# FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

*Mary and Joseph both embraced their unique vocations by deciding to follow God's call wherever it led*

# Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

**24 BURKE ROAD** **FREEHOLD, NJ 07728**

**Sunday after the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ** **December 28, 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

+++ As the Civil New Year approaches, we pray it will be one of good health, good fortune and God's abundant blessing on all of our parish faithful. Happy and Blessed New Year!

+++ **This Thursday is the solemn feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, St. Basil the Great and the civil New Year. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated in anticipation on Wednesday evening at 7:30 PM. How many souls will respond to this challenge to grow in holiness?**

+++ **We ask that returns be made for the Pirohi Sale, the Bake Sale and Candy Sale TODAY!**

+++ 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.

+++ **The weekly Scripture Study meets on Sundays following the Divine Liturgy while children attend their own classes. Everyone now has an opportunity to participate in adult religious education at which Scripture is discussed and explained along with other interests.**

+++ **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, [redacted]; Candles, [redacted] Food Coupons, [redacted]; Holyday, [redacted] Kitchen, [redacted]; Pennies From Heaven, [redacted]; Christian Fellowship, [redacted]; Candy Sales, [redacted]; Bishop's Dinner, [redacted]; Buloletin, [redacted]; Nativity of our Lord, [redacted], for a total of [redacted]. 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: Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, No Name, Maria Garcia, Anna Zacharyczuk, Pani Lucas, Father Lucas, Robert Gorbich, EleanorKorba, 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 [redacted] 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 [redacted]. 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 [redacted] on this project to date!

+++ **As soon a possible, please see Marilyn Korba to sign up for the Alaskan Cruise next August, 2009. We are in need of your support.**

+++ Our parish lawyer has pursued the feasibility of our obtaining the 4.67 acres of land in Millstone Township on route 537 and Mineral Springs Road. He had consultations with the Planning Board Chairman to secure in writing the use of the property for our church and parish center. We have determined as long as all other requirements for the property are observed, securing a variance will not be a problem. Father engaged an engineer to make a preliminary study of the total square footage of the property and draw out the set backs and determine the maximum square footage of buildings we would be allowed to put on it. This is important since we must add a kitchen and bathrooms to the original hall plans. The church building will remain the same. Driveway and parking lot square footage must also be included. We wish to retain a park-like serene setting. This drawing is available in the parish hall. It appears we can fit all that is needed within the set back areas. We will also be able to erect a Picnic Pavilion as we originally planned. There is provision for parish office expansion of the house for rectory use in the future when this becomes necessary. If we are able to procure this new site, everything will be new! **Pray** the Lord inspires realistic generosity in the appraisal of our present property. The Park Commission has on its agenda approval of the appraisal fee Monday evening and then we expect to hear for an appointment with the appraiser.

+++ We acknowledge with deep and abiding gratitude the sacrificial offerings received for the feast of our Lord's Nativity which total $1604.00 to date. We suggested at least $50.00 per family or employed single adults. It is important when we re-apply for our mortgage at the time of building that the records show our parishioners are generous in their support and do not hope to obtain funds solely from outside the parish to pay the debt. Please keep in mind if the bank judges we are depending on Pirohi Sales and Bake Sales to pay our bills, there will be no loan! We thank all who responded to Father's simple request with good health for Many and Blessed Years.

+++ 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!

## PRAYER BEFORE A JOURNEY

O LORD, our God, Jesus Christ, the true and living Way, who deigned to journey into Egypt with Joseph and Mary, and who accompanied Luke and Cleophas to Emmaus : we humbly pray, O all-holy Master, that you accompany us with your grace on our journey. Send us, as you sent to Tobias, a guardian angel, preserving and delivering us from every evil assault of visible or invisible enemies. Direct us toward the fulfillment of your commandments. Preserve us in peace, happiness, and health. Grant us the fulfillment of our good intentions which are for your glory and in accordance with your good pleasure. Let us return in safety and peace, for to You it belongs to show mercy and to save us all who give glory to You ✝, and to your eternal Father, and to your all-holy, gracious, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and forever. Amen.

## Fallen Away Loved Ones

*'My son,' replied the father, you are with me always, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice! This brother of yours was dead, and has come back to life. He was lost and is now found'* **Luke 15: 31, 32.**

*'I fast twice a week, I pay tithes on all I possess.' The other man, however, kept his distance, not even daring to raise his eyes to heaven. All he did was beat his breast and say, 'O God be merciful to me, a sinner'* **Luke 18: 12, 13.**

*Train a boy in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it* **Proverbs 22: 6.**

*You married women must obey your husbands, so that any of them who do not believe in the word of the gospel may be won over apart from preaching through their wives' conduct. They have only to observe the reverent purity of your way of life* **1 Peter 3: 1, 2.**

*Even if you should have to suffer for justice sake, happy will you be. 'Fear not and do not stand in awe of what this people fears. Venerate the Lord, that is, Christ, in your hearts. Should anyone ask you the reason for this hope of yours, be ever ready to reply, but speak gently and respectfully. Keep your conscience clear so that whenever you are defamed, those who libel your way of life in Christ maybe ashamed* **1 Peter 3: 14 – 16.**

*I will pour out water upon the thirsty ground, and streams upon dry land; I will pour out my spirit upon your offspring and my blessing upon your descendants* **Isaiah 44: 3.**

*Yet I tell you're the sober truth: it is much better for you that I go. If I fail to go, the Paraclete will never come to you, whereas when I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin, about justice about condemnation* **John 16: 7, 8.**

## The Old Country Priest says...

What does this say??? OPPORTUNITYISNOWHERE. Did you read it as...Opportunity is *nowhere,* or as every **Orthodox Believer** should, Opportunity is *now here?*

## Like A Sparrow

A philosophy teacher once asked the class to bring in a jar of justice the next time they assembled. No jar was brought. Justice cannot be quantified because it has to do with the quality of relationships. A teacher of spirituality asked students to define humility. The best the class could do was mention a few images. Humility is more like a sparrow than a peacock; humility resembles a small pond, not the majestic ocean; humility might be found in a vigil light rather than the brilliance of a huge stained-glass window. **Humility is the habitual quality whereby we live in the truth of things: the truth that we are creatures and not the Creator; the truth that our life is a composite of good and evil; light and darkness; the truth that in our littleness we have been given extravagant dignity. Humility is the willingness to be what you are and to do what you can. Humility is truth, recognized, accepted and embraced. Humility is saying a radical yes to the human condition; it is a profound acceptance of God's plan for us.**

"All of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." *Hymn of Baptism.*

It is through the mystery of baptism that we become "partakers of the divine nature." It is in the mystery of baptism that we walk with Christ through His passion, death and Resurrection. "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). It is for this reason that during the ceremony that we are immersed three times (*Instruction*, 48), symbolically showing that we are spending three days with Christ in the tomb.

# The Importance Of Visitors

Visitors are most important people when the Holy Spirit gathers us as believers in our parish church.

Visitors are not dependent upon us; we are dependent upon them because our communicants are the first visitors.

Visitors are not an interruption to our Christian worship, but make it more purposeful because we share its truth with them. Permit them to see what Christ does for us so He can do the same for them.

Visitors do us a favor when they come into our church because we have an opportunity to witness to the scriptural truth of our commitment to Christ.

Visitors are a part of our evangelical effort to expose the riches of faith in Christ to them.

Visitors are not statistics; they are flesh and blood with feelings, emotions and spiritual needs similar to ours.

Visitors are people who come to us many times in pain and want; it is our eager prayer life which will help them meet their spiritual needs in our midst.

Visitors are deserving of the most courteous and attentive reception and welcome we can offer them.

Visitors can be the life-blood of the Church because we can witness to them that Christ our Saviour came for all people.

Visitors can be transformed into regular communicants and members of our parish if the love of the Lord in our hearts and souls is contagious.

Visitors should be greeted warmly by all communicants of our parish so the warmth of Christ's concern is made evident in us.

Make a genuine effort to give all our visitors a royal welcome!

## A Definition Of The New Year

*The new year is a door*
*By which we reach new fields*
*Of service for God and fellow man:*
*A door by which we can explore*
*Wide spheres of usefulness*
*Our world to bless,*
*And reap the sheaves God's word of witness yields.*

*The new year is a task*
*Set by the Master of our souls,*
*A little part of our life's work below:*
*And so we ask holy wisdom which alone controls*
*Our labor, teaching what and where to sow:*
*That the year, at its end,*
*May show God's glory and man's profit blend.*

*This new year is a book*
*With many pages, and as yet all white*
*On which to write*
*The history of thought, and deed, and world*
*In this new group of days.*
*We pray You, Lord,*
*As You shall look upon the book,*
*When written over, may all be to Your praise.*

## Resolutions Worth Keeping

**During this New Year: I resolve to put Christ along side my Church and Christ and my church before my club and other interests. I resolve to put the spiritual before the material and the eternal before the temporal. I resolve to put God's Word before man's opinion. I resolve to put Christ before others. I resolve to put prayer before pleasure. I resolve to put the Saviour before the teacher. I resolve to walk more by faith and trust and less by sight and reason. I resolve to live in order to give rather than to get. I resolve to strive to be good rather than great. I resolve to put more of God and less of myself in all that I do.**

# WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE!

Before the dawn of time, He was begotten of the Father and without a mother. Now on earth He becomes man without a father, being virgin-born from you, O Mother of God. Therefore, a star announces the good news to the Wise Men, while the angels and shepherds sing the glory of your giving birth, O Woman full of grace! *Kontakion, Feast of the Synaxis of the Mother of God.*

O first martyr and apostle of Christ, you fought the good fight. You exposed the perversion of the persecutors, for when you were killed by stoning at the hands of wicked men you received a crown from the Right Hand on high, while you cried out to God, saying: "O Lord, do not charge this sin against them." *Troparion, Feast of St. Stephen Protomartyr.*

Yesterday the Master came to us as a man, and today his servant departs from life. Yesterday the King was born as a man, and today His servant is stoned to death. For the sake of Christ, holy Stephen became the first martyr. *Kontakion, Feast of the St. Stephen Protomartyr.*

O Joseph, announce to David, ancestor of Christ, the good news of these wonders you have seen: a Virgin giving birth to a Child. With the shepherds you have glorified Him, with the wise men you have worshipped Him, and an angel appeared to you. Ask Christ to save our souls. Troparion, *Sunday after the Nativity of our Lord.*

Today, David, beloved of God, is filled with joy; Joseph and James offer hymns of praise; their joy is the crown of relationship with Christ. They sing praise to Him Who was wondrously born; and they cry out: "O Merciful Lord, save those who honor You." *Kontakion, Sunday after the Nativity of our Lord.*

The most merciful God did not disdain circumcision. He offered Himself instead as a symbol and example of salvation to all. He made the Law, and yet submitted Himself to its commands and to what the prophets foretold of Him. O our God, Who hold all things in Your hands and yet were wrapped in swaddling clothes: O Lord, glory be to You! *Vesper Hymn, Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord.*

O Basil, in the fullness of your priesthood, you preached the Gospel of the Kingdom joyfully, pouring upon the Church the teachings of the true faith. By these, we learn to speak of godly things and to glorify One Godhead: Father Almighty, Unique Word of God, and Holy Spirit Divine, three Persons undivided. Intercede with Him that He may enlighten and save our souls. *Vesper Hymn, Feast of St. Basil the Great.*

# He is *Revealed* by many Names...

*"...and His name shall be called..."* Isaiah 9:6.

The Holy Name of our Lord, God and Saviour was revealed by the angelic visitor. Throughout salvation history, He is referred to in a variety of ways, each of which make known more and more of the enduring love of our Heavenly Father for each of us.

## *God my Saviour*

*"...my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour..."* **Luke 1: 47.**

**The word "Saviour" here is from its Greek derivation, "Soter," meaning "presence." Should we not now, imitate the virtue and example of His Blessed Mother, in magnifying and glorifying as well as rejoicing in the finished work which He has wrought in our behalf? All that remains for our redemption and salvation is to cooperate with the grace the Saviour of the world has won for us. Then we, too, will rejoice with the Mother of God because we, too, will be victors with Him! In our approach to the Saviour, it is never who *we* are, but what *He* is. Our joy is in Him and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of faith commitment as we face each day with joyful heart. We need the Saviour because we are sinners and fall short of the mark of perfection. Only the Saviour can save us because we cannot save ourselves and so desperately need salvation. At the same time, should we not have a tender heart for those who do not at all know Him? And if some know Him, should we not provide a Godly example they can eagerly follow with us along heaven's path? "Saviour of the world, lead us like a shepherd to glorify Your all-holy Name in our efforts to win souls for You!"**

## Wasted Years

I looked upon a farm one day,
That once I used to own;
The barn had fallen to the ground,
The fields were overgrown.

The house in which my children grew,
Where we had lived for years—
I turned to see it broken down,
And brushed aside the tears.

I looked upon my soul one day,
To find it, too, had grown
With thorns and thistles everywhere—
The seeds neglect had sown.

The years had passed while I had cared
For things of lesser worth;
The things of heaven I let go
While minding things of earth.

To Christ I turned with bitter tears,
And cried, "O Lord, forgive!
I haven't much time left for thee,
Not many years to live."

The wasted years forever gone,
The days I can't recall;
If I could live those days again,
I'd make him Lord of all.

—Author unknown

Character needs no epitaph. You can bury a man, but character will beat the hearse back from the graveyard.

## A DAY WELL SPENT

If we sit down at set of sun
And count the things that we have done,
And counting find
One self-denying act, one word
That eased the heart of one who heard;
One glance most kind
That fell like sunshine where it went-
Then we may count the day well spent.

# Did You Know That ...

...as long as you are going to think anyway, isn't it better to think big?

...we should beware of little expenses because a small leak will sink a great ship?

...the reason the second day of the diet is easier is because by then you're off it?

...perhaps every rule in the book can be broken except one: be the Orthodox Christian you are and become all you were meant to be in God's sight?

...spiritual immaturity can last a life time?

...at times it is difficult to tell what generates the greatest pain: the truths of us told by a friend, or the lies of us told by an enemy?

...love is an irresistible desire to be irresistibly desired?

...love does not make the world go 'round, it makes the ride worthwhile?

...the most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother?

...there are many more people trying to meet the right person than to become the right person?

...God's love is an unusual game; there are either two winners or none?

...the greatest good you can do for others is not just to show your riches, but to reveal them their own?

...a good definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting a different result?

...if there is no struggle in the spiritual life, there is no progress?

...the first person who has to believe in you is *you?*

...every time we turn green with envy, we become ripe for trouble?

## JOSEPH AND MARY: THE ULTIMATE "PROTECTIVE PARENTS"

Being a parent can be described as a multi-faceted vocation. A father and mother are called upon to provide for every need of their child - sometimes at great expense and often with greater sacrifice. A child must be taught, nurtured, fed and disciplined. These are just a few parental responsibilities that a father and mother are obligated to meet.

Perhaps the most important duty, however, that every parent must embrace is protecting their child from harm and misfortune. Sometimes lost in the story of our Lord's Nativity is the effort made by Joseph and the Virgin Mary to protect their precious Child from King Herod, who slaughtered scores of innocent children in Bethlehem and its surrounding region in his rage-driven quest to eliminate anyone who would dare be referred to as the "King of the Jews."

The Gospel of St. Matthew gives us the account of the courageous actions of our Lord's earthly parents. An angel of the Lord warns Joseph in a dream: "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him. " (Matthew 2:13) In the dead of night, they fled from their home in Bethlehem and embarked upon a long and dangerous journey, traveling hundreds of miles over rugged, unfamiliar terrain. Somehow, they safely arrived in Egypt, remaining there until Joseph received another heavenly visitor saying: "Arise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child's life are dead." (Matthew 2:20) Their stay in Egypt is shrouded in mystery. What we do know is this: Joseph and Mary were the ultimate "protective parents," preserving unharmed the One Who would grow up to be the Savior of the world!

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin . . . . . Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey . . . . . Litho in U.S.A.