

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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CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

Saint Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, was born into a Jewish family in Judea early in the fourth century.

Well-educated, Epiphanius always looked deeply into the great questions of life. So when, as a Jew, he heard about Jesus Christ, he pondered the possible truth of Christ's teachings. He was powerfully affected by the example of an elderly monk named Lucian, who gave anything he gathered or received as a gift to the poor. Lucian encouraged the younger man to study the Christian faith.

Epiphanius was drawn to the compassion of Jesus Christ as shown in the Gospels and reflected in Lucian and others. But he also had to consider the validity of Christ's claim to be the divine Messiah, since this was blasphemy in the Jewish faith. He may well have worked through the same questions that a 21st-century Jewish convert to Orthodoxy, Father James Bernstein, ponders in his thoughtful book, "Surprised by Christ."

Father James writes that as a young man studying the New Testament he, too, was attracted to the Man who "conducted Himself with what appeared to be truly supernatural grace, wisdom and love" even when attacked. So Father James also had to confront the claim of divinity that this Man made.

Seeing that Jesus Christ forgave sins, accepted to be worshipped, and claimed the great title of "I AM" convinced Father James of Christ's divinity. This led him to the understanding that the Incarnation was the greatest love God could show. As he writes, God showed that love by "manifesting Himself as a creature and speaking to us directly, rather than in sending a creature of His [such as an angel] to do the 'dirty work' for Him."



May 19, 2019

4th SUNDAY OF PASCHA
Sunday of Paralytic

- 8:45am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Acts 9:32-42
Gospel: Jn. 5:1-15
- Panikhida in memory of V. Rev. Protopesbyter Peter Kohanik, on the 50th Anniversary of his Repose (May 20, 1969).
- Coffee Hour – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, MAY 25

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MAY 26

9:00am - Divine Liturgy & panikhida for all soldiers who laid down their lives on the battlefield.

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, Mary Ann Dolak, Dorothy Fabian, Barbara Kary, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky.

Once Saint Epiphanius was baptized and became a monk, he carried on Lucian's example, drawing others to the faith by the way he lived. But fearful of the praise he was receiving, he withdrew to the remote desert to pray intensely. As sometimes happened in that wild area, he was accosted and held captive by robbers for several months. He used the time to offer them the Gospel. When the robbers finally released him, one of them left the others and followed him to the monastery. The man was baptized with the name John, and became Epiphanius' close companion.

Epiphanius could be curt and abrasive; some people disliked him. He had disagreements with others, possibly including Saint John Chrysostom. But he defended the faith bravely, and his writings are still appealing. For example, he wrote that the Church "admires and praises virginity with humility, praises widowhood, and honors and accepts the chaste bond of marriage." All these kinds of life, in other words, can equally be paths to the Kingdom.

Perhaps it was this welcoming vision of Christ's Church that enabled Epiphanius to spread the faith, despite his human failings. He himself was welcomed by Christ in the fourth century, just as we are in the twenty-first.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Dorothy Fabian**, who celebrates her birthday this Friday. May God grant you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week, good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ **Blessing of graves** is still possible. If for any reason you were not able to have the graves of your loved ones blessed, please make an appointment with Fr. Igor.

◆ Archimandrite Sergius and the Brotherhood of **St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, PA** invite everyone to attend any or all events for the **115th Annual Pilgrimage** beginning May 24. This year's pilgrimage continues the tradition laid down by St. Tikhon and the Monastery's first Abbot, Fr. Arseny. It will be especially graced, once again, by the presence of the myrrh-streaming Hawaiian Iveron Icon of the Mother of God, as well as by the presence of numerous hierarchs, clergy, faithful, and friends of the Orthodox Church in this land. Come, pilgrims, and walk in the footsteps of the Saints! For more information and schedule of services/events please see flyers at the bulletin board or visit monastery website: www.sttikhonsmonastery.org.

Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to the Paschal Divine Liturgy this morning. 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.