



[Startpage](#) › A day of praise and blessings

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6 July 2024

On Sunday, June 30, 2024, the congregation of Montreux / Switzerland experienced a special feast of gratitude and blessings. Invited to the divine service in our beautiful ancient church building (<https://montreux.nak.ch>), conducted by Bishop Thomas Wihler, was also the neighbour congregation of Martigny. The assembled congregation was happy to share the special thankfulness and joy of Apostle (rtd.)

Apostle (rtd.) Peter Gfeller and his dear wife Claudine who received the godly blessing for their golden wedding anniversary. For this reason and as a big surprise for the golden wedding couple also Apostle (rtd.) Volker Kühnle and late Apostle Günter Beck's daughter Gabi and husband District Elder (rtd.) Helmut Hoffmann did the long way from Germany to Lake Geneva – also as “representatives” of our Nigerian brothers and sisters among whom the golden jubilee couple lived for some decades.

At the beginning of the Divine Service Bishop Thomas Wihler transmitted the warm regards from District Apostle Jürg Zbinden and District Apostle Helper Thomas Deubel, both Switzerland, as well as from District Apostel Michael Ehrich from Southern Germany. The Bishop took as basis for the Divine Service, which was musically accompanied by the harmonious mixed choir and the congregational string orchestra, the word from **Romans 4:4-5: "Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness."** The Bishop as well as the rector of the both congregations present, Priest Jean-Pierre Blickle, mentioned that the Bible word states clearly that man cannot not be justified before God by his works but by God's grace alone! However, this does not mean that works do not matter. In **James 2:22 it says: "Do you see that faith was working together with his work, and by works faith was made perfect?"** This statement refers to Abraham, who was justified by works when he was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac according to James 2:21. It makes it clear that through faith extraordinary works can be accomplished. As for example: (1) the work of our trust in God including our faithful discipleship and vivid expectation of the return of the Son of God, (2) the work of our love to God and the neighbour including our prayers and intercessions for their well-being, and (3) the work of our willingness to sacrifices. All these works must have their origin in the love for the Lord. Faith and strength for all these works come from the Holy Spirit especially activating in the Divine Services.

After the celebration of Holy Communion, a solo song by the couple's niece opened the golden wedding ceremony. Afterwards a women's trio with two guitarists performed one of Apostle Peter Gfeller's most favourite songs *"The Rock That Is Higher Than I"* which deeply touched and moved the golden wedding couple and the entire congregation. In his speech before the blessing, the bishop recalled with very warm words the great works that the jubilee-couple has produced over the five decades, among them for over three decades in Nigeria. The Bishop reminded to the fact, that the first Nigerians were sealed by District Apostle Gottfried Rockenfelder on Sunday, 19th May 1974, in Lagos / Nigeria - and the day before the jubilee couple received through him their wedding blessing. This means that they had the privilege to celebrate a double jubilee: 50 years of marriage as well as 50 years of New Apostolic Church in Nigeria - what great and special works of faith and love!

After receiving the congregation's warm wishes of blessings, the happy couple invited everyone present to a standing reception. The joyful celebration came to its end after lively conversations with delicious food and refreshing drinks.

Gallery





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