



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council

May 16, 2010

**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

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

+++ This coming Saturday is the last All Souls' Day of the liturgical year. Please join us in prayer and praise at 9: 00 AM when the Divine Liturgy is celebrated with the Memorial Service following.

+++ We remind our faithful that at the last Diocesan Council this past summer, the Diocesan Dues were raised, due to inflation and need, from the past \$50.00 per adult individual, eighteen years and older, to \$60.00 per year. Our envelope offering system still has the old amount on it, so please disregard that figure and make your offering according to the new mandated amount. If this offering was made in the old amount, please correct it by submitting the additional amount with a notation on the envelope because the parish must send the entire amount to the diocesan chancery.

+++ We will have Bake Sale on Friday, May 28 in time for the Memorial Day celebration. Please secure orders for Nut Rolls, Poppyseed, Lekvar and Apricot Rolls at \$12.00 each. The next and last Pirohi Sale for the season will be on Saturday, June 12.

+++ The offering for flowers for the coming feast of Pentecost is taken TODAY. Please be generous for the beautification of our church as we celebrate its birthday.

+++ A special Birthday offering for the Church will be taken after the gospel reading next Sunday. May your offering show your appreciation for the gift of salvation we have in Christ through His Body, our blessed Church!

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

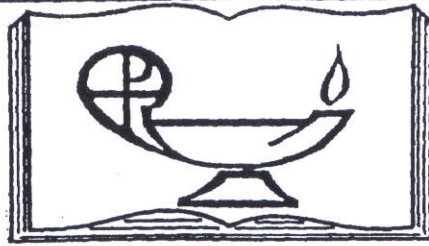
+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week-end: Tithe Offering, ~~\$57.00~~; Candles, ~~\$70.00~~; Kitchen, ~~\$162.00~~; Food Coupons, ~~\$560.00~~; Flowers, ~~\$30.00~~; Holyday, ~~\$10.00~~; Christian Fellowship, ~~\$12.00~~, for a total of ~~\$1501.00~~. 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 41 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, +Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, Maria Idromenos, Anna Zacharyczuk, Marilyn Korba, Maria Garcia, Kent Pasquino, Kyle Pasquino, 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 ~~\$1572.00~~ from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals ~~\$103,715.00~~. 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.

LORD



TEACH
US

Overcoming Pride

Pride goes before disaster, and a haughty spirit before a fall. It is better to be humble with the meek than to share plunder with the proud. He who plans a thing will be successful; happy is he who trusts in the Lord Proverbs 16: 18 - 20.

He who trusts himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is safe Proverbs 28: 26.

God resists the proud but bestows his favor on the lowly James 4: 7.

Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest, and whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all Matthew 20: 26, 27.

Give ear, listen humbly, for the Lord speaks. Give glory to the Lord, your God, before it grows dark; if you do not listen to this in your pride, I will weep in secret many tears Jeremiah 13: 15 - 17.

Man's pride causes his humiliation, but he who is humble of spirit obtains honor Proverbs 29: 23.

Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility goes before honors Proverbs 18: 12.

The fear of the Lord is training for wisdom, and humility goes before honors Proverbs 15: 33.

The Lord is exalted, yet the lowly he sees, and the proud he knows from afar Psalms 138: 6.

When the Lord came upon the earth, when He entered our world, mercy was rather unknown. Among His countrymen, the law of the talon was part of everyone's life. It said that, if a man knocked out your eye, you could take him to court of law and get a judgment to knock out his as well. There was no mercy, just blind convoluted justice!

They had to make up a word for hospital at the coming of the Lord into the world; the idea of taking care of the sick had never really broken through. Do you recall the lepers and their caves outside all the communities of the chosen people? To destroy such coldness of heart, such indifference, our Lord came to light this fire of love and mercy on our earth because our sins had darkened it.

Our Lord emphasizes to us how much He desires mercy rather than sacrifice. He has come to call, not the self-righteous, but sinners to salvation. He recognized how desperately we need God's mercy. And what we must realize as Orthodox believers is how desperately we are in need of God's mercy.

Who really needs God's mercy?

The unfortunate eight year old boy who lost \$20.00 on the way to the store for his parents needs lots of mercy; parents who cannot afford braces for

*Lord have **MERCY!***

*You have **MERCY!***

*Let's all have **MERCY!***

their child's teeth need mercy; teen-agers with acne and teen-agers who have been talked into taking drugs by their 'friends' need mercy. All of us need mercy when someone decides to lie about us. We are completely at the mercy of someone who has a tongue and is vicious with it. All of us need mercy when someone decided to tell the tough truth about us. The sick, the drunkard who needs the telephone number of Alcoholics Anonymous

needs mercy. The spouse needs mercy as well. The child, who remains unmarried during the endless years of sickness and senility of a parent needs that parent's mercy and needs mercy when we come upon them and find them somewhat bitter behind the eyes, although a smile in front is still genuine.

The young need our mercy if their parents never taught them gradual responsibility, but suddenly lowered the boom with "Now you are on your own!" The young also need mercy if they do not have the benefit of parents who provided a good, fine serious Christian example of living faith commitment to Christ, if they were not considered important enough to be accompanied each and every Sunday and holy day to the Divine Liturgy as an opportunity to praise and thank God for their blessings and unique gifts.

Mothers-in-law need our mercy as they try to keep smiling at the endless hurting jokes served up to them. Did you know that the French word for mother-in-law is *belle mere*? It means "beautiful mother". Three cheers for the mercy of the French language and the lesson it teaches us!

But the greatest interplay of mercy the world has ever known happened on Golgotha right after the bad thief more or less challenged our Lord, "If you are the Messiah, save yourself and us" It was a command, a command based on a conditional "if". And then, out of that terrible, abominable, screaming crowd, one merciful voice took up for our Lord. It was a show of mercy and it was Dismas, the repentant thief, berating the other thief: "Have you no fear of God?...we are paying the price for what we have done, but this man has done nothing wrong." And then the grace of God began to take expression in its mercy because Dismas looked at our Lord and said, "Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom." He did not say, "take me with you," just simply, "remember me."

And so it was our Lord's turn to show what mercy really is. His fingers opened a bit before the crowding spike thrust through them and He whispered out of His pain, "Today, you will be with me in paradise." Totality and fullness of mercy!

Precisely for this very reason do we continually repeat and entreat the eternal mercy of our heavenly Father

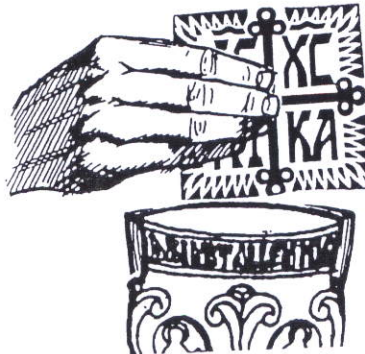
for ourselves at the Divine Liturgy and all other services and devotions of our holy Church. We recognize how necessary mercy is for us who continually fall short of what our God expects of us. That is why the believer is so eager to come and worship because he becomes, then, a recipient of God's freely offered mercy. He knows what it means; he experiences it. We realize we have no other recourse except to ask His mercy and in so doing also remind each other how merciful we must be to one another.

In asking for mercy from our God, we must freely offer it to each other. We must recognize we will only be recipients of God's mercy to the extent we are merciful to our fellow man. If God is eager to offer mercy to a contrite heart, who are we as His creation to withhold it from one another? If we are demeaning and demanding of each other, our God will be demanding of us! This is another reason why it is so important for the sincere and serious soul to participate in the grace of the Divine Liturgy as often as it is celebrated so that we continually remind ourselves of this requisite in our spiritual lives and how it is to be obtained. If we are

merciful, we reflect God's innate mercy and He will be merciful to us,

It is only when we have a genuine relationship with our God that mercy can be ours. We exist because of God's mercy for us. He pardons the sincere soul because of His mercy. It is one of His hallmarks as it must also, by His grace, be ours. He is our merciful Father and we depend on His mercy. We must be as eager dispensers of mercy as our God is.

But we must remember we cannot expect a truly merciful response unless we, too, have been merciful to ourselves, if we have been worshipping and imbibing the spirit and practice of mercy we inevitably learn at the Divine Liturgy. If we are cold and indifferent to our own soul and its genuine needs, we will cavalierly overlook the importance of regular and continuing worship at the Divine Liturgy.



WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

Angelic powers descended to your grave, and the guards fell down and appeared dead. Mary came to the grave seeking your most pure body. You conquered and despoiled the Abyss without being touched by it. You, the Giver of Life, met the Virgin, O Lord, risen from the dead; glory to You! Troparion, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.

You ascended in glory, O Christ, our God, and delighted the disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through this blessing, they were assured that you are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world Troparion, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

O Christ, God, You are above all praise, for you established our fathers O Christ our God. You delighted the disciples as lights to all on earth. You led us all to true faith through them. O most bountiful Lord, glory to you! Troparion, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.

The preaching of the apostles and the decisions of the fathers have established the true faith of the Church which she wears as the garment of truth fashioned from the theology from on high; she justly governs and glorifies the great mystery of worship Kontakion, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.

When you fulfilled the plan of salvation for us and united all things on earth to those in heaven, Christ our God, you ascended in glory, never leaving us, but remaining ever-present. For you proclaimed to those who love you: 'I am with you, and no one else has power over you' Kontakion, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

Blessed are you, and praiseworthy, O Lord, God of our fathers; glorious forever is your name! Prokimenon, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the highest. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Communion Hymn, Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council.

WHO'S GONNA

**INFORM YOU
WARM YOU
MOVE YOU
AMUSE YOU
TOUCH YOU
STUN YOU
ROCK YOU
SHOCK YOU
AMAZE YOU
ASTOUND YOU
DELIGHT YOU
EXCITE YOU
ENTERTAIN YOU
INVOLVE YOU?**

For us as followers of our Lord and Saviour, we know it is only He Who can teach us and bring us to the fullness of salvation in our Orthodox Christian Church! It is He alone Who can warm us and strengthen us by the grace of the Holy Spirit in His sacramental Mysteries. In our sorrows and in our joys, it is He alone Who can move us toward holiness and sanctity. Since He is our all, He also amuses us by overlooking our foibles when we repent and offers us His heavenly joy which is beyond all understanding. Many times, He must rock us from our apathy and lethargy and insist we pursue consistently and steadfastly the goal of our vocation of salvation as His followers.

When we depart from Him, He stuns us into reality as well as shocks us with the gravity of our unworthiness and failing to live up to His expectations. He continually delights us with His eagerness to forgive our offenses if we are repentant, and confess them and astounds us with the promise of eternal beatitude if we are faithful, regardless how bleak our past has been. We cannot help but be excited because He has chosen us individually for a particular unique purpose in the life of His Body, the Church, the vehicle of salvation for the entire world. He has seen because He

created our individual worth and draws us nearer to Him. In calling us to a faithful commitment that is irrevocable, He insists we live it daily. He entertains us in filling our moments with holy insights to the eternal values He offers. He makes us important by teaching us that we must assume his work in this weary world and make it our number one priority.

He wants us to become involved not only in our family life and neighborhoods, but fundamentally in our spiritual family, our parish, as well because it is from our parish that we receive the incentive, the wherewithal, the sacramental Mysteries which infuse us with His grace to be able to be all the things He expects of our human dignity.

That is the fundamental reason our parish is so vitally important to us who believe. It is here that we are coached and taught His principles for our lives. It is here we receive the grace of the sacramental Mysteries to be able to persevere in being faithful to Him.

It is in our parish that we are drawn into salvation. It is here in our parish that we become communicants of the universal timeless Church of Christ. It is in our parish church that we are

touched by the gentle hand of blessing in Christ. It is here in our parish that the visible sign of our Orthodox Christian faith is exhibited. It is here in our parish that we have opportunities to practice our faith, to do the good works that genuine faith engenders.

It is here that we encounter the living God in our worship at the Divine Liturgy. It is in our parish church that our humanity is exhibited and its shortcoming failures strengthened and overcome by God's merciful grace. Our parish church is the conduit through which God's blessings reach me and my loved ones. It is in my parish church that Christ becomes alive and vibrant for me. When we go elsewhere, we are attempting to get into the sheepfold through the back door, something a faithful believer would never contemplate.

Let us be faithful to our parish church. It provides us all with whatever we need to be disciples of the Eternal Galilean. It remains for us to dip into the well of eternal life so that we can make our own all the good things our God has promised us through His Son by the grace of the Holy Spirit. We are fooling ourselves if we think we can find all these treasures somewhere else!



*Wisdom Of
The*



*Byzantine
Fathers*

When men and women marry, the union should be made with the consent of the bishop, so that the marriage may be according to the Lord and not merely out of lust. Let all be done to the glory of God St. Ignatius of Antioch.

Leave me as I am, for He Who gives me the power to endure the fire will grant me also to remain in the flames unmoved, even without the security which the nails give St. Polycarp of Smyrna.

A virgin ought not only to be so, but also to be perceived and be believed to be so; no one on seeing a consecrated virgin, or a nun, should be in any doubt as to whether she is one St. Cyprian of Carthage.

A virgin or nun does not have an imposition of hands, for personal choice alone is what makes a virgin St. Hippolytus of Athens.

Your Yourself, O Christ, are my all. For You shall I keep chaste St. Methodius of Olympus.

WHY DID OUR LORD LEAVE US?

We know that 40 days after His Resurrection, our Lord ascended into heaven. Have you ever wondered why He did that to us? Couldn't He have stayed with us on earth forever? Wouldn't that have been a marvelous way to prove to an unbelieving world that, in fact, He was able to conquer death and rise from His tomb? These are good questions, and the answers to them have been given to us by no less of an "authority" than Christ Himself.

When Jesus shared the Passover meal with His Apostles prior to His Passion, He went to great lengths to explain to His followers the sequence of events that were about to unfold. He told them that it was necessary for Him to leave them. *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not, the Helper (Holy Spirit) will not come to you, but if I depart, I will send Him to you."* (John 16:7) *"When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth."* (John 16:13) Through the Holy Spirit, the grace of God would know no limits, but would be able to dwell within everyone. In reality, Christ, through the Holy Spirit, fulfills His promise to His Apostles and to us as well: *"Lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:20) We sing at Vespers on the Feast of the Ascension: *"The Lord ascended into heaven in order to send the Comforter into the world. Heaven prepared a throne for Him and the clouds assisted Him in His ascent. The angels wonder as they see a Man more exalted than they. The Father receives into His bosom the one Who is eternally with Him."* Yes, this was all part of God's plan for us. As John Chrysostom writes concerning this great Feast: *"Today the human race is completely reconciled with God. Today, we become heirs to the kingdom of heaven - we who do not even deserve earth."*

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