

# 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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ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

## Human Anguish and Divine Compassion

**The Church remembers three saints of the Church who experienced great anguish in their lives, for different reasons. But the three also received the compassion, and comfort, that God gives.**

Joachim and Anna were, of course, the parents of Mary the Mother of God. Joachim was descended from King David, and Anna was the daughter of a priest. They were devout, and offered much of their income to the Temple and for the relief of the poor. But before their child's birth, which happened late in their lives, they lived through long, lonely years of being without any children.

This was not only a source of sorrow, but also of humiliation and rejection. One time when they had traveled to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice in the Temple, the high priest said haughtily to Joachim, "You are unworthy to offer sacrifice with your childless hands." Others pushed Joachim aside, and he and Anna were forced to leave the Temple and make the journey home in deep sadness. So God's compassion, answering their fervent prayers with the birth of Mary, was especially sweet to this couple.

The Church also remembers the Blessed Nicetas, called "Man of God" and also "the Hidden." This latter name refers to his spiritual efforts, which were extraordinary but unseen and unknown by those around him. Even though he lived in the busy city of Constantinople and was surrounded by people all day, he found time for intense prayer and secret good works that brought him very close to God.

Among the blessings he received during his holy life, Nicetas was once able to ease another man's anguish and call down

## 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, 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.

God's compassion on him. This other man, a deacon named Sozon, had quarreled with a priest. They never resolved their argument, and the priest died. Sozon was grief-stricken at having let the rift continue until it was too late.

Sozon's guilty conscience led him, eventually, to Nicetas, who was able to call the priest back from the dead so that he and Sozon could be reconciled. The miracle took place at night, in the church of the Blachernae Mother of God in Constantinople. After Sozon and the priest embraced each other, Nicetas disappeared from his sight; once again he became "Nicetas the Hidden." For the rest of his life, Sozon was free of the anguish of an unresolved quarrel.

In 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4 Saint Paul also speaks about being in anguish. He had already had one painful visit to the Corinthian church, and was reluctant to make another, so he had instead written a rather harsh letter: "For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you."

Paul, too, was grateful for God's compassion which eased his anguish. He writes in 7:4, "[Even] with all our affliction, I am overjoyed."



## Announcements

◆ This coming Saturday, September 15, 2018 there will be a **Liturgical Music Workshop**, hosted by Holy Trinity Church in Rahway, NJ. This workshop will provide tools necessary for beginning singers and conductors with limited experience. The instructor is Dr. David Drilllock, the Chairperson of the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations of the OCA. For more information please see a flyer at the bulletin board.

◆ The **Annual Diocesan Assembly** is scheduled to be convened on Tuesday, October 30 and Wednesday, October 31, 2018 at the Orthodox Church of the Holy Annunciation, 70 Van Zile Road, Brick, NJ 08724. The guest speaker is Archimandrite Sergius, Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery. The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy is on Tuesday, October 30 at 9:00am. Registration is from 8:00am to 8:45am and during lunch. The Assembly will begin at 1:00pm. The schedule for Wednesday will be published when it becomes available.

◆ Our **Food Pantry Coordinator**, Helen Baron, would like to thank you all for your contributions throughout the summer. God grant you all Many Years! Thanksgiving is just around the corner! Many stores have special fall sales that are worth looking into for non-perishable foods (canned or packaged) to help fill our baskets for our less fortunate neighbors.

## 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 9, 2018

### 15<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

• **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy

Epistles: Gal. 6:11-18; 2Cor. 4:6-15

Gospels: Jn. 3:13-17; Mt. 22:35-46

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

### Schedule of Services

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12**

12:00pm - Holy Matrimony of

**Serge Sabo & Hope Marie Callahan**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13**

6:00pm - Great Vespers with Litya

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14**

**EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15**

NO VESPERS

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16**

9:00am - Divine Liturgy