



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Thirty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

January 27, 2008

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor;
Father John Cmur; Deacon Kenneth E. Ellis and
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

+++ Those of our faithful who would like to have their homes blessed are asked to speak to Father as soon as possible.

+++ Today at 9: 15 AM, we celebrate a Memorial Service requested by Robin Pasquino for the repose of the soul of her beloved grandmother, +Terry Sabol on the anniversary of her repose. We raise prayers heavenward that the merciful Lord continues to comfort Robin and loved ones in their loss and that He grants a blessed repose to the soul of +Terry and creates for her Eternal Memory!

+++ This Wednesday we have the simple feast of the Three Hierarchs. In anticipation of the holyday, on Tuesday evening, we will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise. Confessions are heard before and after the celebration.

+++ This week there is another opportunity for sanctification of our soul. On Saturday we have one of the twelve Major Feasts of the Church, that of the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple. In anticipation, we will celebrate the Divine Liturgy Friday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in singing God's praises. Confessions are heard prior to and after the celebration.

+++ 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-end: Tithe Offering, \$375.00; Candles, \$17.00; Energy, \$55.00; Pennies From Heaven, \$2.00; Christian Fellowship, \$9.00; Parish Dues, \$125.00; Holyday, \$22.00; Diocesan Dues, \$50.00; Food Coupons, \$260.00; Kitchen, \$316.00; Initial Offering, \$20.00; Bulletin \$25.00; Utilities, \$121.00, for a total of \$1397.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 38 adults and 14 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: Kyle Pasquino Bob Gorbich, Pani Lucas, Paul Szmajda, Father Lucas, and Pani Bulezta.

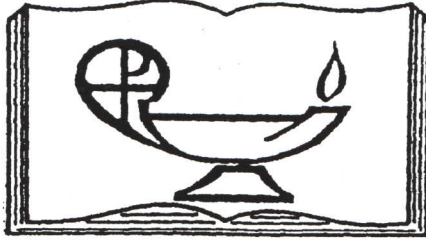
+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of **\$1253.00** from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish!

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals **\$92, 405. 00**. 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 check the Sign-Up-Sheet for the weekly Christian Fellowship for the coming weeks. Simple foods without need for preparation are the best. Marilyn Korba coordinates this vital apostolate. Please assist her in making it a success by bringing your donation early so that all are present at the worship of our God.

+++ Please be certain to see **Helen Karpiak** or 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 \$4100.00 on this project to date!

LORD



TEACH
US

Fellowship Of Believers

The body is one and has many members, but all the members, many though they are, are one body, and so it is with Christ. It was in one Spirit that all of us, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, were baptized into one body. All of us have been given to drink of the one Spirit. Now that body is not one member, it is many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body,' would it then no longer belong to the body? If the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body,' would it then no longer belong to the body? If the body were all eye, what would happen to our hearing? If it were all ear, what would happen to our smelling? As it is, God has set each member of the body in the place he wanted it to be! If all the members were alike, where would the body be? There are, indeed, many different members, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need you,' anymore than the head can say to the feet, 'I do not need you.' Even those members which seem less important are in fact indispensable. We honor the members we consider less honorable by clothing them with greater care, thus bestowing on the less presentable a propriety which the more presentable already have. God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to the lowly members, that there may be no dissention in the body, but that all the members may be concerned for one another. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all members share its joy You, then are the body of Christ. Everyone of you is a member of it. Furthermore, God has set up in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracle workers, healers, assistants, administrators and those who speak in tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do not all work miracles or have the gift of healing? Do all speak in tongues, all have the gift of interpretation of tongues? Set your hearts on the greater gifts 1 Corinthians 12: 12 - 31.

This means that you are strangers and aliens no longer. No, you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God. You form a building which rises on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. Through him the whole structure is fitted together and takes shape as a holy temple in the Lord; in him you are being built into this temple, to become a dwelling place for God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2: 19 - 22.

The Pastor or Shepherd

The shepherd is one who is given the responsibility of caring for a flock of sheep. This word is interchangeable in Scripture with the present day descriptive word, *Pastor*. It is the responsibility of the pastor that the sheep entrusted to his care not only feed in good pasture, but also that they not to be torn by wild beasts, or hurt in any way. “We your servants, like our ancestors, are shepherds” Genesis 47: 3; “The shepherds said to one another: ‘Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this event which the Lord has made known to us...once they saw, they understood what had been told them concerning this child’” Luke 2: 15, 16.

This very same word is spoken of and used to describe God our heavenly Father Who performs the office of a faithful and good shepherd to His people by leading, feeding, preserving and healing them. Thus David of old had no difficulty seeing in God the qualities of a shepherd when he writes, “The Lord is my shepherd...” Psalms 23: 1. It is for this very reason we see these beloved words associated with Christ the Saviour Who not only lived them, but exhibited the depth of their meaning when He willingly laid down His life for His sheep and Who takes charge, care and oversight of them to dispense and provide all things necessary for their temporal and eternal welfare. “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hireling who is no shepherd, no owner of the sheep, catches sight of the wolf coming and runs away, leaving the sheep to be snatched and scattered by the wolf” John 10: 11, 12; “At one time you were straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd, the guardian of your souls” 1 Peter 2: 15.

It also is used in the life of the Body of Christ, the Church, to describe those whom Christ left to continue His work, to the bishops, priests, deacons, to the ministers of the gospel who have the primary responsibility for leading, for feeding and nourishing their people not only with knowledge, but with the sacramental Mysteries that they come to understand their dignity in the sight of God as baptized persons, destined to reign with God in heaven. “I will appoint over you shepherds after my own heart, who will shepherd you wisely and prudently” Jeremiah 3: 15; “It is he who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ, until we become one in faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, and form that perfect man who is Christ come to full stature” Ephesians 4: 11 – 13.

The faithful are called upon to listen, to be attentive, to be obedient to their shepherds and pastors because they impart the salutary message of Christ. It is not without serious reason the Lord insists, “Obey your leaders, and submit to them, for they keep watch over you as men who must

render an account. So act that they may fulfill their task with joy, not with sorrow, for that would be harmful to you” Hebrews 13: 17.

Scripture speaks of what type pastors and shepherds must not be when it cries out, “Yes the shepherds were stupid as cattle; the Lord they sought not; therefore they have no success, and all their flocks are scattered” Jeremiah 10: 21; “Many shepherds have ravaged my vineyard, have broken my heritage underfoot; the portion that delighted me they have turned into a desert waste; they have made it a mournful waste, desolate it lies before me” Jeremiah 12: 10, 11.”Woe to you shepherds who mislead and scatter the flock of my pasture, says the Lord... You have scattered my sheep and driven them away. You have not cared for them, but I will take care to punish your evil deeds” Jeremiah 23: 1.

Consequently, those who desire salvation, those who seek after the truth of Christ eagerly respond to the teaching of the Lord “We have piped to you a tune, but you did not dance” Matthew 11: 17; “You are my friends if you do what I command you” John 15: 14, because “Whoever is of God, hears every word God speaks. The reason you do not hear God is because you are not of God” John 8: 47. No one wants to be guilty of God’s judgment because of incorrect and misleading personal interpretation, “You have made a fine art of setting aside God’s commandments in the interest of keeping your own traditions” Mark 7: 9. Any attempt to demean and discredit the serious work of shepherds and pastors is exposed and denounced by the Saviour: “You hypocrites! How accurately did Isaiah prophesy about you when he said: ‘These people pay me lip service but their hearts are far from me. They do me empty reverence, making dogmas of human precepts’” Matthew 15: 7 - 9.

Authentic shepherds and pastors have no gospel of their own to proclaim; they merely echo the words of Christ because only He alone can save and redeem us. Shepherds ought be honored and respected because they are willing to invest their lives at the express invitation of the Lord, that the message of Christ is lived and honored in their flock. “This is what we proclaim to you; what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our own eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched; we speak of the Word of Life. This Life became visible; we have seen and bear witness to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life that was present to the Father and became visible to us. What we have heard and seen we proclaim in turn to you so that you may share life with us. This fellowship of ours is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. Indeed, our purpose is in writing this to you is that our joy may be complete. Here then, is the message we have heard from him and announce to you: that God is light; in Him there is no darkness” 1 John 1: 1 – 5.

The Lion



In Scripture, in God's revelation to us, the figure of the lion is understood as the most courageous and generous of all wild beasts, an emblem of upright strength and honorable valor. It can represent all that is praiseworthy and worthwhile. "Do you hunt the prey for the lioness or appease the hunger of her cubs..." Job 38: 39? "The wicked man flees although no one pursues him; but the just man, like a lion, feels sure of himself" Proverbs 28: 1. To this animal, above all others in Scripture is compared an entire lot of praiseworthy insights and meanings.

Above all else, the lion is compared to Jesus Christ our Saviour, Who is the great, mighty, invincible lion of the tribe of Judah, Who conquers and leads captive His own and His people's enemies. Not only is he king of the beasts in the natural world, but he symbolizes the King of all creation. His awesome character reminds us of the unusual, unique and astounding personality of the Son of God. "One of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has won the right by his victory to open the scroll with seven seals" Revelation 5: 5.

The lion is also sign and symbol of all that is upright and praiseworthy about the tribe of Judah and its kings, who were valiant, courageous and terrible to their enemies and made prey of them. "Judah, like a lion's whelp, you have grown up on prey, my son. He crouches like a lion recumbent, the king of beasts; who would dare rouse him" Genesis 49: 9?

Ironically, the lion also relates to an unlikely source, in an unusual direction, to the devil, who like a fierce and hungry lion, seeks all opportunities and advantages to ensnare and destroy gullible mankind "Stay sober and alert. Your opponent the devil is prowling like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" 1 Peter 5: 8.

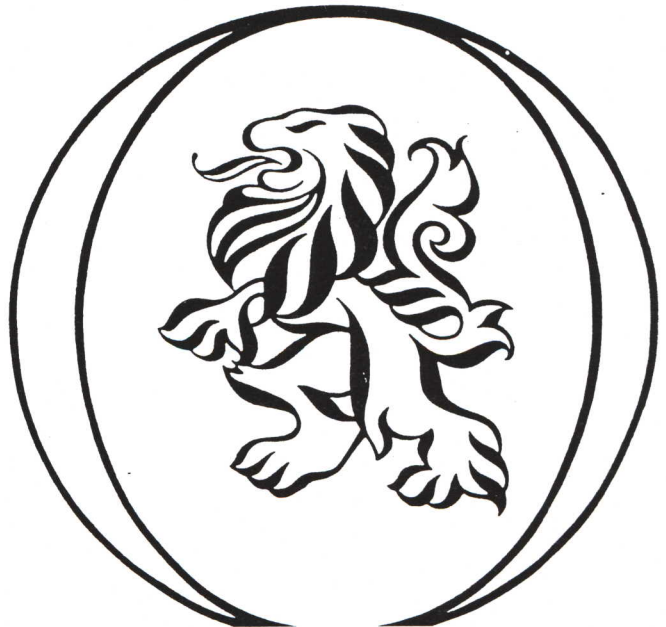
Worldly men of the worst sort, tyrants and oppressors have been associated with the negative characteristics and qualities of this infamous beast. “But the Lord stood by my side and gave me strength, so that through me the preaching task might be completed and all the nations might hear the gospel. That is how I was saved from the lion’s jaws. The Lord will continue to rescue me from all attempts to do me harm and will bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom” 2 Timothy 17, 18.

In addition this symbolism represents for us the worst of all worldly evils and enemies of salvation. “You shall tread upon the asp and the viper; you shall trample down the lion and the dragon” Psalms 91: 13. It also describes the enemies of faith commitment in the life of the Body of Christ, our Church, who conjure up pretended difficulties and hindrances to divert bishops, priests, deacons and all those dedicated to the message of the gospel from fulfilling their heavenly duty. “The eyes of the Lord safeguard knowledge, but he defeats the projects of the faithless. The lazy man says, ‘A lion is outside; in the streets; I might be slain’ Proverbs 22: 12, 13.

The lion is also depicted as the symbolism by which the Lord requites the evil done in the world. He sends “a man of God from Judah to Bethel... 1 Kings 13: 1, to witness for heaven’s integrity. Although he fulfills his limited vocation, he nevertheless fails to complete it wholly because he neglects the instructions of the Lord. Thus he meets his just reward, “ But a lion met him on the road and killed him. His corpse lay sprawled on the road...and so did the lion.” 1 Kings 13: 24. The prophet goes on to explain with insight, “It is the man of God, who rebelled against the command of the Lord. He has delivered him to a lion which mangled and killed him, as the Lord predicted to him” 1 Kings 13: 26.

Precisely like man, the greatest of all God’s created gifts, the lion also does both good and bad; and is a symbol of man’s goodness and his evil inclinations. Let us choose to impute to ourselves, however, and aspire after all the noble and positive qualities Scripture speaks of, that, like the Lord we may reign forever in paradise, our rightful destiny.

Let us make for ourselves the lion as symbol of St. John the Baptist in St. Mark’s gospel spreading through his attention-getting roar “...to prepare the way...Make ready the way of the Lord, clear him a straight path” Mark 1: 2, 3.



Not By Bread Alone

Job said, "I have treasured the word of God's mouth more than my daily bread" Job 23: 12.

A recent convert to the Orthodox Church says that as a child she rarely went to church, but she enjoyed reading the Bible. As she read, she experienced a feeling of warmth enveloping her, even though she did not understand much of what she was reading. But somehow, she readily understood this was no ordinary book.

One verse of scriptures that says we "shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" Matthew 4: 4, often perplexed her. *If I stop eating food, I will die*, I thought. In childlike literalness, she misinterpreted these words. She thought that Jesus was saying to forget about eating physical food for bodily nourishment and to live only by God's word. She doubted she could ever please God if she had to live by such a standard.

Later, as a young woman she wanted to know more and more about the Bible she enjoyed reading. She began to realize it is the product of the Body of Christ, His blessed Church, left in a rich legacy to enliven our hearts and guide our lives within that Body. When she realized the Bible is our book, a book for those in the Church, she began inquiring about Orthodoxy. After finally entering the Church, her understanding began to grow. She gained insight into what the passage from St. Matthew's gospel meant. She continued to feed herself with God's word and her spirit radiated the new life of God's word within her. She related it to daily living, she saw its importance in the worship of the Church at the Divine Liturgy and various other services, that our entire worship was a synopsis of the God's revelation to us in Scripture. How enthralled she became when she saw herself translating its values and lifestyle into her very own life.

The bible offers us spiritual food not available anywhere else except where it is respected and lived because it is understood through the exposition and teaching of the Church of Christ. It is an assistive challenge among Orthodox Christians who value its divine inspiration. Today this young lady no longer struggles through life attempting to live by physical nourishment alone. How delighted she was in her soul when she learned to live fully by feeding on the word of God which also teaches her to nourish her soul on the Body and Blood of the Saviour.

Now she thanks God for His living word, made the flesh and blood of Christ by the Holy Spirit when believers are gathered together for heavenly worship. Now she experiences the glory of heaven itself because she understands the authentic meaning of God's revelation to us. She is grateful for God speaking to us in man's understandable language and thereby elevating man to divine life. It is only in reading, studying and reflectively living His commands that her diet now necessarily includes not only food for the flesh, but nourishment for the immortal soul!



*Wisdom Of
The*



*Byzantine
Fathers*

Imagine a carpenter with the crudest of tools. It takes him many days to make a simple table, and its quality is so low that the price he obtains for it is poor. He has a choice: either he can spend all the money he earns on food and drink or he can set some funds aside, even if it means going hungry, in order to buy better tools. If he does the latter, he then will soon be making good tables much more quickly, and so his earnings will quickly rise. This choice is analogous to a spiritual choice that each of us must make. Either we can spend for our own pleasure all the wealth we possess or we can set aside part of our wealth to give to others. If we do the latter, then we may sacrifice a few immediate earthly pleasures; but the joy we earn for ourselves in heaven far, far surpasses the pleasure we lost on earth. Every act of charity on earth is an investment in heaven St. John Chrysostom.

Never seek consolation that lies outside the heart. Raise yourself above all consolation that the senses provide, so that you may be accounted worthy to receive that consolation which is within, beyond the senses, having its source in Christ alone St. Isaac the Syrian.

Did You Know That ...

- ...our example should take people as far as they can go, not as far as you would have them go?
- ...we should always go beyond the place people expected us to end up?
- ...when we help others get ahead, we stand taller with someone else on our shoulders?
- ...nothing is easy to the unwilling?
- ...if all we are remembered for is our professional life, we have done a bad job with the rest of our life?
- ...flexible people never get bent out of shape?
- ...success is not permanent and failure is not fatal?
- ...it is really hard and amazing to give up on being Christ-like and beginning simply to be your old self?
- ...a true friend recognizes your disabilities, but emphasizes your possibilities?
- ...monuments are not erected to pessimists?
- ...evil people are not remembered with holy days?
- ...when we change our way of thinking, we can change the world?
- ...people will accept your ideas more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first?
- ...millions long for immortality who do not know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday morning?
- ...education is when you read the fine print; experience is what you get if you don't?
- ...truce is better than friction?
- ...some think it's holding on that makes one strong, but sometimes it's letting go?

FULFILLING THE LAW OF THE LORD

Joseph and Mary were devout Jews, so when the days of purification - 40 days after childbirth had passed - Jesus was brought by His parents to the temple to be blessed, according to Jewish tradition. The Book of Leviticus prescribes that a sacrifice was also required: a lamb or, if the family was poor, two turtledoves or two young pigeons could be offered.

In the Gospel according to St. Luke, we read the account of this event, which forms the basis for our celebration of the FEAST OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD. St. Luke reports that, indeed, Joseph and Mary fulfilled the Law with the sacrifice of lesser expense, for they were not a wealthy couple. When we look more carefully at this story, however, we can draw another conclusion of greater theological significance: it was not necessary to sacrifice a lamb, for Christ was truly the LAMB OF GOD. If we study the icon of this Feast, we see the Theotokos extending her arms and giving her Child to Simeon. The high priest, who had been promised by God that he would not taste death until seeing the coming of the Messiah, receives the Infant over the sacrificial altar, giving further symbolic meaning to this "meeting." The altar can be viewed as the throne of God. The Temple assumes it's eternal dimension, no longer merely a structure which one day will be destroyed, but rather our heavenly "Temple".

Christ would grow up to offer Himself upon the Cross, making the ultimate sacrifice of His very life for the sake of our salvation. Centuries before, Isaiah had foretold that the Messiah would be ". . . like a sheep led to slaughter. Like a spotless lamb silent before its shearer. He would not speak a single word." Yes, Jesus was the spotless victim, pure and innocent as a lamb.