

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 Armor That Defeats Armor

On October 27, the Church celebrates the memory of Saint Nestor of Thessalonica, a young student of the Greatmartyr Demetrius, who is remembered on the previous day.

Saint Nestor's story gives insight into a gruesome aspect of Roman imperial power. Many Roman rulers, in this case the emperor Maximian, displayed the cruelty that frequently comes with having absolute control over others' lives.

Maximian sponsored lavish public festivals in the arena. His favorite gladiator was Lyaeus, who was strong, big, and notoriously vicious. A feature of the festivals was Lyaeus' challenge to fight anyone willing to come forward. As he killed more and more men, the number of those offering to fight him dwindled.

Both Maximian and Lyaeus enjoyed not just the gladiator's victories, but horrible deaths for those he vanquished. The two didn't want to give up their sport, so the emperor began compelling rather than inviting men to fight Lyaeus. Christians were among the first to be pitted against him in large numbers.

Maximian had already imprisoned Saint Demetrius, the inspiring leader of the Christians. Now he began forcing one after another of Demetrius' fellow believers to face Lyaeus on a specially-built terrace over the arena. There the powerful gladiator would fight and maim them, and then throw them off the terrace onto rows of upright spears to die in agony, a procedure the emperor himself had invented to delight the crowds.

Saint Nestor was not physically imposing. But knowing what was happening in the arena day after day, he felt called to take action. He visited Saint Demetrius in prison, and received a blessing to confront Lyaeus on that deadly terrace.



October 21, 2018

21st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **8:45am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Gal. 2:16-20
Gospel: Lk. 16:19-31
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service
- **Trustees' Meeting** following coffee social

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, OCT. 27
6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28
9:00am - Divine Liturgy

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.

Nestor managed to kill Lyaeus, and because many in the crowd knew that the victor was Demetrius' disciple, a shout of "Great is the God of Demetrius!" went up. But the emperor had been humiliated. He ordered Nestor's immediate beheading, and had Demetrius executed.

For a saint to ask and receive another saint's blessing to kill a man seems a strange departure from the Church's teachings. One of the hymns of praise to Nestor gives us a way to understand this: it says that he was "given power from above, like David against Goliath."

Luke 11:21-22 gives us a way of thinking about this. In these verses Jesus Christ answers those who accuse him of casting out demons by the prince of demons. He says, "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoil."

Maximian was "fully armed" and able to guard his palace and goods. But Nestor had stronger armor, and used it to defeat Maximian and "divide his spoil" by interrupting his enjoyment of wanton murder. Nestor, Demetrius and Lyaeus lost their earthly lives. But perhaps they gave Maximian a chance to gain back his soul.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Dennis Maixner**, who celebrates his birthday today; **Matushka Anna Kseniuk**, tomorrow; happy 5th birthday to **Helena Czech**, also tomorrow. May God grant all of you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years!



Announcements

◆ Next **Sunday, October 28** there will be a second collection in support of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship's (OCF) **College Student Sunday**. The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA encourages all the faithful to be generous in your offering of support to this ministry on behalf of our treasured college students.

◆ **His Eminence Archbishop Michael** will be visiting our parish with his annual Archpastoral visitation on the first weekend of November. Services will begin at their usual times: Great Vespers – on **Saturday, November 3**, at **6:00PM**, and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy - on **Sunday, November 4**, at **9:00AM**.

◆ Thanksgiving and Christmas are just around the corner. Please keep in mind those of our neighbors who are in need. Our Pantry Coordinator, Helen Baron, is asking for your help with food or funds to donate to those who need assistance especially at this holiday season.

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.