

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

A Bishop Unafraid of Beauty

Saint Pelagia lived in Antioch in the third century. As a young woman she was the most beautiful and desirable and best-known harlot in the city, a person who couldn't help attracting attention. With her fabulous jewels worn as part of everyday dress, her exotic scents that perfumed the air as she walked, and the cosmetics she artfully applied to enhance her beauty, Pelagia was an unforgettable figure.

Her story is closely intertwined with that of Bishop Nonnos, who was also well-known in Antioch for his gentle manner and his excellent sermons steeped in profound knowledge of the Scriptures and the Church's Tradition. Most of all he was renowned and respected for his ability to bring sinners to repentance by loving them and never humiliating them.

One day Bishop Nonnos and other bishops were meeting in a garden to discuss Church matters. As they talked together, Pelagia rode by, accompanied by servants and doting admirers. Several bishops turned their heads away to avoid the sight of the bold, laughing woman whose beauty only seemed to emphasize her immodesty. But one of them, Nonnos, did not turn away. He looked after her as she rode by, and it was clear to his companions that he was deep in thought.

Later, he told the other bishops what he was thinking. Pelagia was so diligent about adorning her outward self, he said, in order to please men. But how much time or energy did he and others who claimed to love God spend in adorning their souls, in order to please Him? Why, Nonnos asked, were they so easily distracted

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, Barbara Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky.

from what should have been their only purpose — to make themselves a fitting habitation for their Lord? That night he prayed with tears that God would not condemn him, even though his soul was so poorly adorned.

A few days later, Bishop Nonnos was delivering one of his wonderful sermons to a large gathering. Pelagia, out shopping, found herself in the crowd. She paid little attention to the bishop's words, but in spite of herself she was drawn to what he was saying about God's judgment and the beauty of each person's immortal soul. She began to long for the true, pure love of the divine Bridegroom. What she'd had with her lovers seemed empty and ugly.

Pelagia's desire for closeness to God grew, and she sent a letter to Nonnos requesting baptism. He hesitated, but seeing her sincerity he granted her wish. She gave him her numerous possessions to be used for the poor, and then quietly left for Jerusalem. There she lived in deep seclusion, disguising herself as a man to avoid attention, near the Mount of Olives. Nearby monks came to know about the pious "Father Pelagios" and when she died they buried her, after overcoming their surprise that she was a woman, with great respect. The beauty that Bishop Nonnos was not afraid to look at had become even more beautiful, having been turned toward the Lord.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Daniel Kary**, who celebrates his birthdays this Wednesday, and **Elena Kibitelsky**, this Friday. May God grant both of you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years!

Heartfelt Greetings

Congratulation to all our choir members on the occasion of the **Church Musician Appreciation Sunday**. Our best wishes are extended to: our Choir Director **Maryann Stagen, Matushka Anna Kseniuk, Barbara Kary, Helen Baron, Vladimir and Elena Nehrebecki, Andrea Shaker, Nicholas Kovalycsik, Sonya Finno, Kerri Czech, and Daniel Kary**. We also greet our former choir members: **Michael Bzik, Maryann Dolak, Dorothy Fabian, Helen Rahnefeld, and Effie Stankovci**.

Our prayers are also for the deceased choir members who throughout more than 90 years of our parish's existence glorified God with their beautiful voices.

May the Lord our God on this day of recognition of all of you, who give your time and musical talent to sing in our church choir, leading us in prayer, singing to the Lord, blessing His name and proclaiming His salvation, will ever strengthen and inspire you and grant you a long life, peace, good health, salvation, visitation, good hastening in all things, and may He protect and preserve you for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Choir Appreciation Dinner will be held on Sunday, October 14 at 2:00pm at Sevilla Restaurant in Passaic. For more information please see Maryann Stagen.

Our Deepest Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family and friends of **Margaret Gill**, who fell asleep in the Lord on Saturday, October 6, 2018. Funeral service will be at Bizub-Quinlan Funeral Home, 1313 Van Houten Ave. Clifton, NJ on Wednesday, October 10 at 12PM. May her Memory be Eternal! Vichnaya Pamyat!



October 7, 2018

19th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Church Musician Appreciation Sunday

- 8:45am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 2Cor. 11:31-12:9
Gospel: Lk. 7:11-16
- Coffee Hour – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

6:00pm - Great Vespers, followed by General Confession

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14

9:00am - Divine Liturgy