

**St. Mary's Orthodox Church
(Dormition of the Mother of God)**

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Sunday September 23, 2018

The Conception of the Honorable, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; Martyrs Andrew, John, Peter, and Antoninus of Syracuse, martyred in Africa; Virgin-Martyr Irais (Rhais) of Alexandria; Saints Xanthippa and Polyxena, disciples of the Apostles, who died in Spain; New-Martyr Nicholas Pantopolos at Constantinople; New-Martyr John of Epirus; New-Martyr Archimandrite Arsenius; Saint Adomnan, Abbot of Iona; Saint Aelfwald, King of Northumbria; repose of Abbess Eupraxia of Old Ladoga Convent

Services for the week of September 23

Saturday, September 29: 6:00 pm Great Vespers

Parish News

WELCOME: to all of our guests today. We are so glad that you have come to enjoy our Orthodox worship. We invite you to come for coffee and sweets in our church hall and to enjoy fellowship with us. May God bless you!

OFFERINGS: September 9: \$1315.00

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER: Very Rev. Michael Miklos, Very Rev. Jonathan Tobias, Wanda (Martha) Smith, John (Randy) Bailey, Janet Mikel, Martha Akers, Alexander Shostko, the grieving members of the Budarin family (who lost their relative, +Timur) and Kenny Bamber. May God grant them the grace to bear the crosses of illness and sorrow. May His will be done in their lives.

DIOCESAN ASSESSMENT: As many of you know, at our September Annual Meeting, it was announced that we are lacking the January records from our former Treasurer. If you paid your Assessment during January, please contact our Treasurer, Doris Akers at 304-887-3618 and let her know. If you know what you donated to the church that month, please let her know that also. All information is confidential. Thanks!

THE CONCEPTION OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

On this day the mercy, miracle and wisdom of God are celebrated: mercy toward the devout and righteous parents of St. John, the aged Zacharias and the aged Elizabeth, who all their lives had wished and begged a child from God; the miraculous conception of John in the over-aged womb of Elizabeth; and wisdom in the dispensation of man's salvation. For John, God had special great intentions, namely, that he be the Prophet and Forerunner of Christ the Lord, the Savior of the world. Through His angels, God announced the birth of Isaac to the childless Sarah, Samson to the childless Manoah and his wife and of John the Precursor [Forerunner] to the childless Zacharias and Elizabeth. Through His angels, God announced the birth of those, for whom He had special intentions. How could children be born of aged parents? If someone is curious to know this, let him not inquire about this, neither of men, for men do not know, nor of natural laws, for this is beyond natural laws but rather let him turn his gaze on the power of the Almighty God, Who, out of nothing, created the whole world and Who for the creation of the first man, Adam, did not need any parents, neither old nor young. Instead of curiosity let us give thanks to God Who often reveals His power, mercy and wisdom to us outside natural laws in which we, shackled, without special miracles of God, would fall into despair and forgetfulness of God.

REFLECTION

He who gives to the poor, gives to Christ. This is the meaning of the evangelical teaching, which was confirmed in the experience of the saints. Peter the Merciful, after he repented, began to give alms to the poor wherever the opportunity presented itself. On one occasion, a shipwrecked man who had barely saved his naked body from the wreck, met Peter and begged him for some clothing. Peter removed his costly dolman and clothed the naked man with it. Shortly afterward, Peter saw his dolman in the shop of a merchant who had displayed it for sale. Peter was very saddened that this shipwrecked man sold his dolman instead of using it for himself. Peter said to himself: "I am not worthy; the Lord does not accept my alms." But the Lord appeared to him in a dream in the form of a nobleman, brighter than the sun with a cross on his head wearing Peter's dolman. "Peter, why are you sad?" asked the Lord. "My Lord, why would I not be sad when I see that which I gave to the poor is sold at the market?" Then the Lord asked him: "Do you recognize this garment on Me?" Peter replied: "I recognize it, Lord, that is my garment with which I clothed the naked one." Then the Lord spoke to him again: "Therefore do not be sad, you gave it to the poor man and I received it and I praise your deed."

