

THE THREE HIERARCHS

# Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of Zacheus

January 25, 2015

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

+++ We are saddened to share with our faithful the death of our good parishioner, +Ann Sabo recently. Next Sunday, requested by Pani Lucas, at 9: 15 AM, we will celebrate a Memorial Service for the repose of her soul praying the gracious Lord comforts her survivors and friends and creates for her a blessed repose and Eternal Memory! Please pray for the repose of her soul.

+++ The next Pirohi Sale will be Saturday, February 14.



+++ Friday is the simple feast of the Three Hierarchs. In anticipation, the vespereal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Thursday evening at 7:00 PM. Please join us in prayer and praise.

+++ 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.

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Father George, Barbara, Betty, James, Yevlogia, Nicholas, Maria, Cynthia, Nicholas, Pani Anna Marie and Andrea.

+++ 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 last Sunday: Tithe Offering, \$225.00; Candles, \$9.00; Parish Dues, \$25.00; Diocesan Dues, \$65.00; January Web Site, \$30.00; Kitchen, \$1213.00; for a total of \$1567.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offer 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!

+++ 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, Maria Idronmenos, Anna Zacharyczuk, Bob Gorbich, Marilyn Korba 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 **\$1819.00** from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ 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 \$5750 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.

+++ A vestment closet is being installed at the right rear of the chapel.

+++ We invite all pray the Lord our God grants us the grace of enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory.



## God Provides

*So Abraham called the name of that place, 'The Lord will provide' as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided' Genesis 22: 14.*

*I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed Psalms 37: 25, 26.*

*Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those of us who revere the Lord will never lack any good thing Psalms 34: 10.*

*And do not worry about food, what to eat and drink. Do not worry whether God will provide it for you. These things dominate the thoughts of most people, but your Father already knows your needs. He will give you all you need from day to day if you make the Kingdom of God your primary concern Luke 12: 29 – 31.*

*I said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord, apart from you I have no good thing' Psalms 16: 2.*

*Up to now you have made no requests in my name ; do so, and it will be answered, so your hearts may be full of joy John 16: 24.*

*For the Lord God is sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless Psalms 84: 11.*



## A little man and the Great God

In today's gospel narrative, history repeats and reverses itself. A little man encounters the great God and he is not the same again. Created man and woman in the Garden of Paradise encountered the great God regularly, daily, and yet degenerated, because of their own confused minds into abject separated sinners. Today an abject sinner encounters the great God but once and he, along with his entire family is totally transformed and returned to the simplicity and innocence of creation. All because he is serious and he repents and asks forgiveness. He even goes the complete second mile and restores whatever he may have secured in his life illegally, unlawfully and criminally. All because he sees and recognizes his limitations as compared to the unfathomable loving mercy of God. No sin, however heinous is greater than the mercy and forgiveness of our God!

He is a thinking man, an intelligent man, a man successful by the standards of the world. His coffers are filled, but his heart is empty. His family has all the worldly things it needs, but his soul remains in the state of a pauper. He is desperate and needy. He does indeed sense something very important is missing. The divine dimension in his life has been well hidden, perhaps even buried. But it is today uncovered and he takes every opportunity to reverse the course his short lifespan has assumed. He climbs a tree, a sycamore tree that he might better see and meet His Creator. Did not Adam and Even utilize incorrectly the tree proscribed for them in paradise? Was it not in a tree that the devil was encountered and quickly, even eagerly followed? Now our great God uses the same means to draw another, sincere soul to Himself. The Lord never misses an opportunity to save a lost soul. Was it not for this purpose that He came? "People who are healthy do not need a physician, sick people do. I have come to call sinners, not the self-righteous" Mark 2: 17.

Those who have more than enough of the world's physical goods often become confused it is because of their own innate goodness, their own intelligence and their own acquisitiveness that has accomplished everything for them. Zachaeus was such a man. He epitomized the secular worldling. But after surrounding himself with only the wealth of the world, he found it does not and cannot satisfy the soul of man which is created for nobler goals. St. Augustine, the Western Father puts it succinctly: "O God you created man for yourself and he will not be satisfied until he rests in you." The problems of our age are that we leave out the most important and crucial ingredient in



life; we do not pay attention to our divine endowed nobility. We are created and made to be citizens of heaven. We cannot and never will be satisfied here and now. This is not enough; we need more; the divine dimension; the association with our God that assures us of our destiny: ruling with Him in eternity forever.

It is never too late to recognize the truth of God, which Zachaeus must have certainly studied, "Otherwise you might say to yourselves, 'It is by my own power and strength of my own hand that has obtained for me all this wealth.' Remember than, it is the Lord your God who gives you power to acquire wealth, by fulfilling as he has now done, the covenant which he swore to your fathers" Deuteronomy 8: 17, 18.

Perhaps it was out of awesome and fearful reality that he now seeks after the Lord, "But if you forget the Lord, your God, and follow other gods, serving and worshipping them, I forewarn you this day that you will perish utterly. Like the nations which the Lord destroys before you, so shall you too perish for not heeding the voice of the Lord your God" Deuteronomy 8: 19, 20. We see then, that obviously, his earthly vocation had a great deal to do with his conversion to Christ. It was simply of this world and could only lead to a worldly reward which does not edify the needs of the soul. Now he can become a devout disciple. Now he is eager, even needs what God alone can offer: "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?" Hebrews 13: 5, 6.

Momentarily Adam and Eve forgot the purpose of their creation and so they lost our inheritance for us. They squandered a heavenly gift with such abysmal rapidity that very little of divine life was left for us to inherit. They spent most of it themselves, on themselves and lost it, choosing sin to virtue and death to life, company with God to alienation self-inflicted. Just as in the life of Zachaeus, the Lord comes among us to restore what Adam and Eve lost. We, too have the same opportunity for redemption recognized by the tax-collector. It is life in our blessed Church!

Zachaeus became in life what the so-called pious Jews thought was the most odious, a tax collector for an alien, godless oppressor. So far had he dug himself into the so-called success of this world that scarcely an intelligent Jew would think salvation was possible. He had become a collaborator, as did Adam and Eve, with the powers of darkness. He identified himself solely with the powers of the fleeting world. He turned himself into a real loser. St. John teaches us, "The world passes away and the lust that it contains, but he who does the will of God lives forever" 1 John 2: 17.

# Did You Know That ...

- ...you find things just the way you think they are?
- ...no monuments are erected to pessimists?
- ...remedies to our problems often within us lie?
- ...if you change your thoughts, you can change yourself?
- ...a true friend sees your anxieties but frees your spirit?
- ...people will accept your ideas more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first?
- ...anger is the only thing to put off until tomorrow?
- ...it is very hard to take yourself too seriously when you look at the world from outer space?
- ...while we cannot direct and control the wind, we can adjust the sails?
- ...worry is a gross misuse of the imagination?
- ...our decisions, even the seemingly small, fleeting ones, tell a great deal about us?
- ...only you can be yourself; no one else is qualified for the job?
- ...while personality can open doors, only character keeps them open?
- ...there is no happiness if the things we believe in are different or in contrast to the things we do?
- ...there is nothing noble in thinking we are superior to somebody else?
- ...real nobility is in being superior to your former self?
- ...life is like an ever-shifting kaleidoscope; a slight change, and all patterns are altered?

# What If?

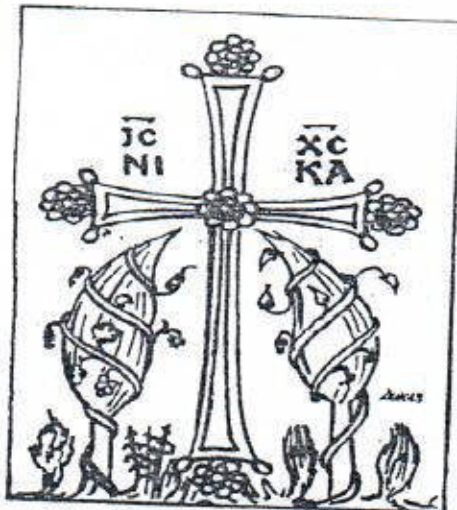
**What would you do if you  
could change the story?**





# **Life before birth**

**He existed before  
the beginning of  
Time**



**He is the first-born Son,  
superior to all creation.  
Everything was created by  
him, everything in heaven  
and on earth, everything  
seen and unseen,  
including all forces and  
powers, and all rulers and  
authorities. All things  
were created by God's  
Son, and everything was  
made for him. God's Son  
was before all else, and  
by him everything is held  
together Colossians 1:  
15 - 17.**

**In the beginning was the  
Word and the Word was  
with God and the Word  
was God John 1: 1.**

## **Future history**

**Centuries before,  
his death was  
written about as if it  
had already  
occurred**



**He was hated and  
rejected; his life was filled  
with sorrow and terrible  
suffering. No one wanted  
to look at him. We  
despised him and said,  
“He is a nobody.”**

**He was painfully abused,  
but did not complain. He  
was condemned to death  
without a fair trial. Who  
could have imagined what  
would happen to him? His  
life was taken away  
because of the sinful  
things my people did. He  
was not dishonest or  
violent, but he was buried  
in the tomb of cruel and  
rich people Isaiah 53: 3,  
7, 9.**



## **Life – the sequel**

**The life of Jesus  
was not meant to be  
a one-off. It is a  
fresh start for  
everyone**



**Jesus said to his  
disciples, “Do not  
worry! Have faith in  
God and in me. There  
are many rooms in my  
Father’s house. I would  
not tell you this unless  
it was true. I go to  
prepare a place for  
each of you. After I do  
this, I will come back  
and take you with me.  
Then we will be  
together” John 14: 1 –  
3.**

**If we believe that  
Jesus died and rose,  
God will bring forth  
with him from the dead  
those also who have  
fallen asleep believing  
in him 1**

**Thessalonians 4: 14.**

## **Live forever**

**Jesus promises to  
change our story**



**Jesus said I am the one who raises the dead to life! Everyone who has faith in me will live, even if they die. And everyone who lives because of faith in me will never really die. Do you believe this?" John 11: 25, 26.**

**I tell you for certain that everyone who hears my voice and has faith in the one who sent me has eternal life and will never be condemned. They have already gone from death to life John 5: 24.**



# **Last Requests**

**A new start  
promised with a last  
gasp**



**Two criminals were led to be put to death with Jesus...One of the criminals hanging there insulted Jesus saying "Aren't you the Messiah? Then save yourself and us!"**

**But the other criminal said, "Don't you fear God? Aren't you getting the same punishment as this man? We got what was coming to us, but he didn't do anything wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied, "Today you will be with me in**

**The man is God  
and God is the  
man**

**The criminal saw it.  
The executioner  
saw it.  
Jesus is the Son of  
God.**



**At noon the whole  
country became dark,  
and the darkness  
lasted for three hours.  
At three o'clock Jesus  
cried out in a loud  
voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama  
sabachthani." which  
means, "My God, my  
God, why have you  
abandoned me?"**

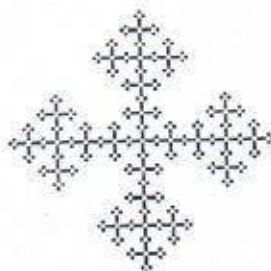
**Then Jesus cried in a  
loud voice and died.**

**When the army officer  
who was standing in  
front of the cross saw  
what happened when  
Jesus died, he said,  
"This man really is the  
Son of God!" Mark 15:  
33, 34; 37, 39.**



## **Absent friends**

**The grave is not the  
final resting place of  
Jesus**



**Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb. Suddenly a strong earthquake struck and the Lord's angel came down from heaven, rolled away the stone and sat on it. The angel looked as bright as lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guard shook from fear and fell down, as though dead. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid! You are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here! God raised him to life just as Jesus said he would." Matthew 28: 1 – 6.**

## **Life after death**

**Jesus was born,  
lived, died, and lived  
again**



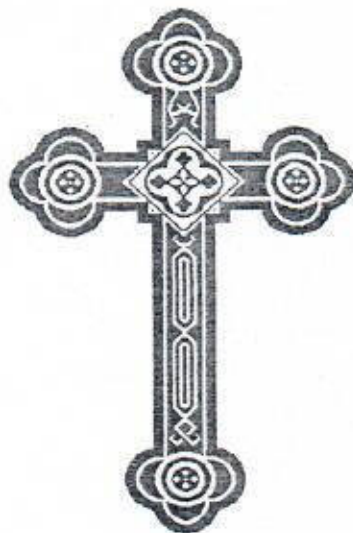
**Thomas said, "I must see the nail scars in Jesus' hands and touch them with my finger. I must put my hand where the spear went into his side. I won't believe unless I do this!"**

**A week later the disciples were together again. This time, Thomas was with them. Jesus came in while the doors were locked and stood in the middle of the group. He greeted his disciples and said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands! Put your hand into my side.**



# **Choosing death**

**He knew all the  
details of his death  
before hand**



**Jesus said: "The Father loves me because I give up my life so that I can take it back again. No one takes it away from me; I give my own life freely" John 10: 17, 18.**

**Jesus said; "We are going to Jerusalem. Everything the prophets wrote about the Son of Man will happen; He will be handed over to those who are not Jews. They will laugh at him, insult him, spit on him, beat him with whips and kill him. But on the third day, he will rise to life again Luke 18: 31 - 33.**

## **The best laid plans of God and men**

**God knew what He  
was doing from the  
very start, and was  
still at work in the  
bitter end**

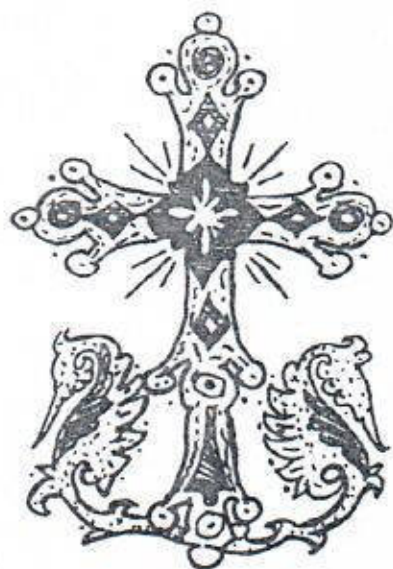


**Listen to what I have  
to say about Jesus of  
Nazareth. God proved  
that he sent Jesus to  
you by having him  
work miracles,  
wonders and signs. All  
of you know this. God  
had already planned  
and decided that Jesus  
would be handed over  
to you. So you took  
and had evil men put  
him to death on a  
cross. But God set him  
free from death and  
raised him to life.  
Death could not hold  
him in its power Acts  
of the Apostles 2: 22 –  
24.**



**A new beginning**

**A new life can start  
today**

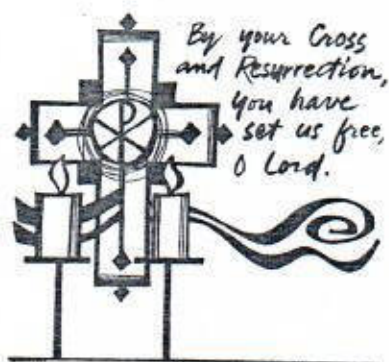


**Jesus said, "If you want to be my follower, you must forget yourself, take up your cross and follow me. If you want to save your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will save it. What do you gain if you own the whole world but lose your soul?" Luke 9: 23 - 25.**

**Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross so we would stop living for sin and start living God's will 1 Peter 2: 24.**

# **How would you change your life?**

**Jesus' life broke all  
the rules and  
provides us with a  
perfect example to  
follow. He shows us  
how to be truly  
human and in his  
death, offers us new  
life.**



**Visit the local  
Orthodox Church  
and ask Jesus to  
change you.**

**By including yourself in  
the life of Jesus Christ,  
you change the story.**

**In Resurrection victory  
follow Christ today!**

**Make up what is missing  
in the death of Christ on  
the Cross...  
your participation in the  
grace of salvation!**

**Make up what is lacking at  
the empty tomb...your  
believing soul!**



## **"THE PILLARS OF THE CHURCH"**

**I**t is human nature to attempt to define "greatness" in any given field. Who was the greatest President, baseball player or actor? These subjective matters will be debated until the end of time!

Even the Church itself has been involved in similar controversy. In the latter years of the 11th century, a dispute arose among the faithful: Who contributed more to the Church? Was it Basil the Great? Was it Gregory the Theologian? Was it John Chrysostom? Ironically, even though they had been dead for centuries, the saintly bishops themselves settled the controversy!

As this issue continued to be debated, Patriarch John of Constantinople was selected to be the mediator on this matter. It was agreed that his decision would settle the disagreement forever. Being a learned and holy man himself, Patriarch John prayed fervently, asking God to give him the wisdom to make the proper choice. Miraculously, the Three Hierarchs appeared to him in a vision! This was their message to John: "As you can see, we are one before God. Each one of us was differently inspired by the Holy Spirit and taught what was necessary for man's salvation. There is no first or second among us. Command those who are arguing over us not to divide themselves. Our goal is to bring all people together!"

Patriarch John did as he was commanded. In 1076 A.D., he established the FEAST OF THE THREE HIERARCHS, giving equal praise to this trio of Church Fathers. Their preaching, teaching and writing remain in our Faith today as a lasting reminder of their commitment to Christ.

*The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin* . . . . . Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey . . . . . Litho in U.S.A.