safe summer!

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.



July 15, 2018

7th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Holy Fathers of the first Six Ecumenical Councils

HOLY EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES

GREAT PRINCE VLADIMIR

• 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistles: Rm. 15:1-17

Heb. 13:7-16 (Fathers); Gal. 1:11-19 (Saint)

Gospels: Mt. 9:27-35

Jn. 17:1-13 (Fathers); Jn. 10:1-9 (Saint)

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

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, JULY 21

2:30pm - Holy Matrimony of

Daria Kibitelsky & John Zawisa

SUNDAY, JULY 22

9:00am - Divine Liturgy