

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

The Cross and the Throne

"Why would you want to be a Christian?" The verses from Hebrews (4:14-5:6) for this Sunday of the Veneration of the Precious Cross provide a convincing answer. They outline the gifts our Savior bestows. They also tell us precisely who He is.

The passage tells us that Jesus Christ has "passed through the heavens" – in other words, He has been exalted as God's Son. The next verses describe His work among us when He became Man. We read that we do not have a high priest who is "unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." This means that we do not have a Savior who, being God's Son, can't understand what it means to be tempted as we humans constantly are. Christ fully shared human testing and temptation. But because He did not succumb, He is strong enough to save us, while still understanding our weakness. As God's Son, He has opened the way to the Kingdom. Therefore we can "approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

So He gives us an immense gift and privilege. We can approach God's "throne" – His very presence – with boldness, and not be struck dead for our presumption. We can receive grace, mercy, and help.

With such gifts and assurances, who wouldn't want to be a Christian? But the day's Gospel reading (Mark 8:34-9:1) reminds us that it is no easy task. Jesus calls the crowd as well as the disciples to hear His words, so we know they are meant for everyone: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny

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

themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

What does "take up (or bear) one's cross" mean? Some people refer to things like the loud barking of the neighbor's dog as "a cross I have to bear." But when Christ took up and bore the cross, it meant gross injustice, excruciating pain, public ridicule and humiliation. He warns us that these things await us if we really want to follow Him. They are there on the path to the throne of grace described in Hebrews. As we sing during most Divine Liturgies: "Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake."

In the passage from Mark, Jesus also speaks of the time when He will come "in the glory of His Father and the holy angels." The throne, at that time, will be the throne of judgment. If we have been ashamed of Christ, unwilling to endure ridicule and humiliation for Him, He will judge us accordingly as wanting no part of Him.

But if we have stayed faithful and paid the cost of our faith, we can know even before we die that, in Mark's words, "the kingdom of God has come with power."

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **David Baron**, who celebrates his birthday this Tuesday, and to **Maxim Kseniuk**, this Thursday. May God grant both of you and all who celebrate their birthdays this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ **"O" Club meeting** will be following the Coffee Hour on Sunday, April 10. All members please plan to attend.

◆ **Deanery Mission Vespers** (beginning at 4:00pm) are as follows:

April 3 - Holy Spirit Church, 102 Rte. 284, Wantage NJ.

April 10 - Holy Assumption Church, Clifton, NJ.

April 17 - Holy Trinity Church, 120 Dover-Chester Rd, Randolph, NJ.

Wed. May 4, Bright Wednesday, **7:00pm** - Christ the Saviour Church, Paramus, NJ. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ **Pre-Sanctified Liturgies** during this Great Lent (starting 6:00pm) will be as follows:

Apr. 6 - our parish will host the joint service.

Apr. 13 - joint service at Holy Assumption Church, Clifton

Apr. 20 - our own service, followed by potluck (bring a dish to share if you wish).

◆ On **Saturday, April 9, 2016** a retreat with a theme "**Orthodox Spirituality and the Little Church**" will be given by Drs. David & Mary Ford at Christ the Saviour Church in Paramus. To register, please contact Fr. Leonid Schmidt: fr.leonid.schmidt@gmail.com, or call 201-652-6633. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ On **Sunday, April 10, 2016** at 4:00pm the Spirit of Orthodoxy Choir will participate in a concert "Diamonds are Forever" at St. Anthony Orthodox Church in Bergenfield. Free admission. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.



April 3, 2016

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Veneration of the Cross

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
Epistle: Heb. 4:14-5:6
Gospel: Mk. 8:34-9:1
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6

6:00pm - Joint Presanctified Liturgy

FRIDAY, APRIL 8

6:00pm - Akathist to the Holy Cross & Panikhida for the Departed

SATURDAY, APRIL 9 - MEMORIAL SATURDAY

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, APRIL 10

9:00am - Divine Liturgy