

TO SERVE THE LORD WITH JOY

There is no greater joy than to serve as the Lord's instrument for the building-up of the Body of Christ. The satisfaction that a builder feels for the construction of an edifice in the physical world pales in comparison with the inner joy that accompanies the edification of souls. The one is limited to this temporal world, the other extends to eternity.

The spiritual guidance, comfort, teaching, and preaching with which a priest is charged by God for the care of his parishioners is an awesome responsibility indeed! Were it not for the mercy of God and the power of His grace, it would be an unbearable burden. The very salvation of a priest's soul depends upon the sincerity and faithfulness with which he carries out his ministry. And yet it is in the acceptance of his responsibilities with fear and trembling that a priest experiences the unspeakable joy and honor of laboring with Christ. This joy comes out especially in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist when a priest, despite his unworthiness, enters into the Holy of Holies, "things into which angels long to look" (I Peter 1:12).

The blessed parish of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary with whose spiritual welfare I have been entrusted is most fertile ground for spiritual growth and development. It has allowed me as pastor the opportunity to utilize the full range of knowledge and pastoral experience that I have accumulated through the years. It is my intent to continue to bring out the talent of our parishioners especially at this very creative opportunity for expansion and inner growth. Through the intercessions of the Blessed Theotokos we shall more than succeed! Amen.

Fr. Peter G. Rizos, Protopresbyter