



Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ

ΕΥΘΥΜΙΟΣ

ΠΑΝΤΟΤΕ ΕΡ-
ΓΑΖΕ ΤΟ ΘΑΘΟΝ
ΚΑΔ' ΗΝ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΝ
ΚΑΙ Ο ΘΕΟΣ ΒΟ-
ΗΘΕΙ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Thirtieth Sunday after Pentecost

January 19, 2014

**Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel
J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors**

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Every Monday, we have prayerful devotions before the Myrrh bearing icon at 6:00 PM. Everyone is invited to be present in praise. The Birthgiver invites us to manifest our faith in response to her first shown love, to unite our prayers with hers for the salvation of our souls. Invite your friends and neighbors to join us.

+++ Please inform Father as soon as possible if you want your home blessed.

+++ **Work on the bathrooms is scheduled to begin Monday morning. Please pray it will be completed quickly.**

+++ **Pirohi Schedule for the New Year: February 1 and March 15.**

+++ **Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Anna, Ryan, Barbara, Betty, James and Michael.**

+++ **The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.**

+++ **We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received last Sunday: Tithe Offering, 472.00; Nativity of our Lord, \$50.00; Candles, \$15.00; Holyday, \$104.00; Energy, \$15.00; Parish Dues, \$25.00; Food Coupons, \$260.00; Kitchen, \$48.00, for a total of \$989.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offer their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.**

+++ **As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleanor Korba, Robert Gorbich, Marilyn Korba and Pani Bulezta.**

+++ **We make a PENNIES FROM HEAVEN Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1715.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.**

+++ **Please be certain to see a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using Shop Rite Food Coupons available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite ALL to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5600 on this project to date!**

+++ **The Clothing Drive is a permanent on-going project in our parish. Please bring any type of clothing and fabrics along with stuffed animals and shoes for the benefit of our parish. The bags can be left in the vestibule or on the front porch of the rectory. Please invite your friends and neighbors to assist us in disposing of unwanted clothing, shoes and fabrics.**

+++ **Please pray the Lord our God grants us an enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory.**

+++ **May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!**



Christ's Priesthood

Stir up the grace of God which is in you by the imposition of hands 2 Timothy 1: 16.

Be followers of me as I am of Christ 1 Corinthians 11: 1.

The lips of the priest uttered holy knowledge and the people sought the law at his mouth
Malachias 2: 7.

The Scribes and Pharisees have sat in the chair of Moses. All things therefore, they shall teach you, observe and do Matthew 23: 2.

...ministers of his kingdom 1 Kings 24: 7; 26: 9.

You would have no power over me if it were not given you from above John 13: 11.

There exists no authority except from God Romans 13: 1.

He who hates you, hates me and he who despises me despises him who sent me Luke 19: 11.

Go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes not shall be condemned Mark 16: 16.

If he refuses to hear the Church, let him be to you as a heathen and the publican
Matthew 18: 17.

Marriage: *Love and Life in the Divine Plan*

Believers are called upon to understand the God-given meaning of marriage, for living it faithfully, for promoting and strengthening it and for protecting and defending it. Each theme communicates an essential point of Christian teaching on marriage as a sacramental Mystery.

Marriage comes to us from the creative hand of Almighty God who endows it with its proper form and purpose. Marriage is a union between man and woman that the Creator blessed and called "very good." It is not something that we invented or that we can redefine. The gift of marriage survived the menace of original sin and was redeemed in Christ and established as one of the sacramental Mysteries of the Body of Christ by which his love for us becomes present. In the sacramental Mystery of Matrimony, the gift of marriage is transformed and elevated by the action of Christ in his Church. The marital union then becomes a unique relationship in which spouses help one another achieve holiness and give witness to God's love in the world.

The creation stories of Genesis show that man and woman are made for each other. The ways that the male and female sexes complement each other are essential to the nature and purpose of marriage. This complementarity is biological, but it also exists in the ways men and women think, act and communicate. Sexual complementarity enables spouses to form an intimate union that is loving and life-giving. Same sex relationships cannot do this and making them equivalent to marriage violates the nature of marriage.

Marriage creates a one-flesh union or intimate communion that is meant to be love and life-giving. The purpose of marriage, called unitive and procreative are equal, inseparable and ordered to each other. That marriage is valid which is always open to the procreation of children.

The sacramental Mystery of Matrimony elevates the ordinary natural institution of marriage to a sharing of love larger than itself. This is the love of Christ for his bride, the Church. His love is faithful, fruitful, free and forever and Christian spouses are called to imitate and live this love. Since the sacramental Mystery makes Christ present in the marriage of man and woman, they can rely on his grace to help them grow and persevere in love even when it seems impossible.

The Christian family is an image of the communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The love that spouses share and offer each other in their children overflows from the family to nurture the world. This familial love is an indispensable service to society and the Church.

Church teaching labels the family a “domestic Church” or Church in the home because Christ is present in its members and because the family has a mission to announce and build up the kingdom of God.

Human growth which is necessary in every marriage is intertwined with growth in holiness. Grace builds upon our human nature. Spiritual growth takes place to the extent that spouses welcome Christ into their lives and strive, through the practice of virtue to conform their attitudes and actions to those of the Lord. All virtue leads to the perfection of love. Marriage is a journey of love that constitutes a true and lasting vocation in the Church.

If marriage is a gift, then the most appropriate human response is gratitude. Gratitude opens the human heart to receive and share love. An open heart, in turn, means openness to children and extends to all in need. When couples are nurtured on the Eucharist, they increase their capacity for love and gratitude. They become a blessing and a gift to each other and to the world.

A Mountain Psalm

(A meditation on Psalm 121)

To the hills I lift up my eyes. To the hills and the skies I lift up my eyes,
to the hills, to the hills!

And I wonder, I wonder, I wonder, I wonder,
from where does my help come when I call out for help,
when I call out for help, when I need someone near me
to listen and hear me, to love and to cheer me?
From where does my help come?

My help comes from the Lord above, the Lord who made heaven and earth!
The Lord is my helper, the Lord is my guide,
my faithful companion who stays by my side.
The Lord is my helper, the Lord is my guide,
my faithful companion who stays by my side,
my helper, my guide who stays by my side now and forever. Amen!

To the hills I lift up my eyes. To the hills and the skies I lift up my eyes,
to the hills, to the hills!

GLORY to God in the highest; on earth
peace, and good will to men.

- We sing to You, we bless You, we worship
You, we glorify You, we give thanks to You
for the splendor of your glory.
- O Lord King, O Heavenly God, Father
Almighty! O Lord, Only-begotten Son,
Jesus Christ! And You, O All-Holy Spirit!
- O Lord God, O Lamb of God, O Son of
the Father who take away the sins of the
world, have mercy on us.
- O You who take away the sins of the
world, receive our prayer.
- O You who are enthroned at the right hand
of the Father, have mercy on us.
- For You alone are holy, You alone are the
Lord Jesus Christ for the glory of the Father.
Amen.
- Every day I will bless You and praise your
name, always and forever.
- Deign, O Lord, to keep us this day free
from sin.
- Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our
fathers; praised and glorified is your Name
forever. Amen.
- O Lord, let your mercy be upon us for we
have placed our trust in You.
- Blessed are You, O Lord : guide me by
your precepts.
- Blessed are You, O Master : make us
understand your precepts.
- Blessed are You, O Holy One : enlighten
us by your precepts.
- O Lord, You have been a refuge for us
from age to age.
- I said : "Lord, have mercy on me and heal
my soul, for I have sinned against You."
- O Lord, to You I come for shelter : teach
me to obey your will, for You are my God.
- For with You is the fountain of life and in
your light we shall see light.
- Extend your mercy upon those who
profess You.

Others may. You Cannot.

If God has called you in the sacramental Mystery of Baptism, to really be like Jesus Christ, His divine Son, you will be drawn into a life of crucifixion and humility and struggle. Your vocation is one to martyrdom, to death to self. The call of God will put such demands of obedience on you that you will not be able to follow other people, or measure yourself by even the most able of others. At times, our God will let other people do things which you will not be permitted to do. God is saving you for Himself, so He is protecting you from the snares of the world. In His own sight He is exalting you because His grace enriches you in a particular way. What part you are called to contribute to the salvation of souls is uniquely your own. If you do not freely give of yourself,

something of unique value will be lost for all time.

Others who seem very religious will push themselves, pull wires, and work schemes to carry out their plans. They will manipulate and even twist and turn to secure their goals. You cannot emulate their example, and if you attempt it, you will meet with abject failure and rebuke from the Lord. He expects great things from you and desires your motivation is pure and unadulterated.

Others may be allowed to boast of themselves, of their work, of their accomplishments, or may have a legacy left to them, but it is likely God will keep you poor in spirit. Our God wants you to have something far better than gold, namely a helpless dependence on Him, that He may demonstrate His faithful and enduring love for you in supplying all your needs day to day. He is using you to offer an example to the depraved world of a devoted disciple.

Our God may let others be honored and put forward but keep you hidden in obscurity in order to produce some fragrant fruit for His coming glory which can only be brought about in the shade, in a privileged place known only by Him. He may let others appear to be great with exalted titles and honors, but He will keep you small for Himself. He will use you as an instrument to show it is His glory that permeates creation. He may let others do a work for Him and get credit for it now. But the reward of all your efforts is held in the hands of Jesus which you will not see until He comes again in the glory of His angels.

He desires your soul express itself sincerely with St. Paul: "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" Philippians 3: 8.

The Holy Spirit will place a strict watch over you with a jealous impelling love. He will rebuke you for the little words and feelings or for wasting your time in accomplishing nothing for God's glory. So make up your mind and understand that the infinite Sovereign God has picked and chosen you to manifest His will and love in the world and has a right to do as He pleases with His choice creation. He does not owe you an explanation of these mysteries nor do those who truly belong to Him expect such. But if you respond to His love as His child, He will envelop you in a jealous love, an invigorating love, a precious love which recognizes your eternal value in His sight. Yours will then be exalted blessings because you belong to Him in heart, body and soul. "You fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" Psalms 16: 11.

Settle it, then, forever in your mind and soul that you are to deal directly with the Holy Spirit to bear His burden, His easy and light yoke. It is His option sometimes to tie your tongue, or chain your hand, or close your eyes in ways that He does not seem to use with others. In other circumstances you will be given thoughts not your own, words having their source in heaven so that souls may be taught and affirmed in salvation values. And when you are so possessed by the living God that your heart delights and your soul exalts

over this peculiar, personal, private enriched guardianship and direction by the Holy Spirit in your life, you will have already discovered the vestibule of heavenly bliss.

You are being slowly taught the only true comfort in life and death. Enduring values are being poured into your soul. Affirmation is being given that you are not your own, but belong, body and soul, wholly and totally, in life and in death to our forever faithful Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ.

Has He not redeemed us all by His death for our sins and has He not washed us with His precious blood? Has He not set us free from the tyranny of the devil? Has He not adopted us and made us children of the kingdom?

He watches over me in such a way that not even one hair can fall from my head without the will of the Father in heaven. In fact, all things work together for my salvation, regardless how they are perceived by the limited mind of others in this world.

Because I belong to Him without reservation, because I am His, because He claims me as His own, Christ our true God by the grace of His Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready to live only for Him. May my life always exalt, worship and glorify Him. May all my efforts draw others to Him!

"Whoever loses his life for me will save it"
Luke 9: 24.

IT IS NOT DEATH TO DIE

**It is not death to die,
To leave this weary road,
And, midst the brotherhood on high,
To be at home with God.**

**It is not death to close
The eye long dimmed with tears,
And wake in glorious repose,
To spend eternal years.**

**It is not death to fling
Aside this sinful dust,
And rise on strong, exulting wing,
To live among the just.**

**Jesus, You Prince of Life,
Your chosen cannot die!
Like You, they conquer in the strife,
To reign with You on high!**

Did You Know That ...

...if you would live in ease, do what you ought, not what you please?

...people wrapped up in themselves make small packages?

...if you would persuade others, speak of interest, do not use reason?

...he that takes wife, takes care?

...a pair of good ears will drink dry a hundred tongues?

...a learned blockhead is a greater blockhead than an ignorant one?

...it is not necessary to approve of him who agrees with all you say?

...it is better to teach a child to hold his tongue because he has plenty of time to learn how to speak?

...he that is rich need not live sparingly, and he that can live sparingly need not be rich?

...the discontented man finds no easy chair?

...virtue and a worthwhile trade are a child's best portio

...the first degree of folly is to concede oneself as swell, wise and wonderful and the second is to believe it?

...you may delay but time will not?

...despair ruins some, but presumption many?

...lost time is never found again?

...blame-all and praise-all are two blockheads?

...what one relishes, nourishes?

...you cannot hunt two rabbits with one dog?

UNSPEAKABLE GRIEF



YOU MIGHT HEAR the news from a policeman: "I'm sorry. He didn't survive the accident."

You might return a friend's call, only to be told, "The surgeon brought bad news."

Too many spouses have heard these words from grim-faced soldiers: "We regret to inform you . . ."

In such moments, spring becomes winter, blue turns to gray, birds go silent, and the chill of sorrow settles in. It's cold in the valley of the shadow of death.

David's messenger isn't a policeman, friend, or soldier. He is a breathless Amalekite with torn clothing and hair full of dirt who stumbles into Camp Ziklag with the news: "The people have fled from the battle, many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also" (2 Sam. 1:4).

David knows the Hebrews are fighting the Philistines. He knows Saul and Jonathan are in for the battle of their lives. He's been awaiting the outcome. When the messenger presents David with Saul's crown and bracelet, David has undeniable proof—Saul and Jonathan are dead.

Jonathan. Closer than a brother. He had saved David's life and sworn to protect his children.

Saul. God's chosen. God's anointed. Yes, he had hounded David. He had badgered David. But he was still God's anointed.

God's chosen king—dead.

David's best friend—dead.

Leaving David to face yet another giant—the giant of grief.

We've felt his heavy hand on our shoulders. Not in Ziklag, but in emergency rooms, in children's hospitals, at car wrecks, and on battlefields. And we, like David, have two choices: flee or face the giant.

Many opt to flee grief. Captain Woodrow Call urged young Newt to do so. In the movie *Lonesome Dove*, Call and Newt are part of an 1880s Texas-to-Montana cattle drive. When a swimming swarm of water moccasins end the life of Newt's best friend, Call offers

*We, like David, have two choices:
flee or face the giant.*

bereavement counsel, western style. At the burial, in the shade of elms and the presence of cowboys, he advises, "Walk away from it. son. That's the only way to handle death. Walk away from it."

What else can you do? The grave stirs such unspeakable hurt and

unanswerable questions, we're tempted to turn and walk. Change the subject, avoid the issue. Work hard. Drink harder. Stay busy. Stay distant. Head north to Montana and don't look back.

Yet we pay a high price when we do. Bereavement comes from the word *reave*. Look up *reave* in the dictionary, and you'll read "to take away by force, plunder, rob." Death robs you. The grave plunders moments and memories not yet shared: birthdays, vacations, lazy walks, talks over tea. You are bereaved because you've been robbed.

Normal is no more and never will be again. After the wife of C. S. Lewis died of cancer, he wrote, "Her absence is like the sky, spread over everything."

Just when you think the beast of grief is gone, you hear a song she loved or smell the cologne he wore or pass a restaurant where the two of you used to eat. The giant keeps showing up.

And the giant of grief keeps stirring up. Stirring up . . .

Anxiety. "Am I next?"

Guilt. "Why did I tell him . . ." "Why didn't I say to her . . ."

Wistfulness. You see intact couples and long for your mate. You see parents with kids and yearn for your child.

The giant stirs up insomnia, loss of appetite, forgetfulness, thoughts of suicide. Grief is not a mental illness, but it sure feels like one sometimes.

Captain Call didn't understand this.

Your friends may not understand this.

You may not understand this. But please try. Understand the gravity of your loss. You didn't lose at Monopoly or misplace your keys. You can't walk away from this. At some point, within minutes or months, you need to do what David did. Face your grief.

Upon hearing of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, "David lamented" (2 Sam. 1:17). The warrior wept. The commander buried a bearded face in callous hands and cried. He "ripped his clothes to ribbons. All the men with him did the same. They wept and fasted the rest of the day, grieving the death of Saul and his son Jonathan, and also the army of God and the nation Israel, victims in a failed battle" (1:11-12 MSG).

Wailing warriors covered the hills, a herd of men walking, moaning, weeping, and mourning. They tore clothing, pounded the ground, and exhaled hurt.

You need to do the same. Flush the hurt out of your heart, and when the hurt returns, flush it again. Go ahead, cry a Mississippi.

Jesus did. Next to the tomb of his dear friend, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Why would he do such a thing? Does he not know of Lazarus's impending resurrection? He's one declaration from seeing his friend exit the grave. He'll see Lazarus before dinner. Why the tears?

Death amputates a limb of your life.

Amid the answers we think we know and the many we don't is this one: death stinks.

Death amputates a limb of your life. So Jesus wept. And in his tears we find permission to shed our own. F. B. Meyer wrote:

Jesus wept. Peter wept. The Ephesian converts wept on the neck of the Apostle whose face they were never to see again. Christ

stands by each mourner, saying, "Weep, my child; weep, for I have wept."

Tears relieve the burning brain, as a shower in the electric clouds. Tears discharge the insupportable agony of the heart, as an overflow lessens the pressure of the flood against the dam. Tears are the material out of which heaven weaves its brightest rainbow.²

We don't know how long Jesus wept. We don't know how long David wept. But we know how long we weep, and the time seems

*Tears are the material out of which heaven weaves
its brightest rainbow. —F. B. Meyer*

so truncated. Egyptians dress in black for six months. Some Muslims wear mourning clothes for a year. Orthodox Jews offer prayers for a deceased parent every day for eleven months. Just fifty years ago rural Americans wore black armbands for a period of several weeks.³ And today? Am I the only one who senses that we hurry our hurts?

Grief takes time. Give yourself some. "Sages invest themselves in hurt and grieving" (Eccles. 7:4 MSG). *Lament* may be a foreign verb in our world but not in Scripture's. Seventy percent of the psalms are poems of sorrow. Why, the Old Testament includes a book of lamentations. The son of David wrote, "Sorrow is better than laughter, for sadness has a refining influence on us" (Eccles. 7:3 NLT).

We spelunk life's deepest issues in the cave of sorrow. Why am I

here? Where am I headed? Cemetery strolls stir hard yet vital questions. David indulged the full force of his remorse: "I am worn out

We spelunk life's deepest issues in the cave of sorrow.

Why am I here? Where am I headed?

from sobbing. Every night tears drench my bed; my pillow is wet from weeping" (Ps. 6:6 NLT).

And then later: "I am dying from grief; my years are shortened by sadness. Misery has drained my strength; I am wasting away from within" (Ps. 31:10 NLT).

Are you angry with God? Tell him. Disgusted with God? Let him know. Weary of telling people you feel fine when you don't? Tell the truth. My friends Thomas and Andrea Davidson did. A stray bullet snatched their fourteen-year-old son, Tyler, out of their lives. Tom writes:

We were bombarded by the question, "How are you doing?" . . .

What I really wanted to tell everyone was, "How do you think we are doing? Our son is dead, our life is miserable, and I wish the world would end."⁴

David might have used different language. Then again, maybe not. One thing for sure, he refused to ignore his grief.

The mighty warriors—fallen, fallen!

Women of Israel, weep for Saul. . . .
O my dear brother Jonathan,
I'm crushed by your death.
Your friendship was a miracle-wonder,
love far exceeding anything I've known—
or ever hope to know.

The mighty warriors—fallen, fallen. (2 Sam. 1:19, 24,
26–27 MSG)

David wept as creatively as he worshiped, and—underline this—
“David sang this lament over Saul and his son Jonathan, and gave
orders that everyone in Judah learn it by heart” (1:17–18 MSG).

David called the nation to mourning. He rendered weeping a
public policy. He refused to gloss over or soft-pedal death. He faced
it, fought it, challenged it. But he didn't deny it. As his son Solomon
explained, “There is . . . a time to mourn” (Eccles. 3:1, 4 NIV).

Give yourself some. Face your grief with tears, time, and—one
more—face your grief with truth. Paul urged the Thessalonians to
grieve, but he didn't want the Christians to “carry on over them like
people who have nothing to look forward to, as if the grave were the
last word” (1 Thess. 4:13 MSG).

God has the last word on death. And, if you listen, he will tell
you the truth about your loved ones. They've been dismissed from
the hospital called Earth. You and I still roam the halls, smell the
medicines, and eat green beans and Jell-O off plastic trays. They,
meanwhile, enjoy picnics, inhale springtime, and run through knee-
high flowers. You miss them like crazy, but can you deny the truth?

They have no pain, doubt, or struggle. They really are happier in heaven.

And won't you see them soon? Life blisters by at mach speed. "You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath" (Ps. 39:5 NIV).

When you drop your kids off at school, do you weep as though you'll never see them again? When you drop your spouse at the

God knows the sorrow of a grave. He buried his son. But he also knows the joy of resurrection. And, by his power, you will too.

store and park the car, do you bid a final forever farewell? No. When you say, "I'll see you soon," you mean it. When you stand in the cemetery and stare down at the soft, freshly turned earth and promise, *I'll see you soon*, you speak truth. Reunion is a splinter of an eternal moment away.

There is no need for you to "to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13 NIV).

So go ahead, face your grief. Give yourself time. Permit yourself tears. God understands. He knows the sorrow of a grave. He buried his son. But he also knows the joy of resurrection. And, by his power, you will too.

ST. EUTHYMIOS - "A DESERT FATHER"



any of the Church's most glorious "flowers" bloomed in the desert areas of the Middle East during the early centuries of Christianity. These were the "desert fathers" who left the world with all its enticements and sought God in the silence and austerity of the desolate sections of Armenia, Egypt, Syria and the Holy Land.



Among them is numbered St. Euthymios the Great, who died about the year 473. He was the son of Christian parents, Paul and Dionysia, who had long prayed for a child. Their plea was answered, and the child was named Euthymios - which means "good cheer" or "joy." But the father died shortly after, and the widow then took her child to her brother, a priest attached to the Bishop of Melitene. There he was nurtured in the service of the Lord, and Dionysia herself became a deaconess.

Euthymios yearned for the monastic life, and after about five years living in religious solitary, he went into a barren area near the Dead Sea. There, in a cave, he and another monastic (Theoktistos) lived their austere lives devoted to labor, prayer and fasting.

Directed by his spiritual advice and pious example, two people who would later become saints, were greatly influenced by Euthymios. He shifted Empress Eudokia away from heresy and towards the True Light. With his guidance, she built and funded many places of worship. Euthymios' power to affect others was also evident in a young boy given over to his care. That boy would outshine his other disciples to later become St. Sabbas the Sanctified.