

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

The Day of the Lord

On February 18 we read a good portion of the relatively short book (three chapters in all) of the Prophet Joel.

Joel prophesies in the first chapter that the Day of the Lord, which is soon to come, will be "a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!" But in the opening verses of today's reading, he urges repentance and reassures the people: "Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing" (2:12-13a).

Joel writes that for those who show by repentance that they want to be with the Lord, there are incredible gifts in store. The Day of the Lord which he has described so darkly will also be, for those who love God, a day when "the mountains shall drip sweet wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the stream beds of Judah shall flow with water" (3:18).

On this day the Church commemorates Saint Leo, Pope of Rome, who was born in the fourth century in Tuscany, Italy. He became Pope in a time when the faith was challenged internally by false teachings about the two natures of Christ, and from the outside by invaders from other lands. Saint Leo knew the Church would be tested from within and without.

He had a wonderful gift of being able to negotiate between two opposing parties. When Northern Italy was overrun by the Huns, he was called on by the emperor himself to meet with Attila, the Huns' famous warrior leader. With no weapons, and certainly no army, he managed to convince Attila not to devastate Rome. Attila's servants later said that their master had agreed

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, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazarczyk, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

because he had seen the figure of a priest mysteriously appear above Leo's head as the two men met.

Two years later, in 455, the Vandals and their leader Gunderic did loot Rome, pillaging homes and taking many of its citizens as slaves. Leo wasn't able to stop the destruction that time, but he urged the people not to lose hope or faith.

Despite the outward turbulence of his years as Pope, Saint Leo was not distracted from the task of articulating the faith correctly. He insisted that the two natures of Christ must always be clearly expressed as truth. His words are still used by the Church: "One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, known in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation..."

Saint Leo knew that the repentance Joel wrote about meant maintaining faith in God even when devastated by foreign invaders. But he knew that it also meant continuing to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ's two unbreakably united natures. Only by believing in God even when facing physical suffering, while also honoring Him as "one and the same Christ...known in two natures..." can we be worthy of the Day of the Lord.

Announcements

◆ Note from the Liturgical Calendar: Today is the last day before Lent for eating meat. It is permitted to eat eggs, cheese, butter, and milk products on every day of this week (including Wednesday and Friday).

◆ Next **Sunday, Feb. 22** is the Cheesefare Sunday, the last day when we are allowed to have dairy products and eggs before Pascha. After the Divine Liturgy we will have **Maslenitsa** in our church hall, followed by the Forgiveness Vespers. Please plan to attend. Delicious blintzes and other meat-free foods are in the menu. Let us have a little celebration before we start Great Lent.

◆ The **Sunday of Orthodoxy Deanery Vespers** on **March 1st** of this year will be hosted by our parish. His Grace, Bishop Michael has also invited His Eminence, Metropolitan Joseph of the Antiochian Archdiocese to be the homilist. Invitation has also been extended to clergy and faithful of various jurisdictions. The responses will be sung by a Pan-Orthodox choir. We are looking forward to sharing this day, the first Sunday of the Great Lent, as brothers and sisters in Christ. Lenten refreshments will be served following the Vespers. We are also asking for your help to clean-up the gym area after the fellowship, so it can be used by the school on the following Monday morning.

◆ **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 after the service in our Church Hall in the school building next door.

Our Deepest Sympathy

to family and friends of **Pauline Bodnar**, who passed away on **Sunday, February 8**. May she rest in peace in God's Heavenly Kingdom! Memory Eternal! Vechnaya Pamiat!



February 15, 2015

SUNDAY OF MEATFARE

Sunday of the Last Judgment

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Cor. 8:8-9:2
Gospel: Mt. 25:31-46
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the service, followed by **Annual Parish Meeting**, weather permitting.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, FEB. 21

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, FEB. 22 - CHEESEFARE SUNDAY

9:00am - Divine Liturgy followed by Maslenitsa & Forgiveness Vespers