

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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April 8, 2018

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

- **11:30pm** (Sat.) – Nocturne
- **12:00am** – Procession & Paschal Matins
- **9:30am** – Paschal Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Acts 1:1-8
Gospel: Jn. 1:1-17
- **Blessing** of Paschal baskets & breaking of the Fast in the church hall.

Schedule of Services

- BRIGHT MONDAY, APRIL 9**
9:00am - Divine Liturgy & Procession
- BRIGHT TUESDAY, APRIL 10**
9:00am - Divine Liturgy
- BRIGHT SATURDAY, APRIL 14**
6:00pm - Great Vespers
- ST. THOMAS SUNDAY, APRIL 15**
9:00am - Divine Liturgy
1:30pm - Blessing of Graves at East Ridgelawn Cemetery

CHRIST IS RISEN!
INDEED HE IS RISEN!
ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕСЕ!
ВОИСТИНУ ВОСКРЕСЕ!

On April 14, Bright Saturday, we read verses 22-33 in Chapter 3 of John's Gospel. Earlier in the chapter, Jesus has had an encounter with Nicodemus, who does not understand His words about being born again.

Jesus asks Nicodemus, a well-known teacher of Israel, "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" It's significant that Our Lord puts the question not in terms of understanding, but of believing. He then tells us how to strengthen our belief, making reference to the Old Testament. He refers to Numbers 21:9, when fiery serpents were biting the complaining people of Israel as they followed Moses through the wilderness. God told Moses to raise a bronze serpent on a pole, and promised that everyone "who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." Jesus says that just as Moses lifted up the serpent, "so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." We are to look up to Jesus, lifted on the cross, as the people looked up at the serpent raised on the pole. Making the effort to look at Him, to see Him and keep looking to Him, will lead us to belief and to salvation.

Bright Saturday's reading shows that John the Baptizer or Baptist, the Forerunner, truly looked up to Christ. In these verses, John's disciples come to him and tell him that the one to whom he bore witness, Jesus, is outdoing him. John was used to having

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, Andrew & Dorothy Fabian, Mary Hadginske, Barbara Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Kathleen Lazorczyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky.

many followers and being a leader, but now the people are following Jesus. Certainly John might have been tempted to feel jealousy and resentment. But he refers to himself as the "friend of the bridegroom." This was a position like that of the best man at a wedding. The "friend" had important responsibilities during the marriage ceremony, but once it was over he stepped down and gave the bridegroom the prominent place, rejoicing for the bridegroom's joy.

John reminds his disciples that he had always said he was not the Christ. Then he makes a wonderful statement of humility: "He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease." In other words, he will now look up to Christ, as many people had looked up to him. He further compares himself to Christ by saying, "He who is of the earth belongs to the earth, and of the earth he speaks; he who comes from heaven is above all." Jesus is the One, John knows, who is "from heaven" and so He is the only one who can claim authority over every person and thing. That authority is based not on coercion but on love: "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand." As the true friend of the Bridegroom, John humbly steps down from his own position and encourages all of us to look up to the One whom the Father loves.



Announcements

◆ Tomorrow, **Bright Monday** at the end of the Divine Liturgy we will be having procession around the Church, during which the children will be carrying the Icons. If you have small family icons that are fit for our little parishioners, please bring them with you for the procession.

◆ The **Blessing of Graves** at **East Ridgelawn Cemetery** will be held next **Sunday, April 15** (St. Thomas Sunday.) The blessing will start with Panikhida at the cemetery chapel at **1:30pm**. For St. Peter's and other cemeteries please make an appointment with Father Igor. If you have family members that are buried far away and you are not able to visit their graves, you can submit their names for commemoration at the time of blessing.

◆ The **Passaic "O" Club** gratefully extends a thank you to all our parishioners and friends who donated to this year's **"Gifts of Love"** program. Your generosity is deeply appreciated and the funds will be a welcomed addition to the funds needed to assist delegates from the Diocese of Alaska and Mexico to participate in the 19th All-American Council this year. Thank you again.

Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to the Paschal Divine Liturgy this morning. 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.