

Garbarczyk Memorial – February 26th, 2023
GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

Prayer

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, our rock, and our redeemer.

AMEN

Christ Died for YOU!

Ewa was a sinner. But she wasn't the only one. You're a sinner and I'm a sinner. In fact, it's a condition that common to ALL of humanity. Paul writes in Romans (Rom 3:23):

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

A little later, Paul tells of the consequences of sin (Rom 6:23):

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And James makes it clear that there are no little sins, no minor offenses (Jas 2:10):

For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

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Let me illustrate – think of a glass of water – pure and clear. If I put one drop of food coloring into that water, it all changes color. One little drop, one little sin, is all it takes to become impure. If I were to put in 100 drops, it would be yet a different color, but it's only by a matter of degree from the color with only one drop – both make the water impure, just like any sin stains our souls.

The only way to make the water pure again would be to remove the drops, remove the sins from our souls and that is exactly what Jesus Christ did for each of us. St. Peter writes (1 Peter 2:24-25):

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Jesus promised to do his Father's will and the Father promised to accept His willing sacrifice as payment for the sins of the whole world.

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Baptized!

Ewa was baptized as an infant. This was God's action upon her; she contributed nothing (except, perhaps, to cry when she got wet).

It was through this gracious act that she was adopted by God and made a part of His family. She was claimed by Christ and marked as one who was redeemed by Christ the crucified. The Holy Spirit gave her gifts to be used for the building up of the body of Christ, the Church.

But this baptism, this washing, did NOT destroy her sin nature. She was at the same time a child of God, born according to the Spirit AND a child of Adam, born according to the flesh. Simultaneously saint and sinner.

The indwelling Holy Spirit, along with the Word of God and His Holy Meal, worked throughout her life to sanctify her and to remake her in the image of Christ. St. Paul writes (2 Thessalonians 2:13):

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

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And St. John records Jesus's words (John 14:26):

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Jesus promised to send the helper, and He kept his promise.

Married!

At the young age of 21, Ewa got married. The marriage of a man to a woman reflects the marriage of Christ, the Bridegroom to His bride, the Church – from the Prophet Isaiah (Is 62:5):

As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Scripture describes the origin of marriage in Genesis (Gen 2:18)

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

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Ewa was that fit helper for Ryszard. Within a decade of leaving Poland for the United States, Ryszard had a stroke and Ewa cared for him for more than 20 years, until his death in 2016. It's because of this selfless caring that we read the passage from the Gospel of Matthew. She gave him food, drink, and cared for him while he was sick; Jesus commends those who do these things for others, because they are truly in service to Him.

Did these good works provide any merit to Ewa? No – they in no way contributed to the restoration of her relationship with our Father in heaven. However, in the same way a good tree bears good fruit, they are evidence that she was connected to Jesus. John records in his Gospel these words of Christ (John 15:4-5):

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

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Marriage is a sacred promise – Ewa kept her vows and Christ, the Bridegroom, promised to keep and protect his Bride, the Church.

Died!

Finally, in the fall of last year, Ewa was welcomed into Heaven by Jesus and all the heavenly host. No more pain, no more sickness, no more suffering. And, importantly, no delay. Jesus made that promise to the thief on the cross next to Him (Luke 23:42-43):

[The thief] said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And [Jesus] said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

I want to focus on the word "today," it means no waiting, no purgatory, (and no 2nd chances). God the Father has promised that the day of judgement follows quickly upon death (Hebrews 9:27):

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.

While we who are left mourn and are sorrowful, Ewa is rejoining with all the saints, seated the banquet table of the lamb. Let us rejoice with her!