

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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ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Two Mothers With Different Hopes

On August 1 the Church remembers seven brothers, the Maccabees, and their mother Solomonia. She had to witness the brutal deaths of all her beloved boys, but the way she did it is memorable.

Antiochus IV, who reigned from 175 to 164 B.C., was the Syrian king so full of pride that he took the title "Epiphanes" and felt entitled to demand that his whole kingdom follow one set of customs – those of the pagan Greek culture.

What this meant for the Jews living under his rule was that they were directed "to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary...to build altars and sacred precincts for idols, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals, and to leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane" (1 Maccabees 1: 45-480).

While this was intolerable to many Jews, some went along with it so as to escape persecution and get along with the ruler. 1 Maccabees tells us: "All the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. Many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the Sabbath" (1:41). Antiochus oversaw the desecration of the Temple itself. A faithful priest of the Temple who was in his nineties, Eleazar, was tortured and killed for his insistence on upholding the Old Testament Law.

The seven young martyrs remembered on this day were disciples of Eleazar. When the king brought them to trial, they openly declared their allegiance to him, and refused to break the Law of Moses by eating pork. The oldest brother, speaking for them all, challenged the king by asking, "What do you intend to

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.

ask and learn from us? For we are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers" (II Maccabees 7: 2).

When only the youngest boy was left alive, Antiochus urged his mother Solomonia to persuade him to give in, so that she would at least have one son left. She pretended to do this, but actually whispered to him that he should show the same bravery his brothers had shown. She was sure they would all, by God's grace, be reunited. When her youngest defied the king and was killed, she said a prayer and died too.

Matthew 20:21 gives us the account of the mother of the sons of Zebedee who comes to Jesus and asks Him to "command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."

Jesus knows that it is really the two sons themselves who are asking this, and He turns His attention directly to them. He tells them that places at His right or left are the Father's, not His, to give.

So we have two mothers, both wanting things for their sons. One seeks honor; the other encourages martyrdom. Yet both women, different as they are, give sons to God for His service, and He accepts them all.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Betty Ann Fechisin**, who celebrates her birthday today, and to **Nicholas Bzik**, this Thursday. May God grant you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years!



Announcements

◆ The **Dormition Fast** begins this **Wednesday, August 1**, and continues until the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos on August 15. **Parish Confessions** will be heard before or immediately following Vespers on Saturday, August 11.

◆ **2018 Church School Workshop** for our Deanery 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** and remember to visit the Orthodox Church at your destination. To search for a local parish, go to orthodoxyinamerica.org. If you plan to receive Holy Communion, be sure that the priest knows who you are before the 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 29, 2018

9th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **8:45am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Cor. 3:9-17
Gospel: Mt. 14:22-34
- **Panikhida** - in memory of **Mary Fechisin**, offered by Elizabeth Hatsko
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4 - NO VESPERS

SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

- 9:00am - Divine Liturgy
- 12:30pm - Great Vespers with Litya for the Feast of Transfiguration