

Youth Publication (SPYC)
St. Peter's Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church
9946 Haldeman Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19115

To Saint Peters Family,

It is a privilege for me to write a message for this publication for the first time. I applaud the youth and Sunday school for their hard work and dedication in making this newsletter a meaningful one. Let us all encourage them to be the best that they can be in all the endeavors they undertake on behalf of our church and pray that our Almighty God will bring all their dreams and aspirations to come to pass.

Each of us are given opportunities in life. These are always accompanied by setbacks and challenges. Sometimes we may wonder, "Can I overcome this struggle?", "Are my dreams ever going to come to pass?", "Or when will my situation turn around?"

Perhaps God allows us to go through challenges because he knows that strength is built within struggle and that nothing in life that is worthwhile comes easy. If we were delivered from every difficulty, then we would not continue to grow in wisdom and grace, learning to trust him unconditionally.

We do not always know what God's plans are for us. His ways are not always our ways, but His ways are always the best. Working in mysterious, unforeseen places, and in unexpected times, he uses average people, like you and I, to accomplish extraordinary deeds. As we continue to put our hope and faith in the Lord, there is nothing that can keep us from becoming the child of God that he created us to be.

Therefore I encourage you to keep pushing ahead through obstacles, never finding fault or doubt in yourself. Stay full of hope and expectation, knowing that difficulties develop our character and can be used for a higher purpose.

God gave us great abilities and made us for a divine design. With Him, there is nothing we cannot accomplish. He loves us and through the trials, God could be preparing us for something far greater.

Continue striving, believing, and praying. With Him nothing is impossible.

I remember reading a story of a young girl named Tara Holland. She dreamed of becoming Miss America. In 1994, she entered the Miss Florida pageant and won the title of first runner up. She decided to try again the following year. She entered the same contest again and ended up as a runner- up. Tara was tempted to get down and discouraged but she stayed focused on her goal.

She decided to change her environment, so she moved to Kansas, and in 1997, she entered the Miss Kansas pageant and won the title. That same year, she went on to be crowned Miss America. In spite of all the downfalls and setbacks, Tara Holland saw her dream come to pass.

Sometimes sad and unpleasant situations happen and they tend to cripple us. But we can choose to "go the other way". It is never too late. We create our circumstances thought by thought. Therefore, if someone hurt us or if we had a few bad breaks, or if we are carrying regrets, let's decide to leave all that behind and not carry the past into our bright future.

We are all capable of achieving great things. So with unshakable determination and unsinkable optimism, let us persevere through challenges, and accomplish our God-aspired destiny in this life.

May God bless you!

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Paul Parambath



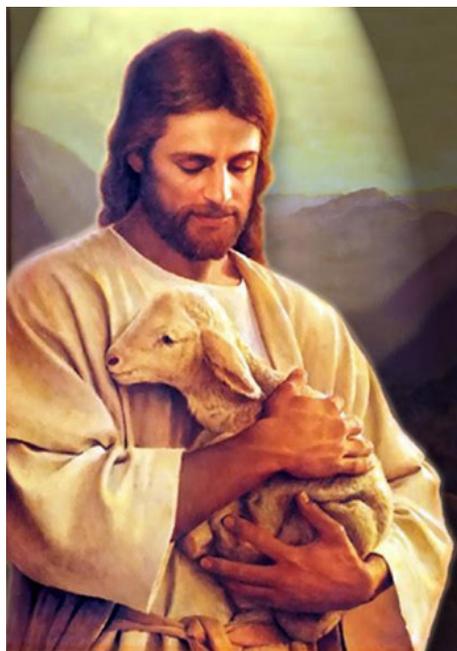
A Lasting Impression



"Jimmy, look at the impression you left in the sand," the man said to his son. "Daddy what's a 'pression?" the young child asked. "That's 'impression" Jimmy. The spot where you were lying on the sand sunk in around your body and when you got up it was there. Your feet do the same thing, they leave footprints." "Oh, but you can't see my face," Jimmy replied. "No, because you were lying on your back, it's like the impression you put in Mr. Johnson's new cement sidewalks." "You mean my hand print?" "Yes, but you also left another kind of impression. An impression on his mind." "Mr. Johnson's brain is made of sand?" His father laughed and then leaned over for one of those "parental moments" "No, you left an impression on his memory. It's called a bad impression. When you do something to someone you leave them with a bad memory. Every time he walks out the door he sees your hand print there in that first step. I'm sure he remembers you daily." "Well, Daddy. I was trying to do something good. I did that so he would see me waving "Hi" every morning." His Dad tried not to laugh. He didn't want Jimmy to think it was okay to do what he did. "So my impression will stay here on the beach forever, too?" "No, it will be gone in the morning." "Who's going to take it?" "Well, God washes the beach every night so the next day we can do it again. It's like God's big drawing board. He likes to see our artwork."

Jimmy sat for a minute and then suddenly ran to get his bigger shovel and pail. "Where are you going?" "Up here where the water can't take it away," Jimmy said. Dad watched from a distance as he saw Jimmy draw a great big circle-like figure in the sand. Then after a few minutes Jimmy yelled to him. "Daddy, How do you spell "Loves?" "L-o-v-e-s!" Finally, out of curiosity, Dad got up and stood nearby. There in the sand was a huge heart-like circle with these Lords..."God Lovs Yo" Not wanting to spoil the moment, Dad didn't bother to correct his spelling. "That's beautiful, Jimmy!" "Oh, wait a minute," Jimmy said. He rushed over and placed his hand in the lower right corner and pushed down. "There, I'm waving to God and Mr. Johnson. There's my hand impression, Daddy." The two of them stood there for a moment admiring his handiwork. "Daddy, I wanted everyone to know that God loves them. Do you think God will leave this one alone?" "Jimmy, even God needs..."a little hand"...to remind us." "I get it Daddy!"

"I believe in You!"



Who Am I?

www.wholesomewords.org/children/chpuzzle.html

God made Adam out of dust,
But thought it best to make me first:
So I was made before the man,
According to God's holy plan.
My whole body God made complete,
Without arms or hands or feet.
My ways and acts did God control,
But in my body He placed no soul.
A living being I became,
And Adam gave to me a name.
Then from his presence I withdrew,
For this man Adam I never knew.
All my Maker's laws I do obey,
And from these laws I never stray.
Thousands of me go in fear,
But seldom on the earth appear.
Later, for a purpose God did see,
He placed a living soul in me.
But that soul of mine God had to claim,
And from me He took it back again.
And when this soul from me had fled,
I was the same as when first made;
Without arms, legs, feet, or soul,
I travel on from pole to pole.
My labors are from day to night,
And to men I once furnished light.
Thousands of people both young and
old,
Did by my death bright lights
behold.
No right or wrong can I conceive;
The Bible and its teachings I can't
believe.
The fear of death doesn't trouble me;
Pure happiness I will never see.
And up in Heaven I can never go,
Nor in the grave or Hell below.
So get your Bible and read with care;
You'll find my name recorded there.

In the Footsteps...



Do you ever wonder what goes on when the veil is closed or while the veil is open in the Sanctuary? 1st part...

While the veil is closed, we do what is called the preparatory prayers. These are taken from the Old Testament age and symbolize the coming of Christ. They consist of two parts: the order of Melchizedek followed by the order of Aaron. These prayers are done to prepare the way for the Holy Qurbana. Melchizedek is known as the king of Jerusalem and as the priest of the most high God. He is the first person to open up the way for man to worship God. These are prayers for repentance and the priest adorns his ceremonial vestments at this time. The order of Melchizedek is followed by the order of Aaron. This part symbolizes the offerings of Aaron and his sons (Leviticus 1:5-9).

The veil opens and thus begins the public celebration. This is known as the Holy *Qurbano* or the Mass of the catechumens. The veil or the *thirasheela* is opened which represent the birth of the New Testament age (life of Jesus Christ). The priest opens up the Holy *Qurbano* by saying "Mary who gave birth to thee and John who baptized thee shall pray for us bestow thine abundant mercies upon us and bless us." At this time, the priest offers incense and the deacons holding the candles circle the altar. The priest represents Christ and the deacon who leads the procession represents John the Baptist and the other deacons represent the Apostles and Disciples of Christ. During this opening celebration, a song is sung to praise the Lord who came down from heaven to grant us salvation and who is glorified along with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

After the procession, the Trisagion is recited to symbolize the Seraphim (angels) singing "Holy art thou O God, Holy art thou Almighty, Holy art thou Immortal, O thou who was crucified for us have mercy upon us." It is said that the Trisagion is what the angels sing to praise God.

The first time the Trisagion is sung, the priest touches the *tabalitho* (Alter stone). It is a rectangular piece of wood or marble that is covered by cloth. It symbolizes the cross on which Jesus was crucified. The second time the priest does

the Trisagion, he places his hands on the paten (*peelaso*). This is the plate that the Eucharistic bread is placed upon. The third time the Trisagion is sung, the priest places his hands on the chalice (*caso*). It is the cup that holds the Eucharistic wine. The placement of the priest's hand on these articles represent the angels singing rising in three steps from the altar stone to the plate and then to the cup (the highest placement).

After the Trisagion, the congregation replies by saying *Kurieliasion* (Gr.) three times. This means "Lord have mercy upon us."

We'll continue the rest of the Holy Qurbano in the next edition.

Syrian Orthodox Teachings

(taken from Queen of the Sacraments by Fr. K. Mani Rajan)

Compiled by Jingle Thomas



MOTHER MARY, MY FRIEND IN NEED

by: Shyno Jose

Mother Mary mother of my lord,
 Thank you for living in my heart
 Through all the days and in every moment
 You are a humble servant of our God almighty
 I am delighted to serve you the queen of angels and arch angels
 I will join with you to praise your glories in your precious son's name
 I am nothing on a day without your rosaries to you
 Help me to hold on to the prayers that help us stay together
 I feel your presence as you guide me
 You whispered in my ears saying 'I would not leave you alone'
 I will never be lonely for your favors are in my presence
 Nevertheless, you will always choose what is right for me!
 I learned what you are when I was sick and sinned
 You looked at me and cried and called my name,
 As I was never known before
 You sent my favor to where it belongs and it answered in the heavens above
 I am afraid; How much more my friend?
 All because I don't deserve all that has given me
 You answered; "as long as you are my best friend,

Please sin no more my precious."
 I cannot measure what you are in this world;
 Young and old are crying for mercy from your hand,
 You are called the ocean of elated mercy and peace.
 Please remember all those in presence of your precious son,
 Amen!



The Book of Ephesians: For the Discouraged

Good news for those who feel abandoned and unloved

By: Debbie Mathew

Imagine yourself a child, abandoned on the streets of New York. Your immigrant parents died on the ship on the way to America. You have no money and no relatives. You can't speak English. And you are left to fend for yourself. As many as 30,000 orphans found themselves in exactly that predicament in 1850. They slept in alleys, huddling for warmth in boxes or metal drums. To survive, the boys mostly stole, caught rats to eat, or rummaged in garbage cans. Girls sometimes worked as "panel thieves" for prostitutes, slipping their tiny hands through camouflaged openings in the walls to lift a watch or wallet from a preoccupied customer.

Immigrants were flooding New York City then, and no one had the time or money to look after the orphans-no one, that is, except for Charles Loring Brace, a 26-year-old minister. Horrified by their plight, he organized a unique solution, the Orphan Train. The idea was simple: Pack hundreds of orphans on a train heading west and announce to towns along the way that anyone could claim a new son or daughter when the Orphan Train chugged through. By the time the last Orphan Train steamed west in 1929, 100,000 children had found new homes and new lives. Two orphans from such trains became governors, one served as a United States congressman, and still another was a U.S. Supreme Court justice.

The Orphan Train provides a vivid parable of the message of Ephesians. To capture Paul's enthusiasm in this book, imagine one more stage in your life as a street urchin in New York.

You have learned to survive and fight off starvation. But one day, someone takes you and puts you on a smoke-belching train jammed with hundreds of other foreign-speaking youngsters. Three days later you are selected by a kindly middle-aged couple in Michigan who introduce themselves as Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford. You are driven (in an automobile!) to the largest house you have ever seen, and they quietly explain that you are now part of their family. Everything they have is yours to use and enjoy. At long last, by some miracle, you have a family and a home-and what a home!

Paul conveys a feeling something like that in Ephesians, a rich book that expands the message of Jesus' parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15). A big "Welcome Home!" banner is stretched across the lawn, confetti swirls in the air, balloons lunge skyward, and a band plays. Christians have been adopted directly into the family of God. This is a good news book, to put it mildly.

If you feel discouraged or wonder if God really cares or question whether the Christian life is worth the effort, read Ephesians. You will no longer feel like an orphan. Paul describes the "riches of Christ" available to all and points to us, God's adopted children, as his sparkling "Exhibit A" in the entire universe (Ephesians 3:10).

Ephesians contains staggering thoughts. Paul wants his readers to grasp "how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (Ephesians 3:18).



WING OF LAUGHTER

A country preacher decided to skip services one Sunday to spend the day hiking in the wilderness. Rounding a sharp bend in the trail, he collided with a bear and was sent tumbling down a steep grade. He landed on a rock and broke both legs.

With the ferocious bear charging at him from a distance, the preacher prayed, "O Lord, I'm so sorry for skipping services today. Please forgive me and grant me just one wish -- make a Christian out of that bear that's coming at me!"

At that very instant, the bear skidded to a halt, fell to his knees, clasped his paws together, and began to pray aloud at the preacher's feet: "Dear God, please bless this food I am about to receive." <http://www.swapmeetdave.com/Humor/Religious.htm>



The Parable of the Sower By Megan George

"That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear."

Have you ever heard this parable before? It has many meanings, although the disciples of the Lord could not figure it out at the time. The Lord through this parable was trying to teach us:

The farmer represents the bible which is given to us. The seeds falling on the road represent the kind of people who hear the gospel, but do not listen to it at all. "They swept away by the devil" - Matthew. The seeds that fall on the rocks represent the people who accept the word but as soon as somebody persecutes them because of the word, they reject the bible. The seeds falling on the thorns represent the people who listen to the word but allow worldly possessions such as money, choke them. The seeds that fall on the good soil represent the people who *really* listen to God and they grow and nurture through the Spirit and their faith grows and grows.

The parable is thought to bring the message of acceptance of the Bible. It does not matter who

plants the seed of God in your heart, but it is how you take care of it and let it grow. Some ways you can take care of it is by reading God's word every day, this provides sunshine for your soul. By praying and worshipping you are giving your soul water and nourishment. Even though you may be persecuted and afflicted for your faith, enduring these problems will make your soul stronger. By also, not being attached to worldly possessions such as money, you soul has no thorns to choke it and make it weak.

So let us accept the Bible as brothers and sisters and nurture our souls to be just like Jesus Christ.



Publication Board Letter

As a part of St. Peter's Church and as members of the S.P.Y.C and Saint Peter's Sunday School, we are glad to present to you Seraphim. We hope that you will enjoy this publication. We hope this newsletter is informative and serves as a closer understanding of our faith. This newsletter can be found on the youth website (<http://phillyspyc.blogspot.com>) and also on the church website (www.stpeterspalli.com). We give thanks to all who submitted their works for the second volume of Seraphim.

We are requesting creative works to be submitted from Sunday school students and SPYC members. Creative works can include: articles, poems, short stories, pictures (please do not email pictures), etc. These creative works can be taken from the Bible or can be taken from your personal life experiences. Please email works to spycpublication@gmail.com

Publication Board

Jingle Thomas

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