



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

11 June 2020

Apostles Bartholomew & Barnabas

№. 93

Mrs. Alice Sutko and the Family of John Sutko
Saints Peter and Paul Church
Burr Ridge, Illinois

Dear Alice and family members,

I want to express my condolences upon hearing about the falling asleep of your husband John. I know these last four months were quite difficult, going between hospitals, rehab facilities and finally hospice. I know for a while family members were not able to visit John in these places due to the COVID-19 restrictions. I can't imagine how hard that was on all of you.

But there is hope this day, because now we pray for him to find rest in the bosom of Abraham and to be established in the mansions of the righteous. What better place to be than there? This is the place where we believe eternal healing will come to John. We live in the hope that his body and soul will find total fulfillment, because at the Last Judgment, the Crucified Risen Lord will come to join John's soul and body together, complete and whole, lacking nothing. What better hands to be in? What a source of encouragement for us that John has entered into His joy! May this encourage us to walk in that same joy, even as we find ourselves grieving at this time.

John's vocation in music is something to which he gave his heart and soul. He is so well-known and loved in the Orthodox world for his labors in the field of Orthodox hymnography. He is one of our major pioneers in the field of Orthodox music. Through his sacrificial labors of love, he has enabled us to be a church that could share its faith to the local culture today.

For all his accomplishments in music, for which he received recognition and many awards, I will most remember John for one thing: his humility. Although a giant in this field, I am sure John saw himself as nothing more than a servant, and this is the

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way he lived his life. His faithfulness, kindness, and humility have had a far greater impact on me than anything else. Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Lord.

Alice, thank you for the love and support you have given John over the last 60+ years in your marriage to him. He couldn't have accomplished what he did in his life in the Church without you being there to support him.

The Lord's blessing be upon you.

With love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Paul". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+PAUL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest