

Ὁ ΔΙΟΣ



ΠΑΥΛΟΣ Ὁ ΔΙΟΣ

Ὁ ΘΗΒΑΪΟΣ



ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ

Ὁ ΚΑΙΝΟΥΤΗΣ



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Thirty First Sunday after Pentecost

January 15, 2012

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

+++ The next Pirohi Sale will be Saturday, February 4. Please secure orders to assure its success.

+++ Those who would like their homes sanctified with the newly blessed water of Christ's baptism, please advise Father as soon as possible.

+++ Today at 9: 15 AM we celebrate a Forty Day Memorial Service for the repose of the soul of +Julia Tsokris at the request of Nikitas and Angeliki Tsokris. We pray the merciful Lord comforts Nikitas and Angeliki in their loss and that He creates a blessed repose for the soul of +Julia and grants her Eternal Memory.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week: Tithe Offering, \$[REDACTED]; Nativity of our Lord, \$[REDACTED]; Parish Dues, \$[REDACTED]; Holyday, \$[REDACTED]; Kitchen, \$[REDACTED]; Diocesan Dues, \$[REDACTED]; Energy, \$[REDACTED]; Pennies from Heaven, \$[REDACTED]; Food Coupons, \$[REDACTED]; Special Gifts, \$[REDACTED], for a total of \$[REDACTED]. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Maria Idromenos, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleni Pallas, Debra Szmaida, Paul Szmaida, and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$[REDACTED] from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$[REDACTED]. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

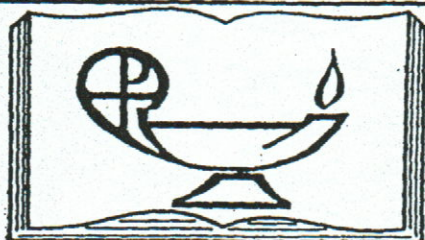
+++ Please be certain to see a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$[REDACTED] on this project to date!

+++ **The Clothing Drive is a permanent on-going project in our parish. Please bring any type of clothing and fabrics along with stuffed animals and shoes for the benefit of our parish. The bags can be left in the vestibule or on the front porch of the rectory. Please invite your friends and neighbors to assist us in disposing of unwanted clothing, shoes and fabrics.**

+++ **We remember only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."**

+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

LORD



TEACH
US

PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, invoke his name; make known among the nations his deeds. Sing to him, sing his praise, proclaim all his wondrous deeds. Glory in his holy name; rejoice O hearts that seek the Lord! Look to the Lord in his strength; seek to serve him constantly, recall the wondrous deeds that he has wrought and the judgments he has uttered Psalms 105: 1 – 5.

Rejoice always; never cease praying; render constant thanks; such is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not stifle the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test everything; retain what is good. Avoid any semblance of evil. May the God of peace make you perfect in holiness. May he preserve you whole and entire, spirit, soul and body, irreproachable at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls us is trustworthy; therefore he will do it 1 Thessalonians 5: 16 -24.

My prayer is that your love may more and more abound, both in understanding and wealth of experience and blameless conduct you may learn to value things that really matter, up to the very day of Christ. It is my wish that you may be found rich in the harvest of justice which Jesus Christ has ripened for you, to the glory and praise of God Philippians 1: 9-11.

Then he prayed, "Lord, God of my master Abraham, let it turn out favorably for me today and thus deal graciously with my master Abraham" Genesis 24: 12.

If you with all your sins know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to anyone who asks him! Matthew 7: 11.



Philippians 4:7

It can't be bought for money
or sold like precious gold
And all who have possessed it
have found it hard to hold.

It's source is everlasting
like moonlight in the soul . . .
It generates a power
to comfort and console.

Unseen it seems to blossom
upon the human vine
Like roses in a garden
so fragile, yet divine.

We need not understand it
for it's a sacred thing.
Rejoice if you have found it—
the soul's eternal spring!

*"And the peace of God, which passeth all
understanding, shall keep your hearts and
minds through Christ Jesus."*

The Great HERESIES

From the inception of Christianity, the Church of Jesus Christ has been attacked by those introducing false teachings or heresies. They preferred their own insights contrasted with the revealed truth of God.

Heresy is far more than simple misunderstanding. It is deliberate opposition to the revelation of divine truth. It is advancing the cause of myths and fables for God's truth. The revelation of our heavenly Father warned us this would happen. St. Paul reminded his young protege, Timothy, "...for the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own liking, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths" 2 Timothy 4: 3, 4.

What is it?

The Greek antecedent from which the English word heresy is derived, signifies "I choose", "a way of thinking," "an opinion," and thus in Hellenistic Greek is also used in the naming of a party or sect. This is the meaning which it has among the party of the Sadducees "The high priest and all his supporters, that is, the party of the Sadducees, filled with jealousy, arrested the apostles and threw them into the public jail" Acts of the Apostles 5 17. While among the Greek-speaking Jews this word continues for awhile to keep this favorable sense, that is, of a particular school of thought within orthodoxy, in Christianity, it soon takes on the unfavorable overtone of unacceptable ways of thinking such as when St. Peter speaks of it, "in times past there were false prophet among God's people, and among you also there will be false teachers who will smuggle in pernicious heresies. They will go so far as to deny the Master who acquired them for his own, thereby bringing on themselves swift disaster. Their lustful ways will lure many away. Through them, the true way will be made subject to contempt" 2 Peter 2: 1, 2.

In time the word came to be understood as destructive opinion since they are produced by "lying teachers" who "disown the Lord." In the contemporary sense of the word, it involves teachings which are contrary to what the Lord taught and enjoined upon His Body, the Church to advance and teach.

Heresy is an emotionally loaded term that is often misused. It is not the same as incredulity, schism, apostasy, or other sins against faith.

**THE
SEDUCTIVE
PATH**

Incredulity is the neglect of revealed truth or the willful refusal to believe or assent to it. Heresy is the obstinate and obdurate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with faith, or it is likewise an obstinate doubt. Apostasy is total repudiation of Christian faith while schism is the refusal to submit to the authority of the Church and communion with her communicants.

To be guilty of heresy, one must refuse to be corrected. A person who is ready to be corrected or who is unaware that what he professes is against the teaching of the Church is not a heretic. A person must be baptized to commit heresy. This means that movements that have split off from the Church or been influenced by Christianity, but do not practice baptism, are not heresies, but separate non-Christian religions. Finally, the doubt or denial involved in heresy must concern a matter that is revealed by God and solemnly defined and taught by the Church.

It is important to distinguish heresy from schism and apostasy. In schism, one separates from the Church without repudiating a defined doctrine. In apostasy, one totally repudiates Christian faith and no longer even claims to be Christian.

The Circumcisers (1st Century)

The Circumcision heresy may be summed up in the words of Scripture: "But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" Acts of the Apostles 15: 1.

Many of the early Christians were Jews, who brought to Christianity many of their former practices. They recognized in Jesus the Messiah predicted by the prophets and the fulfillment of the Old Covenant. Because circumcision had been required in the Old Testament for membership in God's covenant, many thought it would also be required for membership in the New Covenant that Christ came to inaugurate. They believed one must be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law to come to Christ. In other words, one had to become an Old Testament Jew to become a New Covenant Christian.

They were wrong. Our heavenly Father made it abundantly clear to St. Peter that Gentiles are acceptable to God and may be baptized and become Christian without circumcision. "When they heard this, they stopped objecting and listened and began to glorify God in these words: 'If this be so, then God has granted life-giving repentance even to the gentiles'" Acts of the Apostles 11: 18. Non-Jews could become Christian simply by baptism. This teaching was

vigorously defended by St. Paul in his epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, areas to which the circumcision heresy spread. "Appearance does not make a Jew. True circumcision is not a sign in the flesh. He is a real Jew who is one inwardly, and true circumcision is of the heart; its source is the Spirit, not the letter" Romans 2: 28, 29.

Gnosticism (1st and 2nd Centuries)

"Matter is evil" was the cry of the Gnostics. In all its various forms, it denied the goodness of material, bodily reality and therefore the genuine incarnation, crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ in human flesh. It made of Christian faith a type of dualistic, spiritualistic philosophy which pretended to provide a secret knowledge to the privileged of the divine way of intellectual mysticism. As a word, *gnosis* means knowledge. This idea was borrowed from certain Greek philosophers. It stood opposed to the teaching of the Church, not only because it contradicts revelation to us, "And God saw everything that he made and behold, it was very good" Genesis 1: 31, but because it denies the value of the incarnation and the principle elements of faith. If matter is evil, Jesus Christ could not be true God and true man, for Christ is in no way evil. Thus many Gnostics denied the Incarnation, claiming that Christ only *appeared* to be a man, but that his humanity was an illusion. In other words, our God is playing games with us. Some Gnostics, recognizing that the Old Testament taught that God created matter, claimed that the God of the Jews was an evil deity who was distinct from the New Testament God of Jesus Christ. They proposed belief in many divine beings, known as "aeons," who mediated between man and the ultimate unreachable God, the lowest of these aeons, the one who had contact with man, was supposed to be Jesus Christ

Montanism (Late 2nd Century)

Montanus began his career innocently enough through preaching a return to penance and fervor for holiness. His movement also emphasized the continuance of miraculous gifts, such as speaking in tongues and prophecy. However, he also claimed that his teachings were above those advanced by the Church, and soon he began to teach Christ's imminent return in his home town in Phrygia. There were also statements that Montanus himself either was, or at least specially spoke for the Paraclete that Jesus promised would come, that is, the Holy Spirit. Tertullian, the great father of Latin theology in North Africa and prolific writer of Christian treatises succumbed to this thinking and joined the heretical movement.

Sabellianism (Early 3rd Century)

The Sabellians taught that Jesus Christ and God the Father were not distinct persons, but simply two aspects or offices of one person. According to them, the three persons of the Trinity exist only in God's relation to man, not in objective reality.

Arianism (4th Century)

One of the greatest heresies the Church has ever fought is Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, taught that Christ was less than divine, that he was a creature created by God the Father and can only be called divine in a manner of speaking because He was so extraordinarily good. By disguising his heresy using orthodox terminology, he was able to sow great confusion in the Church. He renounced the existence of the Holy Trinity. He was able to muster the support of many bishops, particularly in the west, while others excommunicated him. Arianism was solemnly condemned in 325 at the First Council of Nicea, which defined the divinity of Christ, and in 381 at the First Council of Constantinople, which defined the divinity of the Holy Spirit, but it persisted in various areas of the globe. These two councils gave us the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed which is sung at every celebration of the Divine Liturgy. There is a strong suspicion that too many in the Church still espouse this error even though it is publicly professed in the Jehovah Witness sect.

Pelagianism (5th Century)

Pelagius, a Welsh monk, began this teaching that bears his name. He denied that we bear the results of original sin and claimed that we become sinful only through the bad example of the sinful community into which we are born. Conversely, he denied that we inherit righteousness as a result of Christ's death on the cross and his Resurrection and that we become personally righteous by instruction. Living the sacramental Mysteries in the life of the Church is of no particular avail. Following the example of Christ is not enough because man he says is born morally neutral and can achieve heaven under his own power. He taught that man does not need heavenly grace to become a disciple of Christ. According to him, God's grace is not truly necessary, but merely makes it easier in what is an otherwise difficult task. He is patron to many today who consider themselves good and do not need the

Church. He cannot explain if his insights were divinely inspired why Christ had to come among us to achieve our salvation and redemption.

Semi-Pelagianism (5th Century)

After the Fathers of the Church refuted the teachings of Pelagius, some of his followers tried a modified version of his thinking system. This, too, ended in heresy by claiming that human beings can reach out to God under their own power, without God's grace, that once a person enters a state of grace, one can retain it through one's own efforts, without further grace or heavenly strength from God, and that natural human effort alone can give one some claim to receiving grace, though not strictly merit it.

Nestorianism (5th Century)

This lunacy about the person of Jesus Christ was initiated by Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople who denied Mary the title of *Theotokos* or Birthgiver of God, literally, Mother of God. Nestorius claimed that she only bore Christ in his human nature in her womb and proposed the alternative title, *Christotokos* or Christ-bearer or Mother of Christ. Orthodox theologians recognized that this theory would fracture Christ into two separate persons, one human and one divine, joined in a sort of loose unity, only one of whom was in her womb. The Church reacted in 431 with the Council of Ephesus defining that Mary can be properly referred to as the Mother of God, not in the sense that she is older than God or the source of God, but in the sense that the person she carried in her womb was, in fact, God incarnate or in the flesh.

There is in some questionable quarters some doubt whether Nestorius himself held the heresy or as in later instances, simply this became a matter of language misunderstanding.

Monophysitism (5th Century)

Monophysitism originated as a reaction to Nestorianism. These people led by a man named Eutyches, were horrified by Nestorius' implication that Christ was two people with two different natures, human and divine. They went to the other extreme, claiming that Christ was one person with only one nature, a fusion of human and divine elements. They are thus

known as Monophysites because of their claim that Christ had only one nature (Greek: *mono* = one; *physis* = nature).

The Church recognized this was just as bad as the problem it attempted to resolve because it denied the full humanity and the full divinity of Christ. If Christ did not have a fully human nature, then He would not be fully human and if He did not have a fully divine nature, then He was not fully divine. The two natures are combined in him in such a perfect way that neither is violated or damaged.

Monothelitism (7th Century)

In response to the Monophysites, some began advancing the teaching that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God has one theandric will and action which completely combined the two distinct activities and operations of his divine and human natures. This means that Christ had only one divine-human will, one divine-human action, operation or energy. It was eagerly accepted by those who thought it would overcome the Monophysite divisions. St. Maximus the Confessor and St. Martin, Pope of Rome were untied in their opposition to this thinking. Jesus Christ must have two distinct and separate wills and actions just as surely as He has two distinct and separate natures in one person. There is but one Son of God who is one son of Mary, but this one Son wills and acts distinctly as God and as man. Christ has the fullness of divine will, energy and action, operation and power which is the same as that of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Christ also has the fullness of the human will, energy, action, operation and power which is the same as that of every other human being. Salvation consist in the fact that Jesus Christ, being a true human, freely and voluntarily submitted his human will which is exactly the same human will all men have, to his divine will, which is the will of God the Father. Thus the divine Son of God became a real man with a real human will so that as real man He could "fulfill all righteousness" in perfect, voluntary obedience to the Father. It is through his genuinely human action that Jesus Christ frees all men from sin and death as the new and final Adam. Ss. Maximus and Martin suffered greatly for opposing the monothelite position. They were imprisoned, tortured and mutilated by the imperial powers who wanted badly to use monothelitism as a way to reunion with the separated monophysites.

Iconoclasm (7th and 8th Centuries)

In the eighth century the Isaurian rulers in the East attempted to subject the Church to their rule with a vicious attack against monastics who vigorously defended the Body of Christ.

The attack took the form of a fierce persecution against those who venerated icons. In part it was well placed against those who really persisted in their exaggerated veneration of icons among pious people which truly bordered on idolatry and paganism. They had a pseudo council condemn the veneration of icons and called for removal of all images from the churches, public buildings, etc. The bishops of the Church were under strong imperial pressure to ally themselves with this spurious thinking. Hundreds of Christians, primarily monastics were imprisoned tortured and killed for defending the traditional teaching of the Church honoring icons.

This heresy intensified when a group of people known as iconoclasts, literally "icon smashers" appeared, who claimed that it was sinful to make images or icons of Christ and the saints, despite the fact that in God's revelation to us in Scripture, He commanded the making of religious images (Exodus 25: 18 – 20; I Chronicles 28: 18, 19), including symbolic representations of Christ (cf. Numbers 21: 8, 9; John 3: 14). Icons are not worshipped but simply venerated because of the message of God they relate to believers. They are inspired revelation in color.

The Council Fathers/bishops of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicea defined the legitimate proper use of icons in the Church. It followed the theological thinking of St. John Damascene advanced the traditional idea that icons are to be honored and venerated but never worshipped. The very essence of the Christian faith is the incarnation of the Son and Word of God in human flesh. God indeed is invisible, but in Jesus Christ the invisible God has become visible. The one who sees Jesus sees the Father (John 14: 8). When icon-veneration is denied, the true humanity of Jesus is denied. In addition, the Holy Spirit has been given to man to that he may become holy, truly fulfilling himself as created "...in the image and likeness of God" Genesis 1: 26.

Rejection of holy images is the rejection of the fact of salvation by God in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

God the Father and the Holy Spirit cannot and must not be depicted since they are pure spirits. Christ, the Birthgiver of God and the saints as well as salutary events from Scripture and salvation history may be depicted in iconographic form because they show the reality of man's salvation by God. They depict the true transfiguration and sanctification of man and the whole of creation. The images are honored and venerated in the Church since the honor rendered the image ascends to its prototype and he who venerates an icon venerates or adores the person of the one portrayed. This untimely mess in the history of the Church finally was concluded some fifty years later. Until this day, icons continue to be venerated in the spiritual life of the Body of Christ.

Reflect God's Will- With Your Own!

A PLAY ON WORDS? Perhaps! But our heavenly Father does want us in all our actions to reflect his will! That includes taking care of your dear ones, your fellow communicants both now and after we have departed this life. Your love can continue to embrace them, as well as your favorite, important charities through your will!

Your fellow parishioners can be remembered after you are called to eternity. It will be an enduring reminder to them of your love of Christ. The message of Christ can continue to uplift and encourage even when you are here in spirit among us. PRAY ABOUT AND THINK ABOUT including our parish in your will so that our precious Orthodox presence can be assured in the Freehold area.





*"If you are wrapped up in yourself,
you are overdressed."*

TWO MONKS SHARING THE SAME SPIRITUAL QUALITIES

In January, our Holy Orthodox Church honors two monastic saints who lived in different centuries and in different parts of the world. It is fitting to remember them together on the same day, since they both lived remarkably similar ascetic lives. PAUL OF THEBES was born in Egypt during the reign of the Emperor Decius. He and his sister each inherited half of their parents' property when they died. Paul's pagan brother-in-law threatened to reveal to the local authorities that he was a Christian if he did not give him his share of the family inheritance. Paul did so willingly - not out of fear - but rather out of conviction for following the monastic way of life. He went out to the desert and spent the rest of his life living as a hermit. Even the renowned monastic St. Anthony the Great visited him in the desert and reported back to his fellow monks at his monastery the spiritual heights that had been reached by Paul. Paul of Thebes died in 341 AD, having lived over 100 years.

JOHN THE HUT-DWELLER was born into a wealthy family in Constantinople in the early 5th century. Unimpressed with the riches of the world, he fled from home at an early age and settled in a monastery, where he stayed for six years. Tempted by the devil to return home and live a life of luxury, John left the monastery. Indeed, he went back to his parent's house, but returned dressed as a beggar. Not recognizing their son, John's parents gave the "beggar" permission to live in a hut on their property. For three years, he spent his time praying for his parents. When he ultimately became gravely ill, John revealed his identity to them by showing them a precious Gospel they had given him as a child - his only earthly possession. This humble saint passed into eternity in 450 AD.