

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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Truth at Great Personal Cost

Today, January 21 we remember Saint Maximus the Confessor, who was born in the year 580 in Constantinople. He defended the faith so uncompromisingly that he is one of the great Fathers of the Church.

Maximus did not start out to be a monk or priest. His parents were members of the nobility, and he was highly intelligent and well-educated. When offered an important position in the court of the Emperor Heraclius, the young man accepted it and filled it very well.

But Maximus soon realized that the imperial court was not the place for him. He gave up his position and joined a monastic community outside the city. This was the right choice; he loved the monastic life and later became abbot of the monastery. His prayer life guided him to read, study and write about Jesus Christ with great depth of understanding.

Life, though, was not destined to be peaceful. In the year 626 his monastery was invaded and dismantled. The monks were forced to leave, and Maximus fled from Alexandria to Carthage, and from Carthage to Rome.

It was in Rome that he met Pope Martin I, with whom he discovered a very important common interest. Both of these scholarly, pious men opposed a false teaching about Jesus Christ called monothelitism. Those who adhered to this teaching said that He had only one will — His divine will.

For Maximus and Martin, this was a dangerous falsehood because it undermined Jesus' complete and real humanity. To be the Savior of humanity, Maximus said, Jesus had to have two wills: His divine will as Son of God, and His human will as truly one of us.

January 21, 2018

33rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Zacchaeus Sunday

Ven. Maximus the Confessor

Ven. Maxim the Greek

Sanctity of Life Sunday

• 8:50am – Hours

• 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistle: 1Tim. 4:9-15

Gospel: Lk. 19:1-10

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

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

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 you prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Genevieve Bobenko, Michael Bzik, Mary Fechisin, Andrew & Dorothy Fabian, Mary Hadginske, Barbara Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozzi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky.

Unfortunately, the Patriarch accepted the Monothelite teaching. Even worse, the Emperor himself accepted it, largely for political reasons. So Maximus was accused of treason, taken back to Constantinople against his will, and thrown into prison where he languished for years. But he staunchly defended the faith and the true humanity of the incarnate God throughout all those years.

When he was in his early eighties, Maximus was finally sentenced. His tongue was cut out so that he could no longer speak "treasonous" words, and his hand was cut off so he could no longer write them. He endured all this, as well as exile, public humiliation and beatings, still insisting that Jesus Christ had possessed a human will and a divine will. Many years later, at the Sixth Ecumenical Council which took place about two decades after his death, the Church exonerated him and declared his teachings to be true.

Saint Maximus once wrote, "To harbor no envy, no anger, no resentment against an offender is still not the same as having love for that person. It is possible, without any love, to avoid rendering evil for evil. But to render good for evil — that is the quality of perfect spiritual love." These words have special power because they come from a man who suffered so cruelly for no crime except defending the truth.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to Nicholas Alexander Silvestre, who celebrates his birthday this Monday, Chris Baron, this Tuesday, and Mary Hadginske, this Friday. May God grant all of you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Announcements

◆ Today, Sunday, January 21, is observed as "Sanctity of Life Sunday" in Churches across the United States. The commemoration marks the 45th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion in the US. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, led the Orthodox delegation at the annual March for Life in Washington, DC this passed Friday, January 19. He offered the opening prayer at the pre-March program. Today, liturgical petitions and prayers for Sanctity of Life Sunday are added to the Divine Liturgy. The complete text of His Beatitude's annual Archpastoral Message for Sanctity of Life Sunday is available at oca.org.

◆ Our **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held, weather permitting, on **Sunday, February 11** following the Divine Liturgy and coffee hour. All parishioners (members in good standing, defined by the Church Canons, and OCA, Diocesan and Parish by-laws) are urged to attend this very important in the life of our parish meeting.

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.