

# Sunday of the

**S**urely one of the most profound Gospels read in Church is the one chanted today which tells about Our Lord's dealing with the

Samaritan Woman. The setting of the scene is quite ordinary: Christ comes to a well in Samaria and being thirsty, asks a woman for a drink of water. But the lessons from the conversation that follows are extraordinary, touching several major aspects of life.

The Gospel deals with the problem of race and prejudice. The woman was of a different race than Jesus, and she marvels that the Lord even speaks to her. But Christ crosses over the prejudices of

man to deal with a human being in need. Our Saviour acknowledges that we are all children of God, having been created in His Likeness.



# Samaritan Woman

# **Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church**

**24 BURKE ROAD**

**FREEHOLD, NJ 07728**

**Sunday of the Samaritan Woman**

**May 10, 2015**

**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 thank all who labored to make the Pirohi Sale a success. May the Lord continue to bless all with good health for Many & Blessed Years!**

**+++ We remind our faithful diocesan and parish dues are DUE. Only fourteen diocesan dues are received. Please fulfill this privileged obligation as soon as possible otherwise the parish must make it up.**



+++ A very fulfilling, joyous and happy Mothers' Day celebration to all our parishioners. We pray this day be memorable for all our beloved mothers.

+++ Today at 9: 15 AM, we celebrate a Memorial Service requested by Anna Zacharyczuk for the repose of the souls of her beloved parents, +Michael & Katherine Chmielnicki. We pray the merciful Lord comforts Anna and loved ones in their loss and grants to the souls of the departed a blessed repose and creates for them Eternal Memory, Christ Is Risen!

+++ 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 keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Father George, Barbara, Betty, James, Yevlogia, Nicholas, Maria, Cynthia, Pani Anna Marie, Father Myron, Pani Delores 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, \$246.00; Candles, \$17.00; Food Coupons, \$140.00; Pennies from Heaven, \$9.00; Kitchen, \$1935.00 for a total of \$2347.00. 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, Maria Idronmenos, Anna Zacharyczuk, Bob Gorbich, 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 **\$1828.00** 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.



### Keep Us Faithful

*Happy the man who holds out to the end through trial! Once he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life the Lord has promised to those who love him. No one who is tempted is free to say, "I am being tempted by God." Surely God who is beyond the grasp of evil, tempts no one. Rather, the tug and lure of his own passions tempt every man. Once passion has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin reaches maturity, it begets death James 1: 12 - 15.*

*My point is that you should live in accord with the spirit and you will not yield to the cravings of the flesh Galatians 5: 16.*

*But if we acknowledge our sins, he who is just can be trusted to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrong 1 John 1: 9.*

*O you unfaithful ones, are you not aware that love of the world is enmity with God? A man is marked out as God's enemy if he chooses to be the world's friend. Do you suppose it is to no purpose that Scripture says, "The spirit he has implanted in us tends toward jealousy"? Yet he bestows a greater gift, for the sake of which it is written, "God resists the proud but bestows his favor on the lowly" James 4: 4 - 6.*

*Since then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our profession of faith. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet never sinned. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and favor and to find help in time of need Hebrews 4: 14 - 16.*



## Christ As Liberator

The salvific mission of Christ is liberation and Jesus is Liberator. What is involved is liberation from sin. Sin is the fundamental evil which imprisons man from within and subjects him to the slavery of the one whom Christ called "the father of lies" John 8: 44. At the same time it involves liberation for the Truth, which gives us a share in "...the freedom of the children of God" Romans 8: 21. Jesus says, 'So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.' "The freedom of the children of God" derives from the gift of Christ; it endows us with a share in divine sonship. It confers a share in the life of God.

Consequently, whoever has been set free by Christ not only has his sins forgiven but is raised up to a new life. Christ, the author of the liberation of mankind is the Creator of a new humanity. In Him we become "...a new creation" 2 Corinthians 5: 17. This salvific liberation belongs to the very essence of His messianic mission. Jesus spoke of it Himself. In the parable of the Good Shepherd, for example, He said, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" John 10: 10. He is referring to the abundance of new life which is a sharing in the life of God Himself. Again in this way the 'newness' of the humanity of Christ is realized in man as being "a new creation".

This is what Jesus says in figurative but very evocative language in His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar. "If you only knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me to drink', you would have been the one to ask and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him: 'Sir, you have no means of reaching down and the well is deep; how could you get this living water?' Jesus replied, 'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give, will never be thirsty again. The water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside him welling up to eternal life'" John 4: 10 - 14.

Jesus also repeated this truth in very similar words to the crowd, when He was teaching them, during the Feast of Booths. "Whoever is thirsty let him come to me and let whoever believes in me come and drink. As scripture says, from his breast shall flow a river of living water" John 7: 37, 38.

Rivers of living water are images of new life in which man shares by virtue of the death of Christ on the Cross. The tradition of the Fathers and the Liturgy understand in the same sense the text of John where it is related that from the side, the heart of Christ, after His death on the Cross there came forth "blood and water" when a Roman soldier "struck His side" John 19: 34.

According to an insightful understanding of many of the Byzantine Fathers of the Church, and now accepted by different exegetes, rivers of living water shall also flow 'from the breast' of the man who drinks the "water" of the truth and grace of Christ. From the breast means from the heart. In fact "a clean heart" Psalms 50: 12, is created within man as the prophets, and in particular Jeremiah and Ezekiel announced very clearly.

"This will be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel when those days arrive, says the Lord. I will plant my law, I will write it in their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people" Jeremiah 31: 33. Elsewhere it is stated even more explicitly: "I shall give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from you and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you and make you live according to my precepts and make you observe and keep my laws" Ezekiel 36: 26, 27.

It is a question therefore of profound spiritual transformation which God Himself works within man by means of "the breath of his Spirit" Ezekiel 36: 26. The rivers of living water of which Jesus speaks means the source of a new life which is life in spirit and truth, a life worthy of "authentic worshippers" John 4: 23, because "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth" John 4: 24.

The writings of the Apostles, and in particular the Letters of St. Paul, abound in texts on this subject. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old creation has passed away; behold the new has come" 2 Corinthians 5: 17. The fruit of the redemption wrought by Christ is precisely this "newness of life". "You have put off the old nature with its practices and you have put on the new nature which is being renewed in knowledge of God after the image of its Creator" Colossians 3: 9, 10.

The 'old nature' is the one subjected to sin while the 'new nature' is the one which thanks to Christ, recovers its original dignity of being made in "the image and likeness" Colossians 3: 10, of its Creator. Hence this energetic exhortation of the



Apostle to overcome everything in each one of us which is sin and the inheritance of sin, "But now you, of all people, must give all these things up: getting angry, being bad-tempered, spitefulness, abusive language, and dirty talk, and never tell another lies..." Colossians 3: 8, 9.

A similar exhortation is found in writings to the Church in Ephesus: "You must give up your old way of life and you must put aside your old self which gets corrupted by the following illusory desires. Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution so that you can put on the new self that has been created in God's way in the goodness and holiness of truth" Ephesians 4: 22 - 24. "We are, in fact His work, created in Christ Jesus to live in the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it" Ephesians 2: 10.

Redemption is therefore the new creation in Christ. It is a gift of God - grace - and at the same time it implies a call directed to man. Man must cooperate with the work of spiritual liberation accomplished in him by God through Christ. It is true that "through this grace you have been saved through faith, not by anything of your own but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit" Ephesians 2:8. Certainly man cannot attribute to himself salvation, that saving liberation which is a gift of God in Christ.

Yet at the same time one must see in this gift the origin of a constant exhortation to act in such a way as to be worthy of such a state. The full picture of the saving liberation of man involves a profound awareness of the gift of God contained in the Cross of Christ and in His redeeming Resurrection, and at the same time, an awareness of one's own responsibility for that gift; an awareness of the moral and spiritual commitments involved. Here too we touch upon the roots of what we call the ethos of redemption.

The redemption accomplished by Christ, which acts with the power of His Spirit of truth, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, has a personal dimension which is directed to each individual. At the same time, it has an inter-human, social, and universal dimension.

This is a subject which we see developed in the Ephesian Epistle where reconciliation of the two 'parts' of humanity in Christ is described, that is, of Israel, the Chosen People of the Old Covenant, and all of the other peoples of the earth.

"He (Christ) is in fact the peace between us and has made the two into one and broken down the barriers which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in His own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the law. This was to create one single new man in himself out of the two (races of men) and by restoring peace through the Cross, to unite them both into a single Body and reconcile them with God. In his own person He destroyed the hostility" Ephesians 2: 14 - 16.

That, then, is the definitive dimension of the "new creation" and of the newness of life in Christ: Liberation from division, the breaking down of the barriers, which separate Israel from the others. In Christ, all people are the 'chosen' people. Everyone without exception or difference is reconciled with God and, as a consequence, called to share in the eternal promise of salvation and life. Reconciliation of all with God through Christ must become the reconciliation of all among themselves as a communitarian and universal dimension of redemption, the full expression of the ethos of redemption.

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***"Whoever drinks  
the water  
I give him  
will never  
be thirsty...."***

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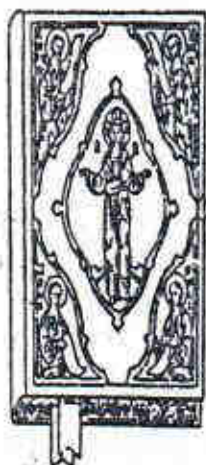
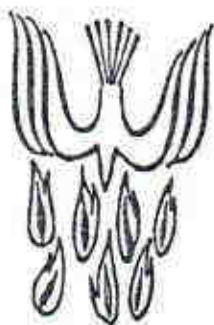




## SCRIPTURE

## TRIVIA

## QUIZ



1. Which king had several hundred royal wives?
2. On which of the days of creation did God make fish?
3. Who was struck by lightening on the way to Damascus?
4. Name the older sister of Rachel.
5. Name the oldest brother of the Old Testament Joseph.
6. Which book of Scripture follows John?
7. Who said, "I will make you fishers of men?"
8. Who suggested a baby be cut in half knowing its real mother would not permit it?
9. Who would not allow Moses to enter the promised land?
10. What Jewish leader visited Jesus secretly at night?
11. On what day of creation did God make man?
12. Into what did satan tempt Jesus to change stones?

## ANSWERS TO TRIVIA QUIZ

- 1.. Solomon. (1 Kings 11: 1) 2. Fifth day. (Genesis 1: 20) 3. Paul or Saul (Acts of the Apostles 9: 1) 4. Leah (Genesis 29: 16) 5. Reuben. (Genesis 35: 21) 6. The book of Acts of the Apostles 7. Jesus. (Matthew 4: 18) 8. Solomon. (1 Kings 3: 16) 9. God. (Genesis 1: 24) 10. Nicodemus. (John 3: 1) 11. Sixth Day. (Genesis 1: 24.) 12. Bread. (Matthew 4: 3)

## **Samaritans**

The inhabitants of Samaria, the geographical region between Judea and Galilee in the Holy Land at the time of our Lord's ministry were not too numerous. Samaria was the capital of the kingdom of Israel after the schism of the Ten Tribes, founded by Omri in 885 BC ( 1 Kings 16: 24), and destroyed by Sargon in 721 BC (2 Kings 18: 9 - 12). It was rebuilt by Herod the Great who named it Sebaste in honor of Augustus who gave it to him. St. Philip preached the gospel there. "Philip, for example, went down to the town of Samaria and they proclaimed the Messiah" Acts of the Apostles 8: 5.

The inhabitants of Samaria were a mixed race, descended from strictly prohibited intermarriage of Israelites and Assyrian colonists. The enmity between Jews and Samaritans was so great that travelers between Galilee and Judea had often to cross the Jordan into Perea for safety. Jewish sentiment almost literally choked rather than even pronounce the name of Samaritans in their conversations, so deeply detested were they. In various uprisings this race was almost exterminated, and only a small remnant survives today. In religious profession, the Samaritans acknowledged the Pentateuch, Joshua and Judges but not the additional revelation or Jewish traditional doctrine. They looked for the Messiah who would teach all truth (John 4: 25). In practice they worshipped the same true God as the Jews, and in such matters as Sabbaths and feasts, circumcision and worship, they did not dissent. But though vying with the Jews in the strict observance of Mosaic regulations, they disowned the Jerusalem temple and priesthood. The rival sanctuary at Gerazim they revered as their holy place (John 4: 20). Our Lord passed through their country more than once, and preached and worked miracles among the people. He also spoke well of them (Luke 10: 30 - 37), defended them (Luke 9: 51 - 56), and commanded that the gospel be preached to them. This was done with success, and a Christian community was early formed among them (Acts of the Apostles 8: 4 - 17; 9: 31; 15: 3).

In today's gospel narrative, the encounter is told of our Lord and the woman at the well. There was a frame of reference by the Lord in the parable of the Good Samaritan in which the Lord witnessed that God's grace also worked in them.



# 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.*

JOHN 16:33: "I tell you all this that in me you may find peace."

MATTHEW 10:34: "My mission is to spread, not peace, but division."

ISAIAH 2:4 and MICAH 4:3: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again."

JOEL 4:10: "Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak man say, 'I am a warrior!'"

## How Can I Know What the Bible Means?

MATTHEW 18:19: "Again I tell you, if two of you join your voices on earth to pray for anything whatever, it shall be granted you by my Father in heaven."

MATTHEW 6:6: "Whenever you pray, go to your room, close your door, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees what no man sees, will repay you."

**F**or two thousand years, the Church has known that God blessed it with his special presence. Like a diamond ring that has to be tilted and turned to catch the various reflections and refractions of light, the Church over the centuries has emphasized different aspects of its inheritance. The emphasis may be on the sacraments or the structure of the Church or the community. Today, one of the points being magnified is the Bible.

The Church has always given a special place to the Bible. Through these very

human words, God speaks to his people. Like an ordinary letter sent by a friend, however, the written word can be misunderstood; the reader may not catch the meaning of the writer. Such a mistake can become very harmful.

The example is told of a top executive who was consulted by one of his stockbrokers on whether or not to buy some risky stock. The executive replied by telegram: "No, price too high." The message received, however, read: "No price too high." The broker



bought the expensive stock; then when it fell, the company experienced a great loss, much to the consternation of the executive. In this example, the absence of a single comma led to a very costly misunderstanding. That's what can happen when the message sent does not have the same meaning as the message received.

Accurately reading the Bible can have the same problems. We can misread the message it contains. We need to interpret the words correctly so that we can correctly understand the revelation.

Basically, interpretation is taking a form of communication and trying to understand the meaning. We use interpretation daily. The art critic interprets a work of art to write about its meaning; psychologists are very observant of body language and interpret it for clues to problems; even handwriting is interpreted to discover basic personality traits. The answers to the question "What does it mean?" are interpretations. They are proportionately more accurate as they approach the meaning that the sender intended. In reading Scripture, therefore, our challenge is to try to understand exactly what God is telling us through his Word.

There are many experts involved in the study of Sacred Scripture. These scholars

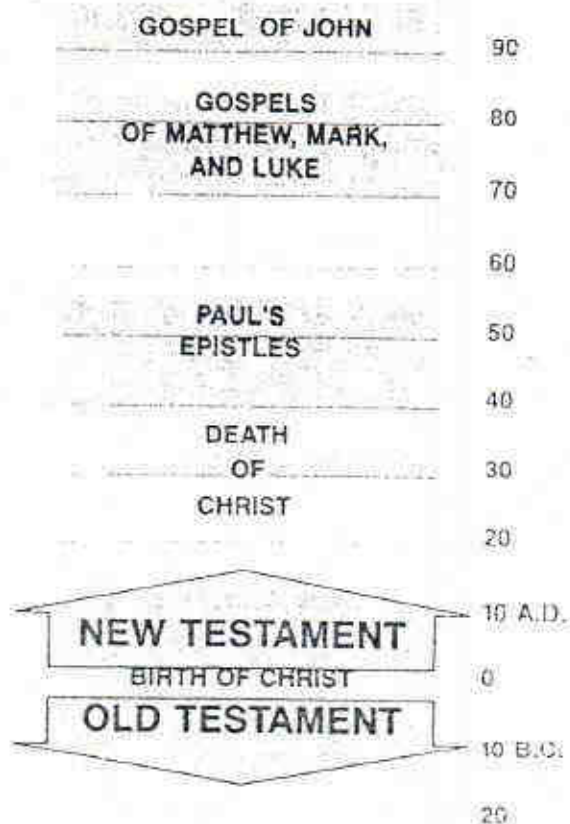
delve into all the possible meanings of the words. They use many sciences, particularly the study of languages, of cultures, of archaeology, and of literature of that era. Certainly the expertise of these commentators is a help in understanding the Bible.

The tradition of the Church gives us a worthwhile sounding board for testing our private interpretation. If, while reading the Bible, we come up with a theory whose meaning is obviously against the teaching of the Church, it should cause us to question whether or not we might be misinterpreting the Bible. More study may be indicated.

Prayer is the best means for understanding the Word of God. God wants to give us his revelation and will help us open ourselves to his message if we ask him to bless us with insight.

Scripture opens for us the wonderful world of God's revelation to his people. Over the years, the Word of God has been one of God's greatest gifts to his people, one worthy of all our efforts. God has spoken to his people, and through our prayer and study, his messages are still his priceless gift to us. On our part, we make the effort necessary for understanding God's Word. For this, our prayer, our Creed, and our study are a great help to us.

# THE BIBLE AND THE FIRST CHRISTIANS



If you had lived in Palestine when Jesus walked this earth, you might quite possibly have heard his great message, his Good News, from his own lips. It was a message for every man and woman in every age. You might have stood there and listened while Jesus revealed his Father to the men and women of his time. You would have heard him as he told about God, as he showed what God is like. You would have heard what the mercy of God was like, the meekness of God, the compassion of God.

But how about us, the men and women of the twentieth century? Do we get his authentic picture and message, his Good News? Well, let us first look at the word "authentic." It means trustworthy, reliable, entitled to acceptance. So our question, then, is: "How do we hear the authentic voice of Jesus in the twentieth century?"

Here is the answer: We hear Christ speaking to us today through the Church. Guided by his Holy Spirit, the Church con-



tinues his presence in the world. Jesus commanded his apostles to go and teach all nations. He sent his Holy Spirit to help them understand everything that he had taught them. From now on, they and their successors were to be his messengers. Through them, Jesus would speak to all people.

What we are saying here is that Jesus himself is the source of the Church's teaching. The Church's mission on earth is to preserve and to hand on faithfully the teaching of Jesus. The Church does this in two ways. One is through the *spoken word*, called *Tradition*, which embraces the whole teaching of the Church. Second, the Church hands on the teaching of Jesus through the *written word*, the Bible, particularly the New Testament.

Let us now examine how the New Testament, and in particular the gospels, came to be written. In doing so, we shall see how the written record of the life and teachings of Jesus is linked to the preaching of the apostles, the first Christian witnesses and messengers.

Let us realize that it took well over 70 years after the time of Jesus for the entire New Testament to be written. Thus, it was not available when the first generations of Christians came together. Nor, of course, could it be read in pri-

vate. It simply did not exist. So we ask ourselves, what was happening during those early years as far as Sacred Books were concerned?

Well, first we must remember that the Jewish faith revolved around *other* books, called the Hebrew Scriptures, or the Old Testament. These were the highlight of the Jewish synagogue service. This service began by repeating the Shema (the Jewish creed), some prayers were recited, the rabbi said a few words, and then (and this was why the people came) the Scriptures were read.

Realize now that Jesus himself and the first generations of Christians were Jews. They had been brought up to love and revere the Word of God (the Hebrew Scriptures). When the synagogue doors were later closed to them, these Jewish Christians continued to cherish and to use these Hebrew Scriptures. It was the Old Testament that was read at all Christian services. These were the Sacred Books, the only Sacred Books, of the very early Christian Church. Sometimes we have a tendency to forget this. This explains, also, why the New Testament books have so many references to the Old Testament. Our roots are in the Old Testament. We are reminded again that we are, "spiritual Semites."

# MOTHER'S DAY





Faith makes a woman  
*extraordinary.*



# E v e



## THE MOTHER OF ALL THE LIVING

*Genesis 1-3*

Eve must have been a creature of unsurpassed beauty. She was the crown and the pinnacle of God's amazing creative work, the last living thing to be called into existence—actually fashioned directly by the Creator's own hand in a way that showed particular care and attention to detail. Adam was refined dirt; Eve was a glorious refinement of humanity itself. She was Adam's necessary partner who finally made his existence complete— and whose own existence finally signaled the completion of all creation.

If the man represented the supreme species (a race of creatures made in the image of God), Eve was the living embodiment of humanity's glory (1 Corinthians 11:7). God had truly saved the best for last.



Eve was the flawless archetype of feminine excellence. Because no other woman has ever come into a curse-free world, no other woman could possibly surpass Eve's grace, charm, virtue, ingenuity, intelligence, wit, and pure innocence. Physically, too, she must have personified all the best traits of both strength and beauty. Scripture gives us no physical description of Eve. Her beauty—splendid as it must have been—is never mentioned or even alluded to. The focus of the biblical account is on Eve's relationships with her Creator and her husband.

As "the mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20), Eve is a major character in the story of humanity's fall and redemption. Yet in all of Scripture, her name is used only four times—twice in the Old Testament (Genesis 3:20; 4:1), and twice in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13). Not only is no physical description of her given; we don't even know such details as how many children she had, how long she lived, or where and how she died (Genesis 5:3–5).

Eve's creation reminds us of several crucial truths about womanhood in general. It speaks of Eve's fundamental equality with Adam. The woman was "taken out of man" (Genesis 2:23). She was of exactly the same essence as Adam. She was in no way an inferior character, but she was his spiritual counterpart, his intellectual cocqual, and in every sense his perfect mate and companion. Her creation also reminds us of the essential unity that is the ideal in every marriage relationship, and it illustrates how deep and meaningful the marriage of husband and wife is designed to be. It is not merely a physical union, but a union of heart and soul as well. The intimacy of her relationship with her husband is rooted in the fact that she was literally taken from his side.

*The woman was made of a rib  
out of the side of Adam;  
not made out of his head to rule  
over him, nor out of his feet  
to be trampled upon by him,  
but out of his side to be  
equal with him, under his arm  
to be protected, and near  
his heart to be beloved.*

—MATTHEW HENRY

Eve's creation also contains some important biblical lessons about the divinely designed role of women. Although Eve was spiritually and intellectually Adam's peer; although they were both of one essence and therefore equals in their standing before God and in their rank above the other creatures; there was nonetheless a clear distinction in their earthly roles. Adam was designed to be a father, provider, protector, and leader. Eve was designed to be a mother, comforter, nurturer, and helper. To acknowledge that there are such fundamental differences between the genders may not correspond with modern feminist sensibilities, but this is what God's own Word says.

After creation and before the fall, Adam and Eve were partners and companions, fellow-laborers in the garden. God dealt with Adam as head of the human race, and Eve was accountable to her husband. This was true paradise, and they constituted a perfect microcosm of the



human race as God designed it to be.

But then it was all ruined by sin. The chronology of the account seems to suggest that a very short time elapsed between the end of Creation (Genesis 1:31) and the fall of Satan (Isaiah 14:12–15; Ezekiel 28:12–19). A similarly short time appears to have elapsed between Satan's fall and Eve's temptation. It might have been only a few days—or perhaps even only a matter of hours. But it could not have been very long. Adam and Eve had not yet even conceived any children. The tempter wasted no time deceiving Eve and provoking her husband to sin. He wanted to strike before the race had any opportunity to multiply. If he could beguile Eve and thereby cause Adam to fall at this moment, he could sabotage all of humanity in one deadly act of treason against God.

Satan singled out Eve for his cunning deception when she was not in the company of Adam. Away from her husband, but close to the forbidden tree, she was in the most vulnerable position possible. It is likely that Eve had heard about God's only restriction not directly from God but from her husband. Genesis 2:16–17 records that God gave the prohibition just prior to her creation, at a time when Adam must have been the lone recipient. Eve's instruction and her protection were Adam's responsibility, but Satan found her alone and apparently without accurate understanding of God's warning to Adam. “

Eve was deceived. She “saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise” (Genesis 3:6). Notice the natural desires that contributed to Eve's confusion: her bodily appetites (it was good for food); her aesthetic sensibilities (it was pleasant to the eyes); and her intellectual curiosity (it was desirable for wisdom). Those are all good, legitimate, healthy urges—unless the object of desire is sinful, and then natural

passion becomes evil lust. That can never result in any good. Eve ate, and then she gave to her husband to eat.

Even though Eve was deceived into eating the forbidden fruit—rather than acting out of deliberate disobedience—her sin still subjected her to God's displeasure. She forfeited the paradise of Eden and inherited a life of pain and frustration instead. No matter what means Satan may use to beguile us into sin—no matter how subtle his cunning—the responsibility for the deed itself still lies with the sinner and no one else. Eve could not escape accountability for what she had done by transferring the blame (Genesis 3:13).



That accountability resulted in serious ramifications that women struggle with even to this day. God placed a curse on Eve (vs. 16) that deals with the two most important relationships in which a woman might naturally seek her highest joy: her husband and her children. "To the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your

husband, And he shall rule over you.'" In a fallen world, sadness, pain, and physical difficulties would be part and parcel of the woman's daily routine. In childbirth, however, the pain and sorrow would be "greatly multiplied." The bearing of children, which originally had the potential to bring the most undiluted kind of joy and gladness, would instead be marred by



severe pain and difficulty. The second part of the verse is a little harder to interpret: "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Before Adam sinned, his leadership was always perfectly wise and loving and tender. Before Eve sinned, her submission was the perfect model of meekness and modesty. But sin changed all of that. She would now chafe under his headship and desire to gain dominance over him. His tendency would be to suppress her in a harsh or domineering way. And thus we see that tensions over gender roles go all the way back to our first parents.

The severity of the curse must have shattered Eve's heart, but God's judgment was not entirely harsh and hopeless. There was a good deal of grace, even in the curse. To the eyes of faith, there were rays of hope that shone even through the cloud of God's displeasure. Although their relationship would now have tensions that did not exist in Eden, Eve remained Adam's partner. She retained her role as a wife, and she would still be the mother of all living (v. 20).

The promise that Eve would still bear children mitigated every other aspect of the curse. That one simple expectation contained a ray of hope for the whole human race. There was a hint in the curse itself that one of Eve's own offspring would ultimately overthrow evil and dispel all the darkness of sin. Eve had set a whole world of evil in motion by her disobedience; now, through her offspring, she would produce a Savior. This powerful hope had already been implicitly given to her, in the portion of the curse where the Lord addressed the evil spirit indwelling the snake: "I will put enmity . . . between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (v. 15). Eve must have taken heart from this guarantee that her race would not be hopelessly subordinated to the evil one's domination forever. The curse

against the serpent held a promise for Eve: her own offspring would destroy the destroyer.

Christ, who was uniquely “born of a woman” (Galatians 4:4)—the offspring of a virgin, and God in human form—literally fulfilled this promise that the Seed of the woman would break the serpent’s head.

It is clear that Eve’s hope was personified in her own children. She saw them as tokens of God’s goodness and reminders of the promise that her Seed would be the instrument by which the tempter’s ultimate destruction was accomplished. For instance, in her great joy upon first becoming a mother, Eve said, “I have acquired a man from the LORD” (Genesis 4:1). It was an expression of hope and rejoicing because of God’s grace, compassion, kindness, and forgiveness toward her. When Eve bore Seth—after Cain had already broken her heart by murdering Abel—Scripture says, she “named him Seth [meaning, “appointed one”], “For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed”” (v. 25). The reference to the “appointed seed” suggests that her heart had laid hold of the promise concealed in the curse, and she treasured the undying hope that one day her own Seed would fulfill that promise.

### *A Blessing for You*

May you imbue your children  
with love of their Creator, joy in His unique roles  
for them, and faith that He will guide them safely  
into the blessed life beyond the curse.



# *The Wonder of God*

*Here I am, your invited guest—  
it's incredible!*

*I enter your house; here I am,  
prostrate in your inner sanctum.*

PSALM 5:7 THE MESSAGE



Every mother has experienced the power of wonder. When we first saw our babies, we were overwhelmed by wonder. As our children were laid in our arms for the first time, the wonder and awe of this complete and perfect little child dissolved us to tears of joy to see what God had created.

Our children may be babies now, or be teenagers, or have families of their own, but mothers can still experience the wonder of God. Whenever we look carefully at our children, whether they're tiny-tots or grown-ups, we can see God's handiwork in them. When we see how God is at work in their lives, we are overwhelmed with wonder at the goodness of God. It is not unlike the first time we held them close and were filled with wonder and joy to see what God had created.



*We can look carefully at our children  
and know the wonder of God.*



When God looks at you,  
He sees...

a woman

who is beautifully perfect

and perfectly beautiful...

a kind and generous spirit

who makes the world

a gentler place...

See yourself as God sees you.



There will be an abundance  
of grain in the earth,  
On the top of the mountains;  
Its fruit shall wave like Lebanon;  
And those of the city  
shall flourish like grass of the earth.

PSALM 72:16 NKJV



From everlasting to everlasting,  
the LORD's mercy is on those who fear him.  
His righteousness belongs  
to their children and grandchildren.

PSALM 103:17 GOD'S WORD



The Lord uses the incident to teach the "what and how" of true worship. He spoke of the need to worship the Father "in spirit and in truth." The worship of God involves not only theory, but practice. We must make sure that the worship coming from our lips has the participation of our heart.

Christ uses the incident to fathom the meaning of marriage and divorce. The woman spoke of having "no husbands," and our Lord pointed out how profound a truth she had spoken, since she had apparently been "married" five times.

The Gospel also speaks of the need in life for spiritual sustenance. Christ points out that "whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again . . ." What a rebuke to the crass materialism of our times, in which people think that "more" of everything will bring joy and gladness to life's journey. A person is not made for this world alone, he is made for eternity. A person is not only flesh and bone, but body and soul united together.

This Gospel is like a gem of many facets, each sparkling with a lesson for our times. It deserves careful reading, study and consideration.

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