



Foot-washing was a common expression of hospitality in the ancient Middle East. Since this was usually done by servants or slaves, one can only imagine the Apostles shock at seeing their Master perform this service. Our Lord did this humble act to show that He Himself is a Servant of God and mankind. Let us follow His lead.

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Second Sunday of the Great Fast

March 11, 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

Friday evening the Presanctified Gifts Liturgy; will be celebrated at 7 30 PM. Please join us in prayer and praise. Conversion is the theme of homilies Father is preaching during this sacred season. Enrich yourself spiritually during this holy season by being present with us.

+++ We express our sincere gratitude to Mrs. Nina Harrison and daughters for donating the jeweled seven day lampada which was placed beside the Icon of the Birthgiver of God touched to the myrrh-streaming icon in

Taylor, PA on the sacramental table in our church. It is offered our parish in thanksgiving for many blessings received from the Lord. May our gracious Lord continue to bless them for Many & Blessed Years!.

+++ This Saturday at 9:00 AM we will celebrate the second All Souls' Day with a Divine Liturgy and Memorial service at 9:00 AM. All are invited to join us in remembering our departed souls in prayer.

+++ We ask those who have not yet done so, to please submit their parish and diocesan dues as soon as possible.

+++ Today we have a Memorial Service on the first anniversary of repose for +Metropolitan Nicholas at 9:15 AM. In addition we will remember +Metropolitan Orestes, the first bishop of the diocese whose 35th anniversary occurred two weeks ago. Blessed Repose and 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, \$225.00; Candles, \$5.00; Food Coupons, \$130.00; Parish Dues, \$25.00; Great Fast Sacrifice, \$52.00; Kitchen, \$249.00; Web Site, \$5.00, for a total of \$586.00. 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, Robert Gorbich, 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 **\$1653.00** 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 **\$10,000.00**. 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 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 **\$22,000.00** 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.**

LORD



TEACH
US

Promises To The Penitent

The Lord is close to those whose hearts are breaking; he rescues those who are humbly sorry for their sins Psalms 34: 18.

It is a broken spirit you want, remorse and penitence. A broken heart and a contrite heart, O God, you will not ignore Psalms 51: 17.

But fill the followers of God with joy. Let those who love your salvation exclaim, "What a wonderful God he is!" Psalms 70: 4.

Satisfy us in our earliest youth with your loving kindness, giving us constant joy to the end of our lives. Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery! Replace the evil years with good Psalms 90: 14, 15.

He is close to all who call on him sincerely, He fulfills the desires of those who revere and trust him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them Psalms 145: 18.

He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds Psalms 147: 3.

But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins and begins to obey my laws and do what is just and right, he shall surely live and not die. All his past sins will be forgotten and he shall live because of his goodness. Do you think I like to see the wicked die? asks the Lord. Of course not! I only want him to turn from his wicked ways and live Ezekiel 18: 21 - 23..

Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted Matthew 5: 4.

My Lord, grant to me that with your peace I may greet all today brings to me.

Grant me grace to surrender myself completely to your holy will.

In every hour of this day instruct and guide me in all things.

Whatever tidings I may receive during this day, teach me to accept tranquilly in the firm belief that your holy will governs everything.

Govern my thoughts and feelings in all that I do and say.

When unforeseen things occur, let me not forget that all can be used for your glory.

Teach me to behave sincerely and reasonably toward everyone that I may bring confusion or sorrow to no one.

Bestow on me, Lord, strength to endure the fatigue of the day and to bear my part in its many events.

Guide my will and teach me to pray, to believe, to hope, to suffer, to forgive and to love above all else.

Pain and its Lessons

St. Paul teaches us and insists, "We glory in tribulations" Romans 5: 3. He continues by saying that whatever afflicts the faithful believer, teaches us, enhances our faith commitment. "We know that affliction makes for endurance, and endurance for tested virtue, and tested virtue for hope. And this hope will not leave us disappointed because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" Romans 5: 3 – 6.

So, in life we quickly learn that pain has its lessons, valuable lessons to impart each participant in its expensive tutoring process. Thus like the youths in the Old Testament furnace, to be able to say "Thank You dear Lord," in the midst of flaming pains, to fill our minds with the thoughts of mountains and streams, winter and summer, birds of the air and great sporting whales and to be able to visualize them praising God with joy, while all the time the pains of hell are gnawing at our vitals, this indeed is the true test of our religious profession of faith and worth many, many countless and profound sermons.

As we slowly progress towards eternity, it is inevitable that we learn all who journey, sooner or later, must pass within the gates of Gethsemane, must kneel there alone in darkness and battle with much fierce despair. We must ourselves here and now pray that God pity those who cannot say "Not my will but yours be done," who have only learned to repeat, "Let this cup pass because they fail to grasp the meaning of Gethsemane in their life.

Just as it focused and made plain the purpose of his vocation among us for Christ, Gethsemane can also show us how much more we can contribute not only to our own salvation, but to that of other souls as well. We can positively approach the suffering in our lives, be it physical, psychological, of the soul or of the body, in expiation of our own sins and for those around us. We can ask that what we endure is utilized to perfect us and transform us so that in union with the Lord, we may be acceptable in the sight of our heavenly Father.

It is entirely true, we can ask as did the crippled and maimed in salvation history of our God, to remove our pain, our suffering if it is his will for our soul. Perhaps in the providence of God it is necessary because of our neglect, that nature take its course. If we do not respect ourselves, we can be certain natural law will catch up with us. Certainly our God is eager to spiritually forgive us our trespasses if we

repent, in regard to health responsibility, but many times, it is necessary that natural developments unfold so that our soul, our mind, our heart and our entire being slowly conform themselves to God's will being done in our lives. Perhaps it is, as Scripture suggests, the place of and timing of all in our lives and all the circumstances attached to it are particularly so arranged by a loving and merciful God that we achieve the salvation of our soul. Perhaps illness afflicting us today is given us so that greater opportunities in the future can be better utilized for attaining the perfection we so desperately need here on earth. If we are called to give up our lives early it may be because living longer would have endangered us, weakened us and so we might succumb to temptation and lose our souls. If we die later, perhaps it is because we need the additional time to repent, to arouse within us sorrow for our life's sinfulness and so we finally, in the end of a longer life, achieve the salvation of our souls, the very purpose of our life is reached.

In eternity, it is safe to say, we will be astounded how lovingly and painstakingly our God works with us and so orchestrates, encourages and inspires us so that we might save our souls.

The Shepherd's Psalm teaches about green pastures, but many times it is not so. He who knows best in kindness also leads us through weary ways, dried out fields where heavy shadows can be found, where the working is not easy, but most difficult. Certainly there are still waters in our lives, but just as frequently, heavy tempests blow around us and waves and billows can overtake the soul. But then, when the storm beats loudest, we can cry out, aloud for help because we see the Master standing by as He quietly whispers, "Look, it is I"

Thus we come to understand rather perfectly what St. Paul is speaking of when he repeats for our instruction that afflictions perfect us and assist us in becoming what we ought to be: faithful devout disciples of the Lord. We learn in our lives that we can follow him and where He leads, we can safely go. But of course, it is not here, but in the hereafter that we shall come to know and perfectly understand why in his wisdom, He led us so.

We can look happily and with encouragement at the earthly life of our Saviour. Because Christianity's best argument is Life. We know our Saviour suffered more than any other because his spirit was purer and his love far vaster than ours. He ventured and his days on our heavenly Father and trusted implicitly in his will. Of course, that meant He lived dangerously because He set himself up against the ancient drift of selfishness, against greed around him, so the drift of the world overpowered him momentarily. He died young, death was sure for one resolved to

live a life of purity and devotion. If we have values, eternal values, we are going to experience the pain of the world more vitally and frequently than others. It is going to hurt us to the core. Christ deserved no cruelty. But such inveterate hatred from his enemies, even his friends was visited upon him as no one else has ever known. We nailed him to the cross while it was laid on the ground. Then we lifted up that wood with a dull heavy wrack and visited additional torture of his physical body and by our invective hate, added desolation of soul as many times we can never imagine. He could have said with better right, than any other person in the world, "Why has this happened to me?"

So from our pain, from our afflictions, from our own major illnesses and shortcomings, combined and mixed together with relevant faith response, we look differently than non-believers on all that afflicts and confronts us in life. We are reminded of our noble vocation. Why were the saints saints? Only because they are cheerful when it is difficult to be cheerful and patient when it is difficult to be patient and because they pushed on and on when they wanted to stand still and kept silent when they wanted to talk, and were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable. All for the glory of our God and the salvation of their souls. To him be all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

CHRIST THE HEALER

HIS BODY was the vehicle of healing power to others. Whoso touched even the hem of His garment with expectation and desire felt the vivifying shocks of imparted physical vitality. When those about Him suffered from disease He repaired the disordered mechanism. . . . The body was always and everywhere in His eyes a sacred thing, so sensitively refined that it would be defiled if its possessor harbored an unclean thought or let loose from the lips an unworthy word.

Said the body to the soul,
"You are master; you control."

For Our Good

Hebrews 12: 10.

In one of Ralph Conner's books, he tells the story of Gwen, who was an undisciplined and strong-willed girl always accustomed to having her own way. One day she had a terrible accident that crippled her for life, leading her to become even more rebellious. Once while in a complaining mood, she was visited by a local "sky pilot" or mountaineer missionary. He told her the following parable about the canyon:

"At first there were no canyons, but only the vast, open prairie. One day the Master of the prairie, walking across His great grasslands, asked the prairie, 'Where are your flowers?' The prairie responded, 'Master, I have no flower seeds!'

"The Master then spoke to the birds of the air and they brought seed of every kind of flower, scattering them far and wide. Soon the prairie blossomed with crimson roses, yellow buttercups, wild sunflowers, and red lilies all summer long. When the Master saw the flowers, He was pleased. But He failed to see His favorites and asked the prairie, 'Where are the clematis, columbine, violets, wild flowers, ferns, and the flowering shrubs?'

"So once again He spoke to the birds and again they brought all the seeds and spread them far and wide. But when the Master arrived, He still could not find the flowers He loved the most, and asked, 'Where are my sweetest flowers?' The prairie cried sorrowfully, 'O Master, I cannot keep the flowers. The winds sweep fiercely across me and the sun beats down upon my breast and brow, so they simply wither up and blow away.'

"Then he Master spoke to the lightning and with one swift bolt, the lightning split the prairie through its heart. The prairie reeled and groaned in agony and for many days bitterly complained about its dark, jagged, and gaping wound. But the river poured its water through the chasm, brining rich dark soul with it.

"Once again the birds brought seeds and scattered them in the canyon. After a long time the rough rocks were adorned with soft mosses and trailing vines, and the secluded cliffs were draped with colorful clematis and columbine. Giant elms raised their huge limbs high into the sunlight, while at their feet small cedars and balsam firs clustered together. Everywhere violets, anemones, and maidenhair ferns grew and bloomed, until the canyon became a veritable paradise and the Master's favorite place for rest, peace and joy."

Then the Sky Pilot said to her, "The fruit or flowers of the Spirit are 'Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness'" Galatians 5: 22, 23, and some of these grow only in the canyon." Gwen softly asked, 'Which are the canyon flowers?' The missionary answered, "Patience, wisdom, kindness and gentleness. Yet even though love, joy, and peace may

bloom in the open spaces, the blossom is never as beautiful, or the perfume as fragrant, as when they are found blooming in the canyon.

Gwen sat still for quite some time, and then longingly said with trembling lips, "There are no flowers in my canyon, only rough, even sharp jagged rocks." The missionary lovingly responded, "Someday they will blossom, dear Gwen. The Master will find the boulders and sharp craggy rocks in your life and help you do something about them and we will see the appealing blossoms, too."

Remember all, this, beloved, when you come to the canyon in your life!

He Answered Nothing

Mark 15: 3.

There is no scene in all Scripture more majestic than our Saviour remaining silent before the evil men who reviled Him. With one quick burst of divine power, or one fiery word of rebuke, He could have caused His accusers to be laid prostrate at His feet. Yet He answered not a single word allowing them to say and to do their very worst. He stood in the power of stillness, God's holy silent Lamb.

There is a place for stillness that allows God the opportunity to work for us and in us and give us peace. It is a stillness that ceases our scheming self-vindication, and the search for a temporary means to an end through our own earthly wisdom and judgment. Instead, it lets God prove and answer through his unflinching and faithful love, to the cruel blow we have suffered.

Oh, how often we thwart God's intervention on our behalf by taking up our own cause or by striking a blow in our own defense! May God grant each of us this silent power and submissive spirit. Then once our earthly battles and strife are over, others will remember us as we now remember the morning dew, the soft light of sunrise, a peaceful evening breeze, the lamb of Golgotha and the gentle and heavenly holy dove descending upon us in plenitude of grace from heaven above.

My friend, have you, for far much less,
With rage which you called righteousness,
Resented contrived slights with great distress,
While our Saviour held His peace?

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

Today the time of earthly deeds is revealed, for judgment is at hand. Let us be found fasting, and let us bring tears of supplication, begging mercy and crying out: "My sins are more numerous than grains of sand at the sea, but forgive me, O Creator of all, that I may receive the crown which does not perish" Kontakion, Second Sunday of the Great Fast.

I have loved the fleeting pleasures of the earth and have thrown away eternal blessings, O Christ Jesus. You alone love mankind, and You do not cut sinners off without hope, pouring out mercy upon those who repent. O Jesus, do not turn from me now as I repent, but see in me the thief who was saved by his confession, the tax collector who was cleansed by mercy, and the prodigal who resolved to weep, for in all of these You have instilled a pattern of repentance. When You see me from afar repenting and running to You as Father, come out with warm and tender mercy. If You wish, You can forgive the sins by which I have polluted myself after baptism and my promise to lead a blameless life: but forgive us, O Creator of all, that we may receive the crown that does not perish Matins Hymn, Second Sunday of the Great Fast.

We do not glorify three gods, but only one divinity. In truth, we honor three Persons: the Father unbegotten, the Son begotten from the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father, the Trinity of one God, and in faith we glorify each with the name of God Matins Hymn, Second Sunday of the Great Fast.

With what lips shall we mortals praise this holy bishop? He is the teacher of the Church and the herald of divine light, the one who is immersed in the Trinity, for the most beautiful adornment of holy monks, renowned for his divine contemplation and the brightness of his virtues; the pride and glory of Thessalonica; and the holy Demetrius, whose relics flow with holy oil, shares with you the kingdom of heaven Matins Hymn, Second Sunday of the Great Fast.

O light of the true faith, teacher and support of the Church, adornment of monks and invincible rampart of theologians, O holy Gregory the Wonderworker, the glory of Thessalonica and herald of grace, intercede with God for the salvation of our souls Troparion of St. Gregory Palamas.

"A SERVANT IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS MASTER ..."

In the Evangelist John's account of our Lord's path to His Crucifixion, we find a remarkable story transpired after Christ had shared the Passover Meal with His Apostles on the first Great and Holy Thursday. We are told that our Lord "... rose from supper and laid aside His garments and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet." In effect, Jesus was teaching His Apostles the ultimate lesson of what TRUE HUMILITY is. He tells them plainly: "For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you." (John 13:15) This lesson is a simple one: humble service is to be shown to everyone. If Christ, Who is Lord of all, humbly served even the Apostle Judas, who had betrayed Him, then we certainly must do the same to those with whom we come in contact — even our enemies.

Christ's washing of the feet of His Apostles was a symbolic act as well. It is an image of the Sacrament of Confession, reminding us that our sins must be continually "washed away" through the ongoing process of repentance. Although we have been "bathed" by Christ in Baptism, these periodic "washings" through Confession are necessary for our salvation.

In our Cathedrals, it is customary on Great and Holy Thursday for the Bishop to wash the feet of 12 clergy to commemorate our Lord's humble deed at the Mystical Supper. This ancient practice has been preserved as a reminder of Christ's servitude.