



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

June 2, 2013

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

+++ We will honor the elementary and high school graduates on Sunday, June 23. Please be with us for this celebration.

+++ The last Pirohi Sale for the season took place yesterday and thanks to the orders, the helping hands, it was a success. We invoke the blessing of our Lord upon all faithful souls who labor for the good of our parish. God grant you many years of good health, Christ Is Risen!

- +++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Anna, Ryan, Betty, Mary, Beth, Ann Helene, Delores, Debra 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, \$330.00; Candles, \$16.00; Food Coupons, \$200.00; Self-Sacrifice, Great Fast, \$50.00; Kitchen, \$841.00, for a total of \$1437.00. 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, Pani Lucas, Anna Zacharyczuk, Debra Szmajda, Marilyn Korba, Eleanor Korba, Michael Douglas, Robert Gorbich, Maria Garcia 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 **\$1694.00** 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 \$5550.00 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!

LORD



TEACH
US

Keep Us Faithful

What a wretched man am I! Who can free me from this body under the power of death? All praise to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So with my mind I serve the law of God but with my flesh the law of sin Romans 7: 24, 25.

He who conceals his sins, prospers not but he who confesses and forsakes them, obtains mercy Proverbs 28: 13.

No test has been sent you that does not come to all men. Besides, God keeps his promise. He will not let you be tested beyond your strength. Along with the test he will give you a way out of it so that you may be able to endure it 1 Corinthians 10: 13.

I am sure of this much: that he who has begun the good work in you will carry it through to completion, right up to the day of Christ Jesus Philippians 1: 6.

Do not, then, surrender your confidence; it will have great reward. You need patience to do God's will and receive what he has promised Hebrews 10: 35, 36.

Be solicitous to make your call and election permanent, brothers, surely those who do so will never be lost 1 Peter 1: 10.

I will heal their defection, I will love them freely; for my wrath is turned away from them Hosea 14: 5.

St. Photini the Samaritan

Known to everyone as the woman at Jacob's well, the gospel narrative in which our Lord lovingly encounters her and astounds her by telling her about details of her life, some may be surprised she was seriously touched by his caring love. Of course we know she returned to the town and invited her friends to come and see the Messiah. Our Lord responds and spends time among them teaching these eager souls. The initial encounter was enduring.

From Scripture we know she was before hand the wife of five husbands. She became an apostle of the Lord and in time became the mother of the martyrs Joses and Photinus, having inspired them with her example of zeal for souls and faith in Christ. In the liturgical life of the Church, they too, are remembered the same day as their mother, February 26.

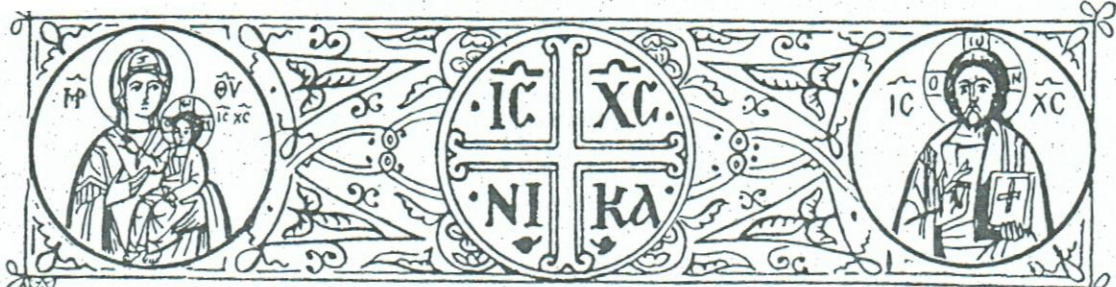
Not only did her example influence her two children, but aroused in her sisters, Anatola, Phota, Photis, Parasceva and Cyriaca, the desire to seek after heroic virtue so that they too have been elevated and glorified as saints and intercessors in the Church. The entire grouping is commemorated together on the same day and can be remembered and honored as a feast of the Christian family.

The Lord had his astonishing conversation with her at the well after which she immediately radically changed her life. The event is recalled on the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, on the fifth Sunday (John 4: 5 - 30) of the Resurrection celebration.

After the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, she sought baptism and followed the apostles, carrying out with her relatives, neighbors and friends, the work of a devoted follower of the Lord and is enrolled in the exalted dignity of the apostles.

Following horrible extended tortures which were accompanied by astounding miracles, she ended her life as a martyr for the cause of Jesus Christ under the notorious emperor Nero in the first century.

St. Photini, intercede before God the Father for the salvation of our souls!



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St. Photini the Samaritan

Are you thirsty?

Have you ever been really thirsty? After playing a sport or spending time in the hot sun, there is nothing like a refreshing drink of cold water. There was a time when Jesus was thirsty and looking for a drink of water. He approached a Samaritan woman who was drawing from a well and asked her for a drink.

Imagine that, Jesus Christ of Nazareth coming to you and asking you for a drink of water! You'd think the woman would have been overly excited to provide the Savior with a refreshing sip. But instead, she questioned him and asked, "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)¹

In response, Jesus said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you *living water*."² Jesus went on to explain that drinking water will eventually leave you thirsty, but the living water he could provide would become a well of life inside you and spring up to eternal life.³

Blaise Pascal, the famous mathematician, scientist and inventor once said, "There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus."

How have you been trying to fill the void in your life? Material possessions, sexual encounters, life experiences, relationships with people? Time and again we will find ourselves disappointed when we choose to fill our lives with everything but God.

When you turn your life over to Jesus, asking his forgiveness and choosing to follow him as your leader, he promises to fill your life with the living water that will satisfy your deepest longings. Jesus said, "He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, from within him will flow rivers of living water."⁴

Death

The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away as though an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if before men, indeed, they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings, he took them to himself. Wisdom 3: 1 - 6.

How consoling for the soul of the faithful and committed Orthodox Christian to see a just man pass from this world! His death is good because he has reached the goal of life and has brought to a conclusion the miseries of this life; but it is better still because it initiates a new and glorious life; it is excellent because it places him in the sweet security of God's presence. So that from the bed of sickness, the bier of family mourning, where the pious Orthodox believer has gained a host of virtues in sickness and pain, he goes to take possession of his eternal destiny.

The Lord acknowledges him as His friend and brother, for he has closed his eyes to the world and opened them at the same instant to behold the dazzling radiance of God. He has closed his eyes to the wanton values of this world and opened them to the eternal and never-ending values of the risen Saviour. He has exchanged time for eternity. Such is the blessed death of the saints. Such is the death of those who desire to be with the Lord, who are tired of this life. Such is the death of those precious in the sight of the Lord.

As joyful and triumphant as the death of those who loved Christ's life on earth, just as despicably wicked is the death of those reprobates who did not count themselves as friends and committed followers of Christ. The least evil is the loss of all possessions and things of this world. That is as nothing because they really never belonged to the person who claimed them. Then comes the separation from the body

and still more dreadful is the devouring flame of an afflicted conscience which at least realizes the folly of its profligate life on earth. Then the gnawing worm of anguish and eternal sorrow have no value.

Just as the ripe fruit begins to loosen from its branch and a gentle shake will make it fall to the ground, so the soul when it is spiritually ripened by a providential and merciful God, is loosened from the body that it might thereby come to know the true joy of its existence in eternity. How consoling for the priest as he attends to the needs of the dying soul to hear the good man honestly say to himself:

"I am dying. I have soon to bid farewell to the world. I shall sigh no longer in this earthly exile. I will no longer be exposed to the satanic snares of the devil and his evil temptations to which I so often and eagerly fell prey. I die. I shall not offend You my Saviour any longer. No more will sinful thoughts, words or deeds come to me. Above all, no longer will I have to struggle against the influences of this evil world."

If this detachment is not always so perfect, it is always with a resignation that belies every sentiment that is opposed to divine commands. It calls to mind the holy thoughts that have been fixed in the memory since youth. It makes virtue of everything that God has told us is necessary and it makes use of death in order to fortify itself against the delusion of death. So the committed Orthodox believer looks upon himself as a victim which God offers to His own glory. his death bed becomes sacred if his life has been sacred, for it is transformed into an altar table on which is brought forth an acceptable sacrifice. There he hallows and brings forth a sacrifice with a life well-lived. And if not well-lived, then one well-died. It is there that the priest prepares the sacrificial victim, through the prayers of the Church, with admonitions, and spiritual consolations.

There the vision of heaven already penetrates the closing eyelids, there heavenly glory grasps the heart with joy, there the fire of divine love grasps him securely enough so that he has no longer any desire to remain on earth, but to quickly cross the portals of eternity so that the sacrifice of himself can soon be ended, so that the perfect holocaust of his life can be brought forward, completed and offered to the Father with Christ.

He listens intently to the priest's whispering tones and derives new meaning from the long familiar and many times heard prayers. Even those he never sensed before somehow sound so familiar he is not alarmed, but made to feel at ease and comfortable on the threshold of eternity.

If not on his lips, then certainly on his mind, in his heart and soul reverberate expressions of love, or resignation to the Divine Will. He wishes the sacrifice of his life be accepted by the eternal Father through the love of Christ by the grace of the holy Spirit. In justice it is due Him. The life was originally given to an infant child, it has been tended and cared for. Now it has come to maturity and sanctity. While in its more pristine form in beauty, it must be returned to the Father. Pain writes its limbs and as he thinks of himself as a transgressor of God's immutable laws, he tries to utter once again prayers of thanksgiving as mercy ends by purifying and chastening him.

And then, before the final cloud of time covers him and eternity envelopes him, in submissive humility, he adores silently the almighty power of the Creator, Who made him, and Who disposes of His work as He pleases. God has willed his death. May His holy will be fulfilled. May he not die in vain. May he die to His glory. May my own death inspire those who stand about, if I am so blessed. May they derive consolation to live holier and worthier lives.

But for the wicked, nothing is more frightening than the recollection of their sins. But even at that hour, the mercy of God cannot be outdone. He fills their souls with fear and remorse which may have lain dormant during life. Thereby he hopes to inspire them to contrition and repentance. St. John Chrysostom sums this up in a few words when he says,

There is weight and a weight, measure and a measure; a weight during life and weight at the hour of our death Goldenmouth Sermons.

During the life of the profligate sinner, impurity passed off as gallantry; at death it is an unbearable fire of guilt, equal perhaps to the flaming agony of hell. Cruel usury is looked upon in life as the clever and insightful manipulation of business; at death it is uncovered for what it really is: theft and robbery. An act of merciful charity coldly refused during life is allowed; at the hour of death it is cruelty and homicide.

Inflicting pain and anguish upon another Orthodox Christian is considered to be an act of conscience in cavalierly "putting him in his place." At death it is properly identified as crucifying the Saviour in sadistic torture. A calumny is enjoyable and an allowable revenge in life; at death its judgment reverberates a thousand times as it plunges us deeper and deeper into hell. There is definitely a difference in gazing upon sin, clothed in the garb of alluring pleasure and a sin exposed to view in all its ugly nakedness; and it is at the hour of death that the wicked see their sins for what they really are. Thus the Old Testament writer places agony on the lips of the sinner:

The sorrows of death surrounded me and the torments of my iniquity troubled me Psalms 116: 3.

Devout Orthodox believers should dispose themselves by the conduct of their daily lives to accept their death and that of their loved ones when a loving God sends it to them and not at any other time. It must be remembered that it is necessary that it should occur at the particular moment for the good of our souls. For the wicked, we pray that the Lord will permit them to cooperate with His grace to respond with a vibrant YES in spite of the fact that in all their life they answered with a disconcerted NO to all His overtures for sanctity.

God's Last Act of Love

Hell is God's last act of love to people who will accept nothing else at His hands. He offers them His love, but they refuse it. He offers eternal paradise, but it is spurned. He freely grants grace, but it is neglected. He leaves them one corner of the created universe which they can call their own and in which they can continue to exist through all eternity as if God did not exist. It will be the object of all their striving, the end reward of their most noble endeavors.

He lovingly does not destroy them who are consigned here by all their striving and eagerness. They have their own being and existence. They are granted their heart's desire. In living in such a way they are sent to hell. They continue the life they lived on earth. They do not have to make any changes. Now they finally have what they always wanted, what their entire earthly lives deserve!

Thoughts Worth Considering

Why is the woman in the gospel narrative today simply known as the Samaritan Woman? Why is she never named? Does the omission of her name make her story more or less believable? More or less powerful?

Have you ever felt judged by people who felt they were aligned with the Church and better than you? Ever felt less than them? How did you handle it? Avoidance? Confrontation? Begrudging acceptance? A gentle attempt at reconciliation? Who should reach out first and why?

The woman at the well was thirstier than she realized. What are you "thirsty" for, spiritually? Have you been reaching for something other than the living water Christ offers? Has it quenched your thirst? Why or why not?

Jesus spoke first. What prompted the Samaritan woman to respond to this stranger, this man, and a Jew at that? Was it courage? Curiosity? Contempt? Courtesy? Have you ever been in a similar situation? What does it take to reach beyond our comfort zones?

Look back at their conversation. At what point did the woman realize they were talking about more than well water? Did she ever seem uncomfortable with the way their discussion was going? What does that say to you?

When the disciples returned, why didn't they intervene? Look at Jesus' brief teaching on sowing seeds, recorded in John 4: 35 - 38. How does that connect with the Samaritan Woman's story that surrounds it?

List all the reasons for yourself - whether righteous or selfish - the Samaritan woman hurried back to town to tell everyone she'd met the Messiah. Have you ever shared your faith commitment with people who knew you well? What were your reasons? And what were their responses? What is the most important lesson you have learned from the life-changing story of the unnamed woman at the well?

Today

Today is here. I will begin with a genuine smile and resolve to be agreeable. I will not criticize. I refuse to waste the valuable time God has given me. I will start the day by greeting the Lord: "Glory to Jesus Christ!"

Today has one thing in which I know I am equal with others: time. All of us draw the same salary in seconds, minutes and hours. I will use them for His glory!

Today I will not waste time because the minutes I wasted yesterday are lost as a vanished thought.

Today I refuse to spend time worrying about what might happen. I am going to spend my time making things happen for the salvation of my soul.

Today I am determined to study to improve myself, for tomorrow I may be needed by the Lord and I must not be found lacking.

Today I begin by doing, not wasting my time. In one week, I will be miles beyond the person I am today.

Today I will not imagine what I would do if things were different. They are not different. I will make a success with whatever material I have. I will save my soul in spite of myself!

Today I will stop saying, "If I had time," or "If I find time," for I will never "find time" for anything. If I want time, I must make the time do what God expects of me .

Today I will act toward other people as though this will be my last day on earth. I will not wait until tomorrow to come to pray, to do good, to go to church. Tomorrow never comes. I am going to invest my time in prayer and in thinking, doing and being what God expects me to be in all my daily routine activities.

Penetrating Love

*See what love the Father has bestowed on us in letting us be called children of God!
Yet that is what we are. The reason the world does not recognize us is that it
never recognized the Son*

1 John 3: 1.

One cold, crisp winter morning the temperature outside was in the lower teens. The deacon looked out the window and watched the sun climbing in the sky. Hmmm, he thinks to himself, something seems so strange. He is watching water dripping off the roof. How is this possible he thinks to himself. He is amazed at the penetrating power of the rays of the sun. They originate some 93 million miles away but are able to melt the frost in spite of the cold temperatures kept steady.

What a lesson he learns in meditation and introspection! How much like the love of God! We live in a world that is spiritually frigid and dark - a vast barren tundra of frozen souls trying to survive in a perpetual; permafrost of their own creation. Were it not for the penetrating rays of God's eternal love shining down through the ages, all men would remain in a cold mass of lifeless existence. How is it that even in the midst of an astoundingly freezing environment our souls can radiate the warmth of God's touch and presence and we can experience the haven of warmth in heavenly grace offered us?

No matter how cold or sharply penetrating the cold winds blow, authentic friendship with our heavenly Father continues to warm souls, affirming renewed faith response. When we fellowship with fellow believers, we are able to soak up life-giving rays and collectively gather the warmth of faith response implanted in our hearts and souls. Our heavenly Father has given us brotherhood to warm and encourage the hearts of his people. As we allow God's love to flow through us and warm and affirm and encourage the commitment hearts of others, we receive his penetrating rays into our own hearts and are strengthened ourselves.

Our heavenly Father desires vessels through which He can flow. Souls that come into contact with a radiant heart will feel the circles of heavenly warmth. Cords that lie broken will vibrate pleasantly once more. Have you allowed God's love to penetrate your life? Are other people experiencing his touch through you? Open your heart and let his love radiate into your innermost being. Let the cold winds blow while you bask in and soak up the warm of heavenly grace. Never forget love reigns where God reigns!

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

The joyful message of the Resurrection was heard by the faithful women from the angel. And being freed from the ancestral curse, they boasted to the apostles: "Dead and despoiled is death; Christ our God is risen, giving great mercy to the world." Troparion, Sunday of the Samaritan Woman.

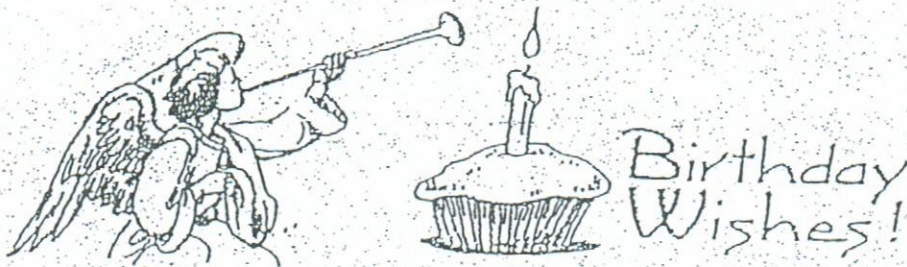
When the Samaritan woman came to the well with faith, she beheld You, O Water of Wisdom; You allowed her to drink abundantly, and glorified her eternally, for she inherited the eternal kingdom. Kontakion, Sunday of the Samaritan Woman.

When the Paschal feast is half-completed, quench my thirsty soul with the waters of devotion, for You, O Saviour, have announced to all: "Let him who is thirsty come to Me and drink." O Christ God, Source of our life, glory be to You! Troparion, Mid-Pentecost Feast.

O Christ God, Creator and Lord of all, when the Paschal feast was half-completed, You told those present: "Come and draw the water of immortality," Let us therefore adore You and cry out with faith: "Grant us Your goodness, for You are the Source of our life!" Kontakion, Mid-Pentecost Feast.

You fought the good fight with faith, O Martyr of Christ, George. You exposed the perversion of the persecutors and offered an acceptable sacrifice to God. Therefore, you also received a crown of victory and through your prayers, O holy one, obtained the forgiveness of sins for all. Troparion, Feast of St. George the Martyr.

Inspired by God, you sowed the seeds of piety, harvesting sheaves of virtue. You sowed in tears but reaped in joy; and having honorably fought and given your blood, you were received by Christ. Through your prayers, O holy one, obtain the forgiveness of sins for all. Kontakion, Feast of St. George the Martyr.

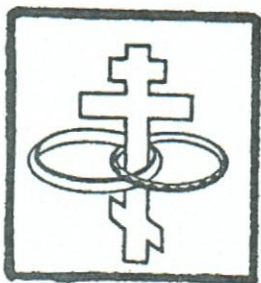


We are pleased to greet those of our faithful communicants who celebrate their birthday this month. Our Lord has offered these souls yet another year of blessed life. The most obvious way He blesses us and participates in our life is by sharing his divine life with us in the Eucharist at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Thus we gather together and offer thanks for yet another year of life blessed by his most gracious hands. Today, we prayerfully remember in the Divine Liturgy the following souls who celebrate their birthday during this month:

May 3 Betty Samaris
May 9 Rachel M. Korba
May 11 Melynda Henry
June 4 Alexander L. Choti
June 5 Mary Demyan
June 14 Austin J. Sarte
June 15 Miguel Garcia
June 18 Sophia R. Choti
June 22 Kyle Pasquino
June 26 Nadya A. Choti
June 29 Angeliki Tsokris

With a prayerful heart and grateful soul, our parish faith community asks the Lord to continue to bless these birthday celebrants with good spiritual and physical health for the coming year. We invite all to add their personal intercessory prayers so that with one voice and one heart we may also participate in the grace and joy of their celebration. As we wish them a happy and blessed celebration of their birthday, our ardent prayer resounds that the Lord our God will continue to bless them for

Many and Blessed Years!



WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

The Byzantine Fathers of the Church were wont to emphasize how ancient and how venerable marriage is in the sight of our God because it was established yet in paradise before the fall of Adam and Eve and brought to blessed perfection by Christ in Cana of Galilee. Its grace survived the sin of our first parents and it remains a sign of the presence of the Holy Trinity in our midst. It is a living symbol of the deep and abiding love between Christ and His Bride, our blessed Church. It is characterized in the liturgical life of the Church as a happy martyrdom. And it is precisely for this reason the sacramental Mystery of Marriage is such a joyous event. On the third Sunday of this month, we honor those of our good parishioners who observe their marriage anniversaries this month. They are specially remembered in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and subsequently receive an individual and personal blessing of the Lord at its conclusion. Celebrating this month are:

May 22 Frank & Maria Pashos

May 24 Louis & Robin Pasquino

June 13 Father Robert & Pani Marlene Lucas

We gratefully give thanks to the Blessed Trinity for having guided and strengthened the marriages of these believers, and their cooperation with sacramental grace to remain faithful to one another over the years. Like all who are faithful to Christ, they recognize the presence and necessity of the Holy Spirit not only in the marriage, but in subsequent family life as well. As we praise our God for their witness in our midst, let us also join them with our prayers and thanksgiving before the throne of the Lord. May they continue to praise His Holy Name by their love and devotion to one another for

Many and Blessed Years

MOVING "FORWARD" BY "RETREATING"

The whole concept of "retreating" in a military sense is often quite misunderstood. It does not mean that an army is "raising the white flag" and surrendering. It is not an admission of defeat. Much to the contrary, when soldiers retreat, they are falling back to regroup and to reassess their position so that they may be better prepared to continue their battle.

Certainly our Lord understood the value in "getting away from it all." His was a demanding ministry, with throngs of people constantly beseeching Him to perform healings and miracles in their behalf. When the strain of this would become too much for Him, Jesus would "retreat" into the mountains, spending time in prayer, meditation and fasting. When He would return to His Apostles, Christ would be refreshed and energized by His time alone.

In like manner, we often find ourselves overwhelmed by our own struggle to live a good and proper Christian life. The temptations placed before us in our pleasure-driven society can be formidable and the burdens of simply trying to provide for our family can weigh heavily on our shoulders and our hearts. The fast-paced schedule that we find ourselves trying to keep can wear us down physically, mentally and spiritually. It is precisely then that we, too, must recognize the importance of "falling back." We must take the time to be alone with God in prayer — "laying aside all of our earthly cares." We must distance ourselves from everyone and everything, allowing God to "refuel" us with His Grace. Yes, it is only our Heavenly Father Who can refresh us and sustain us through our personal battles and Who can give us the strength to move forward in our service to Him.