

ST. ADRIAN



ST. NATALIA

# **Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church**

**24 BURKE ROAD**

**FREEHOLD, NJ 07728**

**Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost**

**August 24, 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**

**+++ The first Pirohi Sale will be on Saturday, September 13.**

**+++ 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.**

+++ This Friday is the simple feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist. In anticipation, the vesperal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Thursday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please join us in prayer and praise. Please note this a day of strict fast.

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Father George, Anna, Barbara, Betty, James, Yevlogia, Nicholas, Maria, Pani Anna Marie and Andrea.

+++ 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, \$482.00; Candles, \$11.00; Holy Day, \$82.00; Bulletin, \$25.00, for a total of \$600.00. 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!

+++ 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, Delores Waller, Maria Idronmenos, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleanor Korba, Marilyn Korba and Pani Buletza.

+++ 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 **\$1809.00** 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 \$5750 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.

+++ We invite all pray the Lord our God grants us the grace of enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory.

+++ Work is about to begin on the exterior of our building with the soffit being replaced completely so that new gutters and down spouts may be installed. Plans are being made to have the dome refurbished and reinstalled on the roof.





# E T E R N A L   B E A T I T U D E

Father Robert E Lucas

## Eternal Beatitude

Generally speaking, all thought and speculation on Heaven cannot be profound in relation to objective reality and truth. Man cannot possibly, with his limited intellect, grasp nor understand what God has in store for the faithful and devoted believer. All attempts resemble a child's pondering thoughts and questionings on things far beyond its powers of comprehension and remind us of St. Paul's observation

When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, reason like a child, think like a child 1 Corinthians 13: 11.

## Heaven Here and Now

And it is true that we are children when we are confronted with the immensity of the glories of Heaven. We have a foretaste of Heaven here on earth because it is present wherever the torrent of Divine Life streams into the soul endowed with sanctifying grace. However, our experience of Heaven in the life of Christ's Body the Church, is commensurate with our limited ability here and now to know it.

Do you not know your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?...so glorify God in your body  
1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20.

You too are living stones, built as an edifice of spirit, into a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ 1 Peter 2: 5.

"The kingdom of God is at hand" Matthew 3: 2.

...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness  
Philippians 2: 12.

The life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me  
Galatians 2: 20.

I will entrust to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven  
Matthew 16: 18.

The kingdom of God is at hand Mark 1: 15.

The kingdom of heaven is within you Luke 17: 21.

However, this is just a little stream of light compared to the glory of the sun. And Heaven is not so much place as it is a state, a state of inexpressible and intimate union with Almighty God in the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the life of the Body of Christ we experience Heaven in a limited incomplete way which shall be perfected in us for all eternity after the Last and Final Dread Judgment.

Since perfect happiness is not confined alone to the soul, it flows into the body as well. Since the body cooperated in God's service during its earthly existence, it will also share in glory afterwards. Complete beatitude in Heaven will be imparted to man, soul and body.

If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then  
He who raised Christ from the dead will bring your mortal bodies to  
life also, through his Spirit dwelling in you Romans 8: 11.

## Glorified Body

To give us an idea of the splendor of the glorified body, the Apostle Paul compares it with the beauty of the glorified body of Jesus Christ.

He will give a new form to this lowly body of ours and remake it according to the pattern of His glorified body, by his power to subject everything to himself Philippians 3: 21.

The final book of Scripture tells us that

He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death nor mourning, crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away Revelation 21: 4;

Never again shall they know hunger or thirst, nor shall the sun or its heat beat down upon them Revelation 7: 16.

The glorified body will possess the quality of spirituality, so that while the form and dimensions of the body remain, it is enabled to pass not only through space, but through solid substances, which are naturally impenetrable to it, in the same manner sun rays pass through glass. Our risen Saviour has shown us this by passing through the rock which covered His tomb and by entering the locked and closed Upper Room where the Twelve were gathered out of fear of the Jews.

Yet in the Old Testament we find already the description of the agility of the bodies of those blessed in the Lord,

They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagle's wings; they will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint  
Isaiah 40: 31.

According to the insightful saints, we shall be gifted with a swiftness like that of an angel, who in a moment can come down from Heaven to earth and as quickly return to Heaven. St. Augustine shares a thought with us:

Wherever the spirit wishes to go, the body will likewise presently be Elementary  
Catechism.

Our divine Saviour Himself taught us,

Then the saints will shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom Matthew 13: 43.

St. Ephrem the Syrian calls the sun the greatest splendor that may be imagined by the human mind here on earth, and he was of the opinion that the elect in Heaven far surpass the sun in brightness and splendor because of their holiness and sanctity. This brightness does not dazzle or bewilder, but rejoices and delights the soul.

Since all of creation was involved in the curse of Adam, in this present state it can hardly furnish a fitting habitation for the blessed as Heaven must certainly remain free and untouched by sin's curse. Scripture speaks of this transformation:

The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and on that day the heavens will vanish with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and its deeds will be made manifest....What we await are new heavens and a new earth where, according to His promise, the justice of God will reside  
2 Peter 3: 10, 13.

## New Heaven

Similarly in the Book of Revelation:

The earth and the sky fled from His presence until they no longer could be seen Revelation 20: 11;

Then I saw new heavens and a new earth. The former heavens and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer. I also saw the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God, beautiful as a bride prepared to meet her husband Revelation 21: 1.

Thus the entire universe will be filled with the same brilliance which the heavenly Jerusalem now possesses, a conception totally beyond our present finite ability and capacity to grasp and understand. So it is understandable to us that Scripture should only give us a brief and fleeting description by way of imagery. The sublimest characterizations of the heavenly city are to be found in the last two chapters of the Book of Revelation. There it is portrayed as a city built upon a lofty mountain with walls made of precious stones, with gates of pearl, streets of purest gold, transparent as glass. This description is completed by that of the throne of God:

A throne was standing there in Heaven, and on the throne was seated One whose appearance had a gem-like sparkle as of jasper and carnelian. Around the throne was a rainbow as brilliant as emerald....From the throne came flashes of lightning and peals of thunder; before it burned seven flaming torches....The floor around the throne was like a sea of glass that was crystal clear Revelation 4: 1 - 7,

along with the infinite grandeur of the Son of Man and the large number of details with which the book is replete.

One like a Son of Man wearing an ankle-length robe, with a sash of gold about his breast. The hair of his head was white as snow-white wool and His eyes blazed like fire. His feet gleamed like polished brass refined in a furnace, and His voice sounded like the roar of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars. A sharp two-edged sword came out of his mouth, and his face shone like the sun at its brightest Revelation 1: 13 - 16.

The name itself, transposed, paradise, which Scripture as well as the college of Church Fathers employ for Heaven give some hint of the attractiveness of the place. It can be represented as a

garden of ravishing beauty, bounded with earthly delights that proceed from God, a garden of perpetual spring time, painted in lively and gorgeous engaging colors. None of our capacities will go ungratified. The glorified and transformed body will be refined and spiritualized beyond imagining; glorified conditions will be presented so that the words of the Apostle find ready application,

Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man  
what God has prepared for those who love him 1 Corinthians 2: 9.

So we can never appreciate the sensible joys of Heaven by the senses we know and experience in this earthly life.

### Senses Incapable

The senses of the body in Heaven will be gratified in a wonderful manner because in their earthly life they were kept from evil and utilized only for good. Contemplation of this blessedness induced St. Augustine to exclaim:

O my soul, if we were to suffer the greatest pains daily, yes, even  
hell itself for sometime, if it were thereby vouchsafed that we could  
see Christ in his glory, should we not gladly suffer this? Elementary  
Catechism.

And what happiness and what bliss will our eyes bring us as they feast at the sight of the Holy Countenance of the most beautiful of all the children of men? Faithful Orthodox believers will be enraptured by the sight of the exalted spiritual and radiant beauty in the souls of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Birthgiver of God, and all the Saints, who in unison shout out in a loud acknowledging voice,

Salvation is from our God, who is seated on the throne and from the Lamb!  
Praise and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving and honor, power and might,  
to our God forever and ever Revelation 7: 10, 12.

If we should see this vision now, we would not be able to bear it. Our body, like an earthen vessel, would break to pieces for excessive joy. The hearing of the blessed will be unceasingly refreshed by heavenly melody and praise from God. St. Augustine witnesses that,

Happy, truly happy shall I be in eternity if it is permitted me to hear  
those celestial melodies and hymns of praise. Blessed and again blessed

shall I consider myself if I may join in and praise my God, My King,  
my Lord, for all eternity Confessions.

The beloved Apostle of Christ imparts for our edification a portion of his vision:

I heard the voices of many angels who surrounded the throne and the living creatures and the elders. They were countless in number, thousands and tens of thousands, and they all cried out: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and praise Revelation 5: 11, 12.

And in yet another instance:

Then I heard what sounded like the shouts of a great crowd, or the roaring of the deep, or mighty peals of thunder, as they cried: Alleluia! The Lord is King, our God, the Almighty! Let us rejoice and be glad, and give him glory! Revelation 19: 6, 7.

In Heaven saints are vested in white garments:

...they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb Revelation 7: 14,

and they receive a crown of beauty and honor:

He...shall wear beautiful sure judgment for a helmet Wisdom 5: 17.

They enjoy perfect freedom and are made custodians of the works of God; they are present wherever Christ is.

Father, all those you gave me, I would have in my company where I am John 17: 24.

The blessed see the face of God in Heaven.

I assure you, their angels in heaven constantly behold my heavenly Father's face Matthew 18: 10.

They therefore know and appreciate the infinity and perfection of God. They see God as He is, face to face,

...for we shall see him as he is 1 John 3: 2;

...there we shall see face to face 1 Corinthians 13: 12.

## Never - Ending Paradise

The blessed in Heaven love one another; they are united by God's love which is their chief characteristic. It is love which marks the children of the eternal kingdom from the children of perdition. Joy unspeakable enters the soul as it recognizes its loved ones, relatives and friends in that blessed place. The blessed are free from all suffering; they shall neither hunger nor thirst.

Never again shall they know hunger or thirst Revelation 7: 16.

Death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor sorrow.

...no more mourning or death... Revelation 21: 4.

And night shall not exist for them any longer.

The night shall be no more, for the Lord shall give them light...Revelation 22:5.

The joys of Heaven last forever. Christ says that the blessed shall enter everlasting life.

I assure you...these will go off...to eternal life Matthew 25: 46.

The Holy Spirit is united forever to those who merit eternal beatitude.

I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you always John 14: 16.

The joy experienced by those saved in Christ can never be wrestled from them; nor will it abandon them.

...your hearts will rejoice with a joy no one can take from you John 16: 22.

We can all look forward to fulfillment and completion in Heaven. The vision of the blessed varies according to their lives. If they have genuinely accepted God's grace and cooperated with it in maturing towards sanctity, St. Paul offers this observation,

Let me say this much; he who sows sparingly will reap sparingly,  
and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully 2 Corinthians 9: 6.

All in Heaven see God, but some see Him more perfectly and experience Him more fully than others, according to the quality of their sanctity, the measure of their spiritual lives. The degrees of heavenly glory which the blessed possess can neither be diminished nor increased. There is of course, no envy among the blessed. In heaven each soul rejoices at the happiness and fulfillment of the others. There, the joy and happiness of another becomes one's own happiness and eternal bliss.

Heaven is not won by indulgence, but by denial. The road to heaven is not an easy one; it follows the path which Christ marked out for us on His way to Golgotha. St. Paul emphasizes this truth:

We must undergo many trials if we are to enter into the kingdom of God Acts  
of the Apostles 14: 21.

There is no beatitude without the practice of self-denial.

But how narrow is the gate that leads to life, how rough the road, and  
how few there are that find it Matthew 7: 14.

For those who are justified before God, Heaven begins on earth. Those who seek eternal joy already have it. The just have true and abiding peace.

Then God's peace, which is beyond all understanding will stand guard  
over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus Philippians 4: 7.

Here on earth those who are committed to Christ are joyful and grateful in adversity.

Blessed are those persecuted for holiness sake; the kingdom of God is theirs  
Matthew 5: 10,

and in the midst of sufferings,

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every  
kind of slander against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, for  
your reward is great in heaven Matthew 5: 11, 12.

In Heaven, in that place of God, there is no want, there is no deficiency, no concupiscence, nor generation, no ending, no failure, no death, no termination, no old age. There is neither hatred nor wrath, nor envy nor weariness, nor toil, nor darkness, nor night, nor falsehood. There is not in

that place any want at all; but it is full of light, of life, of grace, of fullness, of completion, and satisfaction, and renewal of life and love and all the good promises that are made by Almighty God,

...for them that love him 2 Corinthians 2: 9.

In Heaven, men shall be like angels, the soul shall be empowered with new senses, the body spiritualized, the eyes shall perceive the everlasting glory of God; the mouth shall feed upon hymns and glorification of God, the stomach shall be satisfied only by the fullness of righteousness, and the tongue shall speak nothing but praises and wisdom; our society there will be choirs of singers, chanting to God's eternal glory. Contemplation of the holiness of God will be our food; love will be our wine and drink and the beverage of God's holy ones. There will be no earthly desires, the appetite will not want, it will only be a faculty of delight.

In Heaven, there will be understanding surpassing everything we know today: love, wonder, joy and every day will be the same forever. This shall be the state of those accounted worthy of the resurrection to eternal life; where the body will no longer be a servant, but a partner with God; where it shall have no work of its own, but shall rejoice with the soul; where it will bask in the presence of God's infinite beauty; in this great place where we shall be fitted to see and enjoy God Who is our Lord and our loving Father.

It is an eternal source of pain and anguish to our God that because of their sad perverseness men prefer war to peace, cares to tranquillity, grief to joy, and the vanities of this narrow stage to the true and solid comforts of Heaven. Man becomes too comfortable on earth with all its temporary and transient joys and occupations and little realizes it is Heaven which is his true home and rightful destiny. He was created for Heaven and nothing less than its exalted glory is worthy of his dignity as created in the image of Almighty God. The brief sojourn here on earth is but a taste of eternal bliss and meant only to introduce us to how delectable is the sight of the Lord. Even after man's nature shook its fist at the Merciful Father, His loving magnanimity was wont to make other attempts to reconcile recalcitrant sinfulness to Himself. So His never-ending love found expression in the entrance of His Son into the world and with His assumption of our frail humanity, once again, God could show the infinite love that characterized His relationship to man at the creation of the world.

## Heavenly Eucharist

And as if this were not enough, He provided a Heaven on earth by endowing His priests with the power of invoking the grace of the Holy Spirit to transform the meager gifts of bread and wine into His very precious Body and Blood so that reposing on His earthly throne in the tabernacle of

every parish church, He would be just as spiritually present and visible among us as He is among the angels and saints in Heaven.

Thus Heaven is not a distant figure, a simply hoped for aspiration, not a far off place, but a realistic and tangible state to be experienced at least in part here on earth, whenever we enter into the fullness of the life of the Body of Christ, His Church, and immersed in the Holy Spirit as our strengthening grace and Guide, we offer in celebration the Divine Liturgy with the priestly celebrant and then become a part of Him in the Eucharist.

But here on earth, however and unfortunately, we in our daily pursuit of life, are a huge way off from the Kingdom of God, whose excellencies, whose designs, whose ends, whose constitution is spiritual and holy, sublime and perfect and eternal. All this we have now as communicants of the Orthodox Church. So that all we do is exchange time for eternity and Heaven becomes ours forever.

The Lord is sweet to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Let all your works, O Lord, praise you; and let your saints bless you.

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and shall tell of your power;

To make your might known to the sons of men and glorify the magnificence of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is a kingdom of all ages; and Your dominion  
endures throughout all generations.

Psalms 144: 8 - 13.

...we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which  
God ordained before the world, to our glory; Which none of the princes  
of this world knew; for if they had known it, they would never had crucified the Lord  
of glory. But, as it is written, That eye has not seen nor ear heard,  
neither has it entered into the heart of man,  
what things God has prepared for those who love him

1 Corinthians 2: 7 - 9.

**And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth were gone, and the sea is now no more. And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**

**And I heard a great voice from the throne saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men and he will dwell with them. And they shall be his people and God himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.**

**And he that sat on the throne said, Behold I make all things new**

**Revelation 21: 1 - 5.**



He that asks me about heaven means not to listen to or hear me, but to silence me; for he knows that I cannot tell him. When I meet him there, I shall be able to tell him and then he will be as able to tell me; yet then we shall be able to tell one another this, this, and even that which we enjoy forever in heaven, but the tongues of angels, the tongues of glorified saints shall not be able to express what heaven really is. For even in heaven, our faculties will never be able to fully and totally grasp. We shall be overwhelmed.

Heaven is not at all a place that is created, for all place that was created shall be dissolved. God did not plant a paradise for Himself, and remove to that, as He planted a paradise for Adam and removed him to that; but God is still where He was before the world was made. And in that place where there are more suns than there are stars in the firmament, for all the glorified saints are stars, and more light in another Sun, the Son of Righteousness, the Son of Glory, the Son of God, than in all of them; in that illustration, that emanation, that effusion of beams of glory that began to shine incomprehensible eons ago, in those uncreated heavens, shall we finally see our God.

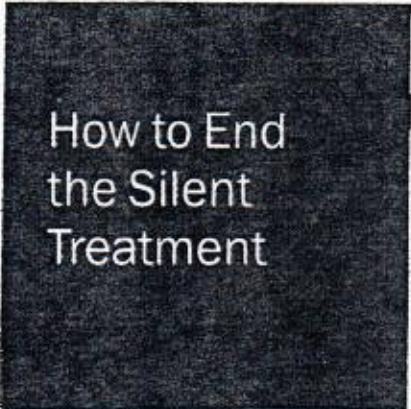
*We measure everything by the standard of the future, rather than the present, and define as useful only that which will be of service to us with reference to the grace of eternal life St. Ambrose 1, 28. On the Duties of the Clergy.*

*God's original wish was that all should be saved and enter His kingdom. For it was not as punishment that He formed us, but to share in His goodness, inasmuch as He is a good God. But inasmuch as He is a just God, His will is that sinners should suffer punishment. The first then is called God's antecedent will and pleasure, and springs from the very nature of Himself, while the second is called God's consequent will and permission and has its origin in us St. John Damascene, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith.*

# *Marriage Insights*

## The challenge

How do two people who have committed and vowed to love each other get to the point when they refuse to talk for hours – or even days? “At least we stopped fighting,” they tell themselves. Still, the issue has not been resolved, and they both feel uncomfortable.



How to End  
the Silent  
Treatment

## Why it happens

**Retaliation.** Some spouses use silence as a form of revenge. For example, suppose a husband makes week-end plans without consulting his wife. When she finds out, she is angry and calls him inconsiderate. He responds by calling her oversensitive. The wife storms off and stewes in silence. In effect, she is saying, “You hurt me, so I am going to hurt you back.”

**Manipulation.** Some use the silent treatment as a means to get what they want. For example, imagine that a husband and wife plan a trip and the wife would like to ask her parents along. The husband objects. “You’re married to me, not to your parents.” He says. He then gives his wife the silent treatment, shunning her in the hope that she will break down and concede to his wishes.

The silent treatment runs contrary to God's explicit mandate: "In any case each one should love his wife as he loves himself, the wife for her part showing respect for her husband" Ephesians 5: 33.

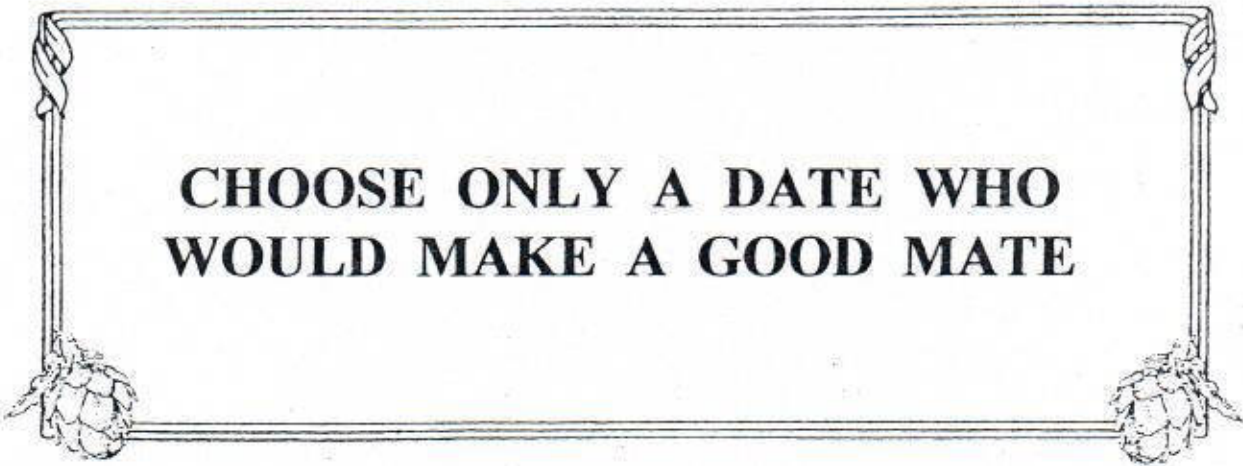
Make an agreement solemnly with your spouse that the silent treatment is unacceptable in your marriage because it violates the unity of body and soul expected and offered in the Marriage Ceremony.

"The patient man shows much good sense, but the quick - tempered man displays folly at its height Proverbs 14: 29.

"Do not hurry yourself in your spirit to become offended" Ecclesiastes 7: 9.

### **Throw the ball gently.**

St. Paul is eager to offer a salient insight: "Let your speech be always gracious and in good taste and strive to respond properly to all who address you" Colossians 4: 6. This most certainly applies to marriage! To illustrate: in a game of catch, you toss the ball so that it can be caught easily. You do not fling it with such force that you injure your partner. No high power ball is permitted in marriage because hurting the marriage actually hurts the thrower. Apply the same principle when speaking with your spouse. Hurling bitter remarks will only cause harm and hurt and separation and violate the unity of marriage. Instead, speak gently with graciousness so that your marriage partner can catch your point.



**CHOOSE ONLY A DATE WHO  
WOULD MAKE A GOOD MATE**

Of course, a temporary time-out can give a couple the opportunity to let emotions cool and subside when an argument is getting out of hand. That type of silence can be beneficial. God's revelation to us teaches there is "a time to keep quiet" Ecclesiastes 3: 7. But when it is used as a means to retaliate or manipulate, the silent treatment not only prolongs the conflict but also erodes the respect the couple has for each other. How can you prevent that from happening to you?

## **What You Can Do**

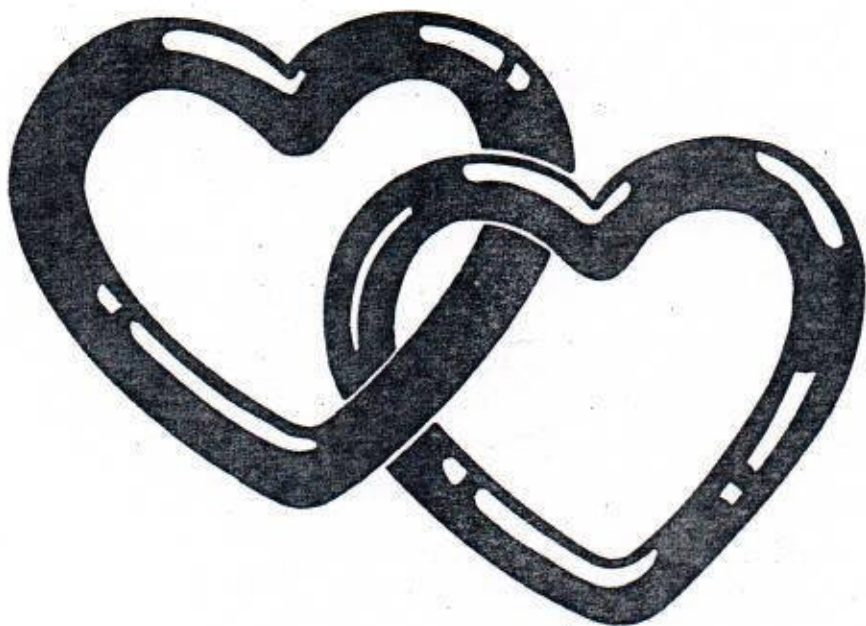
The first step to ending the silent treatment is to recognize it for what it is, only a tactic that at best, works only short-term. True, not talking may quench your thirst for retaliation or compel your spouse to give in to your wishes. But is it really how you want to treat someone whom you have vowed to love? And there are better ways to resolve conflicts.

**Be discerning.** Our heavenly Father says that "...love is patient; love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, it is not snobbish. Love is never rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not prone to anger; neither does it brood over injuries. Love does not rejoice in what is wrong but rejoices with the truth. There is no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, to its hope, its power to endure" 1 Corinthians 13:4 - 7. So the believer does not react to such emotionally charged statements as "You never listen" or "You are always late." Instead, discern the intent behind the words. For instance, "You never listen" might really mean "I feel as if you don't take my viewpoint seriously. "The patient man shows much good sense, but the quick - tempered man displays folly at its height" Proverbs 14: 29.

*Think of your spouse as your teammate rather than an opponent.*

**Lower your voice.** Arguments tend to escalate as they continue. On the other hand, you can change the direction of a heated discussion. How? Softening your tone and acknowledging your partner's point of view are potent tools you can employ to diffuse tension and end escalation. Often that is all it takes. "For lack of wood, the fire dies out; and when there is no talebearer, strife subsides" Proverbs 26: 20.

**Think of "we" instead of "me."** Inspired Scripture reminds us "...no man should seek his own interest but rather that of his neighbor" 1 Corinthians 10: 24. If you think of your spouse as a genuine part of yourself rather than an opponent, you will be less likely to take offense, argue and then refuse to talk to your spouse. "Do not in spirit become quickly discontented for discontent lodges in the bosom of a fool" Ecclesiastes 7: 9.



*Love  
is Contagious,  
we get it  
from one another*

## MARRIED FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

**T**his is a story of ADRIAN and his young bride, NATALIA, who lived about the year 298 A.D. It is a story of faith and devotion to our Lord. When Maximillian was persecuting the Church, he ordered his army to gather all the Christians in the city of Nicomedia. One day he passed a group of 23 of them, heavily chained, being led to prison. He ordered them brought to trial at once.

One by one they were charged to deny Christ or suffer the consequences, yet they stood firm. They showed so much courage during the torture, that an idolater named Adrian suddenly sprang into the middle of the court and cried out: "Write me down as a Christian also, that I may be numbered with these warriors of Christ." The emperor burned with anger. He ordered Adrian chained and consigned to prison. Adrian had been married just 13 months to a young Christian believer, Natalia. Her pious example had first drawn his heart to Christ.

Upon hearing the news, Natalia hurried to the prison and flung herself at the feet of her husband. She implored the other Christians to encourage Adrian and teach him the way of truth. While there, she tended to the wounds of the 23 confessors. For 7 days she ministered to their needs. When women later were forbidden to enter the prison, Natalia cut off her hair, dressed herself like a man and came for admittance. Other women followed her example, that they might care for fellow Christians.

But orders came for the execution of the martyrs in the dungeons and so it fell that Natalia was present when her husband died. She stood as a tower of strength in this hour of crisis. Stationing herself beside her Christian husband, Natalia said to him, "Servant of Christ . . . put your hand to mine." Her dying husband stretched out his hand and groping for hers, caught it in a final embrace.

God grant that young people TODAY, so restless in their search for meaning in their lives, may turn to Jesus Christ, Who said "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."

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