



**ST. PETER & ST. PAUL  
UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**105 CLIFTON AVE  
ANSONIA, CT 06401**

**Rectory Phone 203-734-3895**

**Church Hall 203-732-2414**

**Fax 203-732-3191**

**Fr. Ed Cell 413-218-6404**

**Email: YoungE8073@aol.com**

**Web Site: [www.stspucc.org](http://www.stspucc.org).**

**Very Rev. Archpriest Edward Canon Young, Pastor**

**September 5, 2021**

**Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Holy Prophet Zachariah and Elisabeth, Parents of John the Baptist**

**Epistle: 1 CORINTHIANS 4: 6-15 Gospel: MATTHEW 22: 35-46**

**Tone: 6**



*Leaders of the Apostles and teachers of the world, pray to the Master of all to grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.*

**DIVINE LITURGY SCHEDULE**

**WEEKDAYS:** MONDAY–FRIDAY 10:00AM

**SATURDAY:** Not Now! 4:00PM (Vigil Sunday-Eng.)

**SUNDAY:** 8:30 AM (Ukr.) & 10:00 AM (Eng.)

**Confessions are heard before each Divine Liturgy:**

**Saturday** 3:00PM to 3:30 PM

**Sunday** 8:00AM to 8:30AM and  
9:30AM until 10:00AM

**Religious Education** – Saturday 10:00AM – 11:00AM  
Call Alice O'Doy @203-734-3055 for more information.

**Preservation** – Please use the form in church vestibule, mail it to the church or bring it to Bob Jaskilka, Michael Wysowski, Jr. or Fr. Edward Young

**Address or Name Change/New Phone Number** –

Please update your records. See Bob Jaskilka, or Michael Wysowski, Jr. to update this info.

Returned checks are subject to a **\$35.00 fee**.

**Bulletin Notices** – Notices for the bulletin must be **in writing** by Wednesday @6PM to be included in that week's bulletin.

**Parish Council** meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month @7:15pm in the church hall.

**Rectory Office Hours - Thursday 10AM – Noon**  
**or by Appointment on other days**

**\*\*\*\*Please Note \*\*\*\***

**Mass Offerings , Sorokousty**

**Mother's Day, Father's Day**

**Checks must be made out to the Fr. Young**  
**not the Church ! Thank You...**

**Baptism** Arrangement for baptism is to be made personally at the Parish Office. Please call rectory for an appointment.

**Marriage** – Arrangements for marriage are to be made at least **6 months prior** to the Wedding date. Please call rectory for an appointment.

**Sick Calls** – To arrange for Sacraments for the elderly and sick at home, please call Parish Office Fr. Young at 203-734-3895, **Please advise the rectory of any hospitalization.**

**In your Estate planning** – Remember Sts. Peter & Paul Church in your will.

**Stewardship** - "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10). All Catholics, should give generous support—time, money, prayers, and personal service according to their circumstances—to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church

**Special Share in the Eucharist \*- Bread & Wine**

offered for a week, month, or year. Donations: one week - \$20.00 Donors/intentions will be listed.

Bob Jaskilka, or Michael Wysowski, Jr or Fr. Edward Young

**Eternal Light** \*- offered to light for a week \$10.00.

Bob Jaskilka, or Michael Wysowski, Jr. or Fr. Edward Young

**Virgin Mary's Lamp and Sacred Heart Lamp\*** also available for offering! Offered to light for a week is 10.00, each.

Bob Jaskilka, or Michael Wysowski, Jr. or Fr. Edward Young

**All start on Monday to Sunday!**

**\*Offering must be made when dates are reserved!**

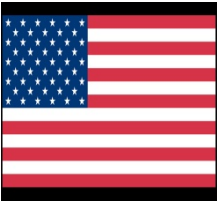
A **Welcome to St. Peter and St. Paul Parish** to all who are worshipping with us today. If you are over twenty-one years of age and have not yet registered, have moved or will be moving, or have a new telephone number, **please fill out the form below**. Each household **must be registered** at St. Peter and St. Paul and every adult receives a set of stewardship envelopes. Registration also entails an annual dues to the parish. If a parishioner is not registered, it is difficult for church authorities to issue him or her a sponsor certificate, reference, or any other certification.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_




*(Please come down to the Basement to be properly registered after or before liturgy)*



**Prayer for Our Country USA:** Almighty God, bless our nation and make it true to the ideas of freedom and justice and brotherhood for all who make it great. Guard us from war, from fire and wind, from compromise, fear, confusion. Be close to our president and our statesmen; give them vision and courage, as they ponder decisions affecting peace and the future of the world. Make me more deeply aware of my heritage; realizing not only my rights but also my duties and responsibilities as a citizen. Make this great land and all its people know clearly Your will, that they may fulfill the destiny ordained for us in the salvation of the nations, and the restoring of all things in Christ our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

*Bread and Wine Offering -*

09/04	Saturday		No Liturgy
09/05	Sunday	8:30 AM 10:00 AM	Pro Populo (For Parishioners) - За Всіх Парафіян +Barbara Lypen req by Bohdan & Maria Zalusky
09/06	Monday		Happy Labor Day
09/07	Tuesday	10:00 AM	+Adele Comcowich
09/08	Wednesday	10:00 AM	God's Bless for Fr. Stefan Yanovsky for his 80 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Day.
09/09	Thursday	10:00 AM	+Stephen & Stephania Ciakot req. by Sylvia Cirkot & Fred Foster
09/10	Friday	6:00 PM	+Antoinette "Toni" Jaskilka req. by Robert Jaskilka
09/11	Saturday		Beginning of Religious Education 10:00 AM
09/12	Sunday	8:30 AM 10:00 AM	Pro Populo (For Parishioners) - За Всіх Парафіян + THEODORE & MELANIA Smerznak & Wasil & Anna Homkowicz

ETERNAL LIGHT		<i>In loving memory +Antoinette "Toni" Jaskilka by Bobby Jaskilka</i>	
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY LAMP		<i>In loving memory +Antoinette "Toni" Jaskilka by Bobby Jaskilka</i>	
SACRED HEART OF JESUS LAMP		<i>Bless Wishes and Good Health Mary Ann Malinak by Aunt Ann</i>	
BREAD & WINE OFFERING RESERVED DATES 10/25/21-10/31/21 11/1/21-11/7/21		ETERNAL LIGHT LAMP OFFERING RESERVED DATES 9/20/21-9/26/21 10/4/21-10/10/21 11/8/21-11/14/21 11/22/21-11/28/21 12/20/21-12/26/21	BLESSED VIRGIN MARY LAMP OFFERING RESERVED DATES 9/20/21-9/26/21 10/4/21-10/10/21 10/18/21-10/24/21 11/1/21-11/7/21 11/8/21-11/14/21 11/22/21-11/28/21
		SACRED HEART OF JESUS LAMP OFFERING RESERVED DATES 9/13/21-9/19/21 9/20/21-9/26/21 11/15/21-11/21/21	

**2021 & Past Church Dues (Blue Book) (Kollekta)**

During Lent & every Saturday & Sunday dues current & past will be collected in the church hall after 8:30 AM & 10AM Sunday Liturgies.

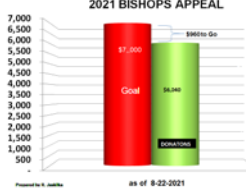
Please bring your dues book to the church hall dues will not be collected in the rectory Back on January 25, 2005 the Parish Council voted to increase the yearly dues to \$75.00 per member. This is the first increase since 1998. The number of upcoming projects that are needed to keep the church building in good repairs, such as painting, doors, walls, fixing the roof, warranted this increase.

**Do not place dues in your weekly envelope offering!**  
Please remember - this is not our church but YOUR church!

*Please fulfill your responsibility to your Church!!*

**Friendly Reminder - 2021 & Past Church Dues** are due during lent to support your church to pay our obligations to keep the church running such as salaries; electricity; oil ; gas; water ; and continual maintiance; repair of the church, rectory and cemetery; insurance ; chancery fees; and telephone just to name a few.

**At Divine Liturgy and All other Services  
Masks are required and social distancing will be enforced !!!**



**2021 STAMFORD CHARITIES DIOCESE APPEAL**

The month of September 2021 continues the Stamford Diocese Charities Appeal for **2021**. This fund provides support for many programs in the Diocese as indicated in the Sower. Our offering reminds us that we are members of a greater body of the Church that operates beyond the barriers of our local parish and that each one of us has a role to play in the Church's mission of evangelization and sanctification.

Please note: that at this time our seminary in Stamford is growing and needs your support. You have received by mail your request for support.

Please help this fund as you have in the past.

**Please do not send your donation to Stamford!!! Do not use Paypal !!!**

**Donations \$6,040 or 86.3% to go \$960.00 This week \$0.00**

**Have you forgot your donation we are so close.....**

**The 2021 Stamford Diocesan Charities Appeal form has been sent. Please make checks payable to: "The Byzantine Rite Diocese of Stamford" and send or bring your donation to the church.**  
Cash is acceptable form for payment.

Since every parish in the diocese has been assigned a Goal for this campaign, **please do not send your gift directly to Stamford**. Our parish needs to be properly credited to meet its goal of seven thousand dollars. **We did not meet our goal in 2020**. While many of our regular contributors have fallen asleep in the Lord, it is even more essential that every parishioner consider such diocesan programs as vocations, religious education, evangelization, and stewardship worthy of personal charity.

**Goal \$50,000 – Donated to Date \$14,400 28.38% to go \$35,600**

**Church Up Keep and Restoration Donations: Donations \$1,500.00 by**

IRENE		HENRY	\$100.00	MICHAEL	WYSOWSKI JR	\$500.00
MICHAEL R.	&	MARIA	TELEP	\$400.00		
In loving memory of +Waldimar Cwildinski						
by Jaroslaw & Leokadia Kuncik				\$500.00		

**Volunteers needed for Our 125th Anniversary**

The parish will be celebrating Our 125th Anniversary in June 2022. A committee needs to be formed to discuss ideas for this event. If your interested please contact Bill Platosz [platosz@hotmail.com](mailto:platosz@hotmail.com) or Scott Walker [sjjawalk@aol.com](mailto:sjjawalk@aol.com)



Sunday 19 September 2021 at 9:30 AM there will begin the Recitation of the Holy Rosary of Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. That one of the intentions to prayer for is our parish: while we prepared to celebrate our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church here in Ansonia, Connecticut.

**New Life A Program for the Separated and Divorced:**

If you are recently divorced or separated you may need to give yourself some time to work through your loss and pain. "New Life" is an eight week program designed for persons in the early stages of separation or divorce. In this program, we offer a "safe place" for people to gain a perspective on their loss. Some of the topics that will be addressed in the program are: self image, stress, anger, blame and guilt, loneliness, and how to move toward growth. The program consists of one meeting each week from 6:00 to 7:30 PM for eight weeks, plus exercises to be practiced between the sessions. If you are interested in attending, the program will begin on Sunday, October 3rd from 6:00-7:30pm at St. Thomas the Apostle Church Parish Center, 733 Oxford Rd. Oxford. The program is Free. Registration is required. Please call Maryjane at 203-888-2382 exit 104 or email [pastoralcare@stthomasoxford.org](mailto:pastoralcare@stthomasoxford.org) to register.

SAINT PETER & SAINT PAUL UKRAINIAN  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
105 CLIFTON AVE.  
ANSONIA, CT 06401

*One Hundred & Twenty Four Years 1897-2021*  
PHONE 203-734-3895

*Sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house.*

June 28, 2021

Subject: **Need for Church upkeep and restoration**

Dear Parishioners:

In the year 2022, it will be the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of Saint Peter and Saint Paul Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. His Excellency Bishop Paul Chomnycky, O.S.B.M., Eparch of Stamford, has approved Sunday June 5, 2022 to be present with us to celebrate this significant moment in the history of this parish.

This parish community has been blessed and has much to be proud of in its long history. *Sanctify those who love the beauty of Your House* is quoted from the prayer from the end of Divine Liturgy. It speaks measurably of how the founders of this parish understood the importance of the beauty of God's Holy House.

We, as a parish family, will begin preparation for our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. There are many needs to be met in our church because of its age. One is our church kneelers. The pads need to be replaced and the kneelers repaired. This is a very costly project, a goal of at least \$50,000. In addition, there are a number of structural issues with the upstairs church and downstairs that need to be addressed. For example, we just received a quote for \$10,000 for repairs that need to be done due to water damage.

In the past year, our church financial situation has been greatly affected because of the Covid19 pandemic. We have been unable to have fundraisers and weekly donations were tremendously low. Therefore, we are launching a fundraising initiative to attend to the many needs of our church.

All members of the parish are called to assist and be as generous as possible in this fundraising effort, following the example of the founding fathers and mothers of this parish, who gave selflessly to build our beautiful church building. We pray our efforts will help sustain our church building for us and future generations.

Enclosed you will find an envelope to make your donation and a stamped return envelope.

**Do not use PayPal !**

Please make checks payable to:

**Saint Peter & Saint Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church.**

We thank you in advance for your generosity and wish God's blessings on you and your families.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Very Rev. Archpriest Edward P. Young, Pastor

Mr. Scott Walker, Parish President

You have received this letter in the mail. Please be so kind as to use the enclosed return envelope to the parish with your gift to your parish church. God Bless and Protect.



St. Peter & St. Paul Religious Education  
2021-2022

August 29, 2021

Dear Parents,

I would like to welcome you to the 2021-2022 year of religious education. Registration and our first class will be held on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 10 am in the church hall. Registration fee is \$30.00 per child and the check should be made out to St. Peter and St. Paul Church. Please fill out the included forms and return them on the day of registration.

On this first day, parents are required to stay and watch a video about a safe environment which is mandated by the diocese. At the conclusion of the video, the parent or guardian is free to leave.

In light of the COVID 19 pandemic, we will need to adhere to current CDC guidelines. This will include the wearing of a mask during class as well as the children sanitizing their hands. The classrooms will be set up to ensure proper social distancing. Students will be given a book, pencil, and markers, which will be kept in individual book bins. These materials will not be able to be brought home, but instead will remain in the church hall. Also, each child is responsible for bringing their own water bottle to class.

Looking forward to a wonderful year of learning. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

Sincerely yours Christ,

Father Edward Young, Pastor

Mrs. O'Doy, Director of Religious Education

**Teachers:** Miss Sokol, Mrs. Bell, Mrs. Wright & Miss Stephanie Dytko

**N.B.** Dear Parents at the Baptism of your child you took an oath to unite your child Christ Jesus and His Holy Catholic Church. This time of religious Education assistance you to fulfill that pledge to Almighty God. ( *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom Proverbs 9: 10*)  
Father Edward

105 CLIFTON AVE  
ANSONIA, CT 06401  
PHONE: 203-734-3895

**St. Peter & St. Paul Church**

**Religious Education Calendar  
2021-2022**

**Sept. 11, Registration/ SAFE ENVIRONMENT We ask parents  
please be present PLEASE/ First Class**

**Sept. 25**

**Oct. 2 , Oct. 16 , Oct. 30**

**Nov. 6 Nov. 13,**

**Dec. 4 , Dec. 18,**

**2022**

**Jan. 8, Jan. 22**

**Feb. 5 , Feb. 19, (Please note the First Day of Great Lent is February 28, 2022)**

**March 5, March 19**

**April 2 , April 9 Children's Confessions and Divine Liturgy for children**

**( Palm Sunday is April 10 and Pascha (Easter) April 17)**

**April 23**

**May 7, May 14**

Religious education is held on Saturday in the church hall from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Father Young will teach on Sunday after the 10:00 Liturgy, those who can't attend on Saturday.

Teachers for this year:

Mrs. Alice O'Doy

Miss Audrey Sokol

Miss Stephanie Dytko (substitute)

Mrs. Janine Bell

Mrs. Donna Wright

Father Edward Young

\*\*\* If you are going to be late or absent, from class, please notify your child's teacher. Thank you!

**FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

EPISTLE - 1 CORINTHIANS 4: 6-15 ~ GOSPEL - MATTHEW 22: 35-46 TONE 6

St. Matthew tells us that the Pharisees came to Jesus not to ask an innocent question but to entrap Him. Read St. Matthew's text more closely, however, and we'll see that even more than this is taking place. Many questions were put to our Savior during His earthly life. His enemies would try to catch Him in His words to prove that He was not divine. Instead, they fell into their own trap and find themselves silenced by His wisdom.

Not too long ago we heard one ask the Lord "Master... is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" It was not a simple question, because many considered it wrong or sacrilegious to give to Caesar, yet if He said "No, it is not necessary." Others would accuse Him of being a lawbreaker. His answer, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." confounded their evil intentions. It is not that Jesus was a clever debater or a brilliant logician; He was teaching divine truths, while silencing His enemies.

Another question regarded the punishment of a woman who was an adulteress. According to the law of Moses she should be stoned to death. "What do You say?" If He said "She should be stoned." many would consider Him hard and unmerciful. If He said that the law need not apply, He would again be accused of changing the law. We all know His answer: "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

Many other such questions were put before the Lord; not all of them from a bad motivation. Three weeks ago we heard the gospel reading in which a rich young man asked Him "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" To the Savior, Whose very purpose was to show us the way to eternal blessedness, this was a very good question. The Lord looked on him very kindly.

In today's gospel reading one of the Pharisees, a lawyer, asked Him "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" The evangelist notes that he asked the question to tempt Him. The Lord answered "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great commandment. And the second is like unto it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It seems that the conscience of this lawyer was not entirely extinguished. As recorded by Saint Mark, he exclaimed "Well, Master. Thou hast said the truth.... To love God with all the soul, and with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and to love one's neighbor as oneself is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." And the Lord answered kindly, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

And to you and I, beloved is this eternal question: "Will we learn to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength, and with all our understanding?" So that all our thoughts are how to love God with all our being? It was this way with the saints. Recall the troparion to Saint Seraphim: "From thy youth didst love Christ, O blessed one, and didst ardently desire to serve Him alone." These words were the goal of the great ascetic. And that is how we should love Him. Not because He has need of it; but because there is no greater good, or greater joy for a man, than to love the Lord.

We must remember this when we repent of our sins. Before all else, we must repent that in our worldly life we have not yet learned to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength, and all our understanding. For such a one, although he is still on earth, in his heart is paradise! He is already in blessedness. It is not by chance that the faces of Saint John of Kronstadt and Saint Seraphim often shone radiantly like the sun. The Lord said, "Where there is love, there God dwells." We need to think more often, Christian soul, and pray that the Lord will teach us to love Him with all our being as our most valuable treasure. When our holy father Saint John of the Ladder appealed to a man to love God, he went as far as to make this comparison: "Love God as others love their lovers." He thinks only of her. She is always in his thoughts. In such a way a Christian should love the Lord, so that it will be the main treasure of his heart and soul. <https://stnektariosroc.org/>

CATECHISM - CHRIST OUR PASCHA - TODAY'S EPISTLE / GOSPEL LESSON :  
 LOVE OF NEIGHBOR: Page 75, Section 207; Page 238, Section 723-724  
 LOVE OF GOD: Page 59, Section 159



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 - FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

"Magnify, O my soul, glorious nativity of the Mother of God" – (Matins)  
 The feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated on September 8, belongs on the list of the Twelve Major Feasts of the Byzantine rite liturgical year (cf. Gospel of Sinai, 715 A.D.) We usually do not celebrate the birthday of the Saints, but rather their "birthday to heaven," that is, the anniversary of their death, considered as the beginning of their blessed life with God. Nevertheless, there are two exceptions, the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist, since we commemorate not only their birthday to heaven, but also their nativity, their coming to this earth .

From the Protoevangelium of St. James we learn that the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary,

Joachim and Anna, were righteous and greatly devoted to God. Her Father was a descendant from the royal house of David, while Mary's mother came from the priestly line of Aaron. Their one great sorrow was that they had no children. In the Old Testament when God blessed His chosen people, He always promised to bless them with a numerous offspring. Thus, among the Jews childlessness was considered as a sign of God's rejection, a "public disgrace" (Lk. 1 :25).

In his fourth sermon on the feast of Mary's nativity, St. Andrew of Crete, after having praised the Blessed Virgin with the most exalted titles, invites all Christians to share in the great joy of her devout parents, since "today a child is born, from whom we received our salvation, Christ, the Word of God, who, having come through her, abides with us forever." (Migne, P. G., vol. 97, col. 882) And indeed, the hagiographers present to us the nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the "beginning of our salvation." As the morning star announces the approaching sunrise, so also Mary's birth heralded the coming of the "Sun of Justice," the promised Messiah, who was to destroy the power of Satan, reopen for us the gates of heaven, and assure divine blessing to the entire human race. This is the reason of our rejoicing.

SEPTEMBER 9 - FEAST OF SS. JOACHIM AND ANNA:  
 The holy and righteous Joachim and Anna are the parents of



the Blessed Virgin/Theotokos, the grandparents of Jesus Christ. Their feast day is celebrated on September 9, following the Nativity of the Theotokos;

Troparion of the Feast: The just couple who lived in the state of grace, Joachim and Anne, gave birth to the holy child for us. The Church solemnly honors this feast in glory and celebrates your precious memory today. She glorifies God Who has lifted up our horn of salvation in the house of David.

### **Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna Commemorated on September 9**

Saint Joachim, the son of Barpathir, was of the tribe of Judah, and was a descendant of King David, to whom God had revealed that the Savior of the world would be born from his seed. Saint Anna was the daughter of Matthan the priest, who was of the tribe of Levi. Saint Anna's family came from Bethlehem.

The couple lived at Nazareth in Galilee. They were childless into their old age and all their life they grieved over this. They had to endure derision and scorn, since at that time childlessness was considered a disgrace. They never grumbled, but fervently prayed to God, humbly trusting in Him. Once, during a great feast, the gifts which Joachim took to Jerusalem as an offering to God were not accepted by the priest Reuben, who considered that a childless man was not worthy to offer sacrifice to God. This pained the old man very much, and he, regarding himself the most sinful of people, decided not to return home, but to settle in solitude in a desolate place.

When Saint Anna learned what humiliation her husband had endured, she sorrowfully entreated God with prayer and fasting to grant her a child. In his desolate solitude the righteous Joachim also asked God for this. The prayer of the saintly couple was heard. An angel told them that a daughter would be born to them, Who would be blessed above all other women. He also told them that She would remain a virgin, would be dedicated to the Lord and live in the Temple, and would give birth to the Savior. Obeying the instructions of the heavenly messenger, Saints Joachim and Anna met at the Golden Gate in Jerusalem. Then, as God promised, a daughter was born to them and they named her Mary. Saint Joachim died a few years later at the age of 80, after his daughter went to live in the Temple. Saint Anna died at the age of 70, two years after her husband. Saints Joachim and Anna are often invoked by couples trying to have children.



### **Holy Prophet Zachariah and Elisabeth, Parents of John the Baptist**

The Holy Prophet Zachariah and the Righteous Elisabeth were the parents of the holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John. They were descended from the lineage of Aaron: Saint Zachariah, son of Barach, was a priest in the Jerusalem Temple, and Saint Elisabeth was the sister of Saint Anna, the mother of the Most Holy Theotokos. The righteous spouses, "walking in all the commandments of the Lord" (Luke 1:6), suffered barrenness, which in those times was considered a punishment from God.

Once, during his turn of priestly service in the Temple, Saint Zachariah was told by an angel that his aged wife would bear him a son, who "will be great in the sight of the Lord" (Luke 1:15) and "will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke

1:17).

Zachariah doubted that this prediction would come true, and for his weakness of faith he was punished by becoming mute. When Elisabeth gave birth to a son, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit she announced that his name was John, although no one in their family had this name.

They asked Zachariah and he also wrote the name John down on a tablet. Immediately the gift of speech returned to him, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, he began to prophesy about his son as the Forerunner of the Lord.

When King Herod heard from the Magi about the birth of the Messiah, he decided to kill all the infants up to two years old at Bethlehem and the surrounding area, hoping that the new-born Messiah would be among them.

Herod knew about John's unusual birth and he wanted to kill him, fearing that he was the foretold King of the Jews. But Elisabeth hid herself and the infant in the hills. The murderers searched everywhere



for John. Elizabeth, when she saw her pursuers, began to implore God for their safety, and immediately the hill opened up and concealed her and the infant from their pursuers. In these tragic days Saint Zachariah was taking his turn at the services in the Temple. Soldiers sent by Herod tried in vain to learn from him the whereabouts of his son. Then, by command of Herod, they murdered this holy prophet, having stabbed him between the temple and the altar (MT 23: 35). Elizabeth died forty days after her husband, and Saint John, preserved by the Lord, dwelt in the wilderness until the day of his appearance to the nation of Israel.



**God wanted a working man to father Jesus:** Besides the Virgin Mary, there are just two saints who have more than one feast day dedicated to their honor on the Church's universal calendar: Saint John the Baptist and Saint Joseph. Pope Pius XII instituted today's feast in 1955 in direct response to the surge of atheistic communism in the decades after World War II. Communism at that time was not so clearly understood as the dehumanizing, anti-man, politically corrupt, and economically anemic system that it later revealed itself to be. Communism, after all, had helped defeat fascism in Germany and Italy, so it was understood as a liberating force, not an oppressive one, in some countries. May 1, or May Day, was the day of the worker in communist lands: a day of rest, of triumphant militaristic parades,

and of pride in all that communism had accomplished, supposedly, for the proletariat. Keen observers, including many Catholic intellectuals, Pope Pius XII, and one future Pope then serving as a priest in Poland, knew better. They had already, intellectually, torn the mask from the true face of communism. Part of the Church's response to the communist appeal to workers was to exalt Saint Joseph the Worker on May 1 as a Catholic alternative to May Day. Not only was Saint Joseph to be understood, then, as the husband of Mary and the foster father of Jesus, but also as the patron of labor. He was the carpenter, the working man, who taught his God-Son how to swing a hammer and run a planer over a rugged plank.

Pius XII's exaltation of Saint Joseph the Worker was an attractive idea. Saint Joseph was a true icon of human labor in contrast to the rough factory worker in an industrial plant in Leningrad or the tanned farm hand threshing hay under the Ukrainian sun. Saint Joseph did not have his fist raised in anger at the capitalist oppressors of Nazareth. He was not leading a mob to burn down his boss's house. Saint Joseph worked like a normal person worked. He was quiet about it. He did his duty. He provided his family with food and shelter. He didn't see injustice lurking behind every corner. He most likely made excellent furniture and received a fair wage for his handiwork.

Work, from a Catholic perspective, is a source of dignity. It has to be done. A life of pure leisure is no life at all. Work and want and trying times are required ingredients in the recipe for a mature, responsible adult. No work, no adult. Work itself is not pure punishment. The onerous nature of work is one of the effects of original sin, though it was not so in the beginning. Work became a burden due to the sin of our first parents. What is the theology behind this? God the Father worked and God the Son worked. When man works, then, he is participating in God's own work. Subduing the earth is one of God's original commandments to man. And subduing the earth cannot come about except through work of one kind or another.

It has been observed that the dash (–) on a tombstone is far more important than the years that are on each side of it. What happened in the time of that dash is more important than one's date of birth or death. For most people that dash denotes work. Mankind works. All the time. And the will of God for us cannot be found outside of what we spend most of our life doing. If that were the case, then we wouldn't have much of a religion. God is found in our work. So if we do it well, we give him glory, and if we do it poorly, we offer him a shoddy sacrifice. The earth becomes our altar when our daily work is our daily offering. Constant, daily work was good enough for Saint Joseph and for the Son of God. So it is good enough for all of God's children as well. Work is a pathway to holiness, and Saint Joseph the Worker stands by our side to encourage us toward the reward that our daily sweat and labor will earn. Saint Joseph the Worker, inspire all laborers of mind or body to work for their daily bread as much as your glorification. May our work be done well to perfect us and to make us participants in completing the creation God began in Genesis.



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—Psalm 33:12