

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

170 Lexington Avenue, Passaic, New Jersey, 07055
www.stjohnspassaic.org

REV. FR. IGOR KSENIUK, Rector

973-473-1928 (Phone/Fax)
646-387-5494 (cell)
fr.igorksn@gmail.com

Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

The Mysteries of Elizabeth

On September 5th the Church commemorates Saint Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptizer or Forerunner.

The first chapter of Luke tells us that she is "of the daughters of Aaron" and is the wife of the priest Zachariah. The two are praised with these words: "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (1:6).

But the next verse describes one of the mysteries in Elizabeth's life: she is barren. Why would such a praiseworthy couple, now advanced in years, be deprived of the blessing of children? This mystery does not have a "solution" we can discover. God chooses to give this couple a child, in fact an extraordinary child. But the timing is His, not ours. Elizabeth and Zachariah will become parents very late in life, but they will not remain childless until they die.

Another mystery is the way the newborn child's name is announced. Elizabeth says, much to the surprise of the gathered relatives and friends, that his name is to be John.

Not only would most people expect that this announcement would be made by the man of the family, but "John" is not a name that had been used in the families of either Elizabeth or Zachariah.

Why is she given this privilege? Perhaps because she, unlike her husband, was willing to believe the angel Gabriel's message from God. Zachariah doubted what the angel said – that such an old couple would have a child, whose name was to be John. But Elizabeth, just as she had accepted years of barrenness, accepted this wonderful news and shared it with the people around her. Zachariah could only mutely confirm her words. He

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, Michael Bzik, Mary Fechisin, Andrew Fabian, Mary Hadginske, Barbara Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

had been temporarily rendered unable to speak because, as Gabriel says, "you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time" (1: 20).

When Mary the Theotokos visits her relative Elizabeth with the news of her own pregnancy, there is still another mystery, which Elizabeth herself questions. She asks, "And why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Elizabeth also is the first human being to repeat Gabriel's words to Mary: "Blessed are you among women." This simple, elderly woman is chosen by God to utter the first human affirmation of the marvel of the Incarnation.

In one of the readings for this day, Saint Paul describes the greatest of mysteries, the saving work of God: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8: 9).

Some are willing to accept God's mysteries, as Elizabeth did. Others doubt and challenge the messengers He sends to tell us about His mysteries, as Zechariah did. It is up to us to decide which example to follow, and to decide which one will enable us to "know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."



Announcements

◆ Save the date: **On Saturday, September 16**, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Rahway will have Consecration and 50th Anniversary Celebration with His Eminence Archbishop Michael. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ Save the date: St. John the Baptist parish in Little Falls, NJ invites everyone to their Parish picnic on **Sunday, September 17** (with a rain date on Sept. 24). The picnic will begin at 12pm and run until 7pm. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ The annual **Diocesan Assembly** this year will be at **Saints Peter & Paul Church in Endicott NY on 1-2 November 2017**. The initial letter announcing the Assembly, with important information, from the Chancellor is available on the diocesan website. Additional information will be coming soon.

◆ Helen Baron, Food Pantry coordinator thanks everyone for all their donations during the summer months. She also reminds us that fall will soon be upon us and that includes Thanksgiving and Christmas. Please remember the need that many families have and start collecting supplies for the Thanksgiving baskets that will be distributed to them. Many thanks again for all your help.

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 3, 2017

13th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Cor. 16:13-24
Gospel: Mt. 21:33-42
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

- THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7**
6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya
- FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 - NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS**
9:00am - Divine Liturgy
- SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**
6:00pm - Great Vespers followed by General Confession
- SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10**
9:00am - Divine Liturgy