

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday before Theophany

January 5, 2014

**Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel
J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors**

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Every Monday, we have prayerful devotions before the Myrrh bearing icon at 6:00 PM. Everyone is invited to be present in praise. The Birthgiver invites us to manifest our faith in response to her first shown love, to unite our prayers with hers for the salvation of our souls. Invite your friends and neighbors to join us.

+++ The monthly Pirohi Sale took place yesterday and we thank all who invested their helping hands to assure its success. God bless you faithful souls with good health!

LORD



TEACH
US

God Is Zealous

I the Lord will...punish those who are complacent...who think, 'The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.' Their blood will be poured out like dust and their entrails like filth. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath Zephaniah 1: 12, 17, 18.

Phineas...has turned my anger away from the Israelites, for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them Numbers 25: 11.

This is what the sovereign Lord says, I will be zealous for my holy name Ezekiel 39: 25.

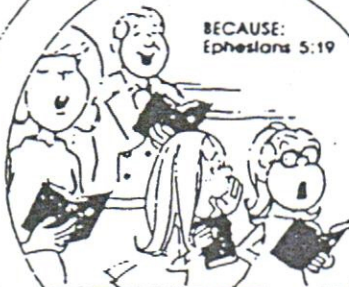
Yes, truth fails and he that departs with evil from it, makes himself a prey and the Lord saw it and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man and wondered that here was no intercessor, therefore, his arm brought salvation to him and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and as a helmet of salvation on his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as with a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the island he will repay Isaiah 59: 15 - 18.

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death cannot and life cannot. The angels cannot and the demons cannot. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell cannot keep God's love away. Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord Romans 8: 38.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word 2 Thessalonians 2: 16, 17.

Listen?

Sing?



WHY SHOULD I...

Give?

Pray?





Marriage at Cana

At the marriage to which our Lord and the Mother of God were invited in Cana of Galilee, a problem arose because there was not enough wine for the guests. Not only were the bride and groom about to be embarrassed, but their parents as well. Mary became aware of the problem and went to her Son and our God because she felt badly for all who were present. She told the Lord about the difficulty, knowing He would do what was best. Then she went and told the servants at the wedding reception, "Do whatever He tells you."

This is also the message of the Birthgiver of God to all true believers. It is the gospel message, too. We must all seriously do whatever the Lord tells us so we can save our souls.



ALL ARE CALLED TO PRAY

THE NEED TO BE IN TOUCH

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” Matthew 7: 7, 8.

How can the contemporary believer say he knows and loves God and not spend time in His Word, in His worship, in His presence? Even more so, how can a believer desire to be in God's perfect will and not spend time in prayer? Jesus, as our example prayed often and as a result did only those things which pleased the Father. Prayer was the result of His union with the Father. “The One who sent me is with me. He has not deserted me since I always do what pleases him” John 8: 29.

He was always confident that He was doing God's will at all time and in all circumstances because He was in perfect communion through prayer with the Father at all times. The Lord does great and mighty things through praying people. God confirms His word with signs and wonders if we are faithful.

As members of the Church of Christ, we are called upon to “...pray always...” 2 Thessalonians 1: 11. Our Lord and Saviour is at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. The Holy Spirit prays for us and in us that our own prayer may be acceptable before the throne of the Father. Let us take our position in heavenly places with Christ and agree with His Word among us. Let us be as He describes us. If we are to be as He is, if we are to be faithful to Him as He is to the Father, we need to learn His Word, pray His Word and see His presence confirmed in His Word. Some teach, some preach, but all without exception are called to pray!

Be at the Divine Liturgy each and every Sunday and holy day praying with us! Your public worship is a ready sign of your private prayer life in the secrecy of your home.

13 THINGS YOUR DOG CAN TEACH YOU

1. When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
 2. Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
 3. Let others know when they've invaded your territory.
 4. Take naps and stretch before rising.
 5. Run, romp, and play daily.
 6. On hot days, drink lots of water and lay under a shady tree.
 7. When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.
 8. No matter how often you're scolded, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout . . . run right back out and make friends.
 9. Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
 10. Eat with gusto and enthusiasm. Stop when you have had enough.
 11. Be loyal.
 12. Never pretend to be something you're not.
 13. If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
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WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

When the Forerunner saw Him Who is our enlightenment, Who enlightens every man coming to be baptized, his heart rejoiced and his hand trembled. He pointed Him out to the people and said: "This is the Saviour of Israel Who delivered us from corruption!" O Christ, God, O sinless Lord, glory be to You! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

O Saviour, the armies of angels trembled when they saw You baptized by Your servant, and the Holy Spirit bearing witness by coming down, and when they heard the Father's voice speaking from heaven: "This One upon Whom the Forerunner lays his hands is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." O Christ God, Glory, to You! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

When the Jordan River received You, O Fountainhead, the Consoler came down in the form of a dove. Behold the marvel: the One Who drew the curve of heaven bows His head to the Forerunner, to the one made of clay who cries out to His Master: "Why do You order me to do things beyond my worth? It is I who need to be baptized by You!" O Christ God, O sinless One, glory be to You! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

O Lord, when John saw You coming to him at the Jordan River, he cried out: "How do You, O Lord, Who have no stain, come to me Your servant? In whose name shall I baptize You? In the name of the Father You possess in Yourself? In the name of the Son while You are the very Son in the flesh? In the name of the Holy Spirit Whom You grant to the faithful with the breath of Your mouth?" O God made manifest, have mercy on us! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

The waters have seen You! O Lord, when the waters saw You, they trembled, for the very Cherubim do not dare to look upon Your glory, nor can the Seraphim rest their eyes upon You. They stand in fear before You, some on guard; others glorifying Your might. Together with them, we proclaim Your praise, O merciful One and say: O God become manifest for us, have mercy on us! Vesper Hymn, Feast of Theophany.

Little Surprises

"Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer"
Romans 12: 12.

Life is full of ambiguities and unanswered questions. Yet, we survive, we continue to find pleasure and joy in the smallest things. We struggle with some temptation, some problem that plagues us and makes our days heavy and our nights broken and troubled. And then for a few minutes or even an hour some small surprise, a piece of music, a visit from an old friend, a smiling countenance, a scent of roses, and we are temporarily drawn out of ourselves into another dimension, something other.

When there are no surprises, our own pseudo-sophistication kills the life within us and it is time to become like little children again, let us not hesitate. Let us follow where the Spirit leads. The ambiguities and questions will be there no matter what we do. The little surprises will be there only if we wish them to be, only if we expect them to come, and that is Hope which is what sustains us in difficult moments.

We look forward to the coming of Christ in our lives each and every day, particularly each Sunday and feast day when we receive the life-refreshing Eucharist. But we ought also to recognize His daily presence in all that we do and everyone we encounter as well.



What a Horrible Dream!

I dreamed that the Lord took my weekly contribution to the church, multiplied it by ten, and turned this amount into my weekly income. In no time I lost all my furniture, and had to give up my automobile. Why, I couldn't even make a house payment. What can a person do on \$10.00 a week?

Suppose the Lord took your offering and multiplied it by ten and made that your weekly income. How much would you earn? This question might give you some fresh insights into the stewardship needs of our church.

Did You Know That ...

...a proper ending to our life is with the very Body and Blood of our Saviour?

...we are called by our God to be faithful witnesses to the truth and credulity of the early Church?

...money is an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and as a universal provider for everything except happiness?

...God sometimes washes our eyes with tears that they might read correctly His commandments?

...if you must make mistakes, make a new one each time?

...riches are like salt water, the more you drink the more you thirst?

...in their prayer life, Orthodox Christians should go to the Scripture, open it carefully and read expectantly and live its precepts joyfully?

...it is difficult to be distracted by the world when we are intimately attracted to God?

...love not only gives, but also forgives?

...an Orthodox Christian without a local parish church is like bee without a hive?

...if you keep your eyes on God, you will soon lose sight of your fears?

...Orthodox Christians are called to live a life of faithfulness to Christ?

...our heavenly Father knows so much about us, St. Basil the Great says He has even counted the hairs on our head?

...for us who believe, the Great Fast, which will begin shortly, is primarily a time for fasting from sin?

...devoted prayer is the beginning of miracles?

God's Strength

*There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God,
and did not respect the people*

Luke 18: 2.

Thoroughly versed in the ways of the world,
Jesus uses this parable to teach us perseverance in prayer.

Too often depicted as naïve about the "real world,"

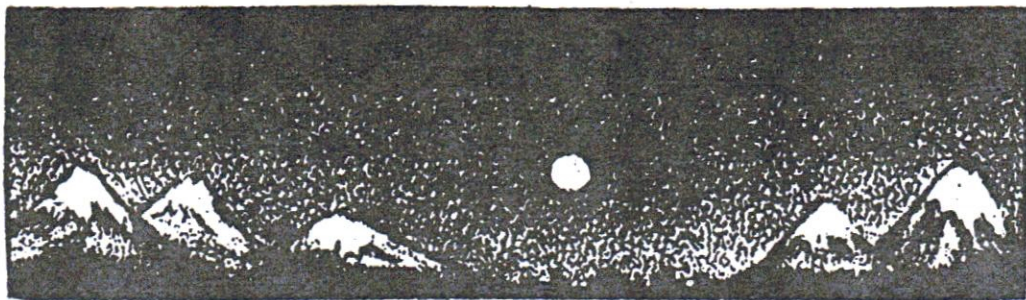
Jesus was not the ethereal or surreal character
of so many popular characterizations in our time and place.

He is a person who performed
manual labor as a carpenter,
walked regularly across his homeland
and was vigorous enough to clear the temple
of its moneychangers.

Satan, the enemy of mankind, deceives us
if we picture Christ as "sissified,"
as many misinformed and misguided men often think of him,
picking flowers and ignorant of the world around him.
Christ is all – powerful and demands our wholehearted allegiance.

He can be trusted to deliver on his promises,
for He has the strength and character to do so.

Being convinced of his strength,
we can fully draw upon the power that is ours as
communicants of his Body and Bride, our blessed Church,
against which
the powers of hell cannot prevail!



PRAYER TO GOD THE FATHER
BY ST. MACARIUS

O ETERNAL God and Ruler of all creation :
You have allowed me to reach this hour.
Forgive the sins I committed today by word,
deed, or in thought. Purify me, O Lord, from
every spiritual and physical stain. Grant that
I may rise from this sleep to glorify You by my
deeds throughout my entire lifetime, and that
I be victorious over every spiritual and physical
enemy. Deliver me, O Lord, from all vain
thoughts and evil desires, for yours is the
kingdom and the power and the glory, Father **✝**,
Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever.
Amen.

PRAYER TO GOD THE SON
BY ST. ANTIOCHUS

O NLY-BEGOTTEN Word of the Father,
Jesus Christ who alone are perfect :
according to the greatness of your mercy, do not
abandon me, your servant, but ever rest in my
heart. O Sweet Jesus, Good Shepherd of your

flock, deliver me from the attacks of the devil. Do not allow me to become the prey of Satan's evil intention, even though I have within me the seed of eternal damnation. Instead, O Lord Jesus Christ, adorable God, holy King, while I sleep, protect me by your Holy Spirit through whom You sanctified your disciples. Enlighten my mind by the light of the Holy Gospel, my soul by the love of your cross, my heart by the purity of your teaching. Protect my body by your sacred passion, my senses by your humility, and awaken me in due time for your glorification. For You, above all, are adorable, together with your eternal Father ✝ and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT
BY ST. ANTIOCHUS

O HOLY Spirit, most merciful Comforter : You proceed from the Father in a manner beyond our understanding. Come, I beseech You, and take up your abode in my heart. Purify and cleanse me from all sin, and sanctify my soul. Cleanse it from every impurity, water its dryness, melt its coldness, and save it from sinful ways. Make me truly humble and resigned, that I may be pleasing to You, and that You abide with me forever. Most blessed Light, most amiable Light, enlighten me. O rapturous Joy of Paradise, Fount of purest delight, my God,

give yourself to me, and kindle in my innermost soul the fire of your love. My Lord, instruct, direct, and defend me in all things. Give me strength against all immoderate fears and against despondency. Bestow upon me a true faith, a firm hope, and a sincere and perfect love. Grant that I always do your most gracious will. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE VIRGIN
BY ST. PETER THE STUDITE

O LOVING Mother of our most gracious King, O pure and blessed Virgin Mary : pour the grace of your Son, our God, into my restless soul. Lead me by your prayers to salutary deeds that I may spend my whole life without fault and attain paradise through you, O Virgin Mother of God; for you are pure and blessed forever. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE GUARDIAN ANGEL
BY ST. PETER THE STUDITE

O GUARDIAN Angel, protector of my soul and body, to your care I have been entrusted by Christ. Obtain for me the forgiveness of the sins I have committed today. Protect me from the snares of my enemy, that I may never again offend God by sin. Pray for me, your sinful and unworthy servant that, through your help, I may become worthy of the grace and mercy of the most Holy Trinity and of the immaculate Mother of our Lord God, Jesus Christ. Amen.



Birthday
Wishes!

We are pleased to greet those of our faithful communicants who celebrate their birthday this month. Our Lord has offered these souls yet another year of blessed life. The most obvious way He blesses us and participates in our life is by sharing his divine life with us in the Eucharist at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Thus we gather together and offer thanks for yet another year of life blessed by his most gracious hands. Today, we prayerfully remember in the Divine Liturgy the following souls who celebrate their birthday during this month:

January 5 Stephen Demyan
January 10 Monica Buletza
January 1 Pani Marlene Lucas
January 12 Christopher Pashos
January 16 Ann Helene Camp

With a prayerful heart and grateful soul, our parish faith community asks the Lord to continue to bless these birthday celebrants with good spiritual and physical health for the coming year. We invite all to add their personal intercessory prayers so that with one voice and one heart we may also participate in the grace and joy of their celebration. As we wish them a happy and blessed celebration of their birthday, our ardent prayer resounds that the Lord our God will continue to bless them for

Many and Blessed Years!

THEOPHANY – MANIFESTATION OF GOD

This is one of the magnificent Feastsdays of the Church, like a diamond which sheds its rays on things spiritual to all men of all ages. It is not simply a commemoration of the Baptism of Christ in the waters of the Jordan. Its very name goes beyond that: **Theophany**, meaning manifestation or the revealing of God.

When Jesus was grown, He came to the Jordan where John the Baptist had been baptizing people. The Lord also asked to be baptized, and though St. John protested in humility, he took Him in the waters for the rite. Then the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove and hovered over Christ. And the voice of the Father was heard proclaiming, **"This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."**

And so the identity of Jesus was now clear. He was the **"son of Mary"** to be sure, but He was the **"Son of God"** as well, God and Man. But the revealing aspect of this event involves more than the Person of Christ. It involves the very being of God. God was revealed as **TRINITY** at the Baptism. God the Father's voice was heard, God the Son was in the water, God the Holy Spirit revealed His presence by the dove. No wonder this became one of the Church's great Holydays, and remains so to this day!

Another term used for this Feast is **"Enlightenment"** or **"Illumination,"** because it marked the time when the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, revealed Himself to mankind and began the work of dispelling the darkness of sin and death. This term is often associated with the rites of Baptism and Chrismation for it is then that the Light of Christ comes to dwell in us and enlighten us.

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