

JAMES THE PERSIAN

Thy Martyr, O Lord, in his courageous contest for Thee, received as the prize, the crowns of incorruption and life from Thee, our immortal God.



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

November 29, 2009

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

+++ Monday evening we have the regular preparatory services for the coming feast of the Nativity of our Lord. Please come and join us at 7: 30 PM for prayer and praise.

+++ The annual St. Nicholas Day celebration Dinner will take place following the Divine Liturgy next Sunday, December 6. Please plan on bringing a meatless dish for the celebration. The sign-up listing will be available next Sunday. WE WILL HAVE A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS.

+++ We will have our monthly Pirohi Sale this coming Saturday, December 5. Preparations will take place on Thursday at 7: 00 AM. Please come and join us in making these projects a success. We need helping hands as always. Even if not scheduled for this sale, please come and offer your efforts because we anticipate larger than usual orders. The Order Sheet is in the hall kitchen for filling in. In addition we will have Pagacs and halushki. For \$10.00 and \$6.00 respectively.

+++ The Nativity Bake Sale will take place on Friday and Saturday, December 11 and 12. Please secure orders early to assure its success. The Order Sheets are in the kitchen to be filled in. Please plan on coming and lending a helping hand as more than usual orders will be secured for the Nativity holyday. Our well-liked popular nicely wrapped cookies as usual will be available at \$15.00 a package along with individual Holyday decorated large size trees for \$5.00. In advance we thank the good ladies who bake cookies to fill these containers.

+++ The offering for flowers for the coming feast of the Nativity of our Lord will be taken next Sunday, December 6. Please utilize the right envelope and offer generously so the church be brightly decorated for the Birth of our Saviour.

+++ We sincerely thank our good parishioners for placing orders for Gertrude Hawkes Candies. The total amounts to \$1398.00. We ask the Lord to bless all those who are concerned for the financial stability of our parish and pray He shares with them and their loved ones abundant grace for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ We are in need of packing boxes for the removal of the attic and hall contents to our new location. Please bring them in as soon as possible. We thank those who have already been supplying us with these needed boxes. We will soon announce when men and women should come to assist us in packing as well as removing the onion-dome from the roof before the weather becomes prohibitively inclement.

+++ 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, \$534.00; Candles, \$100.00; Food Coupons, \$100.00; Kitchen, \$100.00; Holyday, \$100.00; Pennies From Heaven, \$100.00; Candy Sale, \$100.00; Christian Fellowship, \$100.00; for a total of \$1134.00. 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 15 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, Rachel Korba, +Paul Szmajda, Debra Szmajda, Eleni Pallas, Robert Gorbich, Kent 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 \$██████ 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 ██████████. 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.

+++ 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.

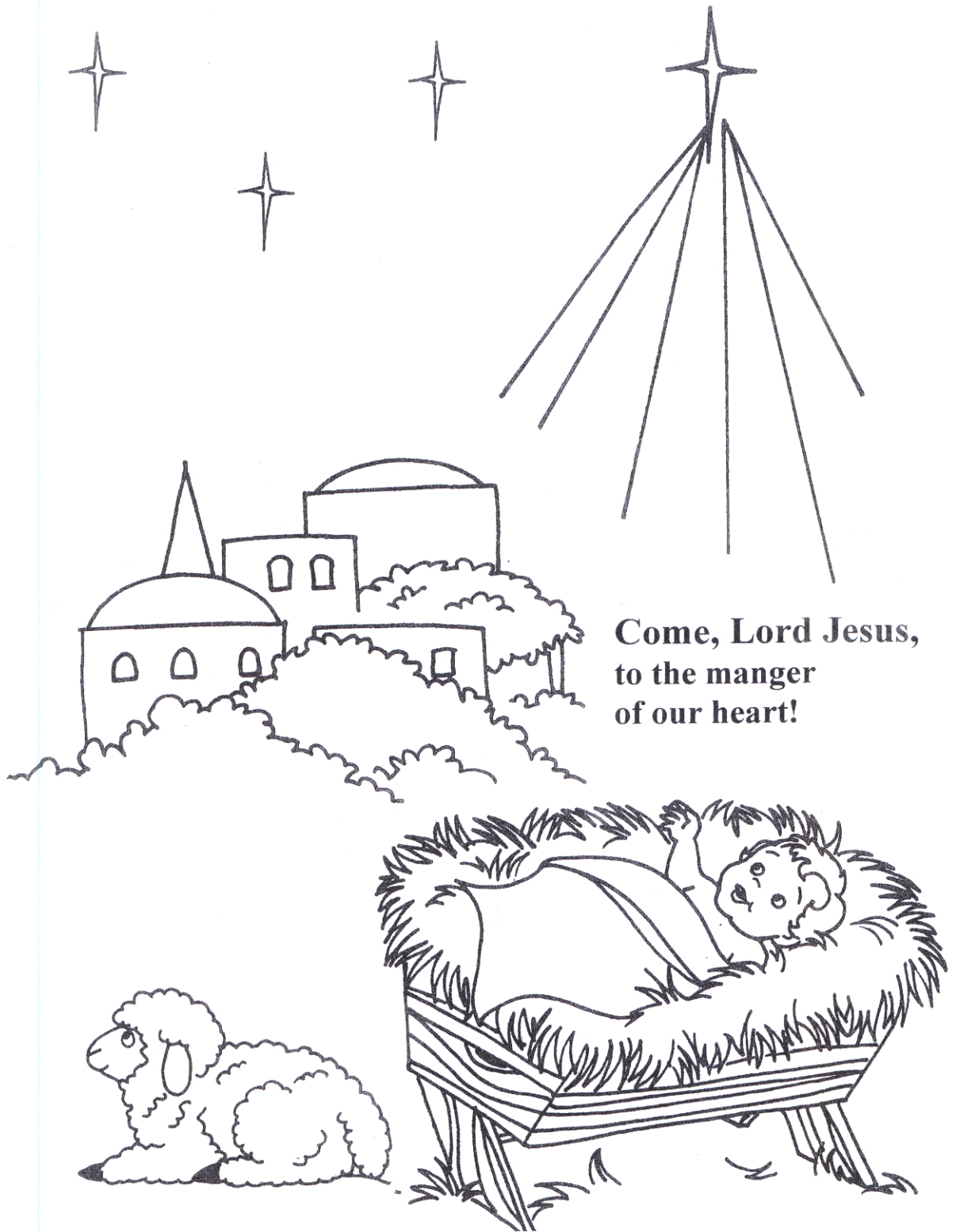
+++ Please be certain to see **Helen Karpiak** or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$██████ on this project to date!

+++ *We have not had a Ten Week Club lately because distributing and selling the tickets by one person has become difficult. We ask all to consider supporting this project with added enthusiasm and give Marilyn Korba a needed helping hand buying more than one ticket and selling some to friends and interested parties. If you have any ideas how we can once again make a success of this source of income, please share them with Marilyn and lend a helping hand. One person cannot do it alone. Marilyn will be able to sell 50 tickets at her place of work. The remaining fifty should be absorbed, bought or sold by the remainder of our parishioners. Please cooperate to make this project a success.*

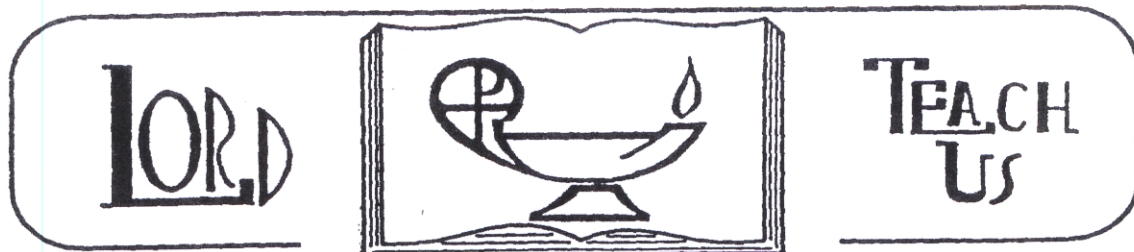
+++ We invite those who pledged support for the Building Fund when building is about to begin, to consider redeeming their pledges as we are preparing to apply to Millstone Township for the variance and Building Permit.

+++ Please remember we are now in the Nativity Fast. We ask our faithful to offer up their sacrifices of food in fasting to the Lord that He bless our efforts in the Building Program. Please also pray for the peace of God among all people on earth.

+++ 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!



**Come, Lord Jesus,
to the manger
of our heart!**



Faith In Christ

And Jesus aid, "Alright, receive your sight. Your faith has healed you" Luke 18: 42.

All who listen to my instructions and follow them are wise, like a man who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rains come in torrents and the floods rise and the storm winds bear against the house, it won't collapse, for it is built on a rock Matthew 7: 24; Luke 6: 46 – 49.

A leper approaches and kneels before him, worshipping, "Sir," he pleads, "if you want to, you can heal me." Then Jesus said to the Roman officer, "go on home, What you believe, has happened." Matthew 8: 2, 3.

Jesus turned around and spoke to her, "Daughter," he said, "all is well! Your faith has healed you." Then he touched their eyes and said "because of your faith, you are healed" Matthew 9: 22, 29.

"Woman," Jesus told her, "your faith is great and your request is granted" Matthew 5: 28.

Jesus came over and touched them, "arise," he said, "do not be afraid" Matthew 17: 7.

"If I can?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if you have faith" Mark 9: 23.

Jesus was amazed. Turning to the crowd he said, "Never among all the Jews in Israel have I met a man with faith like this." And Jesus aid to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace" Luke 7: 9, 10.

DON'T BE
FAITHLESS

any longer.

BELIEVE!

Blessed are those
who have not seen
ME AND

BELIEVE
ANYWAY.

John 20:29

Praying

*Let my prayer ascend before you like incense and
the lifting up of my hands like an evening sacrifice*

Psalms 141: 2.

For believers, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look toward heaven with the eyes of the soul; it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy. St. Clement of Alexandria, a popular teacher of the early Church, put it most simply: "Prayer is conversation with God." Like an conversation, it goes both ways and is interactive. We speak to God and He speaks with us. God loves us more than we can imagine. He wants us to get to know and love him as Father. Like any loving parent, He wants to spend time talking with his children.

What kind of conversation am I supposed to have?

Think of it this way: imagine that someone saved your life through an act of great personal sacrifice. What kind of conversation would you want to have with that kind of benefactor?

You would no doubt want to offer an earnest, serious and sincere *thank you*. You would be eager to praise the person's kindness, generosity and selflessness. You would probably ask, "How can I ever repay you?"

Now think for a moment about what God has done for us. He created us and gives us life. Every good gift we have is from him. When the human race turned away from him and lost its way because of sin, He made the most precious sacrifice possible to save us and bring us back to himself. He sent his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us.

What kind of conversation would you have with that kind of benefactor? For starters, you can express your sincere praise and thanks.

Doesn't prayer include asking God for something?

Of course it does! Think of a small child who is hungry; If the child comes to his father asking for food, he is delighted to answer that request. And if human fathers, Jesus reminds us, know how to give good gifts to their children when asked, "...how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask of him" Matthew 7: 9 – 11!

In fact, most of the *Our Father* is devoted to this important aspect of prayer: *petition*. We ask God to provide for us “our daily bread”, guide us, “lead us not into temptation” and protect us “deliver us from evil.” He cares about us and He is delighted to answer our prayers. “Have no anxiety about anything,” St. Paul insists, “but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” Philippians 4: 6. Just simply tell God what you need.

What about praying for others?

Another aspect of praying we cannot forget is intercession, which is prayer for others. St. Paul urged that intercessions “...be made for all” 1 Timothy 2: 1.

Everyone has some need for God’s help. It is your privilege to ask for it on their behalf. Even if you know that they themselves are praying, you can join them in their requests. Our heavenly Father is glad to see his children being genuinely concerned and helping one another that way.

When you pray for others, you find that your own life changes. Your heart grows warmer towards people in need. You are not as upset by the difficulties in your own life, because you are more aware of the troubles other people have. You find yourself more willing to help people in other ways as well. You readily see need and attempt to respond positively to it.

While it is not easy, our God calls us to prayer even for our enemies. Jesus set the example. As He died on the cross, He prayed for his killers: “Father, forgive them” Luke 23: 34. Praying for people who have offended or injured us actually makes it easier to forgive them and to see them more as God looks upon them. It can also lead us to recognize more clearly the times when we offend or injure others.

Does God always hear our prayers?

We can have the same confidence Jesus had when He prayed: “Father...I know that you always hear me” John 11: 42. And God, not only hears our prayers; He answers them as well. Nevertheless, his answer is not always the one we are hoping to hear. Sometimes we ask for the wrong things, things we would regret having if He granted them to us. Sometimes what we want does not fit into the bigger, wiser plan that leads to our salvation and does not conform to the actual needs, no simple wants of those around us. Sometimes He is allowing us to develop patience or to grow in some other, richer way.

In any case, we can always pray *in faith*. That does not mean we try to convince ourselves that everything we ask for, we will receive. Instead, it means that we pray with absolute trust in the Father who listens to our prayers, confident that He *wants* what is best for us; He *knows* what is best for us and He *is able* to give us what is best for us. Our prayers should always ask that God's will be fulfilled.

How do I find the right words to pray?

God listens even when we are not sure what to say. Oftentimes we pray using composed words, official prayers of the Church. It is called formal prayer, because it has a set *form*, rather than being spontaneous.

Jesus gave us a formal prayer when He taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6: 9 - 12). He and his disciples used formal prayers in worship in the synagogue and temple, often from the Psalms, because this was the ancient custom of the Jewish people. The Church has followed their worthwhile example in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and other settings as well. When we pray using the words given us in God's Revelation in Scripture and sacred Tradition, we are guided by these formal prayers as we search for words to express ourselves to God.

When we make these common prayers our own, we find ourselves praying in unity with the whole Church of which we are communicants. We become part of the timeless, global community of prayer, a sign we all belong to "the household of God" Ephesians 2: 19.

The Lord's Prayer is the most perfect prayer. In it we ask not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence that they should be desired. This prayer not only teaches us to ask for things but also in what order we should desire them.

An easy way to remember
the different kinds of prayer
is ACTS:

A = Adoration

C = Contrition

T = Thanksgiving

S = Supplication

How do I know when God is talking?

First, it is important to give him time to talk, a few quiet moments when you are listening for him, an opportunity for him to communicate with you.. On those occasions you may have thoughts or impressions come into your mind from God: a word of comfort, a solution to a problem, a prompting to take particular action.

There are other ways to listen to God as well. Reading Scripture or helpful spiritual books may allow him to speak to you through the printed word. God may speak through others who say that you came to mind during their own prayer time. Sometimes God simply answers you through diverse situations, opening one door and closing another.

If you think God is saying something what puzzles or even disturbs you, it is a good idea to speak about it with a spiritual father.

When should I pray?

Of course, we can pray any time because our God is always listening and attentive, regardless the time we have. Many believers say “mini-prayers” throughout the day as they go about their daily business, such as “Thank you, Lord,” “Jesus, help me” But over the centuries believers have also developed habits of praying at certain hours because they found it helped them recognize God and seek his will at important junctures of the day.

Many people, for example, dedicate the day to the glory of God as soon as they wake up. Asking God’s blessing is an important way to begin meals and recognize our dependence on his provision. At bedtime, many review the day as it closes, examining their conscience and saying a prayer of confession and contrition for their sins.

What are some prayer traditions?

The Divine Liturgy offers us the greatest opportunity to commune with our God because the Eucharistic celebration contains and expresses all forms of prayer and is the purest offering of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God’s name and according to the tradition of the Church, it is a “sacrifice of praise.”

The public prayer of the Church, the Matins service along with Vespers and the Hours of the Church sanctify the day. The Psalms, biblical and non-biblical readings are reflected upon

during morning, daytime, evening and night services. The various services and devotions celebrated in parish churches are an opportunity to grow in prayer life.

Mary, the ever-Virgin is the perfect prayer. We can pray with her and seek her intercession before the throne of Jesus Christ, her Son and our God. The prayer of the Church is sustained by the prayer of Mary and united with it in hope. Those who have gone before us, particularly the saints, share in the tradition of prayer by their example, their writings and their prayerful intercession for us today. We can and should ask them, particularly our patron saint, to intercede for us and for the whole world. Holydays offer us an opportunity to enrich our prayer life by spiritually entering into the celebration, recalling its meaning and significance and entering the festivities that make the lesson and prayer of the feast day celebrated an enriching principle for our lives. Holydays encourage us to pray because they offer lessons that what God does for others in particular circumstances, He is also eager to do for us. The grace of a particular feast can enrich our spiritual lives. Souls who are serious about salvation and a rich prayer life do not ignore feast days or saint's day celebrations.

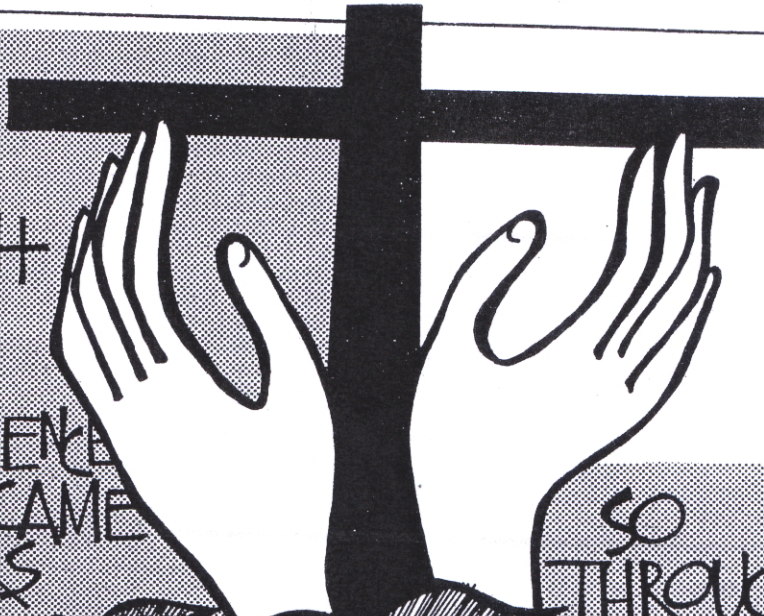
Scripture can serve the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul and a pure and lasting font of spiritual life. The Psalms, particularly, are timeless and appropriate for everyone, no matter the circumstances.

The Jesus Prayer favored by the Church is growing in popularity throughout the world in recent years. This prayer of the heart says; "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." The words of the prayer are repeated over and over as a way of "praying always." It is suitable for any set of circumstances.

Prayers for all times and occasions ask for strength and perseverance in bad times. We pray for the living and the dead. Prayer is the life of the new heart. It ought to animate us at every moment, regardless what circumstances we find ourselves in. Particularly should we be thankful for adverse conditions which permit us to grow in faith commitment and response.

The best way to learn about prayer is to indulge in it. Our heavenly Father is eager to speak with us. To invest time in talking with God consistently is probably the wisest thing we can do. We can weave prayer into the texture of our daily living. The safest way to proceed is to set aside a regular time and even a particular place, before the icon corner in our homes and to pray regularly each day. That way we build a regular habit of prayer into each day which enriches life abundantly.

JUST
AS
THROUGH
ONE
MAN'S
DISOBEDIENCE
ALL BECAME
SINNERS



SO
THROUGH
ONE MAN'S
OBEDIENCE
ALL SHALL
BECOME
JUST.



POSSESSING THE STRENGTH TO CAST AWAY IDOLS

We are all sinners, and we have all had the experience of having our spiritual shortcomings pointed out to us by friends and loved ones. How have we reacted? Were we embarrassed? Did we feel resentful, questioning where anyone felt they had the right to admonish someone else for their sins? Or did we repent, doing all we could to make amends for breaking God's Laws?

The Martyr James the Persian, a 4th century saint, once found himself in that position. He had been raised by devout Christian parents and took a Christian wife. The couple dutifully brought their children up as followers of Jesus as well.

But James also was a member of the pagan King Yezdegerd's court, and was flattered by the lavish praise the ruler gave him. This flattery caused James to fall victim to a grave sin: offering sacrifices to pagan idols. News of this shameful act reached his mother and his wife. They wrote him a scathing letter, beseeching him to repent and return to his Christian Faith. James reacted to this in the proper manner. He repented whole heartedly, and prayerfully reaffirmed his loyalty to the Lord. A fellow soldier overheard this, and reported James to the king. Given an opportunity to, once again, pay homage to the gods, and be "forgiven" by the king, James steadfastly refused. The king devised a brutal, torturous form of execution for him. Little by little, his body was cut into pieces. One by one his fingers and toes were severed, followed by his hands, arms, feet and legs. Throughout this inhuman process, James continued to offer prayers of thanksgiving to God as he repented for his sins. Finally, he was beheaded, suffering martyrdom around 400 AD. Relics of the Martyr James can be found all over the world; his blessed head is revered today in Rome.