

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

Mothers of Saints

On Wednesday of this week, we remember a saint who lived in the 14th century but who was glorified very recently, in 1992. She is Maria, the mother of Saint Sergius of Radonezh, whose repose we commemorate today.

Maria's story gives insight into the effect on mothers when a child desires to become a monastic. Young Bartholomew (Saint Sergius' baptismal name) expressed this desire fairly early in life. But both his brothers were married and had families to take care of, so the parents were not eager to let him leave. He agreed to delay his departure in order to take care of them. This was especially important for Maria. Had her husband died, she would have had only her sons to depend on.

In respecting his parents' wishes, Bartholomew was similar to Saint John Chrysostom, whose mother Anthusa had been widowed very young. When her son told her he wanted to be a monk, Anthusa pointed out that there were family lands to be managed, taxes to be paid, and wily officials eager to take advantage of an inexperienced and unworldly woman who had suddenly been thrust into great responsibility. Like Bartholomew, John put off his entry into the monastic life to help his mother.

Though Maria needed her son, she was open to God's plan for him. In this she was like other holy mothers. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, dedicated her long-awaited only child to the Temple. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, paid attention when the child in her womb leaped for joy at the sound of the Virgin Mary's greeting, and called her "the mother of my Lord." Maria and her husband lost no time in bringing their little Bartholomew to church and offering him as God's servant, believing this was His will for the child.

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 Lazorczyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

Maria was fortunate in having raised children who loved and cared about each other. In this too she was like other mothers of saints. Gregory of Nyssa wrote with great admiration and gratitude about his sister Macrina. Many saints made sure their siblings were provided for before becoming monastics. Bartholomew did this, bequeathing his considerable possessions to a brother before entering the new life in which he would be tonsured with the name Sergius.

Again like other holy mothers, Maria made an agreement with her husband that they would go to separate monasteries. That is where they spent the remaining years of their lives. The title given to Maria by the Church is "Venerable Schema-Nun." That she became a schema-nun means that she reached a high spiritual level in the judgment of her superior, the abbess. She had already taken the formal vows of chastity, obedience, poverty and stability of place. She was already entitled to wear the mantle of a monastic. But as a schema-nun, she reached the highest level of monasticism.

Saint Maria lived as a wife, a mother, and an advanced monastic, all in one lifetime. It's a richness befitting the woman who mothered and raised one of Russia's greatest saints.

Heartfelt Greetings

Congratulation to **Chris** and **Sonya Finno** who celebrated their wedding anniversary last Wednesday. Happy birthday to **Jennifer Bzik**, who celebrates her birthday this coming Wednesday, to **Joanne Bzik**, and **Janice Pecoraro**, both this Saturday. May God grant all of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Announcements

◆ Next **Sunday, October 2**, we are going to Hunterdon Hills Playhouse to see "Squabbles," a comedy about a young couple with live-in in-laws. Tickets are still available and cost \$61.50 per person (choose from 7 entrees). For more information and tickets, please see Kathy Petrow, or call her at 201-796-6958. Dinner starts at 2:00pm.

◆ Save the date: on **Saturday, October 15 & Sunday, October 16, 2016**, His Eminence Archbishop Michael will be visiting our parish with Archpastoral visitation. Great Vespers on Saturday and Divine Liturgy on Sunday will be served at their usual times - 6:00pm and 9:00am respectively.

◆ The **Food Pantry** is always in need of food items. Please keep those less fortunate in mind and help us to feed those in need. A basket is in the vestibule of the church for your convenience. May God bless you abundantly for your generosity.

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.



September 25, 2016

14th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Repose of Ven. Sergius of Radonezh

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistles: 2 Cor. 1:21-2:4
Gal. 5:22-6:2 (Saint)
Gospels: Lk. 5:1-11
Lk. 6:17-23 (Saint)
- **Panikhida** - in memory of **Christine Lynch**, on the 40th day of repose, offered by Barbara & John Kary
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.

Schedule of Services

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

6:00pm - Great Vespers & Litya

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1 - PROTECTION

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2

9:00am - Divine Liturgy