

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Second Sunday of the Great Fast

March 16, 2014

**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 at 7: 30 PM we will celebrate the Presanctified Divine Liturgy. We invite all our faithful to be present with us in glorifying our God during this holy time.

+++ Saturday at 9:00 AM we will have the third All Soul Saturday. Please come and 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.

+++ On Saturday at 3:00 PM on April 5, we will have a guest Father Confessor to hear the confessions of our faithful. After the Penitential Service, Father John Fencik of St. Mary Parish in Bayonne will be with us. Please plan on taking advantage of this opportunity for spiritual growth.

+++ We offer our sincere thanks and gratitude to all our parish faithful who assisted in making yesterday's Pirohi Sale a success. We thank those who made cookies and Clam Chowder for sale. God bless you devoted souls with continued good spiritual and physical health!

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

+++ 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, \$1160.00; Candles, \$31.00; Great Fast Self-Denial, \$192.00; Diocesan Dues, \$65.00; Bulletin, \$25.00; Web Site, \$25.00; Food Coupons, \$120.00, for a total of \$1618.00. 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! 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, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleanor Korba, Robert 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 **\$1715.00** 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 \$5700 on this project to date!

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

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

LORD



**TEACH
US**

Promises To The Penitent

The good men perish; the godly die before their time and no one seems to care or wonder why. No one seems to realize that God is taking them away from evil days ahead. For the godly who die shall rest in peace. Peace, peace, to them both near and far, for I will heal them all Isaiah 57: 1.

The future splendor of this temple shall be greater than the splendor of the first one! For I have plenty of silver and gold to do it! And here I will give them peace says the Lord. Haggai 2: 8, 9.

The purpose of these laws is to give you law and peace Malachi 2: 5.

For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water shall flow from the inmost being of anyone who believes in me John 7: 38.

I am leaving you with a gift, peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is not fragile like the peace the world gives. So do not be troubled or afraid John 14: 27.

I have told you all this so that you will have peace of heart and mind John 16: 33.

Would he overpower me with his greatness? No he would listen with sympathy Job 23:6.

Until I finally admitted all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, I will confess them to the Lord. And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. Now I say that each believer should confess his sins to God when he is aware of them, while there is time to be forgiven. Judgment will not touch him if he does Psalms 32: 5, 6.

Method of Meditation

Our looking forward to prayer should be one of anticipated eagerness, a joy established in peace and tranquility of mind and will. This yearning with desire after the things of God and after God himself, can be manifested in spite of great repugnance and even disgust. Look at the Son of Man in the garden. "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me" Matthew 26: 39.

So too with us at time of prayer. The act of our will should be above our feelings, no matter what these may be – disgust with life, irritability, hatred, despair, sickness and pain... It is on just such occasions as these when we experience a great loathing for our conversations with God that we should "be nothing solicitous; the Lord is near" Philippians 4: 6. The Lord is truly near those who call upon him in spirit and in truth, which is prayer. And prayer in its initial form is meditation which we should always consider.

Recall that meditation is only a means, that is thinking, to an end, that is doing. The doing is the prayer. How shall we set about it? By looking at our heavenly Father and then at ourselves. God is the one true Mirror in which all creation is accurately reflected. The Father has given us Jesus for this very purpose, to be our perfect model and reflection of heavenly glory. To this end we shall study his life, and incident of it, the prayer in the garden.

We compose ourselves for prayer and ask the help of the Holy Spirit. To keep our imagination from moving about, we bridle it like an impulsive horse. It may wander, but our will must direct its movements. It may travel as far as the garden and beyond it to the thicket of olive trees. "My Father" Matthew 26: 39. It is as man that the afflicted Saviour calls upon his heavenly Father. He is not the representative sinner, standing before the bar of God's eternal justice, loaded down with the sins of countless Adams and Caines, of innumerable Sodoms and Romes, of Neroes and Julian the Apostates without end, with secret sins more leprous than these, of multitudes upon multitudes. In the sight of the Father He is the iniquity of the world from its creation in the beginning to its destruction in the end. What wonder that He recoils and trembles at the crushing, permeating foulness. What wonder that the rivers of blood, whipped into mad torrents by the hammering pulsations of a heart diluted with divine love and human fear, rise higher and even higher until they break

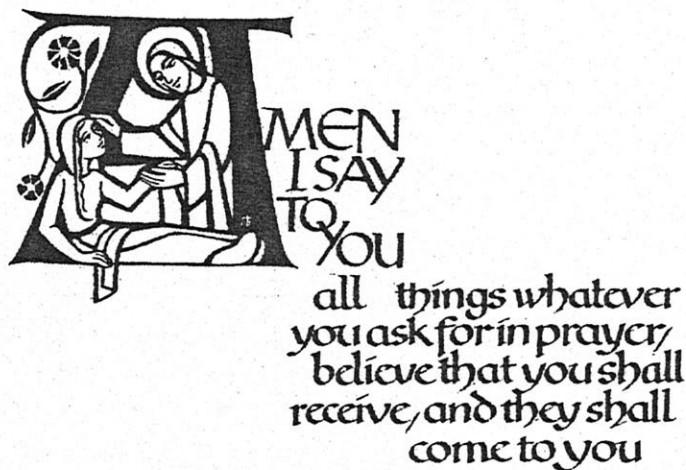
all bounds and saturate the hard, sin-crushed earth with the expiating laver of the God-Man.

It is for you, it is for you who in justice should suffer this agony of body and mind and spirit, but you cannot. You can sin, but God himself, He prostrate in agony and pain, the bleeding one even in his alienation and sweat droplets, who must repair the separation by assuming our sinfulness, for only He alone can. The remorse, the shame, the contrition above all, the incessant love in his heart and soul, gratitude and reality sweep over him so that our soul in purifying movements of accepted grace, in repentance and adoration, can be united once again with him.

Enlightened by the life-giving Spirit and strengthened by the vigor that flows into our hearts through the out-pouring and purifying quality of his blood, which fast weakens the Lamb about to be sacrificed as it is prepared for the slaughter. We raise our heads to heaven, our resolution is made. We shall pray regardless how hard it may be to concentrate. "My Father, if it shall be possible. Let this chalice pass, into our hands so that we may participate by cooperating with the grace He has won for us to be reconciled and stay in that spiritual relationship with him. With your help, dear Lord, we shall drain your agony in the garden to the dregs, together with Christ Jesus, our Saviour and Messiah, we shall pray and unite our heart-felt thoughts in unity before the throne of our heavenly Father.

We must be definite. If we mean what we have just promised the Father, we shall begin now, today, to make to God our share in the redemption of man. We must make up by our efforts in cooperation with his grace what is lacking in the passion of the Cross. What is lacking yet is our individual cooperation, our individual response to all He has done for us. Therefore we must avoid mere generalities and frame a resolution that will strike home effectively today. The thought that God wished us to realize the truth He desired is to be fruitful in good works and is simply this: Our sufferings, patiently borne for our neighbor's sake, give more glory to God and work us greater spiritual benefit than those same sufferings endured for ourselves, as a penance for sin. To put this truth into practice, we generously resolve, out of love for God and other souls, to offer for our neighbor mortifications that afflict us in our lives, mortifications, not of our own choosing but which our heavenly Father permits us to encounter and overcome. These are sent in charitable correction, in loving reproof, public humiliations, unkind words, disrespect thrown at us by friends and enemies, passionate indispositions, uncongenial compassions.

By mediating in this manner, day after day, and bravely determining to keep our resolutions, even though we fail time and again in our effort, we cannot but advance in perfection. In proportion as we are really sincere and wholehearted in our desire to please God, shall we be given light to see our defects, grace to overcome them successfully one by one. Our failings are not hindrances to holiness; they are positive helps if we employ them to our advantage. Nothing, then, can deter us from advancing in holiness except a lack of good will towards our Creator God.



A home for the aged, the ill and retired should be thought of as a powerhouse of prayer because those resident there spend much time in prayer.

Here you are, day after day, in his holy presence, warming his heart, pleasing in his sight; his dear ones; his daughters and sons, his dandelions grown gray in the fields of his will, his love, his service.

Once you glowed, green and golden, amid the grasses everywhere; but now silent and still before him but alert, not idle, fruitful still. For your petitions, soft and insistent rise up to him like pollen wafted by the wind.

How could He resist such sweet appeals from his faithful friends and followers. All the loving words that you spoke, all the eager hands that reached out to others, all the courageous steps that you took for his sake, in his Name, redound now in waves of peace and joy in his embrace of thanksgiving.

And you wait for him as he waits for you, to sit at the banquet and to receive the crown prepared for you from all eternity.

Second Sunday of the Great Fast

And when they could not come near him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was. So when they broke through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying

Mark 2: 4.

We see today that faithful response to Christ is full of creativity. The house is full, a crowd blocked the entry, but faith finds a creative way of getting to the Lord and placing the paralytic before him. If we cannot get sinners to Jesus by ordinary methods, we must use extraordinary ones, it seems, according to St. Luke (5: 19), the roof tiles had to be removed. That would create dust and cause a measure of danger to those below; but when the case is very urgent, we must be prepared to run some risks and even shock some people. Jesus was there to heal, and therefore roof or no roof, faith ventured also that the poor paralytic might have his sins forgiven. We need more daring creative faith among us! We ought to seek it every morning of our lives and the times afterwards as well. We must seek it for our fellow-workers and truly today, to perform some gallant act for the love of souls and the glory of our Lord. That is our purpose, particularly during this sacred season when we are to arm ourselves with a faith response that will continue beyond the boundaries of the preparation period for the Resurrection.

The world is constantly being creative and inventive, genius serves all the purposes of human desire, so why cannot faith

be inventive too and by some creative means reach people who are strangers to the gospel message?

Jesus is moved. So He applauds, if not with hands, at least with his heart. And not only does He applaud, He also blesses and so we witness a divine love-burst. Genuine friends want him to heal their friend. But our Lord has a greater purpose. He will not simply settle for a healing of the body, of the physical flesh, He wants to heal the heart and soul. He leapfrogs the physical and deals with the spiritual. To heal the body is temporal; to heal the soul is eternal.

The request of the friends is valid but timid. The expectations of the crowd are high, but not high enough. They do expect Jesus to say, "I heal you." Instead He says, "I forgive you." They expect him to treat the maladies of the body, of the flesh, for that is what they plainly see. He chooses to treat not only the body, but also the spiritual dimension too, for that is what He plainly sees. They want Jesus to give the man a new restored body so he can walk. Jesus offers him heavenly grace so the man can live.

How remarkable for this needy man. How many times our God is so touched by what He sees that He gives us what we need and not simply that for which we ask!

Of course not all who were present were delighted to behold what is transpiring. What can be more reasonable than to believe a man when He comes and tells us that He is sent from God to heal the diseases of our souls and in order that we may believe him, He heals all sorts of men, at all times, of all manner of diseases, simply by a touch or even simpler, by uttering a word. He plainly shows that he can do it when He will, let the disease be what it will. He tells us that He will deliver us from spiritual and eternal death and also from temporal death in particular cases, that He will raise us from the dead and give us eternal life, so that we shall live forever and not die. And to prove this He gives us visible and invisible evidence that He has power over man's life by not only prolonging their lives, but even restoring them after they are dead and besides, He rises from the dead himself. He tells us that He will bestow heavenly glory upon us and will translate us to heaven. And to confirm us in this belief, He tells us that we shall like him, after his death, ascend into and return to heaven. What more could we desire from a man who comes from God and has power so evidently visible to do all these things for us, than to give us such evidence of this power which we plainly see today?

"Which is easier to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven or to say, Get up and pick up your pallet and walk? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralytic, I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home'" Mark 2: 9 - 11.

Jesus had the power to forgive sin. "And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, 'My son, your sins are forgiven'" Mark 2: 5; Luke 7: 48 -50. By limited Jewish understanding, even law, what Jesus did only God can do; the prominent and well-known prophet Isaiah restricts this prerogative to God alone. "It is I, I who wipe out for

my own sake, your offenses; your sins I remember no more” Isaiah 43: 25. So we can understand why the scribes are quick to ask, “Why does this man speak this way? He blasphemes for who can forgive sins but God alone” Mark 2: 7? Jesus then asks them the obvious question, which is easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Arise and walk?”

This is not an unanswerable question. The statements are equally easy to pronounce, but to say with accompanying astounding performance, requires divine power. An imposter of course, in seeking to avoid detection, would find the former easier. Jesus not only heals the man so they could see the physical deformity is over as he heals the illness that men might know He had authority to deal with its cause. So they could not then deny his overcoming physical problems, plainly seen, He also could resolve problems of the soul, not so easily observed!

Today we see that love takes us out of ourselves and beyond our own limitations in self-giving to others. The whole of our Lord is characterized by such visions. There are several references in the gospels to his great compassion for the needy crowds of people. They needed to witness Christ’s love of mankind and his greater love for souls.

St. Luke in particular stresses that the love of Christ brought him into contact with those who were despised or under-valued by the society of his day. Lepers were excluded from ordinary society, but He not only cleansed them but even touched them, something no Pharisee or scribe would ever have dreamed of doing. (Luke 5: 12 – 14). The tax collectors were regarded as beyond the pale because of their daily contact with Roman officialdom, but He not only ate with them and their despised friends, but actually called one of them to be a member of the inner band of his disciples (Luke 5: 27 – 32). The Roman occupying force was hated, yet He healed the servant of a centurion and remarked loudly and clearly about the greatness of his faith (Luke 7: 1 – 10).

“I tell you, not in all Israel have I found such faith” Luke 7: 10. Regardless of our circumstances, may we be in that category of believers who, in approaching the Lord are blessed to hear this exact observant blessing from our Saviour, particularly during this holy season of the Great Fast.

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH

Author—Jeremiah the prophet

Date—Written during the three months following the destruction of Jerusalem (October, 587 BC) and before Jeremiah was taken captive to Egypt in December of the same year.

Major Themes—*God's judgment of the people's sins and His unfathomable love and sorrow for Israel.* This is Jeremiah's personal testimonial and lament over the devastation of Jerusalem and the temple. The prophet maintains there is still hope for repentance and restoration. Consistent with his previous and later messages, here he instructs the suffering Jews not to despise God's punishment but to repent, confessing their sins and seeking forgiveness and deliverance.

Background—The destruction of Jerusalem has just occurred, and the people have been taken away as captives to Babylon. God continually forewarned them about these specific events through Jeremiah and His other prophets. The Lord had sent many prophecies about His punishment of those who would not keep His commandments. Jeremiah witnessed the destruction and laments over the loss of the people, the temple, and the city. The book contains five psalms.

Outline

- I. The Psalmist and the Daughter of Zion
Lament the Destruction of Jerusalem amid
Ruin and Misery (1:1–22)
- II. The Psalmist and the Daughter of Zion
Describe the Day of the Lord (2:1–22)

- III. Individual Lament: Affliction and Hope
(3:1–62)
- IV. Communal Lament: Meditations in a
Ruined City (4:1–22)
- V. Communal Prayer for Deliverance (5:1–22)

The Kiss

Judas Iscariot – the mere name is loathed by the world even today because of what it represents. A divided allegiance sealed his destiny. Though one of Christ's chosen twelve, his concern was in what he could gain from their relationship, not what he could give and share.

Political ambition and his love of power, position and money were his motivation. If he was now the treasurer of the apostolic band, no doubt he was being prepared to rise to the exalted position of treasurer of a new empire. In the end his desires cost him everything, friends, his Saviour, the wrongly received silver coins, his life, his very soul and heaven itself.

Though Jesus called Judas His friend to the very end, He declared: "It would have been good for that man if he had never been born" Matthew 26:50; Mark 14: 21. His life proved that even the most highly revered religious position cannot save a man's soul if it is not there for the reason and sake of Christ. No wonder St. John Chrysostom writes in *On The Priesthood* that the road to hell is paved with priest's skulls!

Are you pursuing God for all the wrong reasons? Have you been involved in the Church of Christ without involving yourself intimately with Christ? Are you teetering on the edge of selling Jesus for the paltry sum of the world's pleasures?

Beyond baptism, it is never too late to commit your life totally to Jesus Christ and have a genuine relationship with Him. This is only possible if you many times daily demonstrate anew the soul's eager desire to be an ardent and zealous disciple and make a serious effort to live that desire in fact. Salvation is but a prayer away; simply overcome in repentance your shortcomings and begin to seriously live a renewed penitential life.

Having sincerely recognized the kiss of Judas is potentially on everyone's lips, it is humble, committed faith alone that does not permit it to manifest itself on ours

Faith Response

In daily living we take many things on faith, on the word of another, especially if that person is deemed to be reliable and trustworthy. Faith in God is both similar to and profoundly different from ordinary human faith. Minimally, divine faith means we accept as true what God has revealed. In doing this, we acknowledge God's goodness and authority. After all, He is not just reliable, but all-knowing, all-powerful and all-loving. But faith in God is much deeper than the faith we accord to other human beings. The faith we invest in God is a proper response to God who has revealed himself to us. We respond to our heavenly Father with the obedience of faith, which means full surrender of ourselves to God and the acceptance of his truth, insofar as it is guaranteed by the One who is Truth himself.

This is a great deal more than finding out a bit of useful information and taking it to be true. Rather, when we respond in faith to God we are bound in loving obedience to him and to all He reveals. Faith is God's gift to us by which we are enabled to acknowledge and remain in his presence and to follow his commandments. Thus St. Paul speaks of "...the obedience of faith" Romans 16: 26.

There are many examples of men and women of faith to inspire us. The preeminent example of faith is, of course, the Birthgiver of God. Her whole life can be summed up by the words, "Let it be done to me according to your word" Luke 1: 38. In addition to the saints, there are other examples: so many people we know today in the life of Christ's Body, the Church, certainly exemplify the intrepid and persistent spirit of faith-filled obedience to the mission God has in mind for each of us.

Faith is both a gift from God and a fully human response necessary for salvation. It must be full and complete; partial response with limitations cannot be accorded or dignified with the description of faith lived life. Faith is an infused virtue which simply means our God freely imparts faith as a supernatural gift to enlighten our mind and will; it is to be distinguished from acquired virtue which, in the workings of God's grace, we attain by persistent practice or repetition of good deeds. In Christ and through the Holy Spirit, the eternal Father places the gift of faith into us. Faith is "...the assurance of things hoped for," and such "hope does not disappoint us because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given us" Hebrews 11: 1; Romans 5: 5.

But infusion, we must appreciate is not osmosis! The seeds of faith planted at baptism must grow through our fully graced and fully human assent to God and to all He reveals. Our

response must include listening to the Word of God as it comes to us through the Church and thus grow in knowledge and love of what God reveals to us through Scripture and Tradition in his Body, the Church. For this reason, we can see the vital importance of evangelization or proclaiming and witnessing to Christ, along with systematic instruction in the truths of faith. As our faith and thus the personal adherence to Christ, grows, we begin living partially here and now the blessed life we shall experience fully and totally and completely in heaven.

It is not always easy to be a person of faith in a skeptical age. Today there is a newly militant atheism underfoot which claims that faith, far from shedding the light of truth on God and the human condition, is a dangerous, pre-scientific distortion and the root of serious problems such as terrorism! Attacks on faith, of course, are nothing new. We face these challenges confidently as believers. We see faith as an ally, not an enemy, of reason. Though faith is above reason, it enlightens reason in important ways: by helping us grasp supernatural truths that faith teaches and by clarifying what reason can know on its own. We are reminded there can never be a contradiction between faith and science because both originate in God himself who gives to us the light both of reason and of faith.

Faith, of course, is intensely personal, but it is not one's private possession because it is an extension of what emanates from the inner life of the Church, what belongs to the essence of the Body of Christ. Enlightened by faith ourselves, we embrace the faith of the Church of Christ, because it is the truth of the Lord. Therefore, when we profess our faith, we say "I believe..." in company with fellow communicants of the Body of Christ, the Church. It is in fact the Church that believes and thus by the grace of the Holy Spirit precedes, engenders and nourishes the faith of each Christian.

We receive the gift of faith through the Church and it is nourished in and through the community of believers. From childhood we learn formulas of faith. These are time-honored accurate expressions of what the Church believes and teaches, developed under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The most common summary of faith is the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, but we believe not in formulas themselves, but in the divine realities they express and lead us to experience.

It is important for us to know and understand these formulas as sure guides in our lives of faith. The Church is a community of believers with a long uninterrupted history. We are sinners and saints made up of people of every nation, tongue and culture. Yet, we still confess "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" to the glory of God and the salvation of our souls Ephesians 4: 5. Never should a day pass without our thanking Father, Son and Holy Spirit for our faith and asking for its increase in our souls.

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.

Making Time Work For Us

We can take steps to find a balance in work and home life

Even as reformed workaholics, many fathers still have a tendency to be fully engaged at work while maintaining a full plate of family activities. Over time, they can develop a better balance between work life and home life by setting priorities and sticking to them, as difficult as that can be in our challenging economy. Some have tried to make time work for them as they seek to grow as believing husbands, fathers, business leaders and member of the community.

Surveys indicate that work-home balance ranks near the top of concerns for men today. It is no coincidence that the United Nations' International Day of Families held recently, highlighted the themes of work and family. Work should not hinder the family but should rather sustain and unite it, and help it be open to life and to enter into relationships with society and the Church.

So what is the key to finding more time for what really matters while still succeeding at work? There is no magic formula, but five action times may help. Make family dinner mandatory; turn off the technology devices during family time; attend school and sports events; keep romance in your marriage; and make sure that our heavenly Father, as the source and inspiration of love, comes first.

Check your priorities. Men often struggle with work-family issues so often because they have their priorities out of order. If we are living our blessed faith fully, we know that Christ comes first, followed by family and then work. Yet we allow work to eat up most of the energy of our lives while leaving the leftovers for God and family. All areas of our lives are made better when Christ comes first. Our families will flourish when we live out our vocation as Christian husbands and fathers, intent on imitating the example of Christ. Our work will improve when placed at the service of our heavenly Father, who understands and aids us in our struggles.

We control our calendars, not vice versa. A common complaint is: "There is just not enough space on my calendar for everything!" But who makes the entries on our calendar? It is strongly suggested we put prayer, worship, family dinner, children's activities, date nights and meaningful time with spouse and other personal engagements on the calendar before

In our inspired perspective, the original sin of man is not primarily that he disobeyed God; the sin is that he ceased to be hungry for him and for him alone; ceased to see his whole life depending on the whole world as a sacrament of communion with the Creator God. The only real fall of man is his non-eucharistic life in a non-eucharistic world.

For this reason we are engaged in the ascetical struggles of the Great Fast as part of our preparation for the Glorious Resurrection. We no longer really hunger for God in our lives and have forgotten what it means to live a Eucharistic life that springs forth from a thankful and grateful heart. This journey of the Great Fast is intended to help us remember who we are and where we want to go, where we by destiny belong!.

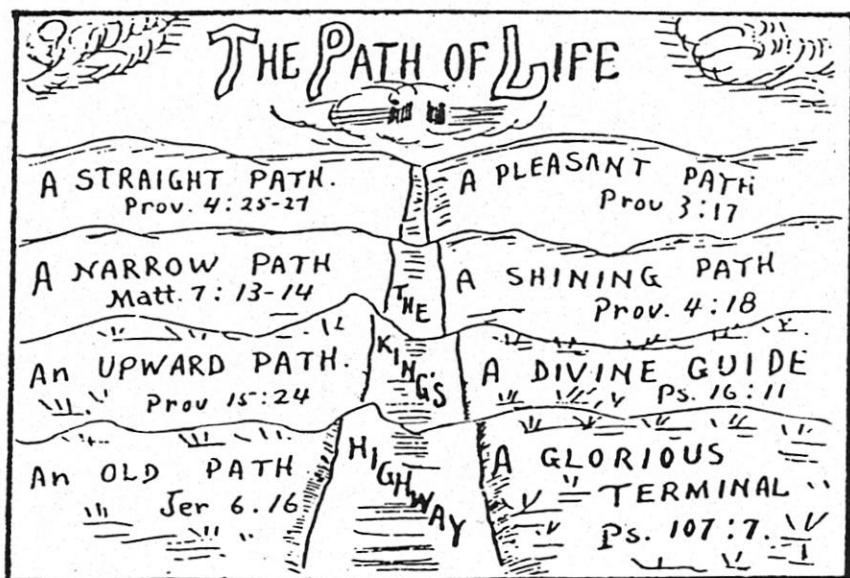


filling in work obligations. For most people, something is more likely to get done if it is scheduled. Better work-life balance starts with saying no to those things that are competing with God and family time.

Combine activities when possible. When going for a run or getting on the treadmill, we can meditate and pray as well. When traveling to or from work, we can turn off the radio and pray and reflect on spiritual themes. We can use time going to children's activities to talk about life, faith, response to God's first offered love, or whatever is on their minds. When we serve in the community, we often do it with wife and children to increase time together and build family memories. There are a number of ways to do this, but the combining concept can turn "away time" into fun and family time.

With unemployment very high, it may seem like the wrong time to recalibrate priorities, especially if we think that doing so will affect our position or security at work. After all, providing for the material welfare of our family is key to our vocation. Yet the answer may be found in working more efficiently and effectively to cut down on overtime, knowing that our Father in heaven will help us if we have the good of our family at heart.

We have to examine and ask ourselves each day if our work is serving the purposes of our heavenly Father and our families or if God and our families are serving our work. The honest answer should set our path in life, both at work and at home.



THE MYSTICAL SUPPER

When mention is made of the Last Supper which Our Lord had with His Apostles before He died, we in the West think of that famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci. But in the East, there are icons even older which depict different scenes of that Holy Supper.



The icon of our bulletin is patterned after a 16th century work that was located, as is traditional, above the Royal Doors of an Iconostas. The Apostles are gathered around an oval table, with Christ off to the left. The Beloved Apostle, St. John, leans his body toward Jesus. The scene, which depicts the apostolic group in somewhat of bewilderment, refers to the passage of the Gospels in which the Apostles respond to the words of the Lord that one of them will betray Him. **"Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spoke . . ."** says the Gospel according to St. John.

The background serves as a fitting setting of the Supper, indicating the upper room that was prepared for the meal. Leaning over the table, reaching for the cup, is said to be Judas. Thomas is said to be at the bottom right. All seem to be occupied with conversation after the bewildering statement of the Lord.

The term **"Mystical Supper"** is more in keeping with the traditional vocabulary of the Church. Surely that Supper, the Eucharist, is a mystery, that is beyond comprehension and analysis. **"This is My Body,"** Jesus said. **"This is My Blood."** Let us accept this in faith and unite ourselves with Him.

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