

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Orthodox Church of America

A Parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

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March 7, 2021

39th Sunday after Pentecost – Tone 6
Meatfare Sunday
Seven Hieromartyrs of Cherson.

- 9:10 am - Hours
- 9:30 am - Divine Liturgy
I Cor. 8:8-9:2
Matt. 25:31-46

Schedule of Services

Tuesday, March 9

- 7:00 pm - Akathist to Saint John, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord.

Friday, March 12

- 7:00 pm - Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos:

Saturday, March 13

- 5:00 pm – Great Vespers

Sunday, March 14

- 9:10 – Hours
- 9:30 – Divine Liturgy followed by rite of Forgiveness.

WEEKLY BIBLE MESSAG

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt. 25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt. 25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.



Saint Paul the Simple of Egypt Commemorated on March 7 also lived in the fourth century and was called the Simple for his simplicity of heart and gentleness. He had been married, but when he discovered his wife's infidelity, he left her and went into the desert to Saint Anthony the Great (January 17). Paul was already 60 years old, and at first Saint Anthony would not accept Paul, saying that he was unfit for the harshness of the hermit's life. Paul stood outside the cell of the ascetic for three days, saying that he would sooner die than go from there. Then Saint Anthony took Paul into his cell, and tested his endurance and humility by hard work, severe fasting, with nightly vigils, constant singing of Psalms and prostrations. Finally, Saint Anthony decided to settle Paul into a separate cell.

During the many years of ascetic exploits the Lord granted Saint Paul both discernment, and the power to cast out demons. When they brought a possessed youth to Saint Anthony, he guided the afflicted one to Saint Paul saying, "I cannot help the boy, for I have not received power over the Prince of the demons. Paul the Simple, however, does have this gift." Saint Paul expelled the demon by his simplicity and humility.

After living for many years, performing numerous miracles, he departed to the Lord. He is mentioned by Saint John, the Abbot of Sinai (Ladder 24:30): "The thrice-blessed Paul the Simple was a clear example for us, for he was the rule and type of blessed simplicity...."

Intercassory 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, Barbara Bogart, Michael Bzik, Mary Ann Dolak, Dorothy Fabian, Barbara Kary, Margaret Kovalycsik, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Dennis Maibner, Marian Nagel, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Sytagen, Patricia Galley.

Birthday Greeting

Happy Birthday go out this week to **Lydia Bzik Marie** – March 9; **Amy LeBorgne** – March – 11, and **Scott Cahayla** – March 13. May God continue to enrich their life with the fullness of joy and happiness for many years – Mnogaya Lyeta!

Announcement

♦ **Panikhida service** today following the Divine Liturgy, in memory of **Eva Stashitsky** – 9th day. As well as for **Anna** – mother of Helen Margitich.

♦ **Daylight Saving Time** this year starts next Sunday, March 14. To be in church on time, please do not forget to turn your clocks forward one hour.

DIOCESAN GUIDELINES

• Forgiveness Vespers should be served as usual, while observing all current safety protocols, but without the direct personal exchange of the kiss of peace. The priest will ask forgiveness of the congregation from the amvon. The faithful should respond from their places.

• Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers should be served in each parish separately, either directly after the Divine Liturgy or on Sunday evening, while observing all current safety protocols.

• The Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts should be served as usual, while observing all current safety protocols.

• Deanery Sunday Lenten Mission Vespers should not yet be scheduled this year. Sunday Lenten Vespers may be served in individual parishes, while observing all current safety protocols.

• Processions, such as those for The Sunday of Orthodoxy, Holy Friday, and Holy Saturday night may be done either outside or inside the church, at the parish priest's discretion. Social distancing must be kept during processions.

