

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

Did You See the Sign?

In Matthew 16:1-12 Jesus Christ talks about signs with some Jewish challengers, and then with His disciples.

The Pharisees and Sadducees throw down their challenge by asking that He show them a sign from heaven. They want a spectacle—one amazing enough to prove that He is what He claims to be.

Jesus reminds them that they are competent at interpreting the signs the sky gives. They anticipate good weather if the evening sky is red, and look for stormy weather if the morning sky is threatening. Yet, He says, they fail to interpret the "signs of the times" They don't acknowledge the clear signs He has shown them: the great crowds who have brought "the lame, the maimed, the blind, the dumb and many others" to Him and have seen all these people miraculously healed. Nor are the healings the only signs, for Jesus has also inspired faith in those who witnessed them; we read that these witnesses "glorified the God of Israel."

The challengers are an "adulterous" generation, He tells them, because they have broken the covenant with God that is like the marriage bond. He says that such a generation, seeking signs, will not receive any other than the sign of Jonah—a reference to His three days in the tomb, like Jonah in the belly of the whale. It's also a reference to the greatest sign: the Resurrection.

The apostles, though of course not hostile to Jesus like the Pharisees and Sadducees, seem equally poor at remembering the signs He has shown them. He says, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." He means that



July 21, 2019

5th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Holy Prophet Elijah (comm. July 20)

- **8:50am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy
Epistle: Rm. 10:1-10
Jm. 5:10-20 (Saint)
Gospel: Mt. 8:28-9:1
Lk. 4:22-30 (Saint)
- **Panikhida** in memory of newly departed **Elena Nehrebecki**, offered by our choir.
- **Coffee Hour** – everyone is invited for fellowship following the service

Schedule of Services

SATURDAY, JULY 27

6:00pm - Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JULY 28

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 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.

they must avoid the wrong teachings of those men. But the disciples, who have forgotten to bring bread, relate it to their oversight. Jesus must remind them: "Do you not remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? How is it that you fail to perceive that I did not speak about bread?"

Saint Apollonarius was a follower of the Apostle Peter, who consecrated him to be the bishop of Ravenna, Italy. He lived there for many years, preaching and baptizing. The years were not easy, because the pagan leaders in the area hated and harassed him. They finally succeeded in having him exiled, and he was put on a ship heading for the Balkans. The pagan soldiers assigned as his guards treated him as a dangerous criminal.

But God sent a sign. The ship capsized, and only Apollonarius, his accompanying priests, and two soldiers were saved. This miraculous sign and their survival convinced the soldiers to be baptized.

We can willfully ignore signs, as the Pharisees and Sadducees did. We can forget them, remembering only our own actions like neglecting to bring bread. Or we can respond with faith, as the pagan soldiers did.

Our God sends signs. He just won't force us to see them.

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to **Helen Baron**, who celebrates her birthday tomorrow, **Kathy Petrow**, this Wednesday, **Brielle Hope Anderson**, this Thursday, and **Austin Christopher Anderson**, this Saturday. May God grant all of you, and all who celebrate a birthday this week good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!

Announcements

◆ **A request from His Eminence Archbishop Michael regarding special "Matching Pledge" for St. Andrew's Camp:** An Anonymous Donor has offered a Matching Pledge: for every dollar donated for the new building in the month of July, the Anonymous Donor will match each of the contributions – up to \$10,000! Our Diocesan parishes, organizations and faithful are urged to help the Camp Building Project by donating this month, and having their contribution matched by this Anonymous Donor. All contributions should be made out to "Saint Andrew's Camp," earmarked for the "New Building Project," and mailed to: Diocesan Chancery, 33 Hewitt Avenue, Bronxville, New York 10708. May God bless you with all the good things that come from His hands.

Deepest Sympathy

Our condolences and sincere sympathy are extended to Vladimir, Diana, and the whole Nehrebecki family on the falling asleep of their beloved wife and mother, our faithful parishioner and a choir singer, **Elena Nehrebecki**, who passed away on July 18, 2019. All services will be in our church: on Wednesday, July 24, viewing will be from 2-6PM, with Funeral service at 6PM; on Thursday, July 25, the Divine Liturgy will begin at 9AM, followed by short coffee hour and burial at St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, PA.

Grant rest eternal with the Saints in blessed repose, O Lord, to the soul of Thy newly-departed handmaid, the ever-to-be-remembered **+Elena**, who has fallen asleep, and make her Memory to be Eternal. Вечная Память!