

July 11, 2010
Bulletin # 28

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church

2216 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

Rectory: 304-233-1688 • Fax: 304-233-4714

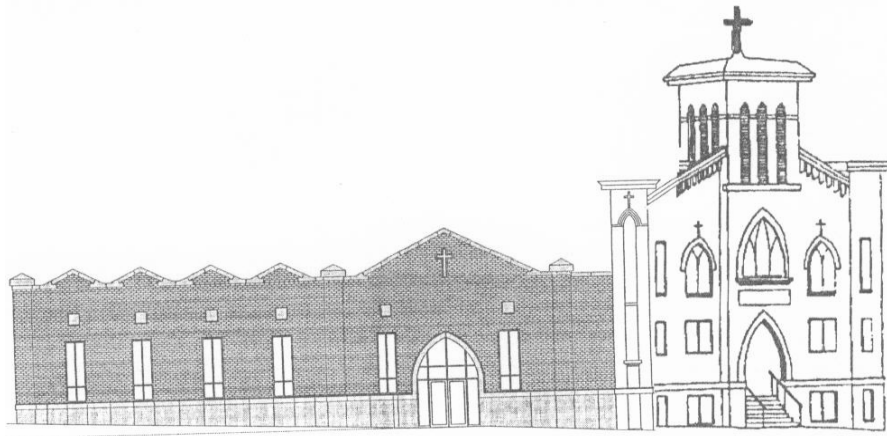
E-Mail: ololwv@comcast.net • Web Site: www.ololwv.com

Fr. Bakhos Chidiac Pastor

Evelyn Ghaphery (Organist)

Charlotte Khourey & Thomasina Geimer (Secretaries)

8th Sunday of Pentecost



Schedule of Divine Liturgies

- ***Weekend Masses:** Saturday evening at 4:00 p.m.
Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. [Rosary & Litany start at 10:00 a.m.]
- ***Weekday Masses:** Wednesday, Thursday, Friday at 9:00 a.m. [Rosary & Litany start at 8:40 a.m.]
- ***Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament:** 1st Saturday of the month at 3:30 p.m. & 1st Sunday after 10:30 a.m. Mass
- ***Confession:** Saturday: 3:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. or any other time by appointment
- ***Baptism:** Please phone the Pastor as soon as a baby is born; at least one Godparents must be Catholic
- ***Weddings:** Please make arrangements at least six months in advance before any other plans are made
- ***Sick Calls & Anointing of the Sick:** Please notify the pastor at **304-233-1688**
- ***Parish Council:** Lou Khourey 304-277-3230, Linda Duffy 304-242-6853, Tom George 304-336-7142,
P.J. Lenz 304-242-5606, Carol Dougherty 740-782-0146, Rita Strawn 304-547-1692,
Mike Linton 304-242-6969
- ***Choir Members:** Rita Strawn, Shirley George, Allison Duffy, George Thomas, Ted Olinski, Earl Duffy,
Lou Khourey, Robert Vawter, Jody & Abbie Seabright, Tracey Dierkes
- ***Altar Boys:** Louie Khourey & Dalton Haas
- ***Cedar Club:** Linda Duffy, President 304-242-6853
- ***Women's Society:** Sandra Dusick, President 304-232-7395



- ***Bulletin Announcements:** Submit all Bulletin Information by Tuesday Noon every week.
- ***New Parishioners:** We welcome you with great joy and invite you to be officially listed as one of our parishioners
- ***Cedar Hall Rental Fees:** Call the Church Office **304-233-1688**
- ***Parking:** Saturday & Sunday, parishioners may park in both lots; Monday-Friday, park ONLY in the 3 ALLEY spaces
- *Remember the Church in your Last Will & Testament – Her prayers will accompany you to heaven
- *Please support Our Lady of Lebanon Church by patronizing our Benefactors and Advertisers
- *If you support the Church and need a Bulletin mailed to you, please call the church office

Gospel Reflection

Readings: Rom 8:1-11 and Mt 12:14-21

To find a treasure either by a stroke of luck or after a persistent search is real good fortune. What wouldn't one do to find a treasure island or simply to win a lottery? The chance of a lifetime, the unexpected opportunity, is to discover in Jesus the kingdom of heaven. But to take possession of it, we have to sell everything we possess like this merchant, this digger, in order to buy what we desire. And it's too bad for those who will describe as folly what is basically no more than wisdom, the capacity to appreciate and to look for the genuine article. "Ask yourselves," said Newman, "if, in the event of the kingdom disappearing, there might be something in your life you would have to change; if you are aware of nothing to be changed, it is because your life is not staked on Christ and the Kingdom".

A life staked on Christ and the kingdom: that is exactly how demanding is the Christian life received in baptism; that is its hallmark, as against all other ways of life. In social, professional, even family life there are certain limits to be observed, but not in Christian living. This overwhelming passion for Christ is like a great wave which swamps everything and knows no division. Anyone who wants to follow Christ must therefore really "sell everything" and admit not even the smallest proportion of hypocrisy or compromise.

Even less is it a question of being only half free. How can anyone speak of sacrifice, when detachment is only the reverse of attachment to Jesus in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? Better than any of the great causes, Jesus can arouse only joy, all the joy of the world: the joy of discovering a purpose in life, the joy of feeling caught up in the adventure of holiness. Truly, all the joy of the world!

Mass Intentions

This WEEKEND, July 10-11: 8th Sunday after Pentecost

Saturday, July 10 at 4:00 p.m.:

Michael (Mick) Sieber by Mary Rose Kukula

Edith June Fahey by Mary Rose Kukula

Sunday, July 11th at 10:30 a.m.:

40-Day Mass for Sam Elias by the Family

Michael Joseph by Cecilia John

Weekday Masses

Monday, July 12: No Mass. Pastoral visits and office work

Tuesday, July 13: No Mass. Pastoral visits and office work

Wednesday, July 14 at 9:00 a.m.:

Lou Elias by his Family

Sam Elias by Bill & Jennie Dematte

Thursday, July 15 at 9:00 a.m.:

Intentions of Judy Ghaphery by the Ghaphery Family

Anthony J. Koury Sr. [MN] (on his 25th Anniversary) by his wife Louise Koury

Friday, July 16 at 9:00 a.m.:

Sam Elias by Esther Khoury

Michael Joseph by Vicky Joseph

Next WEEKEND, July 17-18: 9th Sunday after Pentecost

Saturday, July 17 at 4:00 p.m.:

James Dellget (Anniversary) by Rex & Rita Strawn

Walter Elwartoski by his son Richard

Sunday, July 18th at 10:30 a.m.:

LaVerne Thomas (mother of Diane Frenn on her Anniversary) by Dr. Adel, Diane, Andreah & Justin

Frank Gray (on his 9th Anniversary) by Shirley & Jim George

Our Lady of Lebanon Calendar of Parish Events

Date	Event
Mon.-Wed., July 12-14	Mahrajan Baking Days – starting daily at 9:00 a.m.
Monday, July 19 to 24	MYO Workshop in Latrobe, Pennsylvania –see information at www.maroniteyouth.com
Sunday, July 25	Women’s Society 50/50 Monthly Raffle – following Mass
Sunday, August 1	Mahrajan Raffle – Early Bird Drawing – from all entries received by Saturday, July 31
Sunday, August 15	Feast of the Assumption & Mahrajan – at Oglebay Park
Sunday, October 3	Fall Spaghetti Dinner

Cedar Hall Rental Calendar

Our Cedar Hall is reserved by individuals for events on the following dates and some individuals may have requested to come the day before the event to set up for it:

Date	Set-up Day	Event	Booking Is:
Sunday, July 11	Same Day: Sunday, July 11	Baby Shower	confirmed
Saturday, July 31	Friday, July 30	Wedding Reception	confirmed
Saturday, August 7	Friday, August 6	Wedding Reception	confirmed
Saturday, August 21	Same Day: Saturday, August 21	Wedding Reception	confirmed
Sunday, October 10	<i>Undecided</i>	Wedding Reception	confirmed
Saturday, October 16	<i>Undecided</i>	50 th Anniversary	tentative

Heat System Fundraising to Replace Old Church Furnace

H.E. Newman Company did remove the old boiler. Gary Weisner power washed the boiler room and he is insulating it for fire protection. The final installation of the new boiler will take place when that room is ready. The whole project of heating and cooling the church and the rectory is \$32,850.00. We raised \$30,346.00 so far. We are short \$2,504.00 to finish this project. We need your help and donations to finish this job. A plaque will be installed in the church to commemorate all the donors toward this project on three levels: Diamond, Gold and Silver. If you would like to raise your level of donation or make a donation in any amount toward this project, please call Fr. Bakhos at 304-233-1688.

New donations in July: Jim & Shirley George (\$100),

Mahrajan Baking Days Scheduled (Monday, July 12 thru 14, starting daily at 9:00 a.m.)

Pleas plan to join the Women’s Society to bake the various pastries which will be sold this year at our Mahrajan. Baking will begin Monday, July 12th, starting at 9:00 a.m. and will continue as needed through Wednesday, July 14th. Everyone is welcome to join us with their talented hands for this work and camaraderie.

Women’s Society Bi-Monthly 50/50 Raffle (Drawing: Sunday, July 25, after Mass)

Our next 50/50 Raffle drawing will take place in the Cedar Hall after Mass on **Sunday, July 25th**, from ticket entries received during **June and July**. Complete and return ticket stubs from those placed at the church entrance or printed in the Weekly Church Bulletins. Congratulations to Peggy Justice who won the April/May prize of \$55 and graciously donated it to the New Heat System. May the Blessed Mother grant her a long and healthy life.

Mahrajan (Sunday, August 15, at Oglebay Park)

Souvenir Ad Book: Many Thanks to Janet Shutler for the artwork of the Mahrajan souvenir ad book. Last date for submitting ads is July 15th. No ads will be accepted after that date because the book will be sent to the printer. Mahrajan Donations in any amount will be appreciated and will contribute to the success of our Mahrajan. You may request that your donation be used to sponsor the singer for \$1,000; the Dance Troupe for \$500; be a Booth Sponsor for \$250 or other Donations will be recognized at the levels listed below. Thanks to the following individuals who have made donations toward our event:

- Diamond Level (\$100 and above):** John & Dee Shiben, Dr. Rajai & Nahla Khoury, Dr. Adel & Dianne Frenn, Dr. MaryAnn Cater & Dr. Rob Vawter, Lou & Charlotte Khourey, Orval & Clara Carter,
 --**Gold Level (\$50 to \$99):** Esther Khoury, Cecilia Ammar, Columbia Sales, Chamse Rahi,
 --**Silver Level (up to \$49):** Bob & Fran Saseen, Suzanne Crall, Rita Ann Castle,

Raffle Tickets: This year, during the Mahrajan at Oglebay Park, in addition to having a chance to win the \$100 Early Bird Prize on Sunday, August 1, from all entries received by Saturday, July 31, your Raffle Tickets will also give you the chance to win one of the following prizes:

Grand Prize: \$1,000 Cash; 2nd Prize: 32" Plasma TV (donated by Drs. Rajai & Nahla Khoury, Dr. & Mrs. Adel Frenn and Drs. MaryAnn Cater & Rob Vawter); **3rd Prize: \$100 Gift Certificate** redeemable at **Nicky's Garden Center**; **4th Prize: Olympus 12 mega pixels Digital Camera** (donated anonymously); **5th Prize: beautiful hand-appliquéd, floral-patterned Quilt** (donated anonymously). A very BIG "Thank You" goes to Gold, Khourey & Turak for generously sponsoring our Mahrajan raffle tickets.

Table Reservations:

Under Tents : #1Kay Garvey, #2Michael David, #3George Lewis, #4Tom Carroll, #5Don Ruch Jr., #6Dr. Adel Frenn, #7Sandra Dusick, #8Chamse Rahi, #9Dr. Rajai Khoury, #10Dr. Nabel AlKhouri, #11The Prizinski Family, #12DorothyFenton, #13Angela Nagem, #14Dianna Vargo, #15&16Youssef Chahine (2), #17Coram Family, #18John Shiben, #19Mary Stees, #20Ray Palotay, #21Dr. Cater,

Open-Air: #1&2Kathleen Ackerman (2), #3&4Peggy Palmer (2), #5Fred Shia, #6Emily Vince, #7Jim George, #8Rita George, #9Eva Powell, #10George Taylor, #11Tom Brock, #12Lou Thomas, #13Lucille Gibbons, #14Duffy-Fadoul, #15&16&17Edward Bowman Sr. (3), #18Donna Wasemann, #19Mary Palmer Gioia, #20Carrie Carey, #21Joe Gonot,

Attention last year's Booth Chairpersons (listed below): Please contact Mahrajan Chairman Lou Khourey to confirm your willingness to continue in the same capacity for our 2010 Mahrajan via e-mail at lhk@gkt.com with your contact information (phone, address, etc.) to expedite communications. If you cannot e-mail, please phone him at home in the evenings at 304-277-3230.

Chairpersons are asked to begin contacting those who will be working for your booth at the Mahrajan. As soon as you have a list of workers, please give Lou Khourey a copy of their names and times they will work to both and also give copies to Fr. Bakhos and Charlotte for the office and computer.

Booth	Chairperson(s)	Booth	Chairperson(s)
Grape Leaves	Carol Dougherty	Ticket Trailer	Charlotte Khourey
Shwarma & Falafel	Adel & Diane Frenn with Pitaland Employees and Don & Roberta Henning	Raffles/Culture	Culture: Bassam Deeb Raffle Sales: Gary Dietz & Kim Gibbons
Children's Food	Peggy Justice & Ann Lee Bauduin	Pop & Water	Mike Linton
Children's Activities	Christine Faulkner	Beer	Barry Carter
Food Lines	P.J. Lenz & Al Depto	Instant Bingo	Millet Fadoul
Inside Site 1 Kitchen	Linda Duffy	Hi-Lo	Mickey Duffy
Pastry & Coffee	Kathleen George	Cashiers	Randy Weisner
Grill & Shish Kebab	Tom John	Table Reservations	Janet Shutler
Souvenirs	Nikki Popovich	Booth Break-Down	(on Sunday Evening) ???

Sunday School Classes (Sunday, September 12th)

Sunday school classes will take place every Sunday starting September 12th. We ask the parents to call Fr. Bakhos to register their children. The church needs some volunteer teachers. If you are interested in helping, please talk to Fr. Bakhos.

Bible Study, 1st Communion, Confirmation Classes (Wednesday, September 15th)

Fr. Bakhos will provide the following classes this Fall: Bible Study (adults); First Communion (7 years old or over), and Confirmation (over 13 years old). Classes will take place every other Wednesday evening starting September 15th. Please call Fr. Bakhos at 304-233-1688 to register.

Arabic Language Classes (Wednesday, September 15th)

Fr. Bakhos will give spoken Arabic language classes to those who are interested every other Wednesday evening starting on September 15th. Please call Fr. Bakhos at 304-233-1688 to register.

Please Pray for Those on Our Prayer List

Please Remember Those Hospitalized Recently in Your Prayers:

Cecilia Ammar, Joanne Hill, Pearl Shutler (mother of Janet), Louis Coury (brother of Lucille Gibbons),

Also Please Pray for Those Who Asked Us to Pray for Them:

Eileen Foster and her mom Barb Sobota, Dorothy Kupchak, Mary Law Thomas, William Calvert (cousin of Jim & Sue Brubach), Miah Downs, Tim Wrixon, Don Stoflinsky, Sylvia Long, Patty Billick, Charles and Donald Gibbons (sons of Lucille), Andy Kaminski, Frank Lish, Josephine Joseph, Theresa Snedeker, Dolores Palotay, Bob Dougherty (brother of Bill), Rosella Saseen, Laura Wellman, Virginia Khourey Bryan (aunt of Lou Khourey in Toledo, OH), Manell Brice (Arlington, VA), Rose Mary Bris-Roybal (Albuquerque, NM), Pat & John Vawter (mother & brother of Dr. Rob Vawter)

Happy Birthday

July 11: Kenny DeMuth, Justin Wilson
July 14: Chloe Imer
July 15: Denny Albaugh
July 16: Bob Kupchak, Payton Wilson
July 17: Lucille Coury-Gibbons
July 18: Lois Hammond
July 20: Shirley George
July 22: Grace Klein

What's New?

Parish Condolences: Mary Parravani

The pastor and the parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Wheeling, offer their heartfelt sympathy to the **Parravani** family on the loss of their beloved **Mary** who passed away in Wheeling, **last week**. Mary was the mother of our beloved parishioners and friends Anthony and Frances. May the Almighty God grant repose of the soul to His handmaid **Mary** and we extend the parish's condolences to *her* family in their time of sorrow.

Many Thanks

--To the Palmer Family for donating \$60.00 worth of single rolls for the Mahrajan.

--To Dale Seidler for donating a mirror to the rectory.

--To George and Gary Weisner for insulating and preparing the boiler room before the installation of the new boiler.

Turn Cellular Phone OFF Inside the Church as a Courtesy

--I want to thank our wonderful parishioners who turn off their cellular phone before entering the church and for being considerate and respectful to those who are praying. It is an act of courtesy –used currently in all public places within the USA and elsewhere. Thanks again for being aware that other people should not hear your conversations and often make complaints. I know that you are very important as well as those who call you, but please keep your cellular phone OFF inside the church and help other to prayer. –Fr. Bakhos

Poor Box

Please consider sharing your blessings with the brothers and sisters of Christ. Some are in dire need some are not, but God alone knows what's in each one's heart. The Poor Box is located at the rear of the church near the Holy Water Font. Half of the money from that box is deposited in our "Parish Families Assistance Fund" and the other half is given to the nun at the Catholic Charity on 18th Street, Wheeling to be

used for the poor and homeless. May your good deeds toward the brothers and sisters of Christ shine in the kingdom of God.

Your Church Support Last Week

1,246	Collection
35	Candles
106	Utilities
20	Parking
600	Mahrajan (Ad Book)
130	Mahrajan (Tables)
832	Mahrajan (Raffles)
60	Mahrajan (donation)
\$3,029	Total Deposits. <i>May God reward you many fold</i>

Story of Saint Elias (Feast Day – July 20th)

Elias (also called Elijah).

The loftiest and most wonderful prophet of the Old Testament. What we know of his public life is sketched in a few popular narratives enshrined, for the most part, in the First Book of Kings. These narratives are full of the most graphic and interesting details. Saint Elias was described as "a fire, and his word burnt like a torch." The times called for such a prophet. Under the baneful influence of his Tyrian wife Jezabel, Ahab, though perhaps not intending to forsake altogether God's worship, had nevertheless erected in Samaria a temple to the Tyrian Baal and introduced a multitude of foreign priests; doubtless he had occasionally offered sacrifices to the pagan deity, and, most of all, hallowed a bloody persecution of the prophets of God.

Of Elias's origin nothing is known, except that he was a Thesbite. Some Jewish legends, echoed in a few Christian writings, assert moreover that Elias was of priestly descent; but there is no other warrant for the statement than the fact that he offered sacrifices. His whole manner of life resembles somewhat that of the Nazarites and is a loud protest against his corrupt age. His skin garment and leather girdle, his swift foot, his habit of dwelling in the clefts of the torrents or in the caves of the mountains, of sleeping under a scanty shelter, betray the true son of the desert.

He appears abruptly on the scene of history to announce to Ahab that god had determined to avenge the apostasy of Israel and her king by bringing a long drought on the land. His message delivered, the prophet vanished as suddenly as he had appeared, and, guided by the spirit of God, betook himself by the brook Carith, to the east of the Jordan, and the ravens "brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the torrent."

After the brook had dried up, Elias, under Divine direction, crossed over to Sarepta, within the Tyrian dominion. There he was hospitably received by a poor widow whom the famine had reduced to her last meal; her charity he rewarded by increasing her store of meal and oil all the while the drought and famine prevailed, and later on by restoring her child to life. For three years there fell no rain or dew in Israel, and the land was utterly barren. Meanwhile Ahab had made fruitless efforts and scoured the country in search of Elias. At length the latter resolved to confront the king once more, and, suddenly appearing before Abdias, bade him summon his master.

When they met, Ahab bitterly upbraided the prophet as the cause of the misfortune of Israel. But the prophet flung back the charge: "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house, who have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and have followed Baalim." Taking advantage of the discountenanced spirits of the silenced king, Elias bids him to summon the prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel, for a decisive contest between their god and God. The ordeal took place before a great concourse of people whom Elias, in the most forcible terms, presses to choose: "How long do you halt between two sides? If God is Lord, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." He then commanded the heathen prophets to invoke their deity; he himself would "call on the name of his Lord"; and the God who would answer by fire, "let him be God."

An altar had been erected by the Baal-worshippers and the victim laid upon it; but their cries, their wild dances and mad self-mutilations all the daylong availed nothing: "There was no voice heard, nor did any one answer, nor regard them as they prayed." Elias, having repaired the ruined altar of God which stood there, prepared thereon his sacrifice; then, when it was time to offer the evening oblation, as he was praying earnestly, "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the holocaust, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." The issue was fought and won. The people, maddened by the success, fell at Elias's command on the pagan prophets and slew them at the brook Cison. That same evening the drought ceased with a heavy downpour of rain, in the midst of which the strange prophet ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezrael.

Elias's triumph was short. The anger of Jezebel, who had sworn to take his life, compelled him to flee without delay, and take his refuge beyond the desert of Juda, in the sanctuary of Mount Horeb. There, in the wilds of the sacred mountain, broken spirited, he poured out his complaint before the Lord, who strengthened him by a revelation and restored his faith. Three commands are laid upon him: to anoint Hazael to be King of Syria, Jehu to be King of Israel, and Eliseus to be his own successor.

At once Elias sets out to accomplish this new burden. On his way to Damascus he meets Eliseus at the plough, and throwing his mantle over him, makes him his faithful disciple and inseparable companion, to whom the completion of his task will be entrusted. The treacherous murder of Naboth was the occasion for a new reappearance of Elias at Jezrael, as a champion of the people's rights and of social order, and to announce to Ahab his impending doom. Ahab's house shall fall. In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth will the dogs lick the king's blood; they shall eat Jezebel in Jezrael; their whole posterity shall perish and their bodies be given to the fowls of the air. Conscience-stricken, Ahab quailed before the man of God, and in view of his penance the threatened ruin of his house was delayed.

The next time we hear of Elias, it is in connection with Ochozias, Achab's son and successor. Having received severe injuries in a fall, this prince sent messengers to the shrine of Beelzebub, god of Accaron, to inquire whether he should recover. They were intercepted by the prophet, who sent them back to their master with the intimation that his injuries would prove fatal. Several bands of men sent by the king to capture Elias were stricken by fire from heaven; finally the man of God appeared in person before Ochozias to confirm his threatening message.

Another episode recorded by the chronicler relates how Joram, King of Juda, who had indulged in Baal-worship, received from Elias a letter warning him that all his house would be smitten by a plague, and that he himself was doomed to an early death.

Elias vanished still more mysteriously than he had appeared. Like Enoch, he was "translated", so that he should not taste death. As he was conversing with his spiritual son Eliseus on the hills of Moab, "a fiery chariot, and fiery horses parted them both asunder, and Elias went up by a whirlwind into heaven" and all the efforts to find him made by the skeptic sons of the prophets disbelieving Eliseus' recital, availed nothing. The memory of Elias has ever remained living in the minds both of Jews and Christians.

Famous Quotes

- Living on Earth is expensive, but it does include a free trip around the sun.
- Birthdays are good for you; the more you have, the longer you live.
- How long a minute is depends on what side of the bathroom door you're on.
- If ignorance is bliss, why aren't more people happy?
- Most of us go to our grave with our music still inside of us.
- You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- Don't cry because it's over; smile because it happened.
- We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors... but they all have to learn to live in the same box.
- A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
- Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.

Maronites! Who Are They?

***Maronites = Catholics of the East; Latins = Catholics of the West. We are all Catholics.
Antioch, Roots of the Maronites (7)***

What were John Chrysostom's themes? Although a fervent advocate of monasticism as the best Christian calling, John preached on marriage and family life with a genuine warmth, infusing a sense of dignity and worth into this most basic of civic units. Marriage was not a sacrament of the church at this time (and would not become one until the tenth and eleventh centuries), yet John treated it as a uniquely sacred human institution. The relationship between the couple was, he insisted, patterned on the relationship between the church and her Heavenly Bridegroom, Christ; and in their joining, a coupling physiologically ordained by God and thereby sacred, the child produced held the husband and wife together in a relationship that was nothing less than an icon of the Trinity itself. The family, John taught, is the church in miniature. Therefore, John preached strictly on the moral obligations of husband and wife to each other, insisting, for example, that the husband cannot follow a different sexual ethic than the one followed by the wife and that fear and threats have no place in the marital relationship. Moreover, the family as church implied a wider web of obligations in John's eyes. Slaves and servants must be treated with absolute dignity. And one's neighbors, above all the poor, are also members of one's own household, deserving of one's hospitality, care, and attention.

A scathing critic of material wealth, Chrysostom abhorred the social structure of his times. He insisted that private property was the mark of the fallen order, for God had not created some rich and others poor in the Garden of Eden. John disdained the notion of inherited wealth, which he declared to exist only because it had been earned unjustly by the sweat of a slave's back. He was merciless in his critique of slavery as an institution. In the Stoic tradition he admonished slaves to use their slavery to learn freedom from the transience of material wealth or earthly condition and to manifest a perfection of faith that their owners would do well to emulate.

In the dazzling oratory of classical tradition at its finest, John preached of family values and social justice, of civic responsibility and moral obligations. From it we learn something of Antioch's habits and the real challenges of being Christian in a late antique city. Because of the sanctity of marriage, John admonished, one ought to ban strippers from one's wedding party. Similarly, one ought not spend more money on the theater or on prostitutes than on the poor. In John's eyes, communion was a meaningless sacrament if one walked away from the chalice snubbing the poor and hurrying past the hungry as if they were not there. John was scandalized by the popular craze for elaborately and colorfully embroidered men's sandals, whose very purchase, he insisted, caused a double sin: the unethical work conditions forced upon the laborers to produce these "glittering" sandals at an unholy pace to satisfy the public fad and the money wasted on vain adornment while people starved in the streets.

John Chrysostom described the wealth of the church of Antioch at its height. He claimed that the church financially supported more than three thousand widows and virgins, as well as persons in prison, the maimed, sick travelers, healthy pilgrims, the altar servers and all the clergy, and those who came daily asking for food and clothing.

--(to be continued)

Reflections: Marriage

What is the value of one member?

Ten little members standing in a line. One disliked the president, then there were nine.

Nine ambitious members offered to work late. One forgot her promise, then there were eight. Eight creative members had ideas good as heaven. One lost enthusiasm, then there were seven.

Seven loyal members got into a fix. They quarreled over programs, then there were six.

Six members remained with spirit and drive. One moved away, then there were five.

Five steadfast members wished there were more. One became indifferent, then there were four.

Four cheerful members who never disagree, till one complained of meetings, then there were three.

Three eager members! What do they do? One got discouraged, then there were two.

Two lonely members; our rhyme is nearly done. One joined a bridge club, then there was one.

One faithful member was feeling rather blue. Met with a neighbor, then there were two.

Question & Answer

Question #004 "What Is the Nature of God?" Nathan T., 15

God is the Supreme Being. He is self-existing (not caused), eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing and present everywhere. He is pure spirit, which means He does not have the limitations of a body. God is also supremely personal. He is no mere force or power. In fact, He is a communion of Persons –Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the Blessed Trinity. All three Persons possess the one divine nature.

Story: Miraculous Photo!

A picture began circulating in November. It should be "The Picture of the Year," or perhaps, "Picture of the Decade." It won't be. In fact, unless you obtained a copy of the US paper which published it, you probably would never have seen it.

The picture is that of a 21-week-old unborn baby named Samuel Alexander Armas, who is being operated on by surgeon named Joseph Bruner. The baby was diagnosed with spina bifida and would not survive if removed from his mother's womb. Little Samuel's mother, Julie Armas, is an obstetrics nurse in Atlanta. She knew of Dr. Bruner's remarkable surgical procedure. Practicing at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, he performs these special operations while the baby is still in the womb.

During the procedure, the doctor removes the uterus via C-section and makes a small incision to operate on the baby. As Dr. Bruner completed the surgery on Samuel, the little guy reached his tiny, but fully developed hand through the incision and firmly grasped the surgeon's finger. Dr. Bruner was reported as saying that when his finger was grasped, it was the most emotional moment of his life, and that for an instant during the procedure he was just frozen, totally immobile.

The photograph captures this amazing event with perfect clarity. The editors titled the picture, "Hand of Hope." The text explaining the picture begins, "The tiny hand of 21-week-old fetus Samuel Alexander Armas emerges from the mother's uterus to grasp the finger of Dr. Joseph Bruner as if thanking the doctor for the gift of life." Little Samuel's mother said they "wept for days" when they saw the picture. She said, "The photo reminds us pregnancy isn't about disability or an illness, it's about a little person."

Samuel was born in perfect health, the operation 100 percent successful.

Don't tell me my God isn't an awesome God!!!!

Wisdom: Indian Legend

Cherokee Legend:

Do you know the legend of the Cherokee Indian youth's rite of passage?

His father takes him into the forest, blindfolds him and leaves him alone. He is required to sit on a stump the whole night and not remove the blindfold until the rays of the morning sun shine through it. He cannot cry out for help to anyone. Once he survives the night, he is a MAN.

He cannot tell the other boys of this experience, because each lad must come into manhood on his own. The boy is naturally terrified. He can hear all kinds of noises. Wild beasts must surely be all around him. Maybe even some human might do him harm.

The wind blew the grass and earth, and shook his stump, but he sat stoically, never removing the blindfold. It would be the only way he could become a man!

Finally, after a horrific night the sun appeared and he removed his blindfold. It was then that he discovered his father sitting on the stump next to him. He had been at watch the entire night, protecting his son from harm.

We, too, are never alone. Even when we don't know it, our Heavenly Father is watching over us, sitting on the stump beside us. When trouble comes, all we have to do is reach out to Him.

Joke (007)

Selfishness

An old woman died and was taken to the Judgment Seat by the angels. While examining her records however, the Judge could not find a single act of charity performed by her except for a carrot she had once given to a starving beggar.

Such, however, is the power of a single deed of love that it was decreed that she be taken up to heaven on the strength of that carrot. The carrot was brought to court and given to her. The moment she caught hold of it, it began to rise as if pulled by some invisible string lifting her up towards the sky.

A beggar appeared. He clutched on to the hem of her garment and was lifted along with her; a third person caught hold of the beggar's foot and was lifted too. Soon there was a long line of persons being lifted up to heaven by that carrot. And, strange as it may seem, the woman did not feel the weight of all those people who held on to her; in fact, since she was looking heavenward, she did not see them.

Higher and higher they rose until they were almost near the heavenly gates. That is when the woman looked back to catch a last glimpse of the earth and saw this whole train of people behind her.

She was indignant! She gave an imperious wave of her hand and shouted, "Off! Off, all of you! This carrot is mine!"

In making her imperious gesture she let go of the carrot for a moment –and down she fell with the entire train.

Love

The little daughter of an engineer was killed by a neighbor's dog. The cruel loss turned the community against the dog's owner and drove the father almost insane. At first it shattered his faith. Shortly afterward the region was stricken with famine conditions. The engineer took some of his meager supply of seed corn and planted it in the field of the neighbor whose dog had slain his little daughter.

Here is the love of enemy Jesus talked about. Nothing sentimental or philanthropic about it. Just the Grace of God can come and reward even those who have been shoved to the outermost port of great sorrow.

Love

A guru asked his disciples how they could tell when the night had ended and the day begun. One said, "When you see an animal in the distance and can tell whether it is a cow or a horse."

"No", said the guru. "When you look at a tree in the distance and can tell if it is an apple tree or a mango tree."

"Wrong again," said the guru. "Well, then, what is it?" asked the disciples.

"When you look into the face of any man and recognize your brother in him; when you look into the face of any woman and recognize in her your sister. If you cannot do this, no matter what time it is by the sun it is still night."

Manipulation

A wealthy Jewish farmer burst into his home one day and cried out in an anguished voice, "Rebecca, there is a terrible story in town: the Messiah is here!"

"What's so terrible in that?" asked his wife, "I think it's great. What are you so upset about?"

"What am I so upset about?" the man exclaimed.

"After all these years of sweat and toil we have finally found prosperity. We have a thousand head of cattle, our barns are full of grain and our trees laden with fruit. Now we will have to give it all away and follow him."

"Calm down," said his wife consolingly. "The Lord our God is good. He knows how much we Jews have always had to suffer. We had a Pharaoh, a Haman, a Hitler –always somebody. But our dear God found a way to deal with them all, didn't He? Just have faith, my dear husband. He will find a way to deal with the Messiah too."