

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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Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Surprised by Christ

On November 16th we remember the Apostle and Evangelist Matthew. The primary audience for Matthew's Gospel was his fellow Jews, and one of his main goals was to show that Christ fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies that the Jews revered.

It seems an appropriate time to review a book written by an Orthodox priest who is a convert from Judaism, Father James Bernstein. He grew up as a devout Jew, very knowledgeable about his faith, and with an inquiring mind that wanted to find the reasons for things. His book *Surprised by Christ* tells us about his journey to Orthodox Christianity. The journey itself makes for an appealing story. Father James writes of the initial attraction between himself and his wife Bonnie: "She told me that though she had read about Jews in the Bible, she had never knowingly met one. I was the first, and a New Yorker besides. I told her that I had never knowingly met someone of Okie and Swedish descent as beautiful and mellow as she."

A special value of the book is that Father James shows, through his own study and experience, how Orthodoxy completes the faith of the Old Testament. Though raised to view the New Testament as "the enemy's book," he was curious enough as a teenager to borrow a copy and to read it at night under the covers with a flashlight. He found himself "mesmerized" by its description of Jesus Christ.

Wanting to find out whether this Jesus could be the one described in the Old Testament prophecies he already knew well, he studied them even more closely. His account of that study is rewarding reading for anyone who wants to learn more about how the Church interprets the Old Testament, and why it is the

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

basis of so much of our prayer and teaching. He gives wonderful insights into Jesus' life and work as the fulfillment of the prophets' words.

Father James also was looking for a church that maintained the kind of worship he knew: "As a Jew, I desired worship that contained a sense of mystery, was rooted in ancient Jewish practice, and centered on God and our Communion meal with Him." He did not find these elements fully in Protestantism or in Roman Catholicism, but discovered them in wholeness in the Orthodox Church. He is never smug, or disrespectful toward the Protestant Church and the Roman Church, but reading his analysis of their deficiencies when compared to Orthodoxy is a valuable means for Orthodox Christians (also without smugness or disrespect toward others) to know their own faith better.

Father James writes candidly that he did not always find Orthodox people to be as attractive as the Orthodox Faith itself is. He urges parishes to be welcoming to newcomers, having experienced indifference and even coldness in some of his early visits to churches. But for those who want, as he does, to know Orthodoxy and invite others to share it, *Surprised by Christ* is an excellent companion and teacher.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Florence Junda**, who celebrates her birthday this Wednesday, and to **Juliana Kary**, this Thursday. May God grant both of you good health and happiness for Many Years!

Congratulation

Our heartfelt greetings to the newlyweds **Yelena** and **Peter Weiner**, who united their lives in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony yesterday. May God bless both of you with abundant health, peace and prosperity for Many Years to come! Многая Лета!

Announcements

- ◆ **Passaic "O" Club Meeting** will be today after the Divine Liturgy. All members are urged to attend.
- ◆ The next **Trustees' Meeting** will be this Tuesday, November 17th. All members please plan to attend.
- ◆ Monetary donation for the **Thanksgiving Baskets** for those in need are still accepted today. Please see Helen Baron for more information, and may God bless you for your generosity.
- ◆ If you would like to share some **information**, like announcements, Anniversaries/Birthdays/events etc. in **the weekly bulletin**, please call the Rectory or email it by Tuesday of the week that you would like to have it printed to fr.igorksn@gmail.com

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.



November 15, 2015

24th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
BEGINNING OF THE NATIVITY FAST

- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Eph. 2:14-22
Gospel: Lk. 10:25-37
- **Panikhida** – in memory of **Halina & Jan Szestawicki**, and **Eugenia & Jan Gryc**, by Walentyna & Mirosław Szestawicki.
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20

6:00pm - Great Vespers & Litya

**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 21 - ENTRANCE OF
THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

9:00am - Liturgy & Thanksgiving Molieben