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TO THE  
MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS

# Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast

April 13, 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

+++ Lazarus Saturday is celebrated is week. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 9:00 AM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise. Confessions are heard prior to and after services.

+++ 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 are in need of four individuals to offer \$100.00 each towards the steeple cross which is on the desk in the vestibule. It will surmount the dome on the new parish church. Its cost is \$600.00 and two offerings have been already been received amounting to \$200.00. Please see Father as soon as possible.

+++ 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, \$417.00; Holyday, \$22.00; Candles, \$49.00; Food Coupons, \$330.00; Kitchen, \$1321.00; Great Fast Self Denial Offering \$72.00; Pennies From Heaven, \$3.00; Pennies, \$4.50; April Bulletin Sponsor, \$30.00; Refund, \$57.00; Rental, \$500.00; Steeple Cross Donations, \$200.00; Christian Fellowship, \$6.00; Flowers, \$25.00, for a total of \$3032.00. 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, Kyle Pasquino, Mary Jaakobs, Angeliki Tsokris, Maria Garcia, 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 \$1308.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish!

+++ Today 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!

+++ Today a special offering is taken after the gospel for flowers for Palm Sunday, Passion Week and the glorious feast of the Resurrection. We pray all are generous in their offering as along with everything else, flowers have also dramatically increased in price.

+++ Next Sunday, on the glorious feast of our Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem a special offering is taken after the gospel reading. Please give generously in celebration of this feast.

+++ 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 are in need of helping hands after the Saturday Divine Liturgy in preparing the pussy willows and palms for distribution next Sunday. They must be ribboned together which takes a little time. Please come and make the celebration a pleasant one for all.

+++ **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.**

+++ 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!**



## Man To God

*The Jesus replied, my nourishment comes from doing the will of God who sent me and from finishing his work John 4: 34.*

*But Peter and John replied, you decide whether God wants us to obey you instead of him! We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we saw Jesus do and heard him say Acts of the Apostles 4: 19.*

*Stay always within the boundaries where God's love can teach and bless you Jude 1: 21.*

*Sir, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses? Jesus replied, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second most important is similar: Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets stem from these two laws and are fulfilled if you obey them Matthew 22: 36 - 40.*

*Teacher, what does a man need to do to live forever in heaven? Jesus replied, What does Moses' law say about it? It says, he replied, that you must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind. And you must love your neighbor just as much as you love yourself. Right, Jesus told him. Do this and you shall live Luke 10: 25 28.*

*Well then, he said, give to Caesar what is his and give to God everything that belongs to God Matthew 22: 21.*

## Two Devoted Sisters

Bethany, the home of two devoted sisters and of their younger brother, Lazarus, was to our Lord a favorite resting place and the scene of the most striking miracle recorded in the gospels.

This sign precipitated the most glorious end of our Saviour among us. It appears the family was a rather wealthy one. The sisters are first named together by St. Luke in his tenth chapter. Our Lord is now apparently on his way to the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem, the summer before his death, when He knocked with the apostles at the door of the hospitable and devoted ladies in Bethany, which is situated less than two miles to the east of Jerusalem on the slope of Mount Olivet, and near the point where the road from Jerusalem to Jericho suddenly descends toward the valley of the Jordan.

Every place in the neighborhood is intimately associated with the doings and sayings of the Master. Today it is but a wretched little hamlet occupied by some Arab families. It was always said Bethany must be seen in springtime while olive, almonds and pomegranates were in bloom, and the oaks and carobs in full leaf, to form some idea of what its loveliness was in our Lord's time and before desolation fell like a funeral pall on the entire surrounding region.

Even now it is said, when everything is green, the nook in which it nestles on the mountain side is said to offer a sweet picture of repose and seclusion, just such a place our Master would choose to retire and rest, to relax from the pressures of his daily routine after his laborious days of teaching and contention in the neighboring capital city. On his way from Jericho, then, and when the very road over which He journeyed suggested to him the exquisitely beautiful parable of the Good Samaritan.

"He entered a certain town and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister named Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard his word. But Martha was busy about much serving and preparing."

While the whole house is astir making preparations to give a fitting welcome to the Lord and his companions, He, as usual, turns every moment into an account of

sowing the word and cultivating the seed of heavenly wisdom and holiness. Whether surrounded by the multitudes in the open air, or by a chosen few in his rare moments of privacy, the unwearied heart of the Lord does not cease to pour out its grace and helpful lessons of the secrets of heavenly wisdom. Mary's willing soul is entranced by his words. From the moment

He enters the house, she sits at his feet attentive and eager to learn, to hear and to be transformed. She desires to eat of his wisdom and drink in every word and tone. Martha, meanwhile, was untiring in what he deemed the cares of an over-anxious hospitality. But we cannot blame where praise is due. Following the inspiration of an active and kindly nature, she is displaying it toward the worthiest of all: Him whom she welcomes as Messiah, and worships as the Son of God.

It was duty into which she throws herself unsparingly. She may have cast many an unnerving look at the spellbound Mary, sitting motionless near him, or whispered urgent prayers for help, as she again and again enters the presence where the apostles and others are also charmed listeners. Then comes the frank-hearted woman's open appeal to the Sublime Teacher himself: "Lord do you not care that my sister has left me to make preparations alone? Speak to her that she help me!"

No one forgets his memorable reply, "Martha, Martha, you are worried about many things, but only one thing is necessary and Mary has chosen the best part which shall not be taken away from her."

This gospel narrative is always read on the feast days of the Birthgiver of God because it typifies the living and loving service she provided in response to God's inviting and challenging grace. She did the right thing first and then embraces outward serving after being nourished on the Word and grace of God which inspires her to become what God destined her to be.

The preparation of varied and abundant fare for the Lord and his companions, the setting forth of the table, decking out the banquet preparations as befitted the divinity of the Guest, the care of inviting to meet him none but such as might be responsive to his teaching in love, and be spiritually benefited from his wisdom.

These were the concerns of Martha. She is not reproved for "many things" or "troubled" zeal with which she pursues them for his sake; but He contrasts this multiplicity and anxiety with the "one thing necessary," the learning of, the loving of and the living of Jesus Christ perfectly and imitating him faithfully.

Natural activity is in itself praiseworthy when it is directed to its legitimate objectives and guided by proper limits, but He who planted generosity of soul sustains it ever more in its exercise. It is good what she is doing, but it is even better to be fed and nourished on the word of God because "man does not live on bread alone." The "one thing necessary" to all is to learn more about Christ so that the good example of the Saviour impresses itself on the soul.

In the many degrees of Christian perfection, though all are good, and many excellent, there is one "best" way, to follow him on the road to the cross, living as He lived, dying as He died, and triumphing as He triumphed. This is the sublime lot of a few, a chosen privileged few, and to which they must be specially called. Could both women aspire to the challenge He offers?

Lazarus, the natural head of the family, does not appear in this our introduction to his house. He is mentioned later by St. John, "the beloved disciple"

The sisters sent a messenger to the Lord one day, prior to his entering Jerusalem because Lazarus who was possessed of very rare qualities as made him most dear to our Lord and his disciples, was gravely ill and about to die.

Our Lord understands very well the circumstances and about to use them to glorify our heavenly Father because He said, "Lazarus, our friend sleeps, but I go that I may awaken him out of sleep." He wishes to bear witness to what is about to happen in his own vocation as Saviour of the world.

When He learns Lazarus is sick, He still remains in his place. Even after the sisters send a messenger, with the invitation to come immediately, "Behold, he whom you love is sick." Jesus will wait that a sign may be performed that alludes to his own Resurrection. He continues to serve the spiritual needs of the people in Bethbara from which He was invited to attend to the needs of Lazarus. He will attend to his needs from a distance simply because love knows no bounds and as time passes, those around the house of Lazarus will see the dread changes rapidly wrought on their loved one.

Is this an unkind response? Certainly not! His words as well as his silence, intended for our instruction shows He is Lord of life, that He is all powerful, all-wise, all-loving. When He appears to rebuke his mother at Cana in Galilee and his relatives in Capharnaum, He knew his purpose. Because they believe in his divinity so intently in Bethany, He will trust them to wait, to hope and to believe.



To his followers He discloses his ultimate purpose: "This sickness is not unto death."

The normally hospitable house in Bethany becomes a house of mourning. He insists to his listeners, "Lazarus our friend sleeps; but I go that I may awaken him out of sleep." As they could not penetrate his meaning, He at length exclaims, "...and I am glad, for your sake, that I was not there, that you may believe, but let us now go to him." When they arrive, Lazarus is already four days in the grave.

The sisters never gave up hope in seeing him, even as they took their brother to the grave, even now as they hired the professional mourners and music players to grieve his death with a dirge.

The neighbors had not ceased to watch the road from Bethbara and Jerusalem for his coming. Martha, rushing down the hillside to meet him says, "Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Her disappointment expresses itself as she adds, "But now I also know that whatever you ask of God, God will give it to you." He simply says, "Your brother will rise again."

Not only is the brief formula of pharasaic belief in the final resurrection affirmed, but an enduring truth He will make known by his own Resurrection. Perhaps there is a slight complaint in her next words, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

Every eye is on them both. He thunders very calmly, almost matter-of-factly, "I am the resurrection and the life." From this very valley of Jehosophat where the last judgment, by tradition will take place, the people are confused with the words they hear. It is fitting that the eternal day should occur here for Adam and his race amid these self same hills where our Life rose from his grave.

He continues, "He who believes in me although he be dead, shall live....do you believe this?" The fragile faith does not go any further than that He is the Redeemer, He is the Messiah, the anointed one of God. "Yes Lord, I believe that you are Christ, the Son of the living God..."

Imperfect faith will increase when she witnesses what is about to happen. She goes for her sister; their united prayers obtain the grace not granted to a single supplication. Without a delay, Mary hastens forth.

The guests in the house seem to think they left to go to the gravesite. But it was to the Lord of Life they hurriedly run. "Where have you laid him?" He exclaims. As they answer, Scripture tells us, "Jesus wept." The Jews therefore said, "Behold how much he loved him." Some in their own minds begin castigating him, if He who opened the eyes of the blind had been here, this man would not have died." Jesus approaches the burial chamber; it is a cave and a stone is laid rolled over its entrance. Jesus commands them to take away the stone. As they remove it, the odor of the corpse in putrefaction fills the air. Martha said, "Lord, he stinks!"

He reminds them of the glory of God they are about to witness. With a loud voice He cries out, "Lazarus, come forth!" The astoundingly unbelievable happens. What they had never heard of occurs. What they had never seen, challenges their eyesight. Lazarus comes out of the grave healthy and intact.

Martha and Mary are overjoyed. Their family unity is restored. Their loving brother is once again given life. They enjoy a supper afterwards in celebration. What does Mary do? There is no misgiving in her mind with regard to the certainty of the terrible sufferings and death so near at hand; so she prepared to bestow on her brother's Saviour and Restorer from death such a public mark of her devotion and affection. Scripture tells us, "Mary, therefore took a pound of ointment of great value and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment."

Who among friends of the Lord would not praise the generous outpouring love that had spilled out, without stint, without reservation the rarest of essences on the most divine of benefactors?

One of the disciples, Judas of Iscariot protests the demonstration saying "the ointment could have been sold and proceeds given to the poor and needy." Jesus tells the crowd she anointed "me for the day of my burial."

Martha and Mary, the holy women along with their brother became disciples and evangelized the middle east with their witness of Christ's love. Let us, as we are about to celebrate Lazarus Saturday, follow their example with similar devotion. Let our living faith be expressed in such a devoted way that God is moved to reveal himself in an even greater and more demonstrative way!

## HOW HE SPENDS HIS TIME

*He always lives to intercede...Hebrews 7: 25.*

There are some around us in our neighborhoods, and perhaps even among true believers who think simply because they have been baptized they have no worries. By that they mean that once a person is saved, he is always saved. Truth makes us realize that this kind of fuzzy thinking makes believers careless not only because it is not true, but because it is dangerous. The whole concept leads to complacency and taking the Lord for granted and leads us to the perilous sin of presumption.

There is eternal safety for those who believe in Jesus Christ and then put their belief into action by living the life of Christ. This certainly cannot be simply reduced to once saved, always saved. Anyone who thinks he was saved at baptism once and now has nothing to do with Christ does not understand Christianity at all. He has placed faith in a warlock's notion of good feelings and happy thoughts. He is a self-deceived and beguiled person who thinks so little of himself that he imagines salvation comes about by wishful thinking in an imaginary mind.

Those who believe in Jesus Christ will most surely be brought through temptations and afflictions in this life and they will endure to the extent they cooperate with God's freely offered grace to overcome any temptation or challenge. They must do something and that something is positive action to maintain sanctity and holiness in life. It will not happen by dreaming and wishing for it. It comes as a result of direct struggle with the forces of evil around us, ever depending on God's freely offered grace in the sacramental Mysteries to fortify us and overcome the difficulties of life and achieve victory. We endure only because of the perseverance of Christ who prays continuously for his people who live a grace-filled life.

We must recognize that prayers are being offered in heaven for us at this very moment if we truly belong to him, by no other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of it! Jesus came into this world and lived for his people. He died for us and He rose for us. And now He prays continuously for us. He is not finished with us so why should we think that a one time spiritual event would finish us with him? We have an ongoing relationship with him by the way we live. Our prayers are important, but the prayers of the Son of God are more important and our uniting with them in purpose and faith are vitally important. This must be done over and over again. Only because of our cooperation with the inner working of his freely offered grace, we will make it through to glory.

# **WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE**

*In you, O Mother Mary, the faithful divine likeness shone forth, for by taking up the cross, you followed Christ. You gave us an example to be not concerned with the flesh, but to be diligent over the eternal things of the spirit. Therefore, O Venerable Mary, you now rejoice with the angels* Troparion, St. Mary of Egypt.

*Once filled with all kinds of vices, today, through repentance, she appears as the bride of Christ. Leading an angelic life, she crushes the devil with the help of the cross. Therefore, O venerable Mary, you now rejoice with the angels* Kontakion, St. Mary of Egypt.

*O Christ God, You confirmed the resurrection of all before the time of Your passion by raising Lazarus from the dead; therefore we, as the children of Israel, carry the symbols of victory and cry out to You, the Conqueror of death: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord"* Troparion, Lazarus Saturday.

*Christ, the Joy of all, the Truth, the Light, the Life, and the Resurrection of the world appeared to those on earth. Because of His goodness, He became also the image of Resurrection, granting divine forgiveness to all* Kontakion, Lazarus Saturday.

*The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; Whom shall I fear?* Prokimenon, Lazarus Saturday.

*Let us gloriously honor the pure Mother of God. She bore the divine Fire and was not consumed. With ceaseless praise, let us extol her* Hymn instead of "It is truly proper...", Lazarus Saturday.

*Out of the mouths of babes and infants, You have fashioned praise. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!* Communion hymn, Lazarus Saturday.

*All you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!* Hymn Instead of "Holy God", Lazarus Saturday.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR COMMITMENT TO CHRIST

When we choose to follow Jesus Christ, it should be understood that this will not be a journey free from trials and tribulations. Throughout the history of the Church, a countless number of men and woman have suffered greatly for choosing His ways over the ways of the world - which are inherently sinful and evil. The final Beatitudes remind us of the possible consequences to our Christian commitment: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. . . Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake."

It should be noted that our Lord never painted a "rosy picture" for His Apostles and disciples concerning what may lie ahead for them. He knew that He had many enemies and, therefore, so would they. "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (John 15:20) Jesus proclaimed that He was the "Light of the world," maintaining that "everyone practicing evil hates the light." Persecution is almost inevitable for Christians striving to live in accordance with the righteousness required by the Gospel, for evil people will always detest those who speak out against their wicked deeds. Therefore, a Christian must be willing to patiently bear insults, mockery, disgrace, slander, defamation of character and yes, even death. Such must be the depth of our devotion to the One Whom we promised to love and serve on the day of our baptism.

But we are mere mortals - how can we endure all of the fearful aspects of persecution? By never losing sight of the "prize" at the end of our arduous "race:" the Kingdom of Heaven. Finding a place there will, indeed, be a source of joy beyond our wildest dreams! Remember: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Cor 2:9)