

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

What Would St. Nicholas Do?

On Tuesday, December 6th we celebrate the beloved Nicholas of Myra in Lycia. We know the stories of his saving miracles, his love of children, and the gifts he gave in secret. There is another story, one which seems less in character. Hearing Arius profess his heretical beliefs with smooth, convincing language at the Council of Nicaea, Nicholas finally had had enough. He struck Arius to keep him from speaking more blasphemy. As a result he lost his position as a bishop, and it was not restored until the Theotokos directed that it should be.

If the saint had a hard time listening to Arius, what would he do with Bill Maher, a social and political commentator, stand-up comic, and opponent of religion? Maher's film "Religulous" (a play on the words "religion" and "ridiculous") might draw St. Nicholas' ire, but perhaps it would merely elicit a resigned sigh at its silly pretentiousness.

Like many people who criticize religion, Maher is articulate, but has only a superficial understanding of his subject, and is deeply impressed with his own opinions. He constantly interrupts the people he is interviewing in the film to interject his own ideas. One rabbi asks him at least four times to "let me finish", but Maher continues to break in. He demonstrates his disagreement with what the rabbi is saying by walking out on him, on camera. This kind of petulance is unbecoming to any interviewer and especially one who constantly claims, as Maher does, that he is completely objective and "only wants to ask questions."

One person interviewed is Francis Collins, a leading geneticist who was raised as an atheist but found his way to faith. Maher tells Collins that he is in a distinct minority as a scientist who is

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.

also a believer. The soft-spoken Collins tries to disagree. Maher again interrupts, insisting that few scientists have ever been people of faith (conveniently ignoring Einstein, Mendel and Johannes Kepler, among others). Since Maher talks several times about his own abandonment of his childhood Catholic faith, it would have been fascinating to hear a prominent scientist tell how he went in the other direction, from atheism to belief. But that journey, which could have made the movie more even-handed, doesn't interest Maher. The Collins interview is considerably shorter than those he conducts with inarticulate and foolish-seeming believers, obvious charlatans, and people who agree with him.

Bill Maher doesn't possess the dangerous power Arius had in the fourth century. But he appears often on television, and is regarded as a serious commentator and even an intellectual by some. We should be ready, especially in talking with young people, to give a solid and authentic exposition of the faith, and to point out errors and pretense in those who attack it.

St. Nicholas wouldn't give in to people with half-baked ideas. Neither should we, though it would probably be advisable for us to keep our hands in our pockets.

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday to **Greg Cahayla**, who celebrates his birthday this Tuesday, **Effie Stankovci**, and **Georgiana Stankiewicz**, both this Wednesday. May God grant all of you good health and happiness for Many Years!

Announcements

◆ Tonight, **Sunday, December 4, 2016** the Hawaiian Myrrh-streaming Icon of the Mother of God will visit Ss. Peter & Paul Church here in Passaic. An Akathist service will be served at 6PM. All are invited to attend.

◆ Next **Saturday, December 10, 2016** an *Annual Christmas Cookie Walk* will be held in Holy Resurrection Church in Wayne between 10AM - 4PM. For sale will be a wide variety of delicious homemade Christmas cookies as well as unique holiday gifts and decorations.

◆ Just a reminder: we are in a **Nativity Fast** that will last until the Feast of Nativity of Christ. This is the time when each member of our parish community is encouraged to prayerfully prepare for, and then participate in the Sacrament of private Confession and Holy Communion. **Parish Confessions** will be offered on **Saturday, Dec. 17**, right after the Healing service. If for any reason you cannot make it that day, you can have your Confession after any Vespers service or half-an-hour before the Divine Liturgy on Sundays, just let Fr. Igor know in advance.

◆ On **Saturday, December 17 at 1:00pm** in our church there will be a **Healing service** to the Mother of God in front of her icon "Queen of All". This service is open for everyone and is for the healing from any disease (this icon is especially known for the healings that occurred of those who suffered with cancer).

◆ A special thank you to all who donated to our **Thanksgiving appeal** to help all our neighbors in need. We are always grateful for your help and again our need continues at this special time of year. Please remember those less fortunate and make this a true season of blessings for those in need and for those who give with a cheerful and loving heart.



December 4, 2016

24th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Great Martyr Barbara and Martyr Juliana.
Ven. John of Damascus.

**Glorification of Hieromartyr
Protopresbyter Alexander Hotovitsky**

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
- **Panikhida** – in memory of newly departed **Joseph Korin**, on the 9th day of his repose, offered by Kathryn Korin
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for a fellowship following the service.
- **"O" Club meeting** – all members are urged to attend.

Schedule of Services

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6 – ST. NICHOLAS
9:00am - Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10
6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11
9:00am - Divine Liturgy