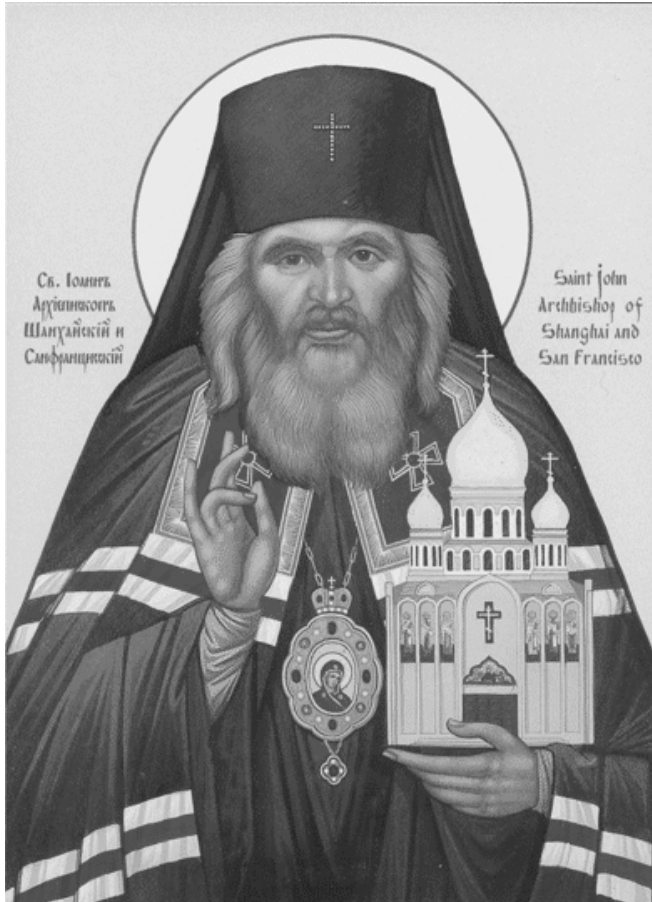




# The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

4th Sunday after Pentecost + Sun, July 2, 2023 + St. John Maximovitch



## Hymns for This Week

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. He has trampled down death by death. He has become the first born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world great mercy.

Glorious apostle to an age of coldness and unbelief, invested with the grace-filled power of the saints of old; divinely-illuminated seer of heavenly mysteries, feeder of orphans, hope of the hopeless: thou didst enkindle on earth the fire of love for Christ upon the dark eve of the

day of judgment. Pray now that this sacred flame may also rise from our hearts!

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the Prophets and Patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

Chosen wonderworker and superb servant of Christ, who pourest out in the latter times inexhaustible streams of inspiration and multitudes of miracles. We praise thee with love and call out to thee, Rejoice, O holy hierarch John, Wonderworker of the latter times.

## Epistle Reading - Romans 6:18-23

And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Gospel - Matthew 8:5-13

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me.

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**DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS:** *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!*

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And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

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## This Week's Schedule

### DOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

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#### **THIS WEEKEND**

Saturday, July 1st

5 PM: Great Vespers & Confessions  
Parastas: Protodeacon Gregory Hatrak

Sunday, July 2nd

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,  
Coffee Hour

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#### **THIS WEEK**

WED 11 AM - 1:30 PM: Private Prayer in Church  
6:30: Akathist: To the Mother of God

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#### **NEXT WEEKEND**

Saturday, July 8th

10 AM: Friends of the Poor  
5 PM: Great Vespers & Confessions

Sunday, July 9th

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,  
Coffee Hour, Parish Council Meeting

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### & UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS

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**FRIENDS OF THE POOR:** Save the date. Our next Friends of the Poor outing will be next weekend,

Saturday, July 8th. We will meet at the church at 10 AM and depart to downtown Wilkes-Barre.

**SUMMER BIBLE STUDY:** Beginning Thursday, July 20th, 11:AM - Noon, we will begin our summer bible study. The bible study will be held weekly on Thursdays for one hour. Bring your bible with you as we discuss and discover the profound revelation of Jesus Christ to the world and how it applies to our daily lives.

**BLESSING OF VEHICLES - SUN, JULY 23RD:** Vehicles are traditionally blessed on or near the Feast of St. Elijah (July 20th) who was taken up by God into the heavens in a fiery chariot. We are all accustomed to having our homes blessed around the Feast of Theophany, yet we also spend a great deal of time in OR on our vehicles traveling through town, on vacations, for work, and for recreation. This blessing is a request to Our Lord that He send a Guardian Angel to protect and keep both drivers and passengers in safety, and to bless our vehicles given to us by God for their good use. Bring your vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles or any other form of transportation on Sunday, July 23rd to be blessed immediately following Divine Liturgy.

**ANNUAL BAZAAR July 28th & 29th - Work and Donations needed** - The Holy Trinity Annual Bazaar is approaching fast. It will be held July 28th & 29th from 4 PM to 8 PM. As usual we need as much help as we can get to make it a big success. There will be a number of upcoming workdays, especially the week of the Bazaar, along with many donation opportunities. Please see the signup sheets in the back to make donations for the Raffle Baskets and Bake Sale, and to sign up for the upcoming perogie project (July 14th/15th) and work schedule.

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## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

**July Birthdays:** Christina Cherkis (7/2), Marley Willis (7/10), Xenia Clark (7/11), Luke Austin (7/15), Diane Welgus (7/18), Rachael Talpash (7/24), Katrina Zbegner (7/26), Donna Stankiewkz (7/27), Christopher Dutko (7/28), Shannon Bisset (7/28), Deborah Mills (7/31) **July Anniversaries:** Lisa & Scott Harvey (7/15), Marianne & Jeremy Haugh (7/18), Tom & Alexanne Conklin (7/27)

**This Week's Birthday/Anniversaries:** Christina Cherkis (7/2)

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## Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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### St. John Maximovitch

The Holy Hierarch John Maximovitch was born in the Kharkov region in 1896, and reposed in Seattle in 1966. During the Russian Civil War, his family fled to Belgrade, Serbia, where he later became a monk and was ordained priest. In 1934 he was made Bishop of Shanghai, where he served until the Communists came to power. Thereafter he ministered in Europe, serving as Bishop first in Paris then in Brussels, until he became Archbishop of San Francisco in 1962.

Throughout his life he was revered as a strict ascetic, a devoted man of prayer, and a truly wondrous unmercenary healer of all manner of afflictions and woes. He served the Divine Liturgy daily, slept little more than an hour a day, and kept a strict fast until the evening. It is doubtful that any one man gave so much protection and comfort as he to the Russian Orthodox people in exile after the Revolution of 1917; he was an unwearied and watchful shepherd of his sheep in China, the Philippines, Europe, and America. Through his missionary labors he also brought into the Church many who had not been "of this fold."

Since his repose in 1966, he has been especially glorified by God through signs and miracles, and his body has remained incorrupt.

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### HOMILY BY ST. JOHN MAXIMOVITCH On the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist

Among the Church's feasts, there are three in honor of God's saint which in their significance stand out from the others devoted to the saints and are numbered among the great feasts of the Church of Christ. These feasts glorify the economy of God for our salvation.

These three feasts are the Nativity of St. John the Forerunner, his Beheading, and the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul.

The apparition of the holy Archangel Gabriel to the priest Zacharias in the Temple, with the announcement of the birth to him and the righteous Elizabeth, of a son who would prepare the way for the Lord, the Savior of the world, and the subsequent fulfillment of this promise, are the first of the events related by the Evangelists.

The announcement of the holy Archangel Gabriel to Zacharias in the Temple begins the New Testament Gospel. The announcement of the same Archangel Gabriel six months later in Nazareth to the Virgin Mary concerning the birth from Her of the Son of God, Who was to become incarnate, is a continuation of the revelation of the Pre-eternal Counsel concerning the salvation of the human race.

Three months after the Annunciation, St. John the Forerunner was born "in a city of Judah," and six months after him Christ Himself was born in Bethlehem.

These events are closely bound together. "The glorious conception of the Forerunner proclaimeth beforehand the King Who is to be born of a Virgin" (Exapostilarion, Sept. 23, Feast of the Conception of John the Baptist). The announcement of the Archangel Gabriel in the Temple, announced later to all living nearby by Zacharias, in the magnificent hymn, which he sang after the birth of the child, John and the restoration to him of the gift of speech (Luke 1:67-79), is the forerunner of the angelic hymn: "Glory to God in the highest;" which was sung in Bethlehem by the angels when they announced to the shepherds the Nativity of Christ.

The Nativity of John the Baptist is the first joy sent down by God to the human race, the beginning of its deliverance from the power of the devil, sin and eternal death.

It is true that even before the Forerunner, the Most Holy Virgin Mary was born, and angels announced Her birth to Her parents. However, at that time, only Her parents knew of the exalted lot that was prepared for the Virgin Who was born, and they themselves were not fully aware of what had been announced to them beforehand. Therefore, it was only they, who celebrated at the birth of their Daughter, while the rest of the world only later understood the joy that had been announced (to it), by this birth.

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For this reason, the feasts of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos and Her Entrance into the Temple were established in the Church and began to be solemnly celebrated significantly later than the other great feasts, whereas the Nativity of John the Forerunner is one of the most ancient and most venerated of Christian feasts. Sermons on this feast have been preserved from the first centuries.

From the day of the Nativity of John the Forerunner, the preparation of the human race begins for meeting the Son of God on earth. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people . . . And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways (Luke 1:68, 76). These God-inspired words of the priest Zacharias, after he had regained the gift of speech, were made known in all the land of Judea, causing disturbance to all living there, who asked each other in astonishment: What manner of child shall this be? (Luke 1:66).

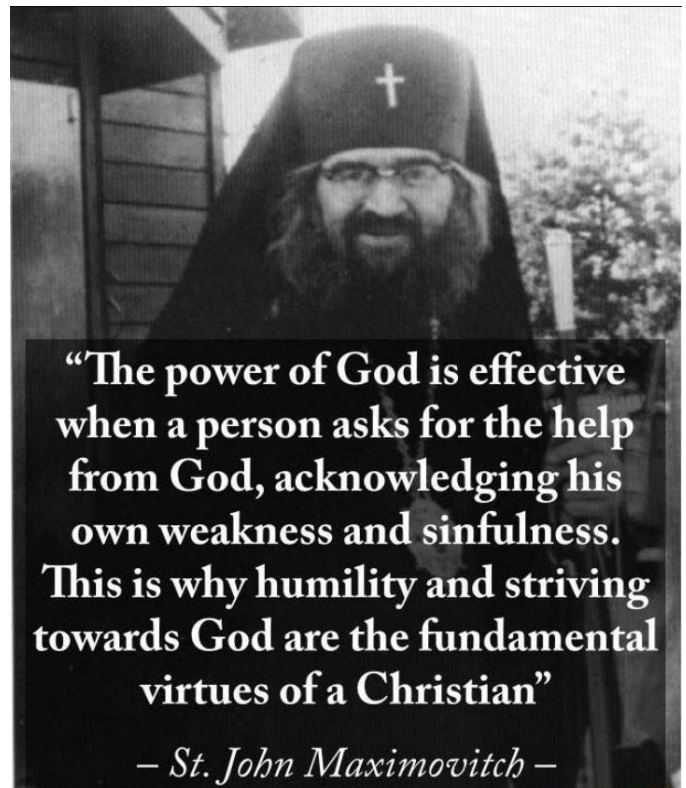
Involuntarily the thought arose: Is this not the Messiah Himself? Judea was in an especially tense state of expectation of the Savior. Thus, the child John prepared the way for the Lord by his very birth; and even while he was still in the womb of His mother, by his leaping (Luke 1:41) he announced the coming birth of the Child Jesus, as if crying out: "Christ is born, give ye glory. Christ comes from heaven, meet ye Him" (Irmos, Canticle One of the Canon, Feast of the Nativity of Christ).

Being born exactly half a year before Christ, John the Forerunner by the exact time of his birth depicted his mission of preparing the way for the Lord. He was born at the time of the year (June 24) when the day begins to grow shorter after the summer solstice, whereas the Nativity of Christ occurs (December 25) when the day begins to grow longer after the winter solstice. These facts are an embodiment of the words spoken later, by the Forerunner, after the beginning of Christ's preaching: He must increase, but I must decrease (John 3:30).

"The herald of the Sun, the Forerunner" was John the Baptist, who was like the morning star that announces the rising of the Sun of Righteousness in the East.

Just as the very event of the Nativity of John the Baptist was the antechamber of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus

Christ, so also the feast of the Nativity of John the Forerunner is also the antechamber of the feast of the Nativity of Christ. "The star of stars, the Forerunner, is born on earth today, from a barren womb, John the beloved of God, and manifests the dawning of Christ, the Orient from on high" (Glory at Lauds, of the Feast, June 24). "The whole creation rejoiceth at thy divine nativity: for thou wast shown forth as an earthly angel, O Forerunner and a heavenly man, proclaiming to us, the God of heaven incarnate" (Canticle Five of the Canon). "O Prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ, we who venerate thee with love, are in perplexity how worthily to praise thee; for the barrenness of her who bore thee and the dumbness of thy father are loosed by thy glorious and precious nativity, and the incarnation of the Son of God is preached to the world" (Troparion of the Feast).



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## The Treasury

*"... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."*

<b>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open:</b> \$12,305
<b>Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open:</b> \$2,840
<b>Last Week's Collection (6/25/23):</b> \$7,741