

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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The Outer Signs are Only to Remind Us of the Inner Things

The words in this article's title were written by the Nun Martyr Grand Duchess Elizabeth. On Monday of this week we remember her martyrdom and that of her companion, Nun Barbara.

Because Saint Elizabeth was born into Western European royalty and raised as a Protestant, she struggled to explain her conversion to Orthodoxy to her relatives, among them Queen Victoria. Some of them believed that her Russian husband, the Grand Duke Sergei, had compelled her to convert. Others, apparently, thought that she had been dazzled by the splendor of Orthodox worship. It was to them that she wrote, according to Ludmila Koehler's book "Saint Elisabeth the New Martyr", these words: "You tell me that the outer brilliance of the church charmed me...in that you are mistaken—nothing in the outer signs attracted me. The outer signs are only to remind us of the inner things."

Many people do not understand why churches, vestments and sacred vessels should be beautiful. They consider these things to be unnecessary "trappings." Yet God Himself gave instructions for the building of a richly-furnished tabernacle, and vestments for the "glorious adornment" of the priests, in Exodus 25.

Jesus reproved the disciples when they questioned the "waste" of costly oil used by a woman to anoint Him. They complained that it could have been sold for a good deal of money which would help the poor. But He said, in Matthew 26:11, "For you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have Me." The Church understands from this that when we have the privilege of being with the Lord in church, everything from 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 Fechisin, Andrew Fabian, Edward Fedush, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorzcyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

choir's singing to the well-polished candlestands should be as beautiful as we can make it. Near the end of every Liturgy we ask God to "sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house."

But beautiful things are not ends in themselves. They are there to "remind us of the inner things" as Saint Elizabeth wrote. We are not meant to get caught up in beautiful externals, but we are meant always to remember the glory of the Kingdom of God, toward which the beauty of those externals points us.

Saint Elizabeth understood that, and she also understood what Jesus meant by saying, "For you always have the poor with you." Creating beauty in the church doesn't exempt us from taking care of those in need; we are supposed to do both. The women's monastery founded by Saint Elizabeth served some of the most destitute people in Moscow while at the same time holding services in a beautifully-appointed chapel.

We should always be able to answer critics of the "fancy trappings" of Orthodox worship by truthfully saying that we do serve and care for our needy sisters and brothers, but that we also make the church a beautiful place so as to "remind" worshippers of the "inner things." Saint Elizabeth shows us how to do both.

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, JULY 23

6:00pm - Great Vespers (call Rectory to confirm)

SUNDAY, JULY 24

9:00am - Divine Liturgy. Commemoration of St. Elijah

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Helen Baron**, who celebrates her birthday this Friday. May God grant you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Floral Offerings

Beautiful flowers were offered by Maryann Stagen in memory of her grandfather John, on the Anniversary of his Birth. May his Memory be Eternal!

Announcements

◆ Please note that due to a problem with the air-conditioning system in our church, and if the hot weather continues, **next Saturday Vespers service might be cancelled**. If you are planning to attend, please call the rectory or check our website to confirm if Vespers will be served. We apologize for the inconvenience while we try to resolve this issue.

◆ Save the date: There will be a **Parish Picnic on Sunday, July 24, 2016** at Christ the Saviour Church in Paramus, starting at Noon. Everyone is invited. For more information, please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ The Diocesan Department of Youth Ministry has several events planned for the upcoming months: **YOUTH DAY** (August 25th); **SAINT ANDREW'S CAMP BIKE RIDE** (August 27th); **GIRLS RETREAT** (November 11th); **ALTAR SERVERS RETREAT** (February 10-12, 2017), and more! Additional information and registration will be available and listed in the "upcoming events" section of the diocesan website.



July 17, 2016

4th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils

Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir (commemorated July 15)

- 8:30am – General confession
- 8:50am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Rom. 6:18-23

Gospel: Mt. 8:5-13

• **Panikhida** – in memory of **Mary Czap**, on the 40th day of her Repose, **Stephen Czap**, on the 8th Anniversary of his Repose, and **Michael Hilko**, on the 42nd Anniversary of his Repose – offered by Barbara and John Kary.

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