

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

Using the Gift of Speech

On February 9 and 10 we read from the letter of James (3:1-4:6), who writes about the gift of speech. He describes the power speech can have for good or evil, depending on how we use it. Though the tongue is a very small instrument, he writes, it is a fire, and even a huge forest can be set ablaze by a tiny fire.

James strikingly contrasts the two ways we can use our tongues to speak: "With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine yield figs? No more can salt water yield fresh" (3:9-12).

But it is not only the way we speak that's important. We also need to be sure that the particular words we choose are meaningful, and faithful to the truth. Empty words, meaningless chattering words, are a waste of the gift of speech, and lies of course are violations of the purpose of speech. On the 13th we remember a saint who wrote about the need for meaningful and truthful words. He is Hilary of Poitiers.

Born in Poitiers, France, Hilary had an excellent education which included Greek—unusual for a fourth-century Western European. Married and a father, he was so admired in Poitiers that he was elected bishop in about 353. But only three years later he was banished to Phrygia for several years. This was the result of his arguments against heretical Arian teachings. His

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 Fechisin, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorzcyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

writings, and his defense of Saint Athanasius, were so compelling that he is sometimes called the "Athanasius of the West." But the emperor was not pleased, and allowed Hilary's enemies to banish him.

Even in exile, Hilary continued to govern his diocese in France. It was during this time that he studied some of the Eastern Fathers' writings, and deepened his understanding of the Church's teachings about the Trinity. This enabled him to write about the importance of using the right words, both meaningful and true, to speak about the Three Divine Persons: "For one to attempt to speak of God in terms more precise than He Himself has used – to undertake such a thing is to embark upon the boundless, to dare the incomprehensible. He fixed the names of His nature: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Whatever is sought over and above this is beyond the limits of perception, beyond the embrace of understanding."

Saint Hilary would object to the modern effort to find words other than Father, Son and Holy Spirit to identify the Persons of the Trinity. He would agree with James that words and speech are important, because both have been given to us by God.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Jeffrey Rahnefeld**, who celebrates his Birthday this Monday, **Christopher Kary**, this Wednesday, and **Alissa Pecoraro**, this Thursday. May God grant all of you good health and happiness for Many Years!



Announcements

◆ Save the date: Our **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on **Sunday, February 21** following the Divine Liturgy. Please plan to attend this meeting.

◆ Registration is still open for the **6th Annual Diocesan Altar Servers Retreat**, which will be at St. Basil's Academy, Garrison NY this coming weekend, February 12-14, 2016. More details at our Diocesan website: www.nynjoca.org

◆ **29th Annual Beefsteak Dinner** at Holy Assumption Church in Clifton is planned for **Saturday, March 5, 2016**. For reservations please call Barbara Polk @ 973-452-1233. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ 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 to fr.igorksn@gmail.com by Tuesday of the week that you would like to have it published.

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.



February 7, 2016

36th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Afterfeast of the Meeting of the Lord

- 8:50am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Tim. 1:15-17
Gospel: Mt. 15:21-28
- **Panikhida** – in memory of Anatoly, Rozanovich on the 40th Day of his Repose, offered by wife Anna and children Vlad, George, and families.
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13

5:00pm - Great Vespers, followed by general Confession

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14

9:00am - Divine Liturgy