

ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

FOURTH
SUNDAY
OF
GREAT
LENT

APRIL 6, 2008

*You became a
Luminary,
shining with miracles
upon the world,
O John
our righteous Father.*



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast

April 6, 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

+++ The All Souls' Saturday celebration which was missed a few weeks ago will be celebrated this coming Saturday at 9:00 AM with Divine Liturgy and Memorial Service. Please submit the names of your beloved departed if you have not yet done so. Please come and join us in prayer for our departed souls.

+++ All are invited and no one is excluded, to come and join us in prayer Wednesday evening at 7:30 PM as we celebrate the Presanctified Divine Liturgy. Father is preaching on the miracles of forgiveness in the New Testament.

+++ 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, \$420.00; Holyday, \$40.00; Candles, \$32.00; Food Coupons, \$420.00; Kitchen, \$118.00; Great Fast Self Denial Offering \$47.00; Pennies From Heaven, \$4.50; Pennies, \$4.50; Web Sponsor, \$25.00; Candy Sales, \$37.50, for a total of \$1144.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 38 adults and 14 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Pani Lucas, Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, Kylea Pasquino, Mary Jaakobs, Angeliki Tsokris, Father Lucas, 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 \$1305.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish!

+++ Next Sunday at 9: 15 AM we will celebrate a Memorial Service for the repose of the soul of her beloved husband, +John, requested by Mrs. Eleanor Korba on the fifth anniversary of his repose. We pray the merciful Lord continues to comfort Eleanor and her loved ones in their loss as He creates for +John a blessed repose and Eternal Memory!

+++ Next Sunday a special offering will be taken after the gospel for flowers for Palm Sunday, Passion Week and the glorious feast of the Resurrection. Please be generous in your offering as along with everything else, flowers have also dramatically increased in price.

+++ We acknowledge with gratitude the sponsorship of our parish Web Site by Mrs. Anna Zacharyczuk for the month of April. We pray the Lord continues to bless her and loved ones with good health for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$92, 405. 00. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ We express our thanks to the family of Miguel and Maria Garcia for sponsoring the Parish Bulletin this month of April and we pray the generous Lord continues to bless them and their loved ones with good health for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ On Friday, May 9, we will have another Bake Sale with Nut and Poppy Rolls, Lekvar and Apricot Rolls available. Please secure orders from friends and neighbors and plan on coming with helping hands to assure its success.

+++ Please check the Sign-Up-Sheet for the weekly Christian Fellowship for the coming weeks. Simple foods without need for preparation are the best. Marilyn Korba coordinates this vital apostolate. Please assist her in making it a success by bringing your donation early so that all are present at the worship of our God.

+++ Please be certain to see **Helen Karpiak** or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$4250.00 on this project to date!

+++ We ask all to make returns on the Bake Sale, Pirohi 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 pirohi available from the recent sales. Please see the woman in the kitchen to secure yours if you had no order.**

+++ **We thank all the good souls who secured orders for the Pirohi Sale, who labored at it and who distributed orders for its success. May the Lord continue to bless your generosity of soul with good health for Many & Blessed Years!**

+++ 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!



Worshipping God

Praise the Lord, I will extol with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly Psalms 111: 1.

I will bring sacrifices to your house; to you I will fulfill my vows, which my lips uttered and my words promised... Psalms 66: 13.

Your decrees are worthy of trust indeed; holiness befits your house, O Lord for length of days Psalms 93: 5.

...and to the church that meets in your house, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ Philemon 3.

Let us enter into his dwelling and worship at his footstool Psalms 132: 7.

...each time they made their pilgrimage to the house of the Lord 1 Samuel 1: 7.

Then he went to the house of the Lord and worshipped 2 Samuel 12: 20.

One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord and contemplate his temple Psalms 27: 4.

Now my Son, the Lord be with you, and may you succeed in building the house of the Lord your God as he has said you shall 1 Chronicles 22: 11.

He is *Revealed*
by many Names...



“...and His name shall be called...” Isaiah 9:6.

The Holy Name of our Lord, God and Saviour was revealed by the angelic visitor. Throughout salvation history, He is referred to in a variety of ways, each of which make known more and more of the enduring love of our Heavenly Father for each of us.

Son of the Most High

“He shall be called the Son of the Most High” Luke 1: 32.

These are the words of the angelic visitor to the Birthgiver of God. This is heaven's revelation to mankind. And it is a remarkable coincidence. We have the evil spirit in the man of the tombs recognizing and addressing a similar title to Jesus, “Son of the Most High God” Mark 5:7. The recognition, here offered is in fulfillment of the Old Covenant promise, “The Lord has sworn in truth to David and will not repent, the fruit of your body will I set upon your throne” Psalms 132: 11. David's descendant is to reign as Son of the Most High. Only time waits for the completion of the Church which is His Body so that a concerted effort may be exerted to manifest Him to the world as He is. He is so announced in all instance so that He can fulfill His destiny as our Saviour, as our Messiah and Redeemer. He comes among us with the credentials to better our lot. Let us do our best each day to win souls for Him and thus hasten the day when we shall be with Him and reign with Him. We bow before You, Son of the Most High. We worship You, Son of the Most High as we exalt Your Holy Name in the world.

"Wisdom, Let Us Be Attentive"

We hear these words repeated frequently during divine services in our parish church. In the first place, they are intended to remind us and bear witness before the world that everything which takes place in the church has as its foundation Christ, the Divine Wisdom of God. "In wisdom you have made them all," Psalms 104: 24, we hear at every Vigil service when the initiatory Psalm is chanted. In our everyday life we frequently use the words "reason, mind, sense, intellect" when we try to describe functions of the brain. In so doing, we frequently and secularly separate functioning of the brain from the full manifestation of the human soul and spirit.

As we live in an age of so-called reason, the age of man's greatest scientific, technical, intellectual and artistic achievements, we become confused. Not infrequently are these achievements deprived of creative elements and are directed toward destructive objectives. The use of the word *Wisdom* in worship is to remind us to always pursue the wisdom of Christ, that is, the values of Christ, the salvation of our soul and not permit the so-called wisdom of the

fallen world to impress or influence us. The world and its values is deceptive and misleading and must be avoided.

This is what is meant by *Wisdom* so often expressed in the life of the Church. Man's reason, enlightened by the light of Christ, can be directed within the sphere of Divine Wisdom representing, at the very best, a mere drop in the ocean of that heavenly expressed Wisdom. We can repeat here the dying words of the great scholar, "All I know is that I know nothing."

Divine Wisdom is the basis of all creative endeavors in this world. All that cannot be contained in God's Wisdom or does not draw nourishment from it, is not enlightened, consciously or unconsciously, is repelled by true knowledge and becomes a victim of destructive forces. As everything is polarized by sin in our world, Divine Wisdom can be opposed only by absolute folly, diabolical folly, and mindlessness. It is that folly of which King David spoke, "The fool says in his heart there is no God" Psalms 14: 1. The Book of Proverbs further attests, "The way of the fool is right in his own heart" Proverbs 12: 15. In other words, it is not the intellect, but simply the changing capricious emotions and distorted feelings of

the individual which express themselves in such simplistic terms.

Thus the Church repeats over again the word *Wisdom* in its liturgical prescriptions. We are thus reminded true wisdom is inherent in God alone, that man can approach it only in direct proportion with his spiritual enlightenment which he derives through the Church and in the life of the Church because it is the Body of Christ. The approximation of Divine Wisdom is predicated on humility and recognition of one's own insignificance, intellectual and spiritual, before the awesome greatness of God. Also, through repetition and emphasis of this word the Church confirms that it, as the Body of Christ is one, holy, catholic and apostolic and the repository and the fountain of the only true wisdom by which man is led to salvation.

Consequently, God's Wisdom is vast and encompassing and profoundly significant. During the Divine Liturgy, this word is often followed by the appended words, "Let us be attentive." In their basic meaning, these words are a call to, and reminder for the supplicants to stand attentively upright, in body and soul, to adopt that physical and spiritual attitude which is conducive to attentiveness and satisfies the reverence of those who pray before

God. Sometimes it is not easy, it can be even tiring, to stand at attention for a long time. But that very fatigue, however, is a noble sacrifice offered to God during divine services and prayer and is blessed and beneficial.

However, the reminder to pay attention is not simply limited to its physical meaning. It then urges upon us inner straightness, simplicity and collectedness. The words of the Cherubic Hymn call upon us "to lay aside all earthly cares." For the duration of worship we must free ourselves from all external, worldly, superfluous, redundant baggage which frequently and very successfully distracts our minds from the greatness and privilege of worship.

This "worldly care", our vanity, our distraction must be left outside the doors of the church; inside everything must be directed towards one goal alone: the glorification of the Lord and our total immersion into the fullness of communion with Him.

In general, simplicity is one of the basic assumptions of spiritual life. It is not without reason that the Optino monastery elder used to take pleasure in repeating: "Where there is simplicity, there are angels aplenty." So here, also, in the church,

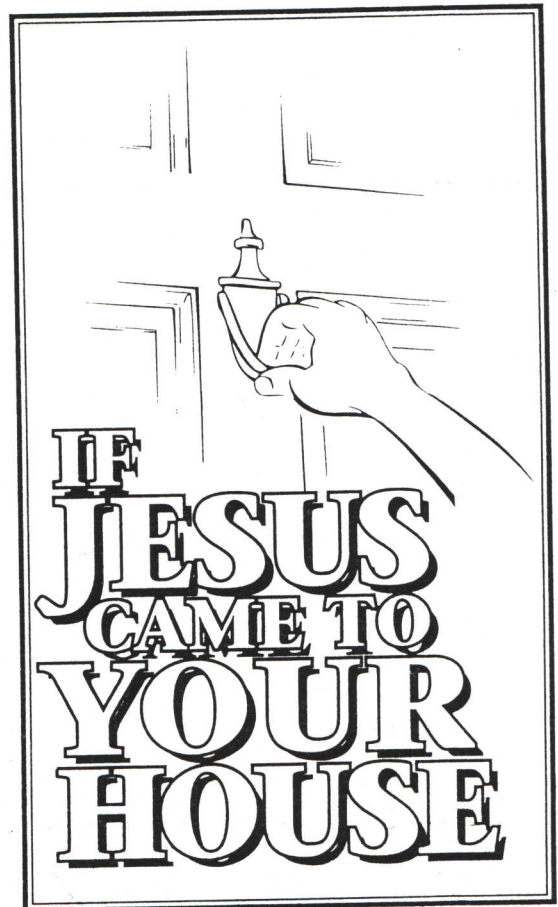
where we stand face to face with the ineffable Wisdom of God, which is revealed in the hymnology and readings to us during the Divine Liturgy, it is good that our hearts, our minds, even our frail flesh be clothed in holy simplicity, in which there are no barriers, no walls between us and God. Paying attention leads to true worship which guides us to salvation. It directs our thinking and our attitude towards eternal truths. Paying singular attention during the teaching homily increases our faith commitment to the Saviour.

This is also the reason why the original meaning of the words, "Let us be attentive" are obviated to convey standing meekly and eagerly absorbing the holiness of God physically in posture and spiritually with an eager soul. They call us to subject our behavior in church to a special spiritual and physical order.

Every divine service is a movement – our movement and the movement of the entire Church – towards God in pilgrimage. In this movement we are like a spiritual army. In the words of the hymn, we "mystically represent the Cherubim", who along with Seraphim are called the "heavenly hosts." An army requires order and systematic advancement towards heaven. In the spiritual dimension, it is an order which unites our spiritual

and physical being into eagerness for nourishment to become the "perfect man" Ephesians 4: 13.

For this reason as we participate in the divine services we should stand soberly, we should stand tall, we then attain the state of physical collectedness which will reveal the way to sobriety of spirit.



If Jesus came to your house to spend
a day or two,
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what
you'd do.
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room
to such an honored Guest,
And all the food you'd serve to Him would
be the very best,
And you would keep assuring Him
you're glad to have Him there,
That serving Him in your own
home is joy beyond compare.

But, when you saw Him coming,
would you meet Him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome
to your heavenly Visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes
before you let Him in?
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible
where they'd been?
Would you turn off the radio and hope He
hadn't heard?
And wish you hadn't uttered that last, loud,
hasty word?



Jesus said:
**Behold, I stand at the
door, and knock: if
any man hear my
voice, and open the
door, I will come in to
him. . .**
Revelation 3:20

Would you hide your worldly music and put
some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would
you rush about?
And I wonder, if the Saviour spent a day or
two with you,
Would you go right on doing the things you
always do?

Would you go right on saying the
things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it
does from day to day?

Would your family conversation
keep up its usual pace?
And would you find it hard each
meal to say a table grace?

Would you sing the songs you always sing,
and read the books you read,
And let Him know the things on which your
mind and spirit feed?
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere
you'd planned to go?
Or would you, maybe, change your plans
for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him meet your
very closest friends?
Or would you hope they'd stay away until
His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever
on and on?
Or would you sigh with great relief when
He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things
that you would do
If Jesus Christ in person came to spend
some time with you.

A Work In Progress

All of us with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another;

for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit

2 Corinthians 3: 18.

Day after day Tatyana watched a picture unfold through her cross-stitching, one of her favorite pastimes. From many squares of colored thread erupts a scene of life so real that she can almost stroke the velvety flower petals and smell the ripe red berries.

As she sews, she realizes that our God also performs a painstakingly slow work of refining each of us, of transforming our lives into something special, something beautiful, something unique, something holy and appealing. With loving persistence, our Creator guides each stroke of the needle in and out of the fabric of our lives. Like her cross-stitch project, Tatyana, too, is a work in progress as are all of us.

As the needlework project progresses, she outlines each leaf and flower with a single contrasting thread. As a result, each object stands out in sharp relief. What was formerly a blurry, white mass has become a sharply defined dogwood blossom, appealing to the eye of the beholder, who gives it form, shape and individual character.

Like the needlework project, each of us is a continuing work of God. When we realize this, our self-worth, goals, triumphs, even our trials are given new and inspiring fresh meaning. Even if the picture is unclear today, we can trust that by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the good work begun in us at our Baptism will continue if we but lend ourselves to the change and transformation necessary to make us truly appealing in the sight of the Lord. Growth in Christ is entirely possible if we allow the Divine Planner of our lives to lead, to guide, to change, to permit the divine thread of holiness to color and transfuse our daily existence.

When we come to understand we are God's choice creation and it takes an entire lifetime for us to become a citizen of heaven, we will gladly permit God's transforming power to work within us. We will cooperate with God's grace. We will follow where He leads because each of us are God's handiwork, wonderfully made and cherished. We are not at all abandoned projects in the hands of a purposeless Creator. We are work in progress!

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

O John our father, God-bearer, hermit of the desert and angel in the flesh; you received heavenly gifts by your fasting, vigils, and prayers. You healed the sick and those coming to you with faith. Glory be to the One Who gives you strength; glory be to Him Who crowned you; glory be to the Lord Who heals all through your intercession Troparion, Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast.

O John, our leader and father; the Lord has placed you on high as a true guiding star lighting the ends of the earth with the truth of your virtue Kontakion, Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast.

Let the faithful exult in glory; let them sing for joy and take their rest Prokimenon, Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast.

Having heard the Gospel of the Lord, O venerable Father John, you left this world, counting as nothing the riches and glory that it offered. Then you cried out to everyone: Love the Lord and you shall find eternal favor, for nothing is preferable to His love. And when He shall come in glory, you will find repose with all the saints. Through their prayers, O Christ, grant great mercy to our souls Vesper Hymn, Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast.

We now behold a new mother, greater than the wonders of old. For who has ever known a mother to bear a child without the help of man? Who has known a mother to hold within her arms the Source of all creation? It was God's own will to be born in this manner, and you, O most pure Virgin, carried Him as an infant in your arms. Because of this, you can approach God with the boldness of a mother. Therefore, we venerate you and ask you to always beseech Him to have mercy on us and save our souls Vesper Hymn, Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast.

Traversing the path of this life, I have been sorely wounded by the thievery of passions; lift me up, O Christ, I beseech You. My soul has been stripped by thieves; they have left me half dead along the path, wounded by the blows of my sins; now deign to heal me, O Lord. By my passions, O Christ our Saviour, I have been stripped of Your commandments; sensual pleasures have struck me down; pour out the oil of Your love upon me Matins Hymn, Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast.

Wonderful News!!!

This past week, all the necessary documents, information, permissory letters from the Most Blessed Metropolitan were delivered to the Sonnenblick Law Firm on Route Nine, Freehold for submission to the Planning Board of Freehold Township for investigation, approval and permission to build.

We are informed the request will be distributed to various township departments for investigation, examination and approval and after some three months, we should be notified to appear at the meeting when our request will be approved.

This is hopefully the final countdown of our preparatory requests so we ask our parish faithful to continue praying that at long last, we may start building some time this summer.

Ground-breaking services will take place after the Resurrection on the new church site.



Birthday
Wishes!

We are pleased to greet those of our faithful communicants who celebrate their birthday this month. Our Lord has offered these souls yet another year of blessed life. The most obvious way He blesses us and participates in our life is by sharing His divine life with us in the Eucharist at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Thus we can gather together and offer thanks to Him for yet another year of life blessed by His most gracious hands. Today, we prayerfully remember in the Divine Liturgy the following souls who celebrate their birthday during the month of April.

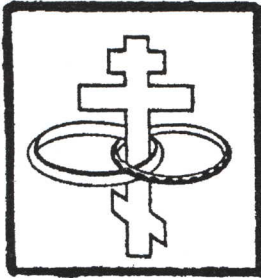
April 2 Mary Jaakobs

April 9 Maria Garcia

April 19 Kyra A. Choti

With a prayerful heart and grateful soul, our parish faith community asks the Lord to continue to bless these birthday celebrants with good spiritual and physical health for the coming year. We invite all to add their intercessory prayers so that with one voice and one heart we may also participate in the grace and joy of their celebration. As we wish them a happy and blessed celebration of their birthday, our ardent prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless them for

Many and Blessed Years!



WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

The Byzantine Fathers of the Church were wont to emphasize how ancient and how venerable marriage is in the sight of our God because it was established yet in paradise before the fall of Adam and Eve and brought to blessed perfection by Christ in Cana of Galilee. Its grace survived the sin of our first parents and it remains a sign of the presence of the Holy Trinity in our midst. It is a living symbol of the deep and abiding love between Christ and His Bride, our blessed Church. It is characterized in the liturgical life of the Church as a happy martyrdom. And it is precisely for this reason the sacramental Mystery of Marriage is such a joyous event. On the third Sunday of this month, we honor those of our good parishioners who observe their marriage anniversaries this month of April. They are specially remembered in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and subsequently receive an individual and personal blessing of the Lord at its conclusion. Celebrating this month are:

April 26 Stephen & Mary D. Demyan

We gratefully give thanks to the Blessed Trinity for having guided and strengthened the marriages of these believers, and their cooperation with sacramental grace to remain faithful to one another over the years. Like all who are faithful to Christ, they recognize the presence and necessity of the Holy Spirit not only in the marriage, but in subsequent family life as well. As we praise our God for their witness in our midst, let us also join them with our prayers and thanksgiving before the throne of the Lord. May they continue to praise His Holy Name by their love and devotion to one another for

Many and Blessed Years

B *lessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.* Man was created to live eternally in peace and harmony, but since the day Cain killed his brother Abel, mankind has struggled mightily to put these ideals into practice. It seems that everywhere we look, we see discord and dissension. Hatred, hostility and mistrust abound between nations, neighbors and, sadly, even family members. Perhaps today - more so than at any other time in history - the world is crying out for peacemakers.

In his Letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul instructs us to “. . . live peaceably with all men.” (Romans 12:18) The Savior we are called upon to imitate is commonly referred to as the “Prince of Peace.” With this in mind, we cannot claim to love God and be at odds with our fellow man - such thoughts are mutually exclusive.

How then do we become “peacemakers?” There is only one way: by totally embracing the “Gospel of Love” espoused by our Lord. Christ clearly instructed us to “love our neighbor as we love ourselves.” He offered us a “new commandment”: to love one another as much as He loves us! Simply put, a loving person is a peaceful person. Peace brings communion with God and concord with all His creation. **WHEN CHRIST RULES OUR HEARTS, PEACE RULES OUR LIVES.**

Our quest for peace often comes at a great price and with formidable opposition. Nonetheless, it is an unwavering journey which every Orthodox Christian is called upon to embark. Doing so will make us true “children of God,” obedient to the teachings of our Father. “So then, let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.” (Romans 14:19)