

## POINTS OF INTEREST

**Thank You.** Thank you to all the volunteers who helped prepare our Corned beef annual luncheon.

**Choir Practice.** Join us on Sunday, **March 22** after the Divine Liturgy, for our Choir practice in preparation for the Holy week and Easter celebrations.

**Candles & Crafts Sale.** The Daughters of Saint Ann will be selling decorated candles and crafts on Sunday **March 22** in the church hall after the Divine Liturgy.

**First Penance.** Our First Communicants will celebrate their First Penance on Sunday **March 22** at **9.30 am** in preparation for their First Communion.

**St Ann's Discussion Group.** Join us to watch the movie of Saint Sharbel the Maronite monk on **Wednesday March 25** at 6.30 PM in the church hall.

**Easter Luncheon.** After the Divine Liturgy on Sunday April 12 you are all invited to our Easter Luncheon Pot Luck. A signup sheet is in the church hall for those who wish to bring a dish and share it with everyone.

**St Ann's parishioners got talent.** Do you sing, dance, act or have any other talent? Hurry and become part of our event that will be held on Sunday April 12 during our Annual Easter Luncheon pot luck starting at 11 am. Register your name on the Signup sheet in the Church hall before April 5.

**Bus Trip** to Yankee Stadium on July 18<sup>th</sup> to attend the New York Yankees v/s Seattle Mariners game. The cost is \$100 per person. For more info contact Mike Rezey 339-9468; Al Patnode 225-3335 or Richard Peters 272-2934.

**Memorials & Liturgy Intentions.** If you like to offer a Memorial or a Divine Liturgy intention for your loved ones, write or call the parish office. In preparing your will, you might wish to arrange for the celebration of Divine Liturgies for yourself and your family.



## Verse Of The Week

"For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

*(Cf. Mk 10:45)*

## St. Rafqa

Born 1832 A.D. ~ Died 1914 A.D.

St Rafqa was an only child, born in Hemlaya, Lebanon on June 29, 1832. She was just 7 when her mother died. In 1843, her father experienced financial difficulties and sent her into service for 4 years.

She returned home to find her father had remarried. His new wife wanted Rafqa to marry her brother but Rafqa felt drawn to religious life. She entered the convent of Our Lady of Deliverance in Bikfaya, received the habit of her congregation and pronounced her first vows.

Following a crisis in her congregation, Rafqa traveled to the Maronite Monastery of St. Simon el-Qarn, and was admitted to the Order. She received the name, Rafqa, after her mother. In October 1885, while praying in church, she asked Jesus to permit her to experience some of the suffering He endured during His passion. Her prayer was immediately answered. Unbearable pain began in her head and spread to her eyes.

Rafqa suffered for seventeen years as a blind paralytic. Her pain was continuous night and day, yet she never complained. She often thanked God for her sufferings, "...because I know that the sickness I have is for the good of my soul and His glory" and that "sickness accepted with patience and thanksgiving purifies the soul as the fire purifies gold."

## Saint's Quote

"Renounce yourself in order to follow Christ; discipline your body; do not pamper yourself, but love fasting."

*St. Benedict*

## Pope announces "Jubilee of Mercy"

"Mercy is not just a pastoral attitude but the very substance of the Gospel of Jesus," the Pope wrote in a letter he sent to the Catholic University of Argentina. Mercy has been a central theme of these first two years of his pontificate and today, on the second anniversary of his election, Pope Francis announced an extraordinary year of Holy Mercy. Pope Francis made the announcement in St. Peter's Basilica while celebrating a penitential service. The Extraordinary Jubilee will begin December 8, on the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Ecumenical Vatican Council II and run until the Feast of Christ the King on November 20, 2016.

Francis announced the Holy Year saying: "Dear Brothers and Sisters, I have often reflected upon how the Church can make its mission as a witness of mercy more apparent. It is a journey that begins with spiritual conversion. For this reason I have decided to proclaim an Extraordinary Jubilee which focuses on God's mercy. It will be a Holy Year of Mercy. We wish to experience this inspired by the Word of the Lord: "Be merciful, just as your father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). This Holy Year will begin on the next Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and will conclude on November 20, 2016, the Sunday of Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the universe and the living face of the Father's mercy." During December's ceremony, Pope Francis will open the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica, which is normally bricked up. The last one to do so was St. John Paul II, who opened it in 2000.

"I entrust the organization of this Jubilee to the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, so that it may bring it to life as a new leg of the Church's journey on its mission to bring the Gospel of mercy to every person. I am certain that this Jubilee will give the whole Church the joy of rediscovering the mercy of God and making it grow. All of us are called to be merciful and offer consolation to every man and woman of our time. We entrust it henceforth to the Mother of Mercy, that she may cast her gaze upon us and watch over our journey."

"The way of the Church" - the Pope said in the important homily he delivered last 15 February to new (and old) cardinals - is not to condemn anyone for eternity." Rather, "It is to pour out the balm of God's mercy on all those who ask for it with a sincere heart. The way of the church is precisely to leave her four walls behind and to go out in search of those who are distant, those essentially on the 'outskirts' of life; to adopt fully God's own approach; to follow the Master who said: "Those who are well have no need of the physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call, not the righteous but sinners to repentance."

"Jesus' call encourages each of us to look underneath the surface of things," the Pope explained, "particularly when we are face to face with a person. We are called to look beyond and to focus on the heart in order to see how much generosity one is capable of. No one can be excluded from God's mercy; everyone knows how to access it and the Church is a home that welcomes all and rejects no one. Its doors remain wide open so that those who are touched by grace can find the certainty of forgiveness. The greater the sin, the deeper the Church's love must be for those who convert."

After announcing the Holy Year of Mercy the Pope knelt down at a confessional in St. Peter's Basilica and confessed in public. He did so last year too, before listening to the confessions of a group of faithful.

*Source: Vatican Insider 03-13-2015*



*The Pope Tweets*

"Let us allow God to fill our hearts with his goodness and mercy."

*@ Pontifex / Mar 17, 2015*