

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST RUSSIAN 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

Everyday Saints: A Book Review

Among the saints remembered on December 20 are two from widely different periods of history.

The first is the Hieromartyr Ignatius, who is traditionally understood to have been the child who was held in the arms of Jesus Christ when He "took a child and set it among them, saying, 'Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven'" (Matthew 18:4). He grew up to become a bishop, and introduced antiphonal singing in the Church. Later he gave his life for the faith in the Roman arena.

The second is Saint John of Kronstadt, whose life began in the late 19th century and continued into the 20th. A miracle worker, teacher and priest who became known and admired all over the world, Saint John spent much of his time helping the poorest and most humble people.

These two men remind us that there have been people in every age who give exceptional service to God. A new book offers stories about monks of our own day who serve Him in the Pskov Caves Monastery, in northwestern Russia. It is called "Everyday Saints" (Pokrov Publications, 2012).

The collected stories reflect the varied personalities and experiences of the monks (there is also a chapter about Mother Frosya, an extraordinary nun), and give the reader insight into the way monastics live. Some of them lead quite solitary lives; others interact with children and families who have some association with the monastery. But all of them make the daily effort to live in obedience, humility and love.

Among them is Abbot Alipius, a highly decorated and courageous veteran of World War II. He was never intimidated by

Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, but we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Among them are:

Michael, Mary and Max Bakaletz, Genevive Bobenko, Pauline Bodnar, Nancy Filak, Dorothy Gentner, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Emil Mikulik, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadine Sojka, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

the persistent efforts of the Soviet government to harass the monks and shut down the monastery. When "government visitors" arrived, he would greet them courteously, but would also remind them that most of the monks were hardened war veterans who didn't give in to threats.

He once told some officials that the only way to close the monastery would be for them to bomb it, adding that if they did so, he would make sure the news went all over the world via the Voice of America. Then he told them simply, "Well, it's up to you." If it was a bluff, it sufficed to make the officials unsure of what this "crazy monk" might be capable of, and they left the monastery, temporarily, in peace. Despite such confrontations, Abbot Alipius felt Christ-like love for every person. He said, "You may object to me that it is impossible to love your enemies. But remember what Jesus Christ told us: 'Whatever you have done to the least of these my brethren you have done to Me...' Inscribe these words in golden letters upon the tablets of your heart, and...read them to yourself every day."

There are more memorable people and inspiring words to discover in the pages of this profusely-illustrated book. It is a literary treasure chest.



Announcements

◆ The second segment of "The Nativity Story" movie will be shown today after the coffee hour. The last segment will be next **Sunday, December 22**. Questions and comments are welcomed.

◆ At the last Diocesan Assembly His Grace Bishop Michael shared the profoundly moving experience of his visit, this passed May, to the Bethany School for Girls at the Gethsemane Convent of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission. The School is located in the very area of Jerusalem where our Savior visited often and where His friend Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary lived, and where He resurrected Lazarus, already dead four days. Today, there amidst an atmosphere of increasing animosity towards Christians, a dedicated and selfless group of Russian Orthodox nuns operates this school which, though recognized as one of the best in the area, still struggles to cover its costs and to maintain its foothold in the face of intensifying anti-Christian encroachment looming at its very gates. During this Nativity Fast, as part of your almsgiving, please consider financial assistance for the Bethany School. For more information about the school please see an informational brochure on the bulletin board. Checks can be made payable to the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, with "Bethany School" in the Memo section, and mailed to: Marge Kovach, 8 Ginesi Drive, Clark, NJ 07066.

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 15, 2013

25th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday of the Forefathers

- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Col. 3:4-11
Gospel: Lk. 14:16-24
- Fellowship – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the Divine Liturgy
- "The Nativity Story" movie - segment 2

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21
4:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22
9:00am - Divine Liturgy, followed by Coffee Hour and "The Nativity Story" movie