

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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**CHRIST IS RISEN!
INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

On April 23 we remember the Great Martyr and Wonderworker George, who was born to Christian parents in Cappadocia, toward the end of the third century.

George always knew he wanted to be a soldier. He quickly rose in the Roman army ranks, gaining the status of tribune. He enjoyed the favor of the Emperor Diocletian, who had known his family, and he was also an excellent soldier.

But Diocletian hated Christianity and brutally punished anyone identified as a follower of Jesus Christ. When George saw the way Christians were persecuted and killed, he confronted the emperor, condemning the cruel acts and proclaiming his own Christian faith. He even renounced his army commission, an act which was seen as deeply insulting to Rome and her ruler.

The emperor had George jailed and tortured. The young prisoner prayed constantly and was saved from death over and over again, despite the terrible things done to him. The sight of these miracles and of George's faithful prayer led many who witnessed them to become Christians, including the emperor's wife Alexandra. This inflamed Diocletian's fury and frustration, and in 303 he ordered his wife and George beheaded.

The well-known image of Saint George shows him thrusting a long spear into a menacing beast, a dragon, but accounts of his life don't include such an episode. Yet it is an appropriate image, because it reflects his courage in challenging powerful evil, and overcoming its might through prayer. The image reminds us that we also must stand up to evil and defend the faith. We also need to be people of prayer who can face "dragons" of various kinds rather than running away from them.



April 22, 2018

3rd SUNDAY OF PASCHA

Holy Myrrhbearing Women

Holy Greatmartyr George (April 23)

• **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy

Epistles: Acts 6:1-7

Acts 12:1-11 (St. George)

Gospels: Mk. 15:43-16:8

Jn. 15:17 - 16:2 (St. George)

• **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the Divine Liturgy

• **1:30pm** – Blessing of Graves at the East Ridgelawn Cemetery

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, APRIL 29

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

Saint George continues to be venerated today. He is the patron saint of England; the city of Moscow has several statues and other depictions of him; countless Orthodox churches are named for him. People still look to him for miracles and healing, too. Among many shrines is a small, unimposing one at Beit Jala, near Bethlehem. Visitors, both Muslim and Christian, come in great numbers to pray, to ask for healing, and to honor this beloved "slayer of the dragon."

On this day we read Acts 9:1-19, telling of the apostle Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. The first words, describing Paul, make him sound like a man possessed by a "dragon" himself. We read: "Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord..." Saul so hates Christians that he wants to round up any there are in Damascus, bind them, and bring them to Jerusalem to face the Temple authorities.

Paul has an inner dragon to face and conquer. He must change his whole way of thinking and acting, and do away with the hatred inside him. We too have dragons to defeat—some internal, some external. Saint George and Saint Paul remind us of that, and they also remind us that Christ can lead us, as He led them, to victory over the dragons in our path.



Announcements

◆ Due to the weather conditions last Sunday, the **Blessing of Graves at East Ridgelawn Cemetery** was postponed to today. 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 **Paschal Artos** that was distributed at the end of the Divine Liturgy last Sunday is still available. Please see fr. Igor if you would like to take a piece home today.

◆ The next **Trustees' Meeting** will be next Sunday, April 29. All members please plan to attend.

◆ **Heartfelt Thank You** to all of you who in any possible way participated in preparation, beautification and clean-up of the services and social events in our parish during this Paschal season. May the blessing of the Lord be upon you and your loved ones for Many blessed Years! Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

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.