



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 20, 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 annual Summer Bible Camp of our parish will be held the week of August 18 to 22. Non-parishioner children are welcome. Subject matter will be The Parables of our Lord. Please inform Kyra Choti immediately if your child will attend.

+++ We have festal anointing on the occasion of today's feast of St. Elias the Prophet. We pray for the intention of travelers and the blessing of vehicles of travel takes place following the Divine Liturgy.

+++ 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: Tithing Offering, Candles, Food Coupons, Kitchen, Holyday, Pennies From Heaven, Utilities, Bulletin, Christian Fellowship, for a total of 1304.00. 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, Father Lucas, Paul Szmajda, Anna Sabo, Marilyn Korba, Rachel Korba, 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 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ We acknowledge with deep gratitude the sponsorship of the bulletin by Deacon and Diaconisa Kenneth Ellis Family. We pray the Lord continues to bless them with good health for Many & Blessed Years.

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

+++ 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 on this project to date!

+++ Please see Marilyn Korba to sign up for 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.

+++ Accompanied by a parish bank draft amounting to application was made for Site Plan approval to the Planning Board of the Township of Freehold recently. An additional check for was sent to the Zoning Board this past week. The Soil Conservation District is planning a visit to our



Sanctification

Tell the people of Israel to rest on my Sabbath day, for the Sabbath is a reminder of the covenant between me and you forever; it helps you to remember that I am the Lord your God who makes you holy Exodus 31: 13.

Lead me, teach me, for you are the God who gives me salvation. I have no hope except in you Psalms 25: 5.

If you do not go with us, who will ever know that I and my people have found favor with you, and that you are different from any other people on the face of the earth Exodus 33: 16?

The priest is a leader among the people and he may not ceremonially defile himself as an ordinary person can. The priests shall not shall not clip bald spots in their hair or beards nor cut their flesh. They shall be holy to their God and shall not dishonor or profane his name, otherwise they will be unfit to make offerings by fire to the Lord their God...The priest is set apart to offer sacrifices to your God; he is holy, for I, the Lord your God who sanctifies you , am holy Leviticus 21: 4, 5, 6.

I knew you before you were formed in your mother's womb; before you were born I sanctified you and appointed you as my spokesman to the world Jeremiah 1: 5.

And when my temple remains among them, then the nations shall know that I, the Lord, have set apart Israel for special blessings Ezekiel 37: 28.

Make them pure and holy through teaching them your words of truth. And I consecrate myself to meet their need for growth in truth and holiness John 17: 17.

Visions Of The Messiah

Praying the Psalms Can Reveal Jesus To Us

Have you ever liked a movie so much that you simply had to see it a second, or even third time? Did you so enjoy a book that you were impelled to reread it? Have you ever noticed how, on the second or third view, perhaps during the second reading of a book, you were able to pick up on more clues about the way the story would end? Could you enjoy and appreciate it more because now seemingly insignificant occurrences are understood to have important meaning? Especially if it had a surprise ending, you might be able to see more hints about that surprise as you pay closer attention to some details that you may have missed the first time around. Perhaps something that a secondary character said halfway through the story tips you off this time, but you glossed over it earlier because you did not understand how important it was.

This kind of experience can help us understand the way first Christians looked back over their earlier convictions once they experienced Jesus risen from the dead. He was really Son of God! He really was the Messiah Israel had been longing for! And this revelation made them look at God's revelation in scripture to believers in a new and provocatively different way.

Everywhere they looked, these earliest of Christians saw new hints and clues about Jesus. He was the "servant of the Lord" Isaiah 53: 5, who was crushed for our iniquities. He was the shepherd who would lead his people and care for them. "For thus says the Lord God: 'I myself will look after and tend my sheep. As shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so I will tend my sheep'" Ezekiel 34: 11, 12. He was the "prophet" Deuteronomy 18: 15, whom Moses promised would come. It was innovatively amazing. Jesus really did fulfill "everything" in the "law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms" Luke 24: 44.

Let us look at a few key psalms to see how He fulfilled everything that was written in these moving prayers from Israel's past.

Psalm 2: Messiah, King and Son of God. This psalm probably has its roots of use in a coronation ceremony for kings of Judah. At the same time, this psalm rejoiced in the new king, who was heralded "son" of God, and it expressed the Israelites' longing for God's "anointed," who was destined to usher in a new era of closeness to the Lord (Psalm 2: 2, 6).

Almost as if by instinct, the first disciples took this psalm and applied it to Jesus, their anointed Messiah. When they read how God installed his king on Mount Sion and how He proclaimed the king to be his son (Psalm 2: 6, 7), they immediately saw Jesus as fulfilling this proclamation of truth in a new and powerful, ever-contemporary way.

This is why the Letter to the Hebrews used this psalm in describing Jesus. “To which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my son; today I have begotten you’? Or again, ‘I will be his father, and he shall be my son’” Hebrews 1: 5? It is also why, in the history of the apostolic Church, the disciples prayed for God’s protection from harassment by quoting from this psalm. “All raised their voices in prayer to God on hearing the story: “Sovereign Lord, who made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, you have said by the Holy Spirit through the lips of our father, David, your servant; ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, the people conspire in folly? The kings of the earth are aligned, the princes gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed’” Acts of the Apostles 4: 24 – 26. They believed that Jesus himself was the Messiah foreshadowed by this ancient prayer and it appears they are right in making that connection. Their prayers caused the room to shake and the Holy Spirit to empower them in a new way to proclaim the gospel with sterling conviction and power. “The place where they gathered shook as they prayed. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak God’s word with confidence” Acts of the Apostles 4: 31.

While all these associations between Jesus and Psalm 2 can be exciting there is something even more’ enthralling here. Just as the Holy Spirit moved in the disciples as they prayed this psalm, He can move in us as well. In fact, the Holy Spirit loves to uncover the “clues and hints” that lead us to Jesus in every psalm and make them plain to us in the teaching of the Body of Christ. He loves to show us more and more about the Lord, so that our faith can grow and so that we can experience Jesus working in our hearts in new and different ways so that dramatic results can be produced in our lives.

Psalm 22: Anguish, Trust and Surrender. Another psalm that helped the early Church understand Jesus better is Psalm 22. This psalm focuses on a person’s suffering – both physically and emotionally – and believers in every age have been amazed at how closely it mirrors Jesus’ own passion and death. It is also a psalm that the gospels tell us Jesus himself prayed as He hung on the cross. “At that time Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” Mark 15: 34?; “Then toward midafternoon, Jesus cried out in aloud tone, “*Eli, Eli lama sabachtani?*” That is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” Matthew 27: 46?

At the heart of the suffering described in the psalm, we can see the psalmist's feeling of being forsaken by God and hated by those around him. "Why have you abandoned me?" he prays. "Why so far from my call for help, from my cries of anguish" Psalm 22: 2, 3? He laments that he is "...scorned by everyone, despised by the people. All who see me mock me...They divide my garments among them; for my clothing they cast lots" Psalm 22: 8, 9, 19. He is suffering physically as well: "As dry as a potsherd is my throat; my tongue sticks to my palate; you lay me in the dust of death...So wasted are my hands and feet that I can count all my bones" Psalm 22: 16 – 18.

But this psalm is much more than simply a list of complaints or the heartfelt cry of someone undergoing great suffering. The psalmist takes a new direction when he announces his trust in God: "I will proclaim your name to the assembly; in the community I will praise you" Psalm 22: 23. He even seems to prophesy that this God, who seems to have abandoned him, will be praised and worshipped by future generations when they see how God has ultimately delivered him...All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; all the families of all nations shall bow down before him. For dominion is the Lord's and he rules the nations. To him alone shall bow down all who sleep in the earth; before him shall bend all who go down into the dust. And to him my soul shall live; my descendants shall serve him. Let the coming generations be told of the Lord that they may proclaim to a people yet to be born the justice he has shown" Psalm 22: 28 – 31.

It is no wonder the early Church saw Jesus in this psalm! Not only does the psalmist recount a kind of treatment that is similar to the way Jesus experienced at Mount Golgotha, he also demonstrates a depth of trust in God that Jesus showed as He endured his own passion and death. This psalm encouraged them – and all of us – to put our trust in our heavenly Father, just as Christ did. Even though He may have felt abandoned, Jesus knew the eternal Father would never let him down. And because Jesus did triumph in the end, He proves that no one who places trust, place their life in his hands – including us – will ever be abandoned.

Psalm 45: A Royal Wedding. If Psalm 22 depicts an innocent man suffering unjustly, Psalm 45 paints a completely different picture. Like Psalm 2, this psalm was probably written in honor of one of Judah's kings, only this time on the occasion of his wedding. The first part of the psalm sings the glory of the office of the king, who is not only just and powerful but handsome and gracious as well "My heart sings a godly theme; as I sing my ode to the king. My tongue is nimble as the pen of a skillful scribe. Fairer in beauty are you than the sons of men; grace is poured out upon your lips; thus God has blessed you forever...In the cause of truth and for the sake of justice, and may your right hand show your

wondrous deeds...the king's enemies lose heart. Your throne stands forever, O God, stands forever and ever, a tempered rod is your scepter. You love justice and abide not wickedness, therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellow kings. With myrrh and aloes and cassia your robes are fragrant; from ivory palaces string music brings you joy. The daughters of kings come to meet you; the queen takes her place at your right hand in gold of Ophir" Psalm 45: 2 – 10.

A section tells the king's bride-to-be to "forget her past and embrace her new role as queen. "Hear or daughter, and see; turn your ear, forget your people and your father's house. So shall the king desire your beauty; for he is your Lord and you must worship him....the rich among your people seek your favor. All glorious is the king's daughter as she enters; her raiment is threaded with spun gold. In embroidered apparel she is borne in to the king; behind her virgins of her train are brought to you. They are borne in with gladness and joy; they enter the palace of the king...I will make your name memorable through all generations; therefore shall nations praise you forever and ever" Psalm 45: 11 – 18. Here we have a reference to the Birthgiver of God as she is brought to the Temple to be presented by her parents and thus become betrothed to the eternal King as the one who introduces salvation to the world by her later consent to bear the Saviour of the world. Her beautiful appearance at the wedding is seen as a sign of the new prosperity this wedding will bring to the kingdom, a sign of the spiritual triumph that will enter the world when the salvation of mankind is begun.

Again, the psalm provided the early Church with a host of images and descriptions they could apply to Jesus and his life among us. Like the king, he, too is a "mighty warrior" who has conquered our enemies of sin and death. As the Lord of heaven and earth, he naturally loves justice and hates wrongdoing. And because He is the eternal Son of God, his throne will surely "stand forever."

But what about the queen? The first Christians saw in this character a sign of the Church as well, the bride of Christ, who is depicted and presented as the one Jesus will take to himself in the unbreakable bond of love. "It is the groom who has the bride, the groom's best man waits there listening for him and is overjoyed to hear his voice, that is my joy and it is complete. He must increase and I must decrease" John 3: 29, 30. "Then I heard what sounded like the shouts of a great crowd, or the roaring of the deep, or mighty peals of thunder, as they cried: 'Alleluia, the Lord is king, our God, the Almighty! Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For this is the wedding day of the Lamb, his bride has prepared herself for the wedding. She has been given a dress to wear made of finest linen, brilliant white. The linen dress is the virtuous deeds of God's saints" Revelation 19: 6 – 8. The bride's beauty foreshadows the beauty of the Church, the beauty of a people living in holiness, in unity, in justice and love.

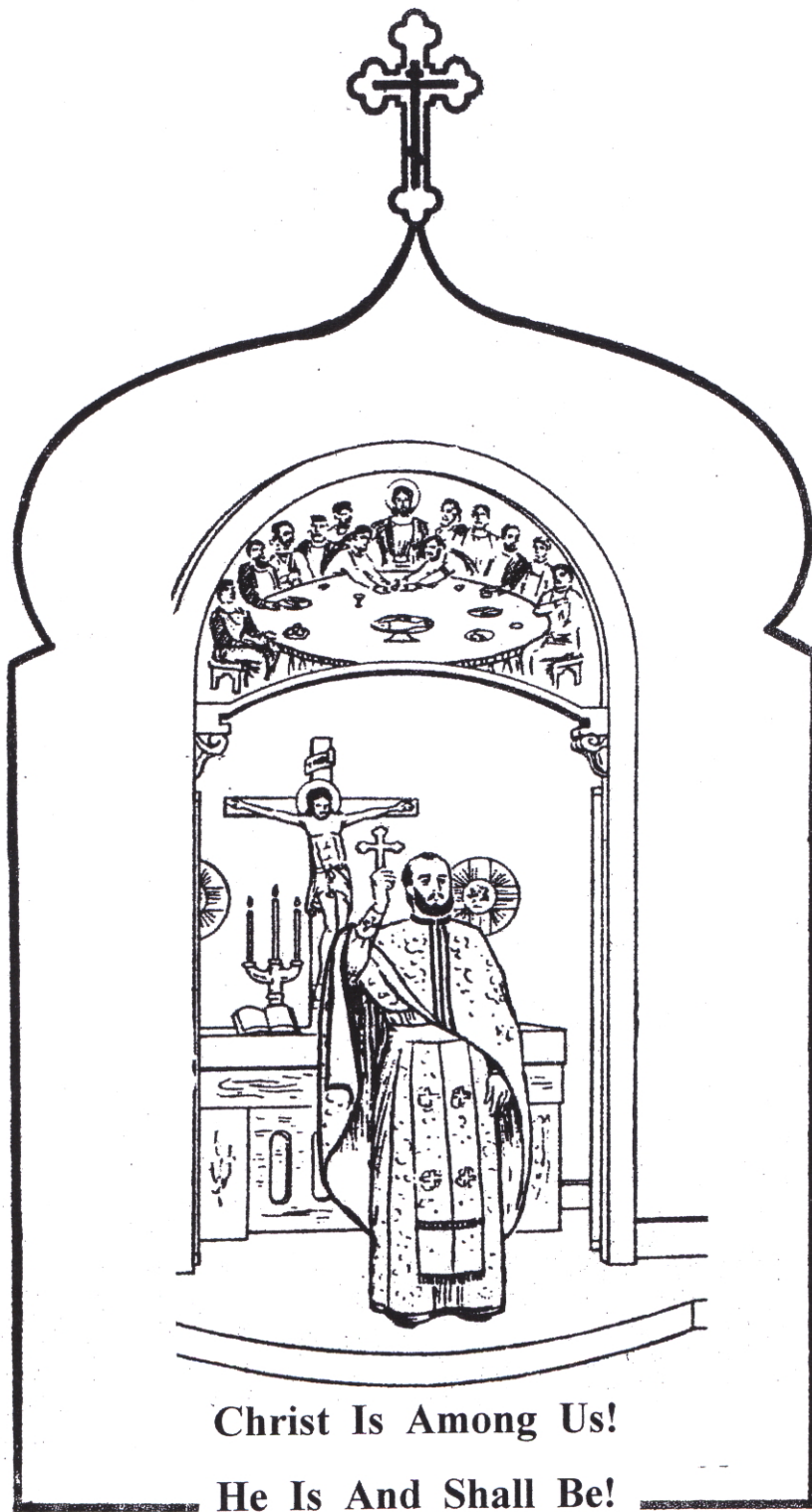
By reciting Psalm 45 and other psalms in this way, the first Christians took great comfort and encouragement in seeing themselves in God's comprehensive plan just as much as they recognized Jesus among them. They saw that each of us has a part to play as salvation history unfolds and that each of us can find our lives mirrored in the prayers and songs of the psalm. They saw all the more clearly that God has his hand on every person, that each individual believer has a place in God's kingdom and that together we can all become that beautiful bride that Jesus longs to fill with ardent love and vigorous life, just as notably as the Birthgiver of God responded to God's freely and generously proffered grace and became the vehicle through which salvation entered the world.

God's Unfolding Plan. We have seen some of the ways Jesus fulfills the psalms. We have also seen how first Christians came to see and identify him in David's writings and how this helped them understand more clearly their own role in God's plan of salvation.

Yet there is another message in the psalms that runs parallel to their ability to deepen our understanding of Christ and his role in God's magnificent plan. This message tells us that He is still unfolding his plan in our lives today. This message encourages us to put our complete trust in Jesus, confident He will fulfill all the promises made to us, promises to be with us to the end of time, to share with us his own Body and Blood in the Eucharist, to be present for the forgiveness of sin in the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation, to fill us with the Holy Spirit and to come again triumphantly in glory.

As we look closely at Scripture, combining prayer with study and relating it to our worship, we will discover that the whole Bible points to the Lord Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our blessed faith. We will also come to see that God's eternal plan is far more deep and intricate than anything we could possibly imagine because it has indelible traces of eternity and divinity woven into it. And we will come to a greater grasp of the myriad ways Jesus is calling us to help bring his plan of salvation to completion and perfection.





Christ Is Among Us!

He Is And Shall Be!

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

The joyful message of the Resurrection was heard by the faithful women from the angel. And being freed from the ancestral curse, they boasted to the apostles: "Dead and despoiled is death, Christ our God is risen giving great mercy to the world" Troparion, Resurrection Tone Four.

O my Saviour and Redeemer, being God, You raised from the grave men who were in chains and destroyed the gates of the Abyss; being the Lord, You arose on the third day Kontakion, Resurrection Tone Four.

How great are your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have made them all Prokimenon, Resurrection Tone Four.

O Saviour, You have absolved the penalty of disobedience, committed through the tree of Eden, by willingly being nailed to the tree of the Cross. As Almighty God, You descended into the Abyss and broke asunder the bonds of death. We, therefore, venerate Your Resurrection from the dead, and joyfully cry out to You: Almighty Lord, glory to You! Vesper Hymn, Tone Four.

O Lord, Your Nativity from the Father is timeless and eternal; Your Incarnation from the Virgin is beyond the understanding of all, and beyond the expression of our words. Your descent into the Abyss and victory over death caused satan and his angels to tremble with fear. Your Resurrection on the third day brought to mankind incorruption and great mercy Vesper Hymn, Tone Four.

I have sinned against You, O Lover of mankind. May I ask forgiveness, and even more than forgiveness? Do not grant me this because of Your nature as man, but because You are more than man and higher than nature. O Saviour, beyond the laws of nature and beyond my understanding You became man. You love mankind more than the mind can grasp. Have mercy on me who have turned to You! Vesper Hymn, Tone Four.

You are glorified in the memory of Your saints, O Christ God. Through their intercession, send upon us great mercy Vesper Hymn, Tone Four.

OUR HOLY MOTHER PARASKEVI

How much should one be expected to suffer for Christ? If we look at the life of our Holy Mother Paraskevi and a countless number of other saints, the answer is simply: "As much as is necessary."

Paraskevi was born in Rome in the 2nd century. The name "Paraskevi" literally means "Friday" and this is the day that the saintly woman was born - the answer to many years of fervent prayers offered to God by her parents. Paraskevi was given the best education and spiritual training by them. When they died, she followed the Gospel command of our Lord to ". . . sell all you have and give it to the poor." Paraskevi gave away all of her possessions and became a nun, preaching the message of the Lord with great fervor. As was often the case during this time of great persecution for the Church, Paraskevi's outspoken zeal caused her to be arrested and put on trial before the Roman authorities. The Emperor Antoninus inflicted terrible tortures upon her, but she was miraculously protected by God and was able to escape and flee Rome. She was arrested two more times in other cities, where she faced great tortures again - and was delivered from her persecutors again as well! When her pagan adversaries attempted to credit THEIR gods with protecting her, Paraskevi replied: "It is not your gods who heal me, but my Christ, the true God."

Ultimately, Paraskevi suffered death by beheading. Her relics were later taken to Constantinople, where a shrine was built in her honor.