ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
901 Sherman Drive, Utica NY 13501
Fr Saba Shofany, Pastor
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SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN
Saturday, May 13 & Sunday, May 14, 2017

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WEEKLY SERVICES

Daily Liturgy: Monday-Friday at 8:30AM **Holy Confession:** Every Monday at 4-6PM
Holy Liturgy: Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM **Vespers:** Every Saturday at 3:00PM
Matins/Orthos: Every Sunday at 9:00AM **Holy Rosary:** Every Sunday at 10:30AM

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SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please pray for our convalescing members**: MaryEllen Busa, Carol Chanatry, Lorraine Chanatry-Howell, Anne Cragnolin, Edgar Hallak, & Mary Machis.** Notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

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WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Sunday Collection May 6/7: $ 483.00   **Candles: $ 234.00**   **Memorial Services: $ 10.00**

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† MEMORIAL MASSES †

This Saturday, May 13, 2017
† **Antoinette Murad,** By Alex Murad
† **Fred & Gladys Farwege**, By Louis Farwege-Fultz
† **Niem Jweid**, 57th Memorial Anniversary, By William & Janet Chanatry
† **Sarah Jweid**, 18th Memorial Anniversary, By William & Janet Chanatry
† **Agnes Kaloosea**, 16th Memorial Anniversary, By William & Janet Chanatry

This Sunday, May 14, 2017
† **Antoinette Murad,** By Alex Murad
† **Lois Stamboly**, By her Family
† **Jannah Jbarah**, By her Family

Next Saturday, May 20, 2017
† **Antoinette Murad,** By Alex Murad
† **Fred & Gladys Farwege**, By Louis Farwege-Fultz

Next Sunday, May 21, 2017
† **Basil Stamboly,** By Mr. & Mrs. David George
† **Jannah Jbarah**, By her Family

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** ANNOUNCEMENT **

Parish Advisory Council (PAC) meeting will be held on Monday, June 5 at 6:30 PM.

ST. PAUL

IN EVERY AGE, there are people who have made dramatic turn-arounds in their life, going from one religion – or no religion – to another. These conversions often lead to a person making a significant contribution to the religious life of their age. One convert who has touched every successive age is St Paul the Apostle.

The story of St Paul's conversion is described three times in the New Testament – twice in the Acts of the Apostles and once in St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. The story is basically the same, although there are a few variations we can note. The basic story, told largely in his own words, is as follows:

Paul's Background – When he was attacked by Jews in Jerusalem and accused of defiling the temple Paul began his defense by speaking of his upbringing: "*I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' Law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today*" (*Acts* 22:3). He described his religiosity in his Epistle to the Philippians. He tells how he was "… *circumcised on the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; concerning the righteousness which is of the Law, blameless*" (*Phil* 3:5, 6). At this time, Paul was still known as Saul of Tarsus. The name Paul was given to him upon his conversion.

Paul's teacher, Gamaliel (+AD 52) was an important member of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. He is described in the New Testament as "*a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law held in respect by all the people*" (*Acts* 5:34) and a voice of moderation in their council. When the Sanhedrin was considering how to kill Peter and the other apostles, Gamaliel calmed them, saying *"...if this plan or this work* [preaching Christ] *is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God*" (*Acts* 5:38, 39). We do not know why Saul did not adopt Gamaliel's wait-and-see approach to the followers of Jesus, but he describes his own attitude to them like this: "*I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren…*" (*Acts* 22:4, 5). We may have a clue to Saul's thinking in what he wrote to believers in Galatia, St Paul described his religious convictions this way: "*And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers*" (*Gal* 1:14). He had been, after all, a participant in the stoning of the protomartyr, St. Stephen.

The Commission to Damascus – There was a large Jewish community – some say it numbered 10,000 – in Damascus in the first century AD. This community, which traced its origin to the time of King David, some 1000 years earlier, was so prominent that it was ruled by its own ethnarch in Roman times. Some 130 miles from Jerusalem, Damascus was one of the first destinations to which Jewish believers in Jesus brought their message. Their impact on the Jews of Damascus was so great that news of it reached Jerusalem. Saul "*went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem*" (*Acts* 9:1). What happened on Saul's journey to Syria is well known. Years later Paul described it for his accusers in Jerusalem with these words: "*Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' So, I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'* "*And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. So, I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.' And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus*" (*Acts* 22:6-21).   (*May*2017Leaflets)