

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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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
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Body and Soul

On April 13 the Church honors the martyr Crescens. He was the son of a nobleman, and came from Myra in Lycia, a familiar name because it's also the home town of the great Saint Nicholas.

Crescens was respected because he was a member of an eminent family. He was also well-known as a Christian who was not afraid to talk about his faith. So it isn't surprising that one day, seeing a group of pagans on their way to the temple to honor the gods, he started a conversation with them. He asked them why they bothered to offer worship to idols made of stone that couldn't even hear them, let alone respond to them somehow. He told them about the life that Jesus Christ lived among us, and urged them to follow His way.

There is no record of any conversions taking place that day, but someone disapproved of Crescens' action enough to report him to the local prefect, a pagan, who took it very seriously. Crescens was arrested.

However, as the son of a prominent citizen, Crescens could not be treated like some common criminal. In addition to that, the prefect knew his father and was aware that the father was a good, decent man. He tried hard to get Crescens to worship the idols, but when that failed he decided to give the young man a suggestion that would save both of them a lot of trouble, rather than keeping him under arrest.

The prefect said, "If you insist that your soul must cling to this God of yours, so be it. But then just bow to the gods with your body—the outward show of respect will be enough."

But Crescens couldn't possibly have been convinced to do such



April 13, 2014

ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM (Palm Sunday)

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy & blessing of palms & willows
Epistle: Phil. 4:4-9
Gospel: Jn. 12:1-18
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the Divine Liturgy

Schedule of Services

GREAT AND HOLY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16
7:00pm - Holy Unction

GREAT AND HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 17
9:00am - Vespers & Liturgy of St. Basil
7:00pm - Matins with 12 Gospels

GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY, APRIL 18
2:00pm - Vespers & placing the Shroud
7:00pm - Matins & Burial Service

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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, Genevieve Bobenko, Pauline Bodnar, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Emil Mikulik, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

a thing. He answered, "The body can never do something independently of the soul. It is the soul that gives guidance to the body." He was martyred for his refusal.

The Lenten services of the Orthodox Church reflect this direction of the body by the soul. As we go through Great Lent we use our bodies to bow before God, making our physical movements consistent with the prayers we offer and the repentance we feel in our souls. Crescens' answer to the prefect puts this into words.

Of course it's possible to offer outward signs of love for God that are not really directed by the soul. Some of those who greeted Jesus Christ with shouts of "Hosanna" as He entered Jerusalem, remembered on this Palm Sunday, were ready to demand His crucifixion not much later.

Also on this day we read about the man most notorious for saying with seeming sincerity what he didn't inwardly believe. John 2: 4-6 records Judas' pretended concern for the poor and then bluntly tells us that he didn't care for the poor at all, but was a thief.

As the Feast of the Resurrection approaches, we can look to the martyr Crescens as an example of how body and soul can work together to glorify God.

Schedule of Services

(continued from previous page)

GREAT AND HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 19

9:00am - Vespers & Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
1:30pm - General Confession, followed by blessing of Paschal Foods
10:00pm - Midnight Office (Nocturne)

SUNDAY, APRIL 20 - THE HOLY PASCHA

8:00am - Procession & Matins, Paschal Divine Liturgy, followed by blessing of Paschal Foods and breaking of the Fast in the church hall.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Valentina Szestawicka**, who celebrates her birthday this Wednesday. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ **Gifts of Love** collection at the end of the Liturgy today will be for gift packs for Orthodox Christians serving in the Armed Forces. These packs will include a pocket Orthodox prayer book, a cross, an icon, and a few other items. Your donation is greatly appreciated.

◆ We are still looking for **volunteers** to be present in the Church during the **Holy Friday and Saturday**. Please see AnnaMae Beckmann to sign up. May God reward you hundredfold for the time that you will dedicate to the Church.

◆ Next Sunday His Grace Bishop Michael will visit us again to celebrate Paschal Matins and the Divine Liturgy. The service starts at 8:00am. Please try to be in church by 7:45am.

◆ **Service books** for Lenten services are available for purchase. Please see Mary Ann Dolak at the coffee hour.