



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

June 20, 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

+++ This Thursday we have the solemn feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. In anticipation, the vespereal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Wednesday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in celebration, prayer and praise.

+++ Monday evening at 7: 30 PM, we will have healing services through the intercession of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker. All are invited to enjoy the grace of this celebration.

+++ We find ourselves in the Apostles Fast which concludes on the feast of the Prime Apostles, SS. Peter & Paul, celebrated June 29. For the success of our parish spiritual growth, we ask our faithful to devoutly observe the prescription of the season by fasting from meat products until the feast day is celebrated.

+++ 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.

++ 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, \$496.00; Candles, \$56.00; Food Coupons, \$240.00; Christian Fellowship, \$7.00; Special Gifts, \$50.00; \$20.00; Bulletin, \$50.00; Pennies From Heaven, \$2.00; Kitchen, \$1887.00, for a total of \$2808.00. 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, Delores Waller, Kent Pasquino, Kyle Pasquino, and Pani Buletza.

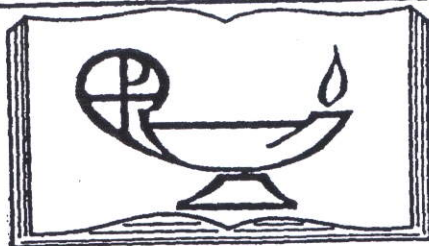
+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1574.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$104, 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.

+++ There is currently a Ukrainian Icon Exhibit from the Caves Monastery in Kiev at the museum of Biblical Art in New York City until September. The museum is opened from Wednesday to Sunday each week from noon onward. Admission is most reasonable with discounts for senior citizens. Nina Harrison has additional information. Please see her if you are interested so we might be able to get a group to attend and set a commonly agreeable date.

+++ Be certain your child attends the spiritual formation classes held each Sunday following the Divine Liturgy. We make a serious attempt to share the love of our Lord with all.

LORD



TEACH
US

Eternal Life

I say emphatically that anyone who listens to my message and believes in God who sent me has eternal life and will never be damned for his sins, but has already passed out of death into life. And I solemnly declare that the time is coming, in fact, is here, when the dead shall hear my voice, the voice of the Son of God, and those who listen shall live and shall rise again; those who have done good, to eternal life, and those who have continued in evil, to judgment. John 5: 24 - 29.

You search the Scriptures for you believe they give you eternal life. And the Scriptures point to me! Yet you won't come to me so that I can give you this eternal life! John 5: 39.

And this is the will of God that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them to eternal life on the last day. For this is my Father's will that everyone who sees his son and believes in him should have eternal life, that I should raise him on the last day. For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him to me and on the last day I will cause all such to rise again from the dead. How earnestly I tell you this – anyone who believes in me already has eternal life. But the Bread from heaven gives eternal life to everyone who eats it. I am that living Bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats the Bread I give shall live forever, this Bread is my flesh given to redeem humanity. So Jesus said it again, With all the earnestness I possess I tell you this: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you cannot have eternal life within you But anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day. I am the true Bread come down from heaven and anyone who eats this Bread shall live forever, and not die as your fathers did, though they ate bread from heaven. Simon Peter replied, Master, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words that give eternal life. John 6: 39 - 68.

Fourth Sunday

"I assure you I have never seen this much faith in all of Israel" Matthew 8: 10. There is a gold mine hidden in every life. A young man found a vein of gold in a mountain. He tried to get it out himself but kept repeatedly failing. He felt like giving up, but instead he went into town and asked a mining agency to come take a look at it. The mining company surveyed the mountain and the vein of gold and wanted to buy it. They offered the young man a huge amount of cash if he would sell it to them. He thought about it and decided that rather than selling it to the mining company, he would keep it and learn all he could about mining. Over the next year he studied practically day and night. He read every book on mining he could lay his hands on, took every course on it he could find and talked to every person who would give him any information about it. He did nothing else for that entire year but learn about mining. He laid aside everything else in life in order to devote his entire attention to learning how to mine gold. At the end of that year he went back to the mountain to dig out the gold. It was tremendously hard work but in the end he had millions and millions of dollars.

The lesson inherent in this tale is that many people, perhaps most people would have taken one look at the mountain and the hard work required to get the gold out of it, and they would have taken the offer of the quick and easy money. They would not have wanted the hassle, the aggravation, they would not have wanted to give up a year of life to study when they could have been having a good time. Instead, they would have taken the "right now" alternative.

How many people are there who never have what they could have because of that kind of mindset? The young man could have done that too, but if he had, he would never have enjoyed the full benefits of that vein of gold. The pagan commander in today's gospel narrative could have taken the easy way out, ignored the symptoms and sickness of his servant boy and just secured another one on the market if he ended up dying. But instead, he invested his entire store of faith in Christ about whom he just heard a few times who could accomplish by heavenly power what he could only dream of achieving. Yes the servant was valuable and yes it would be good to continue having his devoted and attentive service, but suppose Christ refused? Suppose the pagan was rebuked and ignored? He took the chance of being embarrassed in public.

Does what happened in today's gospel narrative say anything to us? Does it light a fire in us? Does it move us to strip off everything else that has been hindering us from staying focused on developing our inner potential as created in God's image? Like the young man, like the

pagan legionnaire, it does take some effort, but if we stay focused, if we are persistent in prayer, we will eventually hit gold, the gold of enjoying the benefits of living a totally fulfilled purposeful life. "Therefore, since we for our part are surrounded by this cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every encumbrance of sin which clings to us and persevere in running the race which lies ahead" Hebrews 12: 1.

If we are going to run our race, if we are going to live our life, we must lay aside every weight and run with patience; literally do what our God tell us to do. Running the race with no hindrances means stripping for the contest. St. Paul is drawing a parallel which then was much better understood than it is today. In those days, runners conditioned their bodies for a race just as we do today. But at the time of the race, they stripped off their clothing so that when they ran there would be nothing to hinder them. They also oiled their bodies with fine oils. In the same way we need to be well oiled or anointed with the Holy Spirit if we are going to win our race. We also need to remove anything from our lives that would hinder us in running the race set before us.

There are different hindrances to running successfully in a race. Too many wrong and inappropriate commitments divide our time away from what is most important in life: saving our soul. The devil can come up with a thousand ways every week to entangle us and get us into something that is going to prevent us from doing what God expects us to accomplish. Everything seems so important, like an emergency and it seems they all have to be handled right now because we are the only ones who can do so.

If we are going to do what God has called us to do, we are going to have to stay focused because the world we live in is filled with distractions and entanglements. We are supposed to be in worship on Sunday and holydays, but we make up all kinds of reasons why we are elsewhere. God expects too much we think to ourselves; we just have so many hours in the day; there are more important responsibilities we have to fulfill. God is always placed second on the list so He is never given the value and priority He deserves. Then we wonder why we are ill, confused, in pain and isolated, why we look to fellow fools for completion and fulfillment instead of to God himself.

The Roman company commander knows how to secure and remain focused and prioritized. He has heard a few things about the Lord and he believes them. So he directly approaches Christ for a blessing. He believes what he has witnessed about the Lord. He has cause to expect an astounding and immediate response. He does not want to forever live on a crazy merry-go-round with no way off. He knew what he was supposed to do because he wanted to safeguard and protect a worthwhile servant boy. God put a vision in him; God gave him the

grace to pursue it to its likely end. He did not want a frustrated life. He stayed focused. He was sincere in pursuing the fulfillment of his need and ambition.

And just like St. John the Baptist whose feast of the Nativity we celebrate today as well, we know what we seek and we pursue it with living faith. We are inspired by the words of St. Paul, "I do not run like man who loses sight of the finish line. I do not fight as if I were shadow boxing. What I do is discipline my own body and master it, for fear that after having preached to others I myself should be rejected" 1 Corinthians 9: 26, 27.

Nothing Can Separate Us

Romans 8

If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A Breathing Meditation

Take a slow, deep breath in. Feel a warmth entering your being. Now breathe out slowly. Imagine that you are releasing all the cares of the week. All the tension. All the worries. All the sadness. Spend the next few minutes taking long, full breaths.

Each time you inhale, imagine that you are filling up your every limb with lightness. Each time you exhale, imagine that you are releasing the heavy weight that burdens your soul. Remember to breathe deeply and slowly.

Breathe in peace, breathe out anxiety
Breathe in light, breathe out darkness
Breathe in joy, breathe out pain
Breathe in health, breathe out sickness
Breathe in trust, breathe out fear
Breathe in rest, breathe out panic
Breathe in the life breath of God
Breathe out all that we take for granted.

Take a moment now to thank God for the blessings you received today.



Children learn what they live



If a child lives with criticism,
He learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility,
He learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule,
He learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame,
He learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance,
He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement,
He learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise,
He learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness,
He learns justice.

If a child lives with security,
He learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval,
He learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance +
friendship,

He learns to find love in the world.

Know God: Know Yourself!

I have dealt with great things that I do not understand; things too wonderful for me, which I cannot know; therefore I disown what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes Job 42: 3, 6.

A clear view of God's majesty and holiness helps us see our own weaknesses and sinfulness. When Isaiah saw the Lord "...high and lifted up," he cried out, 'Woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips' Isaiah 6: 5. When the apostle Peter caught a glimpse of Christ's hidden glory, he declared, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" Luke 5: 8!

A confused man once said, he could go several days without consciously sinning. But an old hermit upon hearing the story of that man's self-evaluation revealed with deep conviction, "No man who has seen the exquisite holiness of God would say a thing like that!"

Before Job "saw" God, he made the statement, "My justice I maintain and I will not relinquish it; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days" Job 27: 6. later God spoke to him out of the whirlwind, drawing vivid word pictures of his majesty, wisdom, and power. Job was so moved and humbled by the wonder of this pageantry that he forgot his suffering, his indignation and his despair. He said, "I repent in dust and ashes."

We need to seek the Lord daily in prayer, in worship in meditation, in reading the Scripture, in cherishing sacramental life and by committing ourselves to his will. A clearer perception of his majesty and holiness will give us a more accurate picture of ourselves, a picture that leaves no room for self-righteousness and pride.

As we survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory offered himself, our riches gain is but loss which then pours contempt on all our pride.

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad. With his arm the Lord has won victory. By His death, the Lord has conquered death. He has become the first-born of the dead, He has delivered us from the depths of the Abyss and has granted great mercy to the world Troparion, Resurrection Tone Three.

Today, You arose from the grave, O merciful Lord. You rescued us from the gates of death. Today, Adam sings in exultation and Eve rejoices. With them, the prophets and patriarchs ever praise the might of Your divine power Kontakion, Resurrection Tone Three.

Sing praise to God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise Prokimenon, Resurrection Tone Three.

O Christ our Saviour, by Your Cross the might of death has vanished; the deceit of the devil has been broken; the human race saved by faith. Therefore we offer You unceasing praise Vesper Hymn, Tone Three.

I glorify the power of the Father; I extol the power of the Son; I sing a hymn to the power of the Holy Spirit, One Divinity, indivisible, uncreated, equal in essence and reigning forever Vesper Hymn, Tone Three.

Although unworthy, we stand in Your temple, O Christ our God. We offer our evening hymns of praise; We proclaim loudly: "O Christ our God, Lover of mankind, You have enlightened mankind by Your resurrection; deliver Your people, save them from the hands of Your enemies" Vesper Hymn, Tone Three.

By the good pleasure of the Father, by the work of the Holy Spirit, as a Virgin you conceived the Son of God. He was born of the Father before all ages. In you, He became man for us. You gave Him birth without a father; You nourished Him as a child. Never cease to intercede with Him that He save our souls from affliction Vesper Hymn, Tone Three.

How to be a better Dad

There's only one expert on the subject: God the Father

A priest reveals how one Nicholas called him at the rectory with a problem. He needed help in being a better father to his three young children than he felt his dad was to him.

“It isn’t as if my father was cruel to us,” Nicholas said, “It’s just that he was shadow. He worked long hours, was active in the community – everybody thought he was great guy – but he was never home. And now I find myself struggling to make a connection with my own kids. I want to have the kind of relationship my wife has with them, but I am not sure how to make that happen.”

How to make that happen is a but living fully one’s vocation to fatherhood. Fathers are primarily responsible to our heavenly Father for building the communities of love we believe and the Church tells us our families should be. But, like Nicholas, many men wonder, “Where is the job description?”

The following insights are offered as a starting point for becoming the kind of father God is to us; the kind of father God is calling us to be to the children He has entrusted to our care.

Orthodox believers consider the family to be the domestic church after the insights offered us by St. John Chrysostom. This means several things but perhaps one of the most important ideals conveyed by this phrase is that each family must be centered around deep love of Christ. Fathers play a central role in making this happen.

In the ancient Hebrew tradition, the father was responsible for teaching his children the Torah, God's Law. Psychological understanding coupled with deep spiritual research supports the value of upholding this tradition. Children who grow up to exhibit the highest level of moral virtue as well as a healthy spirituality learned to do so at their father's knee. These same studies suggest that even when a mother is active in teaching the faith to her children, her efforts are severely hampered – even nullified – if the father is not leading the way.

Sacred tradition and solid research agree. Believing fathers must be the “pastors” and “shepherds” of their family parishes and take their vocation seriously. This begins when men pursue a close, personal relationship - with Jesus Christ both in private prayer and in Eucharistic life. It continues when fathers take the lead in encouraging family prayer and serve as the primary teachers of faith in their homes, knitted closely and tightly with good example.

The best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. It is easy to equate love with giving gifts of flowers, cards or candy, but it is so much more than this. For us Christians real love is willing and working for the good of another. Every day husbands must ask themselves. “What can I do to make my wife's life a little easier, more enjoyable, more grace-filled?” and then we must do it. Not only because she deserves it, but because our Christian dignity demands it. Doing this serves the prime directive of Christian discipleship: teaching our children how to have healthy adult relationships with others and the God who made us.

“Anyone who says he loves God but hates his neighbor is a liar” I John 4: 20 echoes to us from the teaching of the beloved disciple. We cannot legitimately consider ourselves followers of the Lord unless we give every drop of energy we have to loving – that is daily working for the good of our closest neighbors, our wives, and our children. Men of God: devoted fathers, what can you do for yours today?

Part of being the faithful pastor of your family parish is making sure your family has a vision, a plan for where it is going and the kind of person each in the family is to become: mom and dad included – and where each wants to be when they grow up. Sit down with your wife and children today on this Fathers' Day, and identify the qualities and virtues you most want your family to have and impart to others. Patience? Love? Generosity? Respect? Next, ask each family member to give one specific example of how they would better demonstrate that virtue. Start with yourself as father. Post your family identity statement in a prominent place in your home so that all can see what your family stands for. Take primary responsibility for helping your family, yourself included, stay on task.

All parents want obedience from their children. But true Christian obedience as opposed to fear-based obedience, is best understood as a loving response to having been first loved. How many glorified souls wrote of their spiritual experiences and said they never wanted to do anything to offend their parents because the love and service parents showered on the children compelled them to offer nothing less than their best behavior.

Our heavenly Father commands our obedience in the same way. He is constantly reaching out to us, showering us with his love so that one day we might wake up from our sin-induced trances and say, "God really does love me. I can trust him and I will faithfully follow him."

Mirroring God our Father, we earthly fathers must work to expand our capacity for love, affection and service for our children. We must take the time to play our children's games. We must kiss them, cuddle them, gently correct them and say that we love them many times a day. We must be demonstrative with the pride and joy we feel when we look at our offspring; and not just when they do something especially praiseworthy. It is not enough to have love for a child. We must show that love or it will be as if the child was never loved at all.

Our God created every human being to need love more than anything else. Boys especially need a father's demonstrative love. Still today, there is a cultural bias against fathers showing affection to their sons. Babies – including boy babies - will refuse food and drink to the point of death if they are not kissed and cuddled sufficiently. Older boys show the effects of a lack of affection. It is reality the reason so many parents experience boys as more troublesome than girls is because in many homes boys are

typically shown much less actual affection than girls, since, it is wrongly believed they need it less.

Boys who are raised in affectionate homes are no more troublesome than their sisters and they display just as much emotional and communicative ability as their sisters. At the same time, these young men are in no way effeminate. They are “all boy” with regard to their interests and games, but they are capable of more love and sensitivity than boys from less affectionate homes. They are better with younger brothers and sisters than boys from less affectionate homes and they are better behaved to boot. In short, the generous affection of their mothers and fathers is helping these boys not only become men, but Christian gentlemen as well.

Through the grace of marriage and family life, our heavenly Father calls each Christian father to grow up – to be perfected in love. But growing up can be hard work for us fathers. Sometimes rather than facing and challenging our weaknesses – our lack of patience, our limited capacity for affection, our feelings of incompetence, our dislike of the chaos and noise of children – we retreat into work, friends, community involvements, or “important” ministries. How many have painfully heard themselves saying “Sorry Honey, Gonna be home late again. That client/meeting/friend in need/ committee called today. They really need me!”

Yet our God continually brings us back home at the end of the day to remind us that there is nothing more important than learning to love our closest neighbors, nothing more important than being perfected by the honorable task of love, without which we will be poorly prepared to join in the feast of love at the heavenly banquet.

The incompetence or vulnerability some husbands may feel in the presence of their wife and children should be accepted as a gift from God, who is calling men to grow up, to be perfected by his unconditional love. Doing this can be a fearsome task, but it is a task worthy of a true believer, a man who wants to remain faithful to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Redeemer.



VESPER VERSES ACCORDING TO THE EIGHT TONES

TONE 3

1. O Christ our Savior,
By your cross the might of death has vanished;
The deceit of the devil has been broken;
The human race saved by faith.
Therefore we offer You unceasing praise.
2. O Lord our God,
By your glorious resurrection creation has
been enlightened,
Paradise has been opened.
The universe extols You and offers You
unceasing praise.
3. I glorify the power of the Father;
I extol the power of the Son;
I sing a hymn to the power of the Holy Spirit,
One Divinity, indivisible, uncreated,
Equal in essence and reigning forever.
4. We bow in worship to your cross, O Christ;
We praise and glorify your resurrection.
Through your wounds we were all made well.
5. We sing a hymn to the Savior :
He was crucified for us, He rose on the third
day,
He bestowed great mercy upon us.
6. Christ descended to the Abyss.
In these words he announced the good tidings :
“ Have confidence now, for I have conquered.
I am the resurrection :

By the good pleasure of the Father,
By the work of the Holy Spirit,
As a Virgin you conceived the Son of God.
He was born of the Father before all ages.
In you, He became man for us.
You gave Him birth without a father;
You nourished Him as a child.
Never cease to intercede with Him
That He save our souls from affliction.

ARMED WITH THE LOVE OF THE LORD

As we study the lives of the early Christians, it is, indeed, amazing to learn how many of Christ's initial followers originally came from the ranks of the Roman army that persecuted and ultimately executed them! We see three such men depicted on today's Church Bulletin: the Martyrs LEONTIUS, HYPATIUS and THEODULUS. Leontius was a strong, powerful warrior, commanding the military troops stationed in the city of Tripoli in Phoenicia. He professed his Christian beliefs openly, and when word of this reached the emperor, he deployed a unit to place Leontius under arrest. One of the leaders of this group - Hypatius - fell ill along the way. One night, an angel appeared to him and implored him to pray to the God of Leontius for assistance. Miraculously, he was cured! Hypatius and his companion Theodulus went on ahead of the rest of the soldiers and found Leontius. He began to teach them about Jesus Christ, and they immediately were baptized. When the governor and the rest of his soldiers arrived in Tripoli and discovered what had happened, he became enraged, ordering the saintly trio to renounce Christ and pay homage to the Roman gods. When they steadfastly refused, maintaining that they must remain loyal to the Lord Who loved them, Hypatius and Theodulus were put to death. The governor made a last attempt to win back the allegiance of Leontius, promising him great honor and wealth. Leontius remained steadfast in his faith, refusing to be "bought." He was tortured severely and finally beaten to death with steel rods. Truly the life and death of these three saintly martyrs can be viewed as a prime example of "losing the battle, but winning the war."

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