



**Coptic Orthodox Diocese of
the Southern United States**

**The Monthly Message
to the Priests' Wives
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Priscilla and Aquila

They are a couple who offered to us such an amazing model of the work of the Holy Spirit in their life and service to the degree that St. Paul gave a testimony about them saying, “*to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles*” (Romans 16:4). Therefore, it is very beneficial for every priest’s wife and her husband priest to contemplate upon their life and extract from it useful lessons for them.

Aquila was a Jewish man from Pontus, while Priscilla was not thought to be a Jewish. From her

name, we can understand that she was Roman, and some said she was belonging to the noble upper-class in Rome. Because these people used to call men and women with two names, she was called both Prisca and Priscilla. The latter is the diminutive of Prisca and means the little ancient. On the other side, Aquila means eagle.

Aquila and Priscilla were living in Rome, but a Jewish man made some troubles in the city and this pushed the Emperor Claudius to chase all Jewish people out of the city in 52 A.D. Hence, Aquila went out of the city accompanied with his wife and went to Corinth. At that time, the divine providence planned that St. Paul went to Corinth in his second mission trip where he met Aquila and Priscilla, “*So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers*” (Acts 18:3). Therefore, the couple became Christian

because of St. Paul who preached Christianity to them. Later on, they traveled with St. Paul to Syria where *“he came to Ephesus and left them there”* (Acts 18:19). The church used to gather in their home there. To Ephesus came Apollos, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, and he spoke and taught the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. *“When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately”* (Acts 18:26). Later on, they turned back to Rome as we find St. Paul sending greetings to them in his epistle to the Romans saying, *“Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles”* (Romans 16:3-4). It is also thought that they returned to Ephesus when the apostle sent his

greetings to them saying, *“Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus”* (2 Timothy 4:19). They are thought to be martyred later by cutting off their heads.

Now, I would like to contemplate on some of the unique points in the life and ministry of this couple:

- (1) The Lord turned their suffering of being forcibly immigrated from Rome with the remaining Jews to their good as this led them to meet St. Paul and accept the Christian faith.
- (2) St. Paul described them saying, *“my fellow workers in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 16:3). This shows that they owned a strong humble spirit of discipleship to St. Paul.
- (3) They served together with a spirit of oneness, therefore St. Paul would never mention the name of the one without the name of the other. Many times, he mentioned Priscilla first which denotes

her great role and her strong support to her husband in his preaching ministry. Of course, a strong marital bond supported with a true Christian love must stand behind this spirit of oneness in their ministry.

(4) They sustained themselves by working in tentmaking while they were serving and preaching.

(5) They were of great help and support to St. Paul who described his state in Corinth saying, “*I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling*”(1Corinthians 2:3).

(6) They were characterized by strong wisdom and avoidance of clashing. This was clear when they found Apollos knowing only the baptism of John as “*they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately*” (Acts 18:26).

(7) They made their house a church taking on their shoulders all the financial and spiritual requirements of this.

(8) They were characterized with a strong spirit of self-sacrifice amounting to death as they were described by St. Paul saying, “*who risked their own necks for my life*” (Romans 16:4).

(9) Their heart was not attached to a certain place, but they freed themselves from every bond. This gave them a great flexibility that made it easy for them to move from one city to the other to fulfil the preaching service requirements.

(10) They remained faithful to St. Paul while all others abandoned him, “*This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me*” (2Timothy 1:15).

I pray the Lord to make of every priest and his wife new Aquila and Priscilla!!