





# Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost

November 24, 2013

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

+++ Every Monday, we have prayerful devotions before the Myrrh bearing icon at 6:00 PM. Everyone is invited to be present in praise. The Birthgiver invites us to manifest our faith in response to her first shown love, to unite our prayers with hers for the salvation of our souls. Invite your friends and neighbors to join us.

LORD



TEACH  
US

### WHEN THINKING OF DIVORCE

*Then some Pharisees came up and as a test began to ask him whether it was permissible for a husband to divorce his wife. In reply he said, "What command did Moses give to you?" They answered, "Moses permitted divorce and the writing of a decree of divorce." But Jesus told them: "He wrote that commandment for you because of your stubbornness. At the beginning of Creation God made them male and female; for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and the two shall become one flesh. They are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore let no man separate what God has joined." Back in the house again, the disciples began to question him about this. He told them, "Whoever divorces his wife and and marries another commits adultery against her; and the woman who divorces her husband and marries another commits adultery." Mark 10:2-12*

*And you say, "Why is it?" Because the Lord is witness between you and the wife of your youth with whom you have broken faith though she is your companion, your betrothed wife. Did he not make one being, with flesh and spirit, and what does that one require but godly offspring? You must then safeguard life that is your own, and not break faith with the wife of your youth. For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel. And covering one's garment with injustice, says the Lord of hosts; You must then safeguard life that is your own, and not break faith. Malachi 2:14-16*

*Some Pharisees came up to him and said, to test him, "May a man divorce his wife for any reason whatever?" He replied, "Have you not read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female and declared, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two shall become as one'? Thus they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, let no man separate what God has joined." They said to him, "Then why did Moses command divorce and the promulgation of a divorce decree?" "Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses let you divorce your wives," he replied; "but at the beginning it was not that way. I now say to you, whoever divorces his wife for any reason except adultery, and marries another commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery." Matthew 19:3-9*



## Serving Christ In The Church

Some people might ask: *"Can I be an Orthodox Christian without being involved in the life of my parish?"* Before we attempt to satisfy ourselves the answer is yes, it is important to put this question in proper perspective. Being an Orthodox believer without being an involved communicant is something like this:

- An avowed student who will not attend classes.
- A devoted soldier who will not join the army.
- An ardent citizen who does not vote or pay his taxes.
- An ambitious salesman with no customers.
- An excited explorer with no base camp.
- An active seaman on a ship without a crew.
- A successful businessman on a desert island.
- An inspired author without readers.
- An enthusiastic tuba player without a band.
- A loving parent without a family.
- An athletic football player without a team.
- A gregarious politician who refuses to meet people.
- A determined scientist who refuses to share his findings with others.

Or, in other words, A follower of Christ without Christ!

## How To Grow As An Orthodox Believer

Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 7: 17).

Rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4).

Add to your faith, virtue (2 Peter 1:5).

You have not because you ask not (James 4:2).

Whatever he says to you, do it (John 2:5).

Only fear the Lord and serve Him (Samuel 12:24).

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus (Acts of the Apostles 20:35).

Keep yourself pure (1 Timothy 5:22).

Go into the world and preach (Mark 16:15).

In all your ways acknowledge Him (Proverbs 3:6).

Vow and pray to the Lord your God (Psalm 76:11).

Endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ (2 Timothy 2:3).



## Being Devoted To Prayer

Paul is a believer who has struggled for years with anxiety, panic attacks and depression. His mental state affected everything. He tried doctors, self-help books, medication, and talk therapy, but nothing seemed to help. "I began to believe that real change was not possible." Sound familiar? Everyone of us is carrying the scars of some unique suffering. Perhaps we have been rejected...discriminated against...emotionally or sexually abused; even abandoned. We may have lost someone very beloved in our lives, and do not feel like waking up tomorrow.

So is St. Paul confused when he insists, "Rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings...so you can shout for joy when his glory is revealed?" Suffering often comes from our ego, which perceives everything as centering around us. If we learn detachment from objects, we can shrink the ego, we can lessen our suffering. We can shrink our ego when we come to know who God is...to let God be God and let creation be creation and above all, to let these mysteries be mystery, without a constant striving to "solve the mystery." This is the only way out of our suffering if we are believers, to go through the unknown with the Unknown and a sense of awe and wonder at our mystery.

Thus the final question actually becomes, "Do I believe genuinely?" if so, then, just like Jesus, we are to face suffering by giving glory to God for who God is, our Creator and Saviour and Protector, our Source of grace, our Beloved, our Unknown and most certainly our Best Known. We do not need to beg or challenge God, like a high-level mathematician, to solve the problem of suffering for us.

Our life is held, is protected, nourished inside the Ultimate Mystery and our God involves us in that, which also is reason enough to rejoice in!

## Preparation For The Divine Liturgy

Before the actual beginning of the Divine Liturgy, the priestly celebrant enters the church with special prayers, and vests in liturgical vestments. He then goes to the table of oblation to prepare the gifts of bread and wine for the celebration of the Eucharist. This part of the Divine Liturgy is called the *prothesis* in Greek or *proskomedia* in Old Slavonic, both of which mean *preparation*.

When a bishop celebrates the Divine Liturgy, the preparation is performed just before the offertory procession called the Great Entrance. Otherwise, for ordinary celebration in the parish church, the priest performs it just before the Liturgy of the Word. At the preparation, the priest first cuts out a large cube of bread from the small bun-like loaf called *prosfora* in Old Slavonic. This word means *offering*. This square cube of bread is called the Lamb and stands for Christ, the "*Bread of life...which came down from heaven,*" as well as "*The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*" John 6: 33, 35; 1: 29.

While the priest cuts the Lamb from the offering loaf, he recites verses from the Prophecy of Isaiah: "*He was led as a lamb to the slaughter...*" Isaiah 53: 7, 8. He cuts the Lamb so that the seal with which the offering bread is sealed, with the symbols of Jesus Christ (IC XC) on the top and Conqueror (NIKA) on the bottom, is plainly evident. The Lamb particle is then turned over and cut from the bottom in the sign of a Cross so that it can easily be broken into four pieces at the time of Holy Communion in the Liturgy. The priest also symbolically pierces the right side of the Lamb with the liturgical spear, reciting the words of the gospel, "*One of the soldiers thrust a lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. This testimony has been given by an eyewitness, and his testimony is true. He tells what he knows is true, so that you may believe*" John 19: 34, 35.

After having poured wine and then water into the chalice, the priest then places a piece of bread on the offering plate, known in Greek as the *diskos* to the right of the Lamb in remembrance of the Mother of God. Then small cut particles of bread are placed on the offering plate in memory of St. John the Baptist, the greatest man ever born of a woman (Matthew 11:11), the prophets, apostles, hierarchs, martyrs, monastic saints, healers and the whole company of the righteous with special mention of the saint or saints commemorated on that particular day.

In addition, small particles of bread are placed in a horizontal row below the Lamb commemorating the leaders and hierarchs of the Church, for the diocesan bishop, for the civil authorities and for all the faithful living souls, each mentioned individually and personally by name. Below this another row of commemorations is made for the departed souls, each by name, as requested by the local community of believers or the priestly celebrant. Between the two rows, finally, is placed an individual particle representing the priestly celebrant, who by his intercessory prayers, remembers both the intentions of the living and the dead before the throne of the Lord.



The chalice and offering plate are then ceremoniously covered while the priestly celebrant recites Psalm 93 and other psalm verses with the offering of incense. He finally offers in conclusion the following prayer of offering: *"O God, our God, Who has sent forth the heavenly bread as the nourishment of the whole world, our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer and Benefactor, to bless and sanctify us, bless these gifts placed here before You and accept them on Your heavenly altar. Remember, as the merciful Lover of mankind, those who brought the offerings and those for whom they are offered; and keep us blameless in the holy celebration of Your divine mysteries. For sanctified and glorified is Your most honored and sublime Name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever. Amen"* Divine Liturgy Of St. John Chrysostom.

The dismissal and blessing follow this prayer, thus ending this service of preparation. The preparation service signifies the gathering of the entire Church of God into one great assembly: Christ the Head, together with the Mother of God, and all the members of His Body, those already glorified with Him in the presence of the Father and the Holy Spirit, together with all the faithful disciples on earth. The preparation clearly shows that the Eucharistic Liturgy is always the action of the entire Church, with its Head Jesus Christ and is always offered *"in behalf of all and for all."*

## Blessed is the Kingdom

Following the rite of preparation, the deacon incenses the altar, the icons, and the entire church. While incensing the altar table, he recites prayers which confess the fullness of Christ's presence: *"When Your body was in the tomb, and Your soul in the place of the dead, You were in paradise with the thief, You were at the same time, O Christ, as God, upon Your throne with the Father and the Spirit, infinite and filling all things"* Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. When he leaves the sanctuary, he begins to recite Psalm 50, *"Have mercy on me, O God."*

After incensing is completed, the royal doors of the Icon Screen are opened and the priestly celebrant together with the deacon pray *"O Heavenly King,"* invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit. They together recite the angelic salutation: *"Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace, good will toward men."* Together they approach the altar table and the Divine Liturgy begins. The first exclamation is made by the deacon, inviting the priestly celebrant to proclaim the purpose of the assembled faithful which reveals the key to the entire celebration and gathering: *"Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever"* Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. With these words the celebrant announces the source and goal of the divine service of the People of God, the very context and content of the entire liturgical action which now begins. It is the Kingdom of God brought to the world by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and mystically reigning already in the souls of the faithful disciples of Christ by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. The Kingdom of God is now present. The faithful are no longer sojourners in the world, but have entered into the dimension of God's eternal kingdom. They are in the actual presence of the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Kingdom of God is eternal life in communion with God in loving obedience to His divine will. It is



life in union with the Blessed Trinity; life lived toward the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. it is the life which Christ has imparted to man by His Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection and glorification. it is the life to be lived already in this world by the people of God.

To bless the Kingdom of God means to love it as one's most precious possession, to follow after it as life's only worthwhile goal. The response of believers to this proclamation of the priestly celebrant is with the simple word, *Amen*, which means, "*so be it, I concur.*" This is the solemn affirmation that indeed the blessing of God's Kingdom is fitting and proper. It is the official confirmation that this Kingdom is indeed the "*pearl of great price*" Luke 13: 14, for the faithful, which once having found it, they will love it and serve it and desire to have it forever, and forsake all else in keeping it.

Only the Divine Liturgy and the other sacramental Mysteries which were originally integrated into the Eucharistic celebration, such as baptism, chrismation, and marriage begin with the solemn invocation and blessing of the Kingdom of God.

## The Great Litany

After the opening proclamation, the Great Litany is chanted by the deacon who leads the faithful in their prayer of praise and worship of the Blessed Trinity. This litany begins every liturgical service of the Church of Jesus Christ, as well as virtually all sacramental Mysteries and special services. It is the all-embracing prayer of the Church for everyone and everything. It consists in petitions to which the people readily and enthusiastically respond "*Lord, have mercy!*"

The Great Litany begins with prayers "in peace" and "for peace." The people then proceed in the litany to pray for their eternal salvation; for the welfare of the holy churches of God, for the union of all; for the faithful and God-fearing of the particular community, for bishops, priests, deacons and all the people of the Church; for the nation and its institutions for which all are responsible; the civil authorities and all in the services of the country; for the particular community and for all cities and countries; for good weather and abundant crops; for travelers, for the sick, the suffering, and those in captivity.

Finally, after asking the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for deliverance from everything harmful and negative and for His divine help, salvation, mercy, and protection, the people remember the Mother of God and all the saints and commend themselves and each other and all their life to Christ our God. The Great Litany then ends with a doxology proper to the Blessed Trinity to Whom is due all glory, honor and worship forever. Once more the prayer is completed by all the assembled faithful who respond with "Amen." They have been drawn into and introduced to the Kingdom of God in their midst. They have been prepared to glorify God in His presence. They have been invited by the grace of the Holy Spirit to worship the Blessed Trinity and enter into the communion of the saints along with other spiritually disposed souls to experience the glory of eternity and the fulfillment of all God's promises to those who love Him.



ARIUS, THE NON-BELIEVER SAYS:

When people say "I wanna live!" what they mean is they don't have time for God?



### God's Diversity

You are all one in Christ Jesus  
Galatians 3: 28.

When we are satisfied and comfortable in belonging to a parish church of only "our own" safe people, we have created a social club to advance the worldly cause of one particular predominant identity which does not advance the cause or value of salvation in Christ. We end up alienated from the cause of the Lord and become enemies with the Redeemer.

With brick upon brick, we wall ourselves in  
because, Lord, we are not like those "others."  
One day we will see we have not kept out sin,  
but walled out sisters and brothers.

The altar in our church

*This altar is an object of wonder; by nature it is of stone, but it is made holy  
when it receives the Body of Christ*

St. John Chrysostom.

# Did You Know That ...

... there are myriad kinds of lunacy, but only one kind of common sense?

... wines can range from the acceptable to what is called a three-man wine: two men to hold you down so that a third can pour it down your throat?

... great successes are built on taking the negatives and turning them around?

... you cannot paint the Mona Lisa by assigning one dab each to a thousand painters?

... everyone is a genius at least once a year?

... it is almost impossible to overestimate the unimportance of most things?

... liturgical music is a higher revelation than philosophy?

... we worry what a child will be tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today?

... there is a close correlation between getting up in the morning and getting up in the world?

... trees are to be respected because they seem more resigned to the way they have to live than other things do?

... discernment is God's call to intercession, never fault finding?

... being a believer is being a catalyst for Christ?

... being a parent means being an intercessor in prayer for your children?

... prayer should be the opening key of the morning and the protective lock of the evening?

... genuine prayer has in it a strong element of expectancy?

... believers relinquish their rights to God because they know He will return them if it is His will, or provide something much better instead?



# THE ART *of* FAMILY PRAYER

*The practice of family prayer helps your home to grow in faith, peace and joy*

Unquestionably the family that prays together stays together. For many families saying grace before meals or worshipping together on holydays and Sundays is probably the only experience they share in prayer. Changing family habits and behavior can be uncomfortable, especially if parents do not have a model to follow.

If we are not praying with our families, it is often a case of not knowing where and how to begin or not having the tools and materials to lead our families in prayer. Fathers can be very private about praying, particularly as we share our weaknesses and concerns with our heavenly Father,. Often we want to be strong for our families and diminish any of their concerns about our real struggles.

However, just as we grow in peace through regular private prayer, that same peace and positive spirit can unite a family that prays together. When families come together to pray and share their joys and struggles, they become unified in the petitions they place before our heavenly Father. Family prayer can bring a peace and closeness like no other experience. Sharing personal prayer intentions builds trust and allows family members to stand together in confidence before the Blessed Trinity.

As we strive to be models of faith to our families, let us remember to look first and foremost to our Lord, Jesus Christ as our model. Jesus taught his disciples a family prayer when they asked him how to pray. The familiar opening words, "Our Father" identify immediately that we are part of God's family.



Like any spiritual exercise, family prayer requires discipline. It may not be easy to turn away from television or computers, but our families are worth the sacrifice of shutting off all media for a brief time each day. Praying as a family can be difficult to start especially for those who did not grow up with such an enriching practice. It may be hard to get your spouse to participate, never mind your children. If you have young children you are at a distinct advantage. Begin the practice now as a couple and invite them to join you as they grow. Have some version of family prayer on a regular basis.

If you already have some form of family prayer, consider adding a new form of prayer to help the family grow deeper in faith. If you and your family are new in praying together, keep it simple and start small. It may simply be starting with "grace" at each meal. Perhaps it may include a prayer of intercession of each family member that experiences need, such as illness, confronting a work problem, anticipated testing at school, friends experiencing difficulties. Prayer may be a spring board to family members discussing how our heavenly Father is working in their lives.

Holydays can be teaching and praying experiences. On the feast of the Annunciation, for example did I say "Yes" to our heavenly Father as readily Mary did? When in the company of family and friends, was I as concerned and attentive as Mary was to her cousin Elizabeth? In this way prayer at the family meal can be expanded into a real educational and encompassing part of daily living that enriches and strengthens.

However you pray now or decide to pray in the future, each experience of family prayer unites the family and strengthens ties to each other and to our heavenly Father. Newcomers to family prayer will find it much easier than expected and much more fulfilling than could be imagined.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO PRAY TOGETHER

Mealtime blessing. You may institute your own personal family blessing or the familiar, "Lord, Bless these gifts of food and drink for our family for you are holy, now and ever and forever. Amen." Always begin with the sign of the Cross. Offer special intentions for any



sick family member or friend or any struggles the children may be facing. Then sing "God grant you many years."

Bless the children with a sign of the cross on their head or with holy water including the prayer, "May the Lord bless you and keep you and guide you all the days of your life. May all you do be for the glory of God."

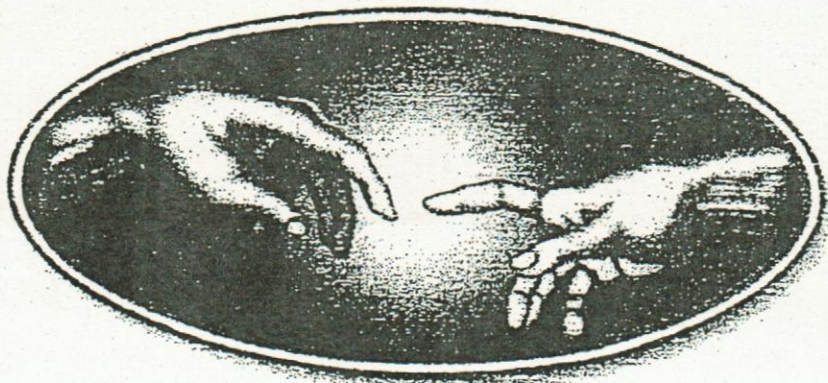
In addition to regular Sunday worship, the family should be together for holyday Liturgies as well if the parish schedule permits this.

Special faith events. Look for retreats, spiritual workshops and prayer events for families in your area. These create lasting memories.

Prayer jar. Set aside a container for family members to drop in written intentions and names of people to pray for that can be read aloud. Children will look forward to hearing their special petitions included in prayer.

Faith discussion. Opportunities for asking questions about each family member living out faith that day or if someone was Christ-like to them.

Spiritual reading. Scripture may be referred to or liturgical books consulted.





## A FAMILY PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of our family. Enlighten our hearts and minds that we may live more fully this vocation to love.

In our daily life and work,  
may we reflect the self-giving love which you,  
O Father, eternally show with your Son  
and the Holy Spirit.

Let your love be evident in the peace that reigns  
in our home and in the faith we profess and live.  
May our family always be a place of generosity,  
understanding, forgiveness and joy.

Kindly give us the wisdom and courage  
to be witnesses to your eternal design for  
the family; and grant that the Holy Family  
of Nazareth may always guide our path  
to holiness as a family.





## MAKING THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE FOR CHRIST

**I**t has always been part of human nature to view soldiers and military leaders with a great deal of respect. This was especially true in the glory of the Roman Empire, where commanders of fighting forces were often looked upon as equal to the gods themselves!

In the third century, MERCURIOS was a man who reached this special status in Roman society. He was a bold and brilliant tactician, winning victory after victory on the battlefield. But there was another side to Mercurios: he was secretly a follower of Christ. At a time when practicing Christianity openly surely meant death for any individual, Mercurios chose to remain silent about his beliefs.

At the age of 25, Mercurios was promoted to the rank of general by the Emperor Decius. A fellow officer, jealous of all of the praise and attention directed towards Mercurios, was determined to find out something that would discredit this Christian warrior in the eyes of the Emperor. After noticing that Mercurios was always absent at feasts honoring the Roman gods, the soldier sought him out and discovered Mercurios at prayer in a catacomb church. The secret was out: Mercurios was a Christian!

Mercurios was brought before the enraged Emperor, who demanded that he renounce Christ and pledge his total allegiance to the Roman gods. When Mercurios refused, Decius had no alternative: this popular soldier must die. Orders were issued for his execution, and Mercurios was martyred in the city of Caesarea in Cappadocia in 253 A.D.

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