

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith

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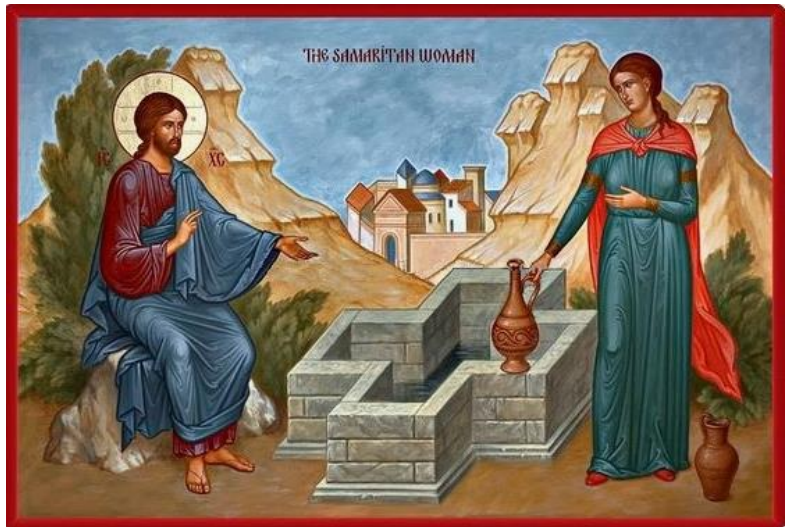
***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,
Diocese of the Midwest***

JUNE 2, 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PASCHA
SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

EPISTLE: Acts 11:19-26, 29-30

In those days, those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as



Christ and the Samaritan Woman

Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

GOSPEL: John 4:5-42

At that time, Jesus came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and 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." The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ? Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime, His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." Therefore, the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors." And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." So, when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

MON. June 3	Martyr Lucillian and those who suffered with him at Byzantium; Acts 12:12-17, Jn 8:42-51
TUE. June 4	Saint Metrophanes, first Patriarch of Constantinople; Acts 12:25-13:12, Jn 8:51-59
WED. June 5	Hieromartyr Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre; Acts 13:13-24, Jn 6:5-14
THU. June 6	Venerable Bessarion, Wonderworker of Egypt; Acts 14:20-27, Jn 9:39-10:9
FRI. June 7	Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Ancyra; Acts 15:5-34, Jn 10:17-28
SAT. June 8	Translation of the relics of the Greatmartyr Theodore Stratelates; Acts 15:35-41, Jn 10:27-38
4:00 PM	VESPERS
SUN. June 9	6th SUNDAY AFTER PASCHA, <i>SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN,</i> <i>Tone 5</i>
9:10 AM	HOURS
9:30 AM	DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Hour

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



Debby Pinta, P. O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; **Tony Monastra**, 2119 Willow Cove Marblehead, OH 43440; **Patti Owens**, 311 Woodbridge Road, Vermilion, OH 44089; **Basil Glovinsky**, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; **Subdeacon Roger Pinta**, P.O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; **Diane Tryon**, 109 Joslyn Street, Arcadia, OH 44804; **Ed & Irene Vangeloff**, 454 Strouse Lane, Sandusky, OH 44870

JUNE REPOSED



Mike Mazur (1923) No date provided; Anna Mazur (1923) No date provided; **4-** Alex Sennich (1994); **4-** Victoria Guzy (1965); **6-** Matthew Gould (2020); **8-** Mary Hunt (2003); **9-** Cristina Rindfleisch (2006); **9-** Charles Hagmaier (2018); **16-** Verona Pich (2010); **17-** Archimandrite Luke Sirkun (1956) Former Pastor; **17-** Mitered Archpriest John Gratson (1965) Former Pastor; **20-** Jean Frances Glovinsky (2016); **20-** Dan Karens Cousin 2019; **21-** Mary Elchisco Migala (1983); **22-** Archpriest Kyrill Hartman (2010) Former Pastor; **23-** Ruth Benya (1995); **26-** George Millie (1974); **27-** Anna Ignatenko- (1969); **29-** Stephen Millie (1988)

JUNE CANDLE SPONSORS



Altar Candles: Fr. Peter & Mat. Michelle, For Health and God's Blessings for Barbara Wroblewski, Matushka's mother and Michal Tomáš, Father's father (**\$50**); **Chandelier:** Diane Tryon, In Loving Memory of Uncle Tig (**\$50**); **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Available (**\$25**); **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Stephanie and in memory of John Kovach (**\$20**); **Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** For Safety and Health of Nicholas, Tikhon, Gleice, & Chloe (**\$20**)



VIGILS FOR May 26

Angela Bricker 4 For family and parents

Susan Guzy 1 Special intentions

Laura Kovach 3 For health and/or healing of David M., Patti O., Margi H., Jim K., Ron R., Diane T., Ruth S., James W., Tony M., Hannah S., Barbara D., Pauline O., Betty K., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Sharon D., John D., Karen D., and Kathie J.
Memory eternal to Ben Franklin, Rob Gevertz, and Don Wright
Safe travel for family

Sandy Martin 1 Special intentions

Natalie Twarek 8 God's Blessing to Fr John on his 50th anniversary to the priesthood! In loving memory of Don Wright, Health and recovery of Debbie Pinta, For the health and recovery of Bill Byrnes, Ruth, Pam, Diane, Ron, Jim, Michelle, Terrie, Theresa, Clayton, Father Emilian, For the health of Matushka Melania, Randy, Patrick and Marty, Mike Heffernan and Barbara Heffernan, Health and healing for Father's dad Michal and Matushka's mom Barbara, For the health and recovery of Tony, Bev, Ed, Irene, Father David, Pauline, Judy, Tina, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Tina's dad, Earl, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Betty, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat, special intentions

PRAYER LIST

Parishioners & Family: Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Tony Monastra / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Ruth Sheller / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Jeanne Smith / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Chris Hannon / Subdeacon Roger Pinta / Ed Vangeloff / Irene Vangeloff / Diane Tryon / Sonja Rose / Ron Royhab / James Bargdill / John Beadle / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Elaine Hileman / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Stephanie Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Clifford / Gleice, Sophie & Chloe / Carol / Debbie & Marco / Nora.

Other Requests: Amy / Bill Byrnes / Michael Heffernan / Susanne / Barbara Heffernan / Rita Mumea / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Sidharth Bijilani – friend of Subdeacon Roger and Debbie Pinta / Anthony / Archpriest Ján Čížmár / Archpriest David Lis / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / Mark Masica / Valerie Ritzenthaler / William / Rick Rowe / Chris.

Military: Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military



JUNE BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

2 – Jake Muscaro; **19** – Ryan Stamp; **25** – Fr. Peter; **26** – Jim & Laura Kovach Anniversary (48)



NEW GRANDPARENTS IN OUR PARISH FAMILY

We wish to congratulate **Kathy and Cliff Ruggles** on becoming **Grandparents** of their newly born granddaughter, **SOPHIE SHEA RUGGLES**, who was born on **Friday, May 31st** in Yokosuka, Japan. Baby and mom **Gleice**, as well as the new dad **Tikhon** are all doing well. *May the Lord bless the newly born SOPHIE with good health, peace, and happiness that she may grow for the joy of her parents and especially of her Proud Grandparents!*



READERS LIST

Sunday Jun 2 – Tim
 Sunday Jun 9 – Ron
 Sunday Jun 16 – Joe
 Sunday Jun 23 – Natalie



ATTENDANCE

05/25 Vespers, **9** attending (1 guest); **05/26** Divine Liturgy, **34** attending (11 guests)



COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST

June 2 – Matushka Michelle
 June 9 – Natalia
 June 16 – Sandy
 June 23 – Tina
 June 30 – Natalia
 July 7 – Jake
 July 14 – Available
 July 21 – Tina

Please sign up to host coffee hour after the Sunday Divine Liturgy. Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall.



SUNDAY OFFERING

Sunday, May 26, 2024

Tithe	\$ 797.00
Candles	\$ 34.00
Vigils	\$ 65.00
Donations	\$ 81.00
Holy Day Donation	\$ 40.00
Baby Bottles – Heartbeat (May)	\$ 10.00
Bookstore	\$ 200.00
Total:	\$1,227.00

May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“St. Tikhon Seminary” is the charity we donate to for the month of May.



CLEANING SCHEDULE

June 3, Angela
 June 10, Angela
 June 17, Angela
 June 24, Angela

UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

June 3rd Baking Day 8:00 AM (*Monday*)
June 4th Baking Day 8:00 AM (*Tuesday*)
Jun 8th Market Day 8:00 AM (*Saturday*)



- June 10th** Cleaning Onions 8:00 AM (*Monday*)
- Jun 13th** Ascension of Our Lord (*Thursday*)
- June 17th** Baking Day 8:00 AM (*Monday*)
- June 18th** Baking Day 8:00 AM (*Tuesday*)
- Jun 22nd** 5th Memorial Saturday, Market Day (*Saturday*)
- Jun 23rd** PENTECOST
- June 24th** Baking Day 8:00 AM (*Monday*)
- June 25th** Baking Day 8:00 AM (*Tuesday*)



FR. JOHN ADAMCIO CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY!

You are invited to celebrate with Fr. John Adamcio his 50th Anniversary of the Holy Priesthood today **Sunday, June 2nd** at **3:00 PM** at **5318 Coachlight Trail, Sheffield Village, OH 44054**. May Our Lord and God grant to His servant the Archpriest John, long life, good health, peace, and happiness for Many Happy and Blessed Years! Mnogaya Leta!



MARKET DAY!

Our next Market Day will take place next Saturday, **June 8th** starting with set up at **8:00 AM**. We will have perohi, kielbasa and kraut, spanakopita, and a large variety of baked goods. Your help is greatly appreciated!



BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN

You are invited to participate in the Annual Baby Bottle Campaign sponsored by Ottawa County Pregnancy Services. Please take a Baby bottle which you will find in the vestibule and fill it with loose change, cash or check made out to Ottawa County Pregnancy. Please return the bottle on or before Father's Day.



Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

Commemorated on June 2

The Holy Martyr Photina (Svetlana) the Samaritan Woman, her sons Victor (named Photinus) and Joses; and her sisters Anatola, Phota, Photis, Paraskev , Kyriake; Nero's daughter Domnina; and the Martyr Sebastian: The holy Martyr Photina was the Samaritan Woman, with whom the Savior conversed at Jacob's Well (John. 4:5-42).

During the time of the emperor Nero (54-68), who displayed excessive cruelty against Christians, Saint Photina lived in Carthage with her younger son Joses and fearlessly preached the Gospel there. Her eldest son Victor fought bravely in the Roman army against barbarians, and was appointed military commander in the city of Attalia (Asia Minor). Later, Nero called him to Italy to arrest and punish Christians.

Sebastian, an official in Italy, said to Saint Victor, "I know that you, your mother and your brother, are followers of Christ. As a friend I advise you to submit to the will of the emperor. If you inform on any Christians, you will receive their wealth. I shall write to your mother and brother, asking them not to preach Christ in public. Let them practice their faith in secret."

Saint Victor replied, "I want to be a preacher of Christianity like my mother and brother." Sebastian said, "O Victor, we all know what woes await you, your mother and brother." Then Sebastian suddenly felt a sharp pain in his eyes. He was dumbfounded, and his face was somber.

For three days he lay there blind, without uttering a word. On the fourth day he declared, "The God of the Christians is the only true God." Saint Victor asked why Sebastian had suddenly changed his mind. Sebastian replied, "Because Christ is calling me." Soon he was baptized, and immediately regained his sight. Saint Sebastian's servants, after witnessing the miracle, were also baptized.

Reports of this reached Nero, and he commanded that the Christians be brought to him at Rome. Then the Lord Himself appeared to the confessors and said, "Fear not, for I am with you. Nero, and all who serve him, will be vanquished." The Lord said to Saint Victor, "From this day forward, your name will be Photinus, because through you, many will be enlightened and will believe in Me." The Lord then told the Christians to strengthen and encourage Saint Sebastian to persevere until the end.

All these things, and even future events, were revealed to Saint Photina. She left Carthage in the company of several Christians and joined the confessors in Rome.

At Rome the emperor ordered the saints to be brought before him and he asked them whether they truly believed in Christ. All the confessors refused to renounce the Savior. Then the emperor gave orders to smash the martyrs' finger joints. During the torments, the confessors felt no pain, and their hands remained unharmed.

Nero ordered that Saints Sebastian, Photinus and Joses be blinded and locked up in prison, and Saint Photina and her five sisters Anatola, Phota, Photis, Paraskev  and Kyriake were sent to the imperial court under the supervision of Nero's daughter Domnina. Saint Photina converted both Domnina and all her servants to Christ. She also converted a sorcerer, who had brought her poisoned food to kill her. Three years passed, and Nero sent to the prison for one of his servants, who had been locked up. The messengers reported to him that Saints Sebastian, Photinus and Joses, who had been blinded, had completely recovered, and that people were visiting them to hear their preaching, and indeed the whole prison had been transformed into a bright and fragrant place where God was glorified.

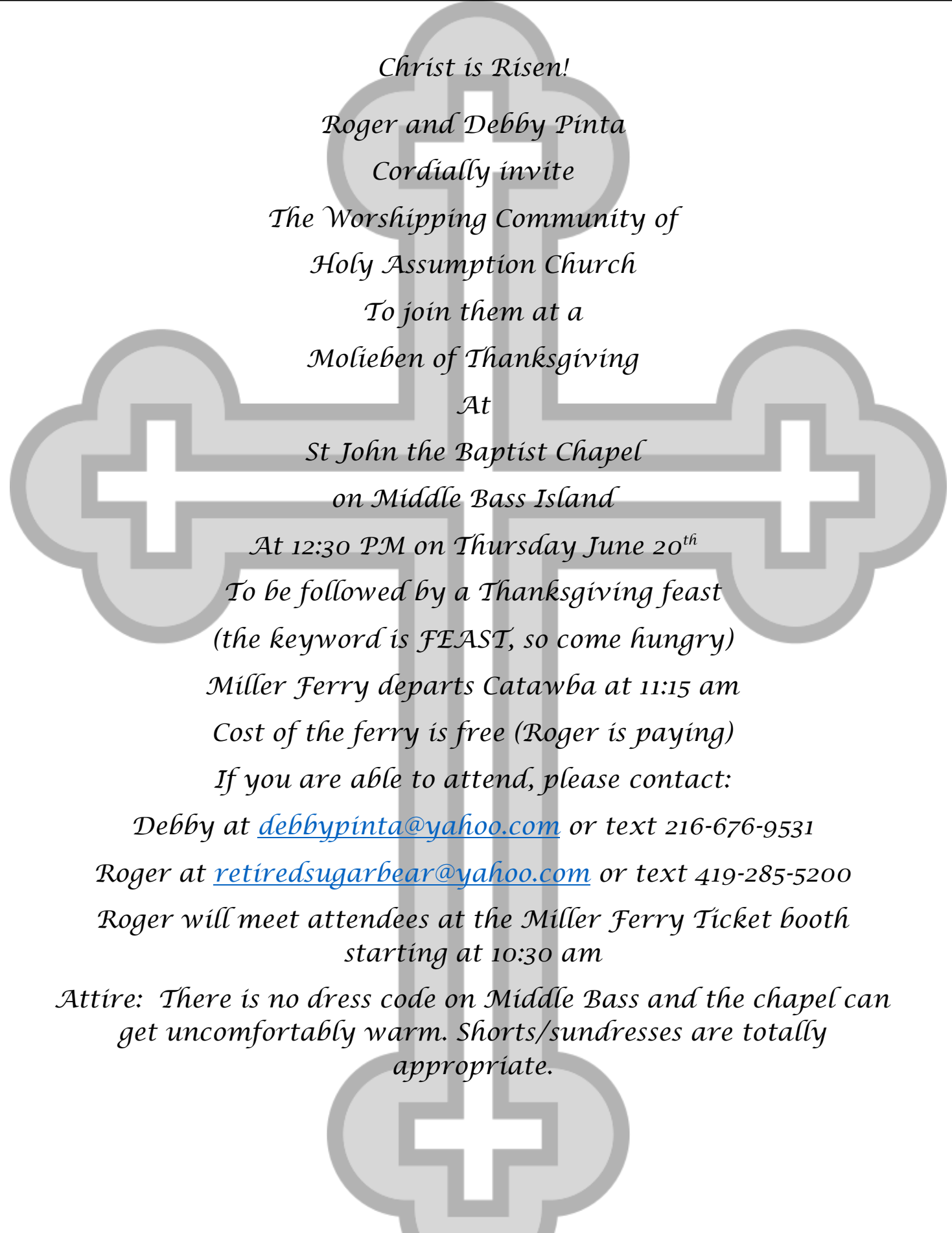
Nero then gave orders to crucify the saints, and to beat their naked bodies with straps. On the fourth day the emperor sent servants to see whether the martyrs were still alive. But, approaching the place of the tortures, the servants fell blind. An angel of the Lord freed the martyrs from their crosses and healed them. The saints took pity on the blinded servants, and restored their sight by their prayers to the Lord. Those who were healed came to believe in Christ and were soon baptized.

In an impotent rage Nero gave orders to flay the skin from Saint Photina and to throw the martyr down a well. Sebastian, Photinus and Joses had their legs cut off, and they were thrown to dogs, and then had their skin flayed off. The sisters of Saint Photina also suffered terrible torments. Nero gave orders to cut off their breasts and then to flay their skin. An expert in cruelty, the emperor readied the fiercest execution for Saint Photis: they tied her by the feet to the tops of two bent-over trees. When the ropes were cut the trees sprang upright and tore the martyr apart. The emperor ordered the others beheaded. Saint Photina was removed from the well and locked up in prison for twenty days.

After this Nero had her brought to him and asked if she would now relent and offer sacrifice to the idols. Saint Photina spit in the face of the emperor, and laughing at him, said, "O most impious of the blind, you profligate and stupid man! Do you think me so deluded that I would consent to renounce my Lord Christ and instead offer sacrifice to idols as blind as you?"

Hearing such words, Nero gave orders to again throw the martyr down the well, where she surrendered her soul to God (ca. 66).

On the Greek Calendar, Saint Photina is commemorated on February 26.



Christ is Risen!
Roger and Debby Pinta
Cordially invite
The Worshipping Community of
Holy Assumption Church
To join them at a
Molieben of Thanksgiving
At
St John the Baptist Chapel
on Middle Bass Island

At 12:30 PM on Thursday June 20th
To be followed by a Thanksgiving feast
(the keyword is FEAST, so come hungry)
Miller Ferry departs Catawba at 11:15 am
Cost of the ferry is free (Roger is paying)
If you are able to attend, please contact:

Debby at debbypinta@yahoo.com or text 216-676-9531
Roger at retiredsugarbear@yahoo.com or text 419-285-5200
Roger will meet attendees at the Miller Ferry Ticket booth
starting at 10:30 am

Attire: There is no dress code on Middle Bass and the chapel can
get uncomfortably warm. Shorts/sundresses are totally
appropriate.



Christ Meets Samaritan Woman at the Well – How God Meant Evil for Good

by Sergey Khudiev

Like a diamond, the story of Jesus Christ and the Samaritan woman has many sides to it. Here, we will concentrate on one specific aspect: we will look at it as an example of God's grace and mercy.

The Samaritan woman does not come to the well in the morning like all married women did. She comes at the hottest hour at mid-day because she does not want to bump into them. In contemporary terms, we might call

her personal life “problematic” and full of challenges, and in a patriarchal society like hers, most other women treated her with disdain, out of concern for their own married lives. She would have been glad not to come to the well at all. She asks Him that she would not get thirsty to have to come to the well to draw water, but her thirst keeps forcing her to come.

Thirst is a prominent theme of this narration and the scripture in general. To quote the biblical prophet Isaiah (55:1), “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”

The Samaritan woman is thirsty for water, but she is also craving for something else that is at least as essential to her life.

She has had five husbands, but not because she was widowed but likely as a result of the relationships that did not last. None of the men she met was able or willing to respond to her need for love, appreciation, and protection. All had taken advantage of her need and went on with their lives. The hope and inspiration that she experienced at the beginning of every new relationship ended in disappointment; her whole life was like drawing water that did not quench the thirst or quenched it only for a short time. She then accepted a life with someone who would at least keep her company, but not as her husband.

The Gospel's story has many layers of meaning. The first layer is historical – its story is about a certain woman with a face and a name whom Jesus met at a specific time and place. But it also has another dimension. It is the story of a person who is looking for happiness, or at least for some relief or consolation. She cannot find any, because the only way one can find genuine happiness is by living with God.

As Prophet Jeremiah wrote, “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. (Jeremiah 2:13). The poor woman who was looking for water in the broken cisterns finally meets God.

Jesus tells her the truth about her life, which is anything but flattering. But obviously, his attitude was starkly different from that of the other women at the well. He was critical of her disorderly life, but his disparagement leads to an unexpected result. It does not make her feel rejected, belittled, or embittered. Conversely, it inspires her to go to the fellow villages – the very same people that she had been trying to avoid by coming to the well at mid-day – and preach to them with courage. Her past life – things that were the reason for her guilt and condemnation – turned into something else. Jesus saw through her, but he did not condemn or reject her. Her fall, her past sins and dishonor – and likewise the pains that she had suffered from others – were episodes in her glorious salvation and the salvation of the whole world.

As Joseph says to his brethren in the book of Genesis, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.” (Genesis 50:20).

The transgressions that she committed and the pains that she had suffered God intended for her good. He forgives her transgressions; moreover, she meets Christ and discovers that her whole life had been leading her towards that meeting.

Some people meet Christ under similar circumstances. Having reached their lowest point they appeal to Him, and He pulls them out of their abyss, while the example of their fall and salvation becomes a lesson for multiple others. This may happen to a hopeless drug user or a criminal in prison – they repent before God, and God redeems their transgressions and directs them to salvation. Or an abortion doctor who realizes the evil that he had been doing and becomes an opponent of abortion. God accepts his repentance and puts his experience to use to affirm life.

One bewildering feature of the New Testament is that it makes no secret of the infirmities, falls and transgressions of God’s disciples. The Apostles have argued over the right to sit on the right and left hand of Christ at the table; they fled when Christ was captured, Saint Peter disowned Christ three times, while Saint Paul has been a persecutor of Christians. Why do the apostles tell us this? Does it undermine their authority as the teachers of others? Normally, we will want to present as positive an image of ourselves as possible and to remain silent as much as possible about our sins and failures. Why do the apostles not do the same?

Apostle Paul explains it this way: “But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.” (1 Timothy 1:16)

The good news is that the people who have fallen and disgraced themselves, who are lost and exhausted can all come to our Lord Jesus Christ, and He will turn the story of their fall into a history of His mercy. Through God’s mercy, these broken and lost people, who bear the pain of their sins and the sins of others, find dignity, joy and a new life. When they share their life with others it becomes like the water that Christ gives to them and that becomes in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Thursday, 30 March 2024
Venerable Father Isaac of Dalmatia
№. 94

**Archpastoral Message of His Eminence, Archbishop Daniel,
to the Venerable Clergy, Monastics and Faithful
of the God-protected Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest**

Beloved Sons and Daughters,

✠ CHRIST IS RISEN! ✠

I have just returned to Chicago from my unexpected visit to Cleveland and to our beloved Saint Theodosius Cathedral. As you are already aware, this historic Cathedral recently suffered from an accidental fire sparked by restoration work on the roof. While not a complete loss, significant damages were incurred and substantial efforts will be necessary in order to return the Cathedral to its former glory.

For over a century, Saint Theodosius Cathedral has been a place of worship, spiritual comfort and consolation, Christian fellowship, ministry and service. Indeed, the Cathedral's history and its noteworthy architecture have made it not only one of the Orthodox Church in America's most beloved churches, but also a landmark on the Cleveland skyline. Those of you whose lives have been entwined with the life and history of Saint Theodosius know, better than anyone, what a great loss has been suffered because of the devastation caused by the fire on Tuesday afternoon.

It was emotionally moving and spiritually uplifting to gather in prayer with the local clergy and faithful on Wednesday morning, just hours after the fire. Standing before the open doors of the Cathedral, surrounded by fallen debris and with the smell of smoke still in the air, we sang the Paschal Canon. With these familiar melodies and comforting verses, we were reminded of what we continue to celebrate in these forty days of Pascha: Christ has conquered death and the powers of darkness and has given us the life and light that flow from His victorious Resurrection! Our coming together to proclaim Christ's Victory in word and song, especially in the midst of this painful loss, is a great testament of faith. It directs our hope to another victory, one that is yet to be shown, as the work of the restoration of the Cathedral begins.

At yesterday's service of prayer, I also had the blessing of witnessing the closeness of the Saint Theodosius parish community. Amidst the tears and sadness upon the faces of men and women, young adults and children, I saw the love and concern that the cathedral community have for one another. I am confident that these relationships will provide the strength and determination our brothers and sisters will need as we move forward. Your prayers and support will also play an important role in the rebuilding of the Cathedral. As the newest chapter of the Cathedral's history begins to be written, I call upon you to pray for Father Ján Čížmár, Cathedral Dean, for the parish leadership, and for all the members of the Saint Theodosius Cathedral parish community. May we all, as Saint Paul exhorts us in his letter to the Galatians, "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DANIEL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest