

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 12, 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

+++ Tuesday is the most solemn feast of the Exaltation of the Life-Giving Cross. In anticipation, the vesperal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Monday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise. Please remember this is a day of strict fast.

+++ Today we have festal anointing on the occasion of this past week's feast of the Nativity of the Birthgiver of God. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we respond, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ 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, \$574.00; Candles, \$19.00; Food Coupons, \$120.00; Holyday, \$49.00; Christian Fellowship, \$14.00; Kitchen, \$1080.00, Pennies from Heaven, \$2.00, for a total of \$2192.00. 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: Subdeacon Daniel J. & Marilyn Korba Family, Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Louis Pasquino, +Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, George Idromenos, 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 \$1578.00 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 \$104,875.00. 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.

+++ 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 \$3500.00 on this project to date!

+++ We remind our faithful only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."

+++ 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!

LORD



TEACH
US

Persecution of the Righteous

Bullies will vanish and scoffers will cease and all those plotting evil will be killed: the violent man who fights at the drop of a hat, the man who waits in hiding to beat up the judge who sentenced him, and the men who use any excuse to be unfair Isaiah 29: 20, 21.

I am he who comforts you and gives you all this joy. So what right have you to fear mere mortal men, who wither just like grass and disappear? And yet you have no fear of the Lord your God, your Maker; you have forgotten him, the one who spread the stars throughout the skies and made the earth. Will you be in constant dread of men's oppression, and fear their anger all day long? Isaiah 51: 12, 13.

Yes, truth is gone and anyone who tries a better life is soon attacked. The Lord saw all the evil and was displeased to find no steps taken against sin Isaiah 59: 30.

I have punished your children but it did them no good; they still will not obey me. And you yourselves have killed my prophets as a lion kills its prey Jeremiah 2: 30.

I had been as unsuspecting as a lamb or ox on the way to slaughter. I did not know that they were planning to kill me! "Let us destroy this man with all his messages," they said, "Let us kill him so that his name will be forever forgotten" Jeremiah 11: 19.

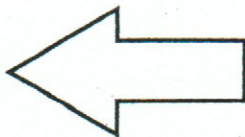
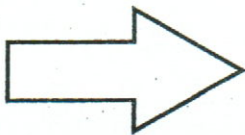
Then Jeremiah said, "What sadness is mine, O my mother; that I had died at birth. For I am hated everywhere I go. I am neither creditor soon to foreclose nor a debtor refusing to pay; yet they all curse me" Jeremiah 15: 10.

Then the people said, "Come, let us get rid of Jeremiah...Let us silence him that he may speak no more against us, nor bother us again" Jeremiah 18: 18.

They scoff and mock and make my name a household joke Jeremiah 20: 8.

Where Are You Going???

Once our God told Jonah to go to Ninevah to preach to the people there who were doing bad things. They were pagans and not enlightened by God's revelation. God wanted to change that. But Jonah did not like the idea of pagans being introduced into the circle of Chosen People, so he went in a different direction thinking God would forget about the instructions. He went in a different direction like so many of us do. That is what the arrows point out for us, teaching us the lesson that we do not decide how to save our soul because on our own we cannot do it. Only God can save us. Are you still following your own directions and being detoured?



HE WAS INCARNATE

The Son of God became a human being for our sake and for our salvation. The Creed actually uses two words for this reality: He was incarnate or assumed flesh, and became man, in effect, to coin a word, en-fleshed, or en-humanized. These two terms are necessary to express the full range of our faith in what God has done for us. As human beings, we are a composite of matter and spirit, body and soul, and the Word of God took on our entire nature in both its material and spiritual dimensions.

The first term, in Greek, *sarkothenta*, that is, He was en-fleshed, stresses that God truly accepted and clothed himself in a body of human flesh and matter. Like us, God became a part of the material world, seeing light and color through bodily human eyes and experiencing the world by touch and smell and sound. We often think of ourselves as centers of being that have a body, but the deeper reality is that we are physical bodies, connected with and interdependent on created matter. In becoming incarnate, God accepts these same created limitations.

It was necessary to say this in the Creed explicitly because of the prevailing understanding of the Greek philosophy of the time. The Creed was a proclamation of faith in the age of Greek Platonism which devalued the importance of material existence. Only the spiritual was valid and valuable. To achieve perfection was to be completely spiritualized and to lose our dependence on the material universe.

The cultural prejudice against physical matter, seen as the enslavement of the true human person, led to many heresies in the early Church denying the true materiality of the mystery of the incarnation. The strongest of these was docetism which held that Jesus did not suffer physical death on the Cross, for this would be unbecoming to God and to his divine reality. His passion, then, happened only in appearance. In other words, it only seemed like He suffered. The name for this heresy is from the Greek word for "to seem," as if Jesus only seemed to take human flesh.

Docetism was already present even in New Testament times. St.

John has to warn his readers, "Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh" 2 John 7. At the end of the first century after Christ, the holy martyr St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, warned his fellow believers, "Jesus suffered truly and just as truly raised himself from the dead. He did not suffer merely in appearance, as some unbelievers say" Letter to the Smyrneans, 2.

It is no wonder, then, that the Creed of Nicea affirms in the first place that in Jesus Christ, God came truly in human flesh; He was "incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary." This reality has almost always been a problem for those who want to believe, but sometimes find it difficult. We lead a physical life on this earth and then all of us are confronted with our mortality, the fact that our material bodies wear out, and that we all must die.

What happens to us after we die? Our precious faith tells us that we continue to exist, that there is "life after death," that life is changed, but not taken away. However, we are tempted to idealize this faith into a continued spiritual existence as the physical body is gone, but think we continue to live as a kind of angel or ghost.

However, in the Christian faith, there is more. The teachers of the

Church, particularly St. Maximus the Confessor, said that even after death, there is still a relationship of our soul to our body and that human destiny is not complete until there is a resurrection of the body, as we say later in the Creed, "I expect the resurrection of the dead." This is why, therefore, the Resurrection of our Lord is the very center of our faith and why the inner life of the Body of Christ testifies to the ascension of the physical body and spiritual soul of the Birthgiver of God takes place at the behest of her Son and our God.

As we continue to journey in our earthly pilgrimage lives, the Creed is a hymn of thanksgiving, that Christ, through his incarnation, has given us eternal life in both body and soul. Of course, though St. Paul does tell us in the inspired Scripture that there will be a change. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown incorruptible...it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" 1 Corinthians 15: 42, 44.

This affirmation of our faith that Jesus was "incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary" has an even deeper and profounder dimension and is manifested in our life as believing Christians. We do have in fact, a share in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. By becoming incarnate in human flesh, He has made even material elements a source of sanctification for us. St. Paul asks us, "The bread that we break,

is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" 1 Corinthians 10: 16; and St. John reports the words of Jesus, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you" John 6: 53.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, the bishop who fought the docetists knew well the importance of the Eucharist, and that through the divine mystery revealed at the Mystical Supper, - the Cross and the Resurrection - it was to become God's plan of salvation for us. He wrote to the Smyrneans at the beginning of the second century, "the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father in his graciousness, raised from the dead" Smyrneans 6.

We do not participate in the mystery of the incarnation in the same way as Christ, who is God by nature and became one in essence with us through the human nature he took from the Holy Spirit and the body of his mother, the Virgin Mary. We, however, are united in our own bodies with God, one in the Trinity through the body of Christ that we receive in Communion.

The Creed does not contain an explicit profession of the mystery of Holy Communion, because it is accomplished not only in words, but in the eating and being nourished by the flesh of Christ, and also because this reality is

expressed implicitly in the words of the Creed, "He was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary." The Creed that we profess in every Divine Liturgy is no mere speculation about the nature of God and the mystery of Christ, but it is the confession with our lips from our heart and soul of the real sanctification which is taking place in the Church gathered by the Holy Spirit for worship.



Wisdom Of
The



Byzantine
Fathers

For peace in the world, let us pray to the Lord St. John Chrysostom.

It is not enough to help the poor. We must help them with generosity and without grumbling. And it is not enough to help them without grumbling. We must help them gladly and happily. When the poor are helped, there ought to be these two conditions: generosity and joy St. John Chrysostom.

Remember those, O Lord in the depths of the earth, in harsh labor, in every kind of affliction, necessity or distress St. Basil the Great.

Whatever is generously given away becomes the first fruit of the soul. It therefore becomes the soul's wealth St. Clement of Alexandria.

For seasonable weather and an abundance of the fruits of the earth, let us pray to the Lord St. John Chrysostom.

Do You Love The World?

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son
John 3: 16.*

These words are cherished by every believer. Of course, their familiarity can dull our appreciation of their full meaning. One insightful man speaks of his appreciation and awareness of ingratitude when he received a greeting card for one feast of the Nativity of our Lord which truthfully announced, "God still loves the world!" It is a realistic reminder that God's love is always and forever fixed in the present tense which is why we greet each other, "Christ is born!" - Christ is risen!" instead of the western expression, "Christ was born!" - "Christ has risen!"

Inspired by the endless love of our heavenly Father for the world which motivated him to offer his Son for its redemption, the Church makes present and proximate the reality and truth of God's continuing concern for us and our planet. He is supremely concerned about the souls of those who inhabit our world. We are likewise called upon to love the world in which we live and see it as a world of individuals who are lost so many times and need to hear the gospel message in its purity. Our baptism calls us to be a serious and sincere living example of the life of Christ in our time and place. Christ's teaching is to be made real in today's current circumstances and lifestyle.

A mature believer recognizes the possibility of being a witness of the teaching of our Lord in the world he travels each day among neighbors, friends and fellow-workers. But he must be sensitive of soul and conscience and recognize the possibility of being an example to people as an ego trip without necessarily loving them as potential communicants of the Body and Bride of Christ.

We must show that Christ is just as zealously concerned for souls today as when He lived among us on earth is the role of each believer. We are to make Christ present and viable here and now, not only in language, but in practice and upright example. We must be careful we do not go simply through the motions without actually loving those we speak to. Our witness will lack power without the force of God's overwhelming and compelling love.

To speak to the lost of the world about the love of God if we do not actually love them too, is insincere and lacks the dynamic strength of words which should ring true.

Those who love Christ have a love for the lost.

Did You Know That ...

...the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light?

...each moment, each day, each year, our God begins anew?

...when little kids play ball, you can count on immature grown-ups to throw a tantrum?

...one glaring proof of American's refusal to grow up is the behavior of parents at the sports events of their children?

...children's athletics used to convey the idea of a field of dreams but now it has become a field of screams?

...restless leg syndrome can find relief in being directed to church for prayer of thanks?

...although we like variety it should not manifest us at odds with God's revelation for us?

...there are a lots of *truths* being advanced today, but only one truth in Christ still sustains us?

...since God is always in our corner, the question really is, are we with him?

...just because someone has fancy sneakers does not mean they run faster?

...nobody roots for Goliath?

..."Yes I can" is the response our Lord wishes to hear when He invites us to run the race for salvation?

...the deadly distraction of sin in our lives is still not appreciated?

...no one can love too much?

...thousands of times each day we are called to judge our own behavior?

...the best place, the safest place to be is with our God?

...we should always be ready to give an answer for why we follow Christ?

❖ ❖ ❖ **THE CROSS "ELEVATES" OUR FAITH!** ❖ ❖ ❖

Depicted on the cover of this morning's Church Bulletin is a beautiful icon of the Feast Day of the Elevation and Exaltation of the Holy Cross. It commemorates an actual historical event: the finding of the true Cross of Christ by St. Helen, who led an expedition to the Holy Land in the 4th century for the purpose of recovering this most precious of all Christian relics. Yet the real significance of this great holy day has nothing to do with HISTORY, but rather with MYSTERY - the mystery of discovering why the Cross is so important to our Faith.

Why do we venerate and exalt the Cross? Why do we kiss it and bow down before it? Why do we wear it around our necks and place it on our walls at home? Why is it the most predominant of symbols in a Faith full of symbolism? We hold the Cross in such reverence and awe because the Crucifixion which occurred on it - that treacherous, murderous act - brought us our salvation. Christ, the only sinless person who ever walked this earth, took the blame of all of our sins upon Himself and gave His life on the Cross. He died so that we may live. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: *"FOR THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS IS FOOLISHNESS TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING, BUT TO US WHO ARE BEING SAVED, IT IS THE POWER OF GOD."* Notice that Paul uses the phrase "being saved." Christ promises salvation for all who believe in Him and yes, we say that our sins are washed away by the precious Blood our Lord shed upon the Cross. But there is much soul searching that we all must do. We must be sorry for those sins. We must seek forgiveness and repent for those sins. Our Lord tells us plainly that there will not be one unrepentant sinner in the Kingdom of Heaven. May the Cross inspire us all to do a thorough and honest evaluation of our relationship with the Lord as we take our own cross upon our shoulders and follow Him.