

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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Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH in AMERICA

The Gift to Be Simple

The first words of a well-known Shaker song are "Tis the gift to be simple" and they could well apply to the great saint Spyridon, the Wonderworker and Bishop, commemorated December 12.

Spyridon's life from its very early years was simple. Born in 270, he was a shepherd on the island of Cyprus, his birthplace, and came from a family of farmers. Though they were not educated, his parents were devout Christians and raised him in the Church.

He married early in life and had a daughter, but his wife died when he was still fairly young. After her death he decided to devote his life to God's service and become a monk. His daughter, following his example, also entered the monastic life.

Spyridon's background, unlike that of many bishops, was not one of advanced education and study. Yet his dedication to God and his deep faith led to his being chosen as Bishop of Tremithus. And even though he had taken on this immense responsibility, he didn't change his way of life. He continued to care for his own cattle and till his land. The abundant produce that the land produced was mostly given to the poor, while Spyridon himself ate sparingly of the simplest food, as he had always done.

Though his work was no threat to anyone, Spyridon was persecuted, mutilated and exiled to slave labor in the mines of Spain toward the end of the third century. When he was finally allowed to return to his diocese, he continued to work with the poor and to bring many pagans to the Christian faith.

Being a person without great education or sophistication did not mean that Spyridon could not find ways of explaining the complex

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

teaching that God is Trinity. He is credited with using the helpful image of a piece of pottery to describe the three Divine Persons. Pottery is made, he said, of three elements: earth, water, and the effect of fire. Yet these three are united in the pot that is produced. In the same way the Persons of the Trinity are three and distinct, yet united. It was at the Council of Nicaea that Bishop Spyridon, so familiar with the elements of farming and the earth, impressed people with this image.

Spyridon's simplicity made him humble enough to be open to God's guidance, and he was given the gift to work wonders. He was able to cast out demons, bring rain in a time of drought, and heal the sick. Yet his humility never altered. When because of his modest dress he was not recognized as a bishop and was insulted by an arrogant guard, he didn't take offense but quietly accepted the ill-treatment.

Spyridon died in 348, and was buried in the Church of the Apostles in Tremithus, where he had served for so long. His relics were transferred to the Greek island of Corfu, having been discovered to be incorrupt. His grave sent forth the fragrance of basil, that herb associated with the cross and with kings.



Announcements

◆ This **Saturday, December 15 at 2:00 PM**, weather permitting, there will be an **Akathist** (healing service) to the Mother of God in front of her icon "Queen of All", followed by **Parish Confessions**. Take this opportunity to rejuvenate your spiritual life as we prepare to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And remember that not variety, or quality, or quantity of foods that we prepare for the feast will make our celebration more joyous, but that our souls, cleansed in private Confession and sanctified in Holy Communion will be immensely more joyful when prepared properly.

◆ **Winter weather alert:** in case of necessity to cancel or delay any particular service in the church due to weather conditions, the information about cancellation will be posted on the parish website as well as on our Facebook page at least 1 hour before the scheduled time. If the weather is bad and you are not sure if the service will be served, please call rectory to verify.

◆ The **Food Pantry** is always in need of food items. Please keep those less fortunate in mind and help us to feed those in need, especially now that we are approaching Christmas. A basket is in the vestibule of the church for your convenience. May God bless you abundantly for your generosity.

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.



December 9, 2018

28th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most-Holy Theotokos

• 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistles: Col. 1:12-18; Gal. 4:22-31

Gospels: Lk. 17:12-19; Lk. 8:16-21

• **Panikhida** – in memory of **Andrew Fabian**, on the 40th day of his Repose, offered by St. John's Women's Club.

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

• **Trustees' Meeting** right after coffee hour

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

2:00pm - Akathist to the Mother of God "Queen of All", followed by private confessions

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

9:00am - Divine Liturgy