

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Third Sunday of the Great Fast

March 7, 2010

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; 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

+++ Please join us Friday evening at 7: 30 PM for the Presanctified Liturgy. Confessions are heard prior to and after the celebration.

+++ This Saturday is the Fourth All Souls' Day. The Divine Liturgy and Memorial Service are celebrated at 9:00 AM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise of our God.

+++ We remind our faithful that at the last Diocesan Council this past summer, the Diocesan Dues were raised, due to inflation and need, from the past \$50.00 per adult individual, eighteen years and older, to \$60.00 per year. Our envelope offering system still has the old amount on it, so please disregard that figure and make your offering according to the new mandated amount. If this offering was made in the old amount, please correct it by submitting the additional amount with a notation on the envelope because the parish must send the entire amount to the diocesan chancery.

+++ The offering for flowers to beatify our parish church for Palm Sunday, all of Passion Week and for the glorious Resurrection will be taken next Sunday. Please use appropriate envelope and be generous in your offering.

+++ 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-end: Tithe Offering, ~~\$500.00~~; Candles, ~~\$27.00~~; Food Coupons, ~~\$220.00~~; Special Gifts, ~~\$350.00~~; Kitchen, ~~\$54.00~~; Great Fast Self Denial, ~~\$45.00~~, for a total of ~~\$1196.00~~. 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 41 adults and 15 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, +Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, Kent Pasquino, Kyle Pasquino, Robert Gorbich, 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 ~~\$1567.00~~ 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 ~~\$162,715.00~~. 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.

+++ Be certain your child attends the spiritual formation classes held each Sunday following the Divine Liturgy. We make a serious attempt to share the love of our Lord with all.

+++ 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 \$5050.00 on this project to date!

+++ We gratefully thank the generous souls who secured orders, came to prepare and make the pirohi and distributed the orders this past week. We continue to pray the good Lord blesses our devoted faithful and their loved ones for their devotion to the parish for **Many & Blessed Years!**

+++ We acknowledge the yeomen service rendered to the parish by Robert Gorbich and Miguel Garcia in assembling the newly bought storage cabinets and work tables in our parish hall kitchen, along with painting and assisting at the Pirohi Sale as well. May the bountiful Lord continue to infuse his grace in the lives of these devoted souls and their loved ones for **Many & Blessed Years!**

+++ Catalogues and order blanks are available for Spring Candy orders for the coming feast of the Resurrection. Please secure orders from friends and relatives to assist our parish. **Deadline is next Sunday!**

+++ We remind our faithful 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!

WINNERS!

Of Past Ten Week Club

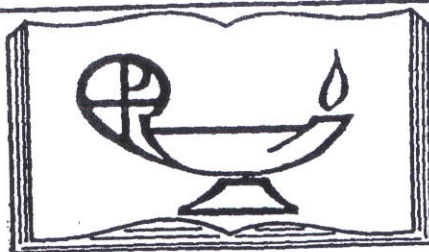
**Diane Bushe
Alice Iacono
Paul Michael
Sue Thompson
Pani Lucas
Nina Harrison
Michele O'Hara
Kyra Choti
Robin Pasquino
Stella Wanca**

We offer our sincere thanks to all who participate in and support this endeavor for the benefit of our parish, along with hearty congratulations to all the winners. We will now begin another Ten Week Club as commitments are received. We do need help from ALL our faithful. We ask everyone to help make it a success not only by personally participating, but taking a few extra tickets for sale to friends, relatives and neighbors for the good of the parish. We thank Marilyn for moderating this fund-raiser.

**THE NEXT 10 WEEK RAFFLE WILL BE STARTING IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
ANYONE WISHING TO KEEP THEIR SAME #, OR IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED IN
GETTING IN ON THE ACTION, PLEASE LET ME KNOW ASAP.**

THANK YOU. MARILYN KORBA, 732 845-4715

LORD



TEACH
US

Perfection

Happiness comes to those who are fair to others and are always just and good Psalms 106: 3.

For the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth, looking for people whose hearts are perfect toward him; so that he can show his great power in helping them 2 Chronicles 16: 9.

But I? Am I righteous? My own mouth says no. Even if I were perfect, God would prove me wicked. And even if I were utterly innocent, I dare not think of it. I despise what I am Job 9: 20, 21.

O God, you have declared me perfect in your eyes; you have always cared for me in my distress, now hear me as I call again Psalms 4: 1.

He is just and fair and knows right from wrong. The good man, what a different story! For the good man, the blameless, the upright, the man of peace, he has a wonderful future ahead of him. For him there is a happy ending Psalms 37: 31.

I will try to walk a blameless path, but how I need your help, especially in my own home, where I long to act as I should Psalms 101: 2.

Happy are all those who perfectly follow all the laws of God. Happy are all who search for God and always do his will, rejecting compromises with evil and walking only in his paths. Then I will not be disgraced, for I will have a clean record Psalms 119: 1.

Nothing is perfect except your word Psalms 19: 7.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

The lovers of Christ lift out their hands to the great gift of suffering.
For how could they seek to be warmed and clothed
and delicately fed,
to wallow in praise and to drink deep draughts
of an undeserved affection,
have castle for home and a silken couch for bed,
when He the worthy went forth, wounded and hated,
and grudged of even a place to lay His head?



This is the badge of the friends of the Man of Sorrows:
the mark of the cross, faint replica of His,
become ubiquitous now; it spreads like a wild blossom
on the mountains of time and in each of the crevices.
Oh, seek that land where it grows in a rich abundance
with its thorny stem and its scent like bitter wine,
for wherever Christ walks He casts its seed
and He scatters its purple petals.
It is the flower of His marked elect, and the fruit
it bears is divine.

Choose it, my heart. It is a beautiful sign.

That's the Spirit

I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in
you.... For God has not given us a spirit of fear,
but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:6

When we avoid dealing
with our mistakes and
pretend they don't exist,
they usually express
themselves in ways that
we would not anticipate:
anger at someone else,
frustration at something
else, lack of control.



*Lord, help me control
my tongue; help me be
careful about what I
say. Take away my
desire to do evil or to join
others in doing wrong.*

PSALM 141:3-4

Lip Service

Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and curses. My brethren, this ought not be so
James 3: 10.

A father prayerfully was asking the blessing at the breakfast table. After he was done, his little daughter asked him: "Daddy, do you really think the Lord hears our prayers?" With certain confidence in his voice, the father answered, "Sure God hears our prayers and thanksgiving. Satisfied with her father's answer, the little girl began eating her breakfast.

Soon enough, the father found that the eggs were not done right and started complaining about the food. When the mother served the coffee, it was rather weak and not very hot. "What's wrong this morning? You know I like my eggs well done and my coffee good and hot," complained the father.

As the little girl listened intently to her father's critical remarks, she finally asked, "Daddy, do you think the Lord hears what you are saying about the blessed food?"

The father thought about the question a little while and finally answered, "Yes, I suppose He does."

"What do you suppose the Lord is going to believe?" asked the innocent little girl. "Is He going to accept the blessing on our food for which you asked and because you prayed for it, or is He going to believe your complaints about the blessed food?"

Like this father, sometimes, we need to take inventory of our attitudes and ask ourselves, "Can God really believe everything we say?" Jesus worked with people of whom He said, "These people draw near to me with their mouths and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" Matthew 15: 8. St. James makes a similar observation and observes for his listeners, "Does a spring gush forth fresh water and foul from the same source? A fig tree, brothers cannot produce olives or a grapevine figs; no more can a brackish source yield freshwater" James 3: 11, 12.

Believers must be careful of the words they employ to express themselves. We must be careful our language does not contradict our deeds or our prayers. Our God does know what to believe, but we must keep in mind our deeds speak so loudly that our words often cannot be heard.

**"WHAT
IS A
SIN
NOWADAYS?"**

ENVY
PRIDE
GREED
GLUTTONY
ANGER
LUST
SLOTH

While it is true people do not go to confession as often as they should and while they do not go around deliberately trying to offend God or hurt people, many are confused in today's world about sin. It so abounds that it has become acceptable and seemingly standard behavior.

Sin has become a slippery concept for many. It is hard to recognize in ourselves. Perhaps, for that reason, we can come around to the back door by trying to understand sin from the

experience of being sinned against. When we stop and thoroughly analyze our feelings after we have been the victim of someone else's sin then we begin to grasp the real power of sin to upset or destroy our relationship with God or with one another.

For example, some one you confide in gets upset with you. Knowing you pretty well, he or she can use that knowledge to put you down. "Oh I'm tired of your goody-two-shoes attitude, get with the real world and loosen up. Stop being such a wimp!" You would be offended wouldn't you? You would feel hurt, betrayed, mistrustful of confiding anything more to that person; perhaps you would even avoid their company and begin to harbor thoughts of revenge or retaliation. You see what sin does to you and how it begins to snowball? How it begins to eat away at you like a worm in an apple? And that's just a small matter of harsh words. Think of the harm serious evil, such as child abuse, drug abuse, neglect to worship God, unfaithfulness to a spouse, or warfare, unleashes on God's children and creation. So we can see, our actions or our failure to act, may sometimes be excusable and may even be free of subjective guilt, but the consequences of our actions take on a life of their own and extend and perpetuate evil.

This look at sin from the back door returns us to the front door to show

some criteria that can help identify sin or patterns of sin we commit against others. First of all, there are the Ten Commandments. Have you obeyed them? Do you think you are a sole exception to what they expect of all of us? Second, there are the concerns Jesus expressed in the gospels, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Have you gladly undertaken and fulfilled them? Third, there are the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. Have you lived them? And there are the traditional seven capital sins. Have you avoided them?

The capital sins: Pride, the desire for total control; Envy, the refusal to accept differences and the malicious desire to possess what another person possesses; Anger, the refusal to harness violence; Greed, the pursuit of profit at the expense of others; Gluttony, pleasure beyond satiation; Lust, the exploiting of the differences between the sexes or a wrong attitude towards the body's sexuality which lead to perilous idolatrous behavior; Sloth, giving in to spiritual apathy due to the difficulties of living the faith in today's world. There is no lack of sin in today's world. We are surrounded, even bombarded by it. The Good News is that the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation gives us the opportunity to fight fire with fire, the fire of God's all-powerful love and supernatural forgiveness enabling the repentant soul to quench the roaring fire of sin.

Refusing Help

The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all
1 Corinthians 12: 7.

In 1869, John Roebling dreamed of building a massive bridge over the East River from Brooklyn to Manhattan. Unfortunately, at the outset of the project, his foot was crushed in an accident. In the recovery process, Roebling insisted he knew best and took charge of his own medical care. After refusing proffered medical help, he began to show signs of tetanus. Before long, Roebling's jaw had locked into a permanent smile. Seizures and dementia soon plagued him until his death but a few weeks later. His self-sufficiency was not enough to overcome the difficulties which faced him

The revelation of our heavenly Father to us in Scripture records a story about an independent person who balked at the help offered him. Naaman, a great warrior of the Syrian kingdom, suffered grievously from leprosy. Having heard about his reputation in healing, he sought out the prophet Elisha but to his own detriment, had preconceived notions about how the healing should take place. Since he was a general with a great, even daunting reputation, he apparently thought some sort of grandiose healing service befitting his imagined dignity in the world should occur. When Elisha perfunctorily replied, sending his messenger to tell Naaman to simply dip in the Jordan River seven times, he was greatly enraged and found the idea preposterous. But Naaman's own servants offered him wise advice: "If the prophet told you to do something great, would you not have done it" 2 Kings 5: 13? After thinking about it for a moment, Naaman followed the prophet's simple instructions and his leprosy was removed and cured.

Our God gives us gifts to aid and assist each other. "To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" 1 Corinthians 12: 7. But self-sufficiency shuts the door on much-needed help. Let us be open to the helping hand He provides and let us allow ourselves to be eager instruments in expressing God's compassion to others.. In salvation history our God expresses his concern many times through the medium of other persons.

The Lord extends his gracious hand to those in desperate need. He certainly lifts them up. He helps them stand through caring believers and their loving concerned and expressed deeds.

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

Save Your people, O Lord, and bless Your inheritance; grant victory to Your Church over her enemies, and protect Your people with Your Cross
Troparion, Third Sunday of the Great Fast.

No longer does the flaming sword guard the gates of Eden, for on them one finds the most glorious seal, the tree of the Cross. By it, the sorrow of death and the victory of the Abyss have been conquered, for You, O my Saviour, stood up and called out to those in the Abyss: "Enter again into paradise"
Kontakion, Third Sunday of the Great Fast.

We bow to Your Cross, O Lord, and we praise Your holy Resurrection Hymn
instead of "Holy God", Third Sunday of the Great Fast.

Rejoice, O live-giving Cross of the Lord, Paradise of the Church and new Tree of life, who bring us the joy of unending glory. Through you, the hosts of demons are driven back; in you, the angels in heaven rejoice; and for you, the assemblies of believers are now keeping the feast. O invincible weapon and impenetrable stronghold, pride of bishops and scepter of kings, grant that we may now contemplate the Passion of Christ, and His holy Resurrection Vesper Hymn, Third Sunday of the Great Fast.

Seeing You, the Creator of the universe, hanging naked on the Cross, all creation was shaken with fear; the sun hid its rays and the rocks split asunder; the earth trembled and the veil of the temple was torn in two; the dead arose from their tombs, and the powers on high were struck with awe and said: O, what wonder! Behold, the Judge undergoes judgment and freely endures His passion for the salvation and restoration of the world Vesper Hymn, Third Sunday of the Great Fast.

Come, let us all sing a new song to celebrate the defeat of hell; for coming from the tomb, Christ has broken the power of death and saved the world. Come, let us all draw in faith, not from the fountain of corruption, but from the source of light; let us venerate the Cross of Christ in Whom we are glorified. As we venerate the Cross, which Moses formerly prefigured with his hands, we put the spiritual Amalek to flight. O Christ, our Master, and we ourselves are saved. Matins Hymn, Third Sunday of the Great Fast.

OUR TRUE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

At one time or another, everyone finds themselves in situations of crisis and concern. It may be illness, or family issues or even financial difficulties that push us to the brink of despair. In troubled times like these, we are often overwhelmed by our problems - we may feel like we just can't handle our personal burdens alone, no matter how we try. It is then that we not only need God's divine assistance, but the support and encouragement of our family and friends as well.

It is truly amazing how a kind word can lift our spirits and give us hope. The difference in giving up and going ahead is often caused by simply knowing that someone is in our "corner." Yes, genuine Christian compassion can contribute greatly to assisting someone in bearing their crosses in life.

This morning, we find ourselves at the halfway point of the Great Fast. Perhaps some have already weakened in their Lenten journey and have succumbed to the temptation to abandon their spiritual quest for reconciliation with Christ. Others may be wavering, needing something to keep them on the proper path of prayer and fasting as the end of this annual "pilgrimage to Pascha" is in sight. That "something" is the CROSS. It is placed before us today to uplift and encourage us. It reminds us that our own struggles pale in comparison to what the Lord was forced to endure. It inspires us to continue to "fight the good fight" and to never lose sight of the importance of what happened upon the Cross. As we sing at Matins on this 3rd Sunday of the Great Fast, **"Your Cross, O Lord, is holy, and it brings healing to those who are in sickness through their sins."**

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