

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

A Man with a Mustard Seed

We read in the Gospel of Luke that Jesus told His disciples: "If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamore tree, 'Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you" (17: 6).

Most of us, reading this passage, see it as a striking image. Perhaps when we were church school students we were given mustard seeds as an encouraging reminder that even a little faith can eventually achieve wonderful things. But how many of us really believe that our faith could bring about big changes, especially against great odds? Do we have faith at least as substantial as a mustard seed?

One man who did have that faith is Saint Nicholas (or Nicolai) of Japan, who worked to foster Orthodox Christianity in that country. He was born Ivan Kasatkin in 1836 in Smolensk, Russia. A bright student, he won a scholarship to the St. Petersburg Theological Academy and began his studies there in 1856.

Four years later, an announcement was posted on the Academy's notice board: Graduates were invited to apply for the position of chief priest at the Russian Embassy Church in Japan. Ivan Kasatkin, reading the announcement, felt deeply drawn to the idea of going to Japan. He hurried to complete his application, and was soon given the good news that he had won the position. In June of that year, 1860, he was tonsured a monk and given the name Nicholas. He spent the following winter making the long voyage to his new country.

Nicholas knew what he would face when he arrived. He was a missionary in a land where Christianity was prohibited. There was widespread persecution of its adherents; Japanese called it a "vicious" religion. The Bible and numerous other needed books

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

had not yet been translated.

He began slowly, spending years talking to people in the streets, in order to absorb Japanese culture and language and to show that he respected both. His first convert, a samurai and son of a Shinto priest, helped him bring others to the faith, but he was not looking for large numbers. Having seen the Japanese people's high regard for the written word, he sought out Christian spiritual works to translate, while continuing to meet and talk with people.

Over time the number of converts to the Orthodox faith in Japan grew and Fr. Nicholas was eventually consecrated Bishop of Tokyo. Parishes and schools were established, and a number of Japanese men were educated and ordained as clergy for the Mission.

The Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) was a time of danger and uncertainty for Nicholas, as the most visible Russian in Japan. But he declined special protection, and quietly went on with his work of translation and visits to his parishes, by then numbering over 200. He would live for another 11 years, carrying on with his work energetically despite illness and the many demands placed on him.

When we wonder how much our faith can really do, Nicholas' life is a memorable example. Even if we never have as much faith as he had, a mustard seed grain's worth can grow into something beautiful to glorify God.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Christopher Kary**, who celebrates his birthday today; **Alissa Pecoraro**, tomorrow; and **Chris Finno**, this Thursday. May God grant all of 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.

February 10, 2019

37th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Zacchaeus Sunday

- **8:45am** – 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, FEBRUARY 16
6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17
9:00am - Divine Liturgy

Memory Eternal

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family and friends of our lifetime parishioner, **Helen Kurnewitz**, who fell asleep in the Lord on Saturday, February 2, and was buried from our Church on Saturday, February 9. May her Memory be Eternal!