



# CROSS VENERATION

Third Sunday of Great Lent

March 30, 2008

# **Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church**

**24 BURKE ROAD**

**FREEHOLD, NJ 07728**

**Third Sunday of the Great Fast**

**March 30, 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**

+++ Today we have festal anointing on the occasion of this past week's solemn feast of the Annunciation to the Birthgiver of God. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we respond, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ 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 \$4200.00 on this project to date!

+++ We ask all to make returns on the Bake Sale, Pirohi Sale, Cookie Sale and Candy Sale as soon as possible.

+++ We encourage our faithful during this Great Fast to offer up the grace of their fasting and penitence for the speedy success and completion of our building program.

+++ **Please see Marilyn Korba to sign up for the New Ten Week Club as well as to receive information about the Alaskan Cruise next August, 2009.**

+++ **We have some remaining rolls and cookies and pirohi available from the recent sales. Please see the woman in the kitchen to secure yours if you had no order.**

+++ **We will have our monthly Pirohi Sale this coming Saturday. Preparations will be made Thursday at 7:00 AM. Please come and join us with helping hands to make these events a success. The Pirohi Order Sheet is in the kitchen. Please fill in your orders today.**

+++ 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!

**Having endured the passion for us,**

**O Lord,**

**Jesus Christ, have mercy on us!**

**Web Site Address**

**Parish:**

**Father's address:**



## Pirohi Volunteers

Father Lucas 215-862-9227  
Pani Lucas 215-862-9227  
Kyra Choti 609-397-7281  
Joseph Choti 609-397-7281  
Nadya Choti 609-397-7281  
Elizabeth Simon 609-397-7281  
Deacon Kenneth 732-845-0873  
Diaconisa Cindy 732-845-0873  
Robert Gorbich 732-780-1619  
Eudoxia Fasouletou 732-771-6418  
Eleanor Korba 732-845-5304  
Betty Samaris 732-868-9468  
Michael Garcia 732-780-6359  
Maria Garcia 732-780-6359

Subdeacon Daniel 732-845-4715  
Marilyn Korba 732-845-4715  
Rachel Korba 732-845-4715  
Eleanor Korba 732-845-5304  
Betty Samaris 732-866-9468  
Mary Demyan 732-929-3051  
Steve Demyan 732-929-3051  
Nina Harrison 215 862-9227  
Eudoxia Fasouletou 732-771-6418  
Robin Pasquino 732-780-7914  
Maria Pashos 732-833-1342  
Frank Pashos 732-833-1342  
Anna Zacharyczuk 732-780-0169  
Sue Thompson 732-251-6638

January 12, March 1,  
May 3.

February 9, April 5, June  
14.

Thursday Before

Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Eleni  
Pallas, Joan Henry, Anna Sabo,  
Marion Peles, Betty Samaris,  
Eleanor Korba, Eudoxia  
Fasouletou and Anna  
Zacharyczuk



## Perfection

*When Abram was ninety nine years old, God appeared to him and told him, "I am the Almighty; obey me and live as you should" Genesis 17: 1.*

*So Moses told the people, "You must obey all the commandments of the Lord your God, following his directions in every detail, going the whole way he has laid out for you" Deuteronomy 5: 32.*

*You must walk blamelessly before the Lord your God Deuteronomy 18: 13.*

*But be very sure to follow all the instructions written in the book of the laws of Moses, do not deviate from them the least little bit Joshua 23: 6.*

*O my people, may you live good and perfect lives before the Lord your God, may you always obey his laws and commandments just as you are doing today 1 Kings 8: 61.*

*Solomon, my son, get to know the God of your fathers. Worship and serve him with a clean heart and a willing mind, for the Lord sees every heart and understands and knows every thought. If you seek him, you will find him, but if you forsake him, he will permanently throw you aside 1 Chronicles 28: 9.*

*If they sin against you and who has never sinned, and you become angry 1 Chronicles 6: 36.*

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

## PENITENCE

*Against you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...Psalms 50: 4.*

A major element of our prayers is our confession of sin, Psalm 50 now numbered popularly in Scripture as 51, stands out in God's revelation to us as the most moving of all personal confession of sin. It is usually viewed as David's expression of penitence, spoken after his sin of murder and adultery. It contains within itself an expression of all the deep and profound mystery of man's running without thinking into sin. Consequences are forgotten and reality forgone. Many times, even when considering the seriousness of separation from God by sin, man still plunges himself into the depths of odious rebellion.

The depth of David's fall is unexplainable. But so is the depth of human sin today; think of the genocides and holocausts continually being perpetrated on man, of all those atrocities visited on ourselves just in recent history. The depth of the sin each of us harbors in his heart is always so unexplainable.

Unquestionably we are all sinners and we realize this more plainly when we stop comparing ourselves with others, when we stop justifying ourselves and looking for excuses with which to label others for causing our fall from grace. We see it as soon as we see our lives in the light of God's holiness. David's confession arose out of his understanding that he sinned against God, not just against Uriah whom he had set up to be murdered; not just against Bathsheba whom he had lustily violated and then tried to cover up by making her his wife thinking that would lend respectability to what he immorally did.

The reason we are what we are and do what we do is that our hearts are wicked which is the emphasis of Psalm 50 and no doubt the sobering reason why the Church prescribes this quiet and silent prayer by priests and deacons prior to celebrating the Divine Liturgy; as a warning that even in the grandiose scheme of celebration man can fall into sin and be seduced just as readily as was David even while he was occupying the lofty position of God's chosen king of Israel. A new heart is needed and a steadfast spirit required. External sins, David realized were the fruit of inner corruption. And priests and deacons are thus reminded purity of intention is always vital. Sins of attitude, envy, resentment, bitterness and lust are all in us as well. As we pray, we ask to be led seriously and sincerely to ask for forgiveness and renewal.



## Expressed In Wood

*For the Jews require a sign...Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified*  
1 Corinthians 1: 22, 23.

When our Lord came to earth, He carried the credentials of the Father as the "Word" John 1: 1. Everything He did and said was in obedience and concert with the Father. He therefore was a loving expression of the Father's devoted and loving heart. Yet it was not by Christ's teaching alone nor simply through his astonishing miracles that He best represented the eternal purposes of God. Rather, He proclaimed the Father's emphatic and plain love most eloquently by his sacrificial self-emptying death on the cross and subsequent Resurrection.

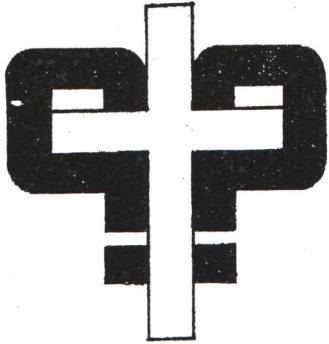
This love of our Creator for us is declared in a unique, demonstrative way. We are thus reminded of a conversation between a blind apprentice and an old gifted furniture maker. The craftsman tries to explain the theory of his designs in furniture and he tells the apprentice that he believed he could best express himself through his craft.

"Artists," he said, "express themselves in colors, in words, in stone; well, I do not see why a man cannot express himself in wood." The apprentice, with unusual insight, offered this surprising observation, "In wood? It has been done, sir; yes, the mightiest expression of man ever the world knows has been in wood!" "What, apprentice?" asked the gifted man. "Sir, the cross of Jesus Christ! Our Lord did not just talk about saving mankind and showing his love; He actually did it on the cross!"

The sacrificial death of the Lord on the tree of the Cross is the supreme expression of a loving God. That death, that sacrifice, that proclamation of unending love is for each of us. A sign of enduring love in fulfillment of self-prophecy, "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" John 15: 13.

Christ assumed the guilt of sin that we might have the gift of his salvation. In the Cross of Christ, all life is made new. In the person of Christ we are crucified to sin. Let us go to the Cross. Let us renew our identity with Christ!

# "What is faith?"



While parents seriously attempt to hand on a traditional understanding of commitment to Christ to their children and it becomes no object of delight for them to watch young children absorb elements of Christian faith, just as eagerly as they absorb delectable food by which they grow physically. Devoted parents teach as much as they can, but often wonder what to say to them who some day will approach and ask for a fuller explanation of faith response to God's first shown love. "Mom, what is faith?" is a question not often answered as appropriately as could be. Children ask, not in a challenging way, but rather with the simplicity and honesty with which they might grow in it.

Faith is an obedience by which a human being entrusts his whole self freely to God. The Holy Spirit is part of the process of faith response because it is his grace which makes it possible for us to respond in faith to God. If the believing heart is so disposed, God will make up what is lacking. It is the Holy Spirit who does all the right things in us right up to and including when we say "YES!" to God. In other words, faith is an outright, undeserved gift from God to each baptized believer.

For the more practical side of faith, an illustration for a story written years ago might be appropriate. A man who



was quite a skier tells of his experience on a certain part of the high Alps when a murderous snowstorm suddenly hit. As he walked on, scarcely able to put one ski before the other, all the time he could hardly see his hand before his eyes. Suddenly, the tips of his skis began to bend downward. He stopped immediately. He knew where he was. He was on the end of a crevasse, that is, an opening in the mountain some 2000 feet deep, but according to his information, only two feet wide. He heard this from an old mountain friend, who had told him about this one break in that part of the Alps. He was further told that across the chasm there was a long row of rocks that led to a cottage where a person could build a fire and spend the night in safety.

As he stood there, with the greatest decision of his life before him, whether to freeze because he could not completely and fully put his life in that mountaineer's hands, freezing thus in his doubt, or to jump out into the nothingness before him on the trusted word of his friend. He jumped, and of course he made it and came back to write a book about his experience. But he would never forget that jump, to him it was the picture of his faith, namely, that he again had to decide whether to stand there in the midst of his life and freeze because he would not believe, would not trust in God, or jump into the darkness on the word of

a friend. Jesus Christ, he realized at last, that the person of Christ, not the catechism, was his faith. He leaped out to him!

The definition of faith means entrusting oneself wholly to God and comes alive in this retold dramatic experience.

Whether we realize it or not, we all live by faith every day. We enter a restaurant, trusting a cook whom we never saw, trusting him with our very life; we board an airplane, handing over our complete, beloved earthly experience to the pilot, who as far as we know, plans to use the whole flight to get us to our destination and not side track us with an accident. We trust our very physician, our pharmacist, who between them prescribe and fill our prescription and what we take home and drink or ingest in complete faith of their good will and intention towards us. If we trust the cook, the airplane pilot, the doctor and druggist, or in the case of the related episode, the man's old devoted friend, if we trust these people with the earthly life we love so much, why should we not trust our heavenly Father with our eternal life? He died for us and made a pledge of eternity to each of us who are baptized. Faith is confident assurance concerning what we hope for, and conviction about things we do not see" Hebrews 11: 1.



**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.**



## Free To Follow

*...freed from your sin you become slaves of justice*

Romans 6: 18.

Many years ago, a well-to-do-Christian believer paid a very high price for a particular slave. Actually, the man abhorred the practice of slavery and his sole purpose was to set at liberty the one he purchased. When the two met for the first time, the affluent and high-minded man said, "It is true, I bought you, but I did it only to free you from the terrible bondage you have always known." Then he handed the other person some papers that guaranteed freedom and as further proof he was no longer a chattel or possession of his former owner.

The former slave looked at him in utter amazement. "Am I truly free? Am I really my own? May I go where I wish?" "Yes," said the bestower of freedom, "that is why I bought you, so you could be loosed from those chains forever." Overwhelmed by these pregnant words, the newly freed man fell at his feet and said with heartfelt devotion, "Then my greatest joy and freedom will be to stay with you and serve you gladly for the rest of my life. Who wouldn't want to be in the company and friendship of such as you who literally bought my freedom!"

So, too, our Lord Jesus Christ delivered us from an awful bondage, not to another human being, but far worse, to the devil himself: Christ purchased us at a tremendous price, his own precious blood. By dying on the cross He paid the penalty of our sin and released us from the condemnation of eternal hell! By God's marvelous grace we are fully freed to do good in the sight of our Creator. We are no longer constrained by evil and sin, no more slaves to demeaning behavior or lifestyle. Now we are fully free to become followers of Christ, loving disciples, "servants of righteousness" Romans 6: 19.

Are we thankful for our liberty, or do we ignore the one who paid for our deliverance and set us free? O how love should motivate us to praise, adore, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ! Like that freed and emancipated slave, let us tell him that our greatest joy is to stay close to such as He and to do his will for the rest of our life!

How can we help but follow Christ who has liberated us by paying such an enormous price in dying on the tree!

We are forgiven our sins so that we do not seek to be excused from service!



# 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.*

## HOW CAN A MAN KEEP HIS HEART PURE?

**T**he words above pose a question about the meaning of the next Beatitude: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” In Mark 7:21-23, our Lord cautions us concerning the “evil things that come from within and defile a man.” He candidly illustrates that “. . . out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride and foolishness.” Clearly then, the heart can harbor a multitude of sinful actions.

If we are ever to “see God” and live eternally in His Heavenly Kingdom, it is essential for us to have a “pure heart.” A pure heart is developed rather than acquired. We do so by devoting ourselves to serving and worshipping

God. We must also live in temperance, guarding against sins of excess that take our thoughts away from spiritual matters and direct them to worldly concerns. When our soul is not dominated by sinful passions, its only desire is doing the work and the will of God. Purity of heart requires complete suppression and constant remembrance of God and His Commandments.

“Seeing God” is the goal of every Orthodox Christian, for being deprived of this blessed privilege places us in a place of torment throughout eternity. Let us strive to live in a manner that will enable us to enjoy the fullness of God's glory on the last day, and “. . . see Him as He is. For everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:2-3)

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