

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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Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Where Does Temptation Come From?

The writer of the Epistle or Letter of James is traditionally identified as James, the "brother" or relative of the Lord, who was the first Bishop of Jerusalem.

James 1: 1-18 he addresses his words to "the twelve tribes in the Dispersion." This phrase might appear to refer specifically to the people of Israel, the Jews who are "dispersed" and living in various areas of the world.

But James describes himself as a "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." So the phrase he uses is really a description of the Church, which is the new Israel, dispersed in a pagan society. Christians are pilgrims and sojourners, whose true home is not in this world. The First Letter of Peter similarly addresses members of the Church as "the exiles of the Dispersion" (1:1.1)

In the next verse of his letter, James acknowledges that Christians will face trials. These should be counted as "all joy" because they test faith, and those who are steadfast in the test will come to be "perfect and complete" as followers of Christ.

James then assures his readers that God will provide the wisdom needed to withstand those trials to anyone who asks. All that's required of us is that we ask with faith that He is able and willing to provide what we need. If we ask while doubting all the while that He can really help us (James calls this being "double-minded") we can't expect to receive any real help; we are like a wave of the sea "driven and tossed by the wind." We need to make a solid commitment to God, and then act with unwavering faith in Him.



February 3, 2019

36th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Afterfeast of the Meeting. Holy and Righteous Simeon the God-receiver and Anna the Prophetess

- **8:45am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: 1Tim. 1:15-17
Gospel: Mt. 15:21-28
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service.
- **Trustees' Meeting**

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9

6:00pm - Great Vespers & General Confession

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10

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 Ann Dolak, Dorothy Fabian, Barbara Kary, Helen Kurnewitz, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Dennis Maixner, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky.

Nobody living in the fallen world and trying to follow Jesus Christ will be free from temptation. James acknowledges this, but he cautions that nobody should ever, in the midst of temptation, say that the temptation comes from God. God does not tempt anyone.

The source of our temptations, James says, is our own desires, misdirected and allowed by us to lure us into places we should not go. God has given us desires and appetites, and they can either be used in a healthy way or a destructive way. The choice is ours and so is the responsibility.

If temptation doesn't come from God, what does come from Him? Verse 17a contains the answer in words that we say as part of the Divine Liturgy: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."

The next part of that verse tells us that in God "there is no variation or shadow due to change." This God who calls us to be constant is constant Himself; we can rely forever on that. He has "brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures." That is a manifestation of His love for us — a love we can also rely on forever.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Jeffrey Rahnefeld**, who celebrates his birthday this Friday. May God grant you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



Announcements

◆ Plans for our **Annual Parish Meeting** are set for **Sunday, February 24, 2019**, following the Divine Liturgy and coffee hour. Please plan to attend this important meeting in life of our parish. A light lunch will be available.

◆ Diocesan **Altar Servers Retreat** will take place on Friday, March 1st - Sunday, March 3rd at Saint Basil Academy, 79 St Basil's Rd, Garrison, NY 10524. This event is open to current altar servers, and those with an interest in serving in the altar. Last day to register is Sunday, February 17. All those who plan on attending – children, chaperones, and clergy – must fill out the respective participant and chaperone registration forms available at the Diocesan website www.nynjoca.org.

◆ Diocesan **Annual Lenten Teen Retreat** will take place on March 22-24, 2019 at Shiloh Bible Camp & Retreat Center, 753 Burnt Meadow Road, Hewitt, NJ 07412. For more information and how to register, please see a flyer at the bulletin board or visit our Diocesan website.

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.