

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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Seeing the Kingdom Before We Die ?

One of the readings for October 19 includes a warning from Our Lord. His words remind us that we are called to witness to Him no matter what the circumstances, and regardless of temptations to disavow Him in order to make our own lives easier. He says, "Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels" (Luke 9:26).

The next verse is one that apparently still troubles people. Jesus says, "But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God." Earlier this year, a lengthy article in the New Yorker Magazine cited this verse as a "proof" that the whole story of Jesus Christ is questionable. The writer of the article took the verse to mean that the Second Coming would take place during the lifetimes of some who were Jesus' contemporaries. Since that did not happen, Christianity is based on a lie – in fact, a series of lies.

But is that what Jesus means, that the Second Coming is imminent, and that some of those to whom He is speaking will live to see it? Does the fact that things didn't happen that way mean that Christianity is based on lies? Any Christian, especially one who knows some lives of saints and holy people, can confidently answer "no" to both questions.

Saint Paul is the first one who helps us see what Jesus' words meant. In II Corinthians 12:2-4 he writes about a man (himself,

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:

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.

as later verses reveal) who "fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise...and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter." Certainly this vivid description shows us that Paul saw the kingdom of God before tasting death.

But Paul's experience is not the only example. We know of many saints who in various ways saw and knew the Kingdom while they lived on earth. Saint John the Chozebite, commemorated earlier this month, saw a light from heaven whenever he served the Liturgy. Other saints were seen to be surrounded by angels while they served at the altar. Saint Seraphim spoke about man known as Peter the Breadgiver, who offered a piece of bread to a beggar and received a vision assuring him that, because of his act of simple charity, all his sins were forgiven. There are innumerable other incidents like this.

Some might see in these visions and revelations "proof" that Jesus' words are true. But they help us more if we accept them as God's gift of assurance that others have seen the destination of the path we are on, and know the journey is worth it.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Dennis Maixner**, whose birthday is this Wednesday, **Helena Rosanna Czech**, who celebrates her 2nd Birthday this Thursday, and **Matushka Anna Kseniuk**, this Thursday as well. May God grant all of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆The **Annual Diocesan Assembly** will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, **November 10 & 11, 2015** at **Saints Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ**. As a special guest, His Eminence has invited His Beatitude, Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and Canada to the Assembly. For more information visit our Diocesan website nynjoca.org.

◆ Please help us to fill **Thanksgiving Baskets** for those in need. Turkeys, stuffing, gravy, and cans of vegetables, fruits, soup, and cranberry sauce are needed. Or, you may prefer to give a monetary donation, and we will shop for you. Please bring in your donations by Sunday, November 15, to give us enough time to put the baskets together and prepare them for distribution to our neighbors in need. It is important that we all be a part of this ministry, and show that we are true followers of Jesus Christ and follow His teachings.

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.



October 18, 2015

20TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke

• 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Gal. 1:11-19
Col. 4:5-9 (St. Luke)

Gospel: Lk. 8:5-15
Lk. 10:16-21(St. Luke)

• **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY OCT. 24 – MEMORIAL SATURDAY

5:30pm - Panikhida
6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

9:00am - Divine Liturgy
6:00pm - Great Vespers & Litya

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26 - ST. DEMETRIUS

9:00am - Divine Liturgy