



The manna of St. Nicholas serves as a source of help and hope for all believers.

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

December 7, 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

+++ Today we have festal anointing on the occasion of this past week's solemn feast of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we reply, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ The annual St. Nicholas Day Covered Dish takes place after the Divine Liturgy today. Please be certain to join us in Christian Fellowship for the celebration. We thank all who prepared foods for our enjoyment. God bless you faithful souls!

+++ The offering for flowers for the coming feast of the Nativity of our Lord takes place TODAY. Please use appropriate envelope and be generous with your sacrificial offering so our church will be fittingly beautified for this solemn feast.

+++ His Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas will be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood at St. John the Baptist Parish in Perth Amboy on Sunday, January 11, 2009 when he will celebrate a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Many bishops and priests will be present for the festivities. We are invited to participate as well since Father is his classmate. A Golden Jubilee Banquet will be held at the Forge Inn in Woodbridge as part of the event. We would like to have 2 tables from our parish. Tickets for the banquet are priced at \$50.00 for adults and \$15.00 for children under thirteen. Please see Nina Harrison to make reservations and secure details as soon as possible. Deadline is December 24. We wish our parish is well-represented. **NEXT SUNDAY IS THE DEADLINE FOR PAYMENT.** Make checks out to our parish.

+++ 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, \$432.00; Candles, \$100.00; Food Coupons, \$100.00; Christian Fellowship, \$100.00; Refund, \$100.00; Pennies From Heaven, \$100.00; Holyday, \$100.00; Candy Sales, \$100.00, for a total of \$1,032.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 38 adults and 14 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Pani Lucas, Father Lucas, Paul Szmajda, Mary Jaakobs, Robert Gorbich, Kent Pasquino, Maria Garcia 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 \$1,150.00 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 \$92,000.00. 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 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 \$4500.00 on this project to date!

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

+++ The Winter Bake Sale will take place for Nativity of our Lord on and Friday and Saturday, December 12 and 13. Cookies will be available at the Nativity Bake Sale. Please begin to secure orders NOW. **The Order Sheet for the Bake Sale is available on the church hall table. Please begin securing orders now so these endeavors are successful.**

+++ Recently, Father received for our Parish Library the donation of a DVD about the Moslem threat to our nation and the world from Fox News as a public service. Anyone interesting viewing it may see Father as soon as possible and it will be provided. It is an interesting, informative and provocative work and Father recommends it for viewing and study.

+++ 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 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 are in the gracious season of the Nativity Fast. During this holy preparatory season for the coming feast of the Nativity of our Lord, Father is preaching a series of homilies on *Men in Scripture* at the services celebrated Monday evenings at 7: 30 PM. Come join us in prayer and an eagerness to grow spiritually as we observe the prescriptions of the holy preparatory season. Let us welcome together the coming of our salvation! All are asked to abstain from meat products. Offer your sacrifice for the success of our building program. Confessions are heard prior to and after services.

+++ We express our sincerest gratitude to all our faithful for their support of the Candy Sales. Father sent in the order and will advise when it is received. We also thank all who came and prepared for, secured orders for and then worked at the past Pirohi Sale. It was the largest we ever had, with over 400 dozen orders. God bless each soul who contributed to its success. May the gracious Lord continue to bless us with good health for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ We sincerely thank Paul & Eleni Pallas for sponsoring the Bulletin and the parish Web Site this month of December in thanksgiving for the many blessings upon their family and loved ones.. We pray the gracious Lord continue to bless them and loved ones for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ We are in need of a donor for the candles which will beautify our altar table and parish church for the coming feastday of the Nativity of our Lord. The offering is \$125.00. Please see Father as soon as possible.

+++ 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!



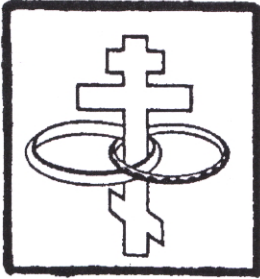
Birthday
Wishes!

We are pleased to greet those of our faithful communicants who celebrate their birthday this month. Our Lord has offered these souls yet another year of blessed life. The most obvious way He blesses us and participates in our life is by sharing His divine life with us in the Eucharist at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Thus we can gather together and offer thanks to Him for yet another year of life blessed by His most gracious hands. Today, we prayerfully remember in the Divine Liturgy the following souls who celebrate their birthday during the month of December.

December 2 Pani Mary Buletza
December 2 Father Robert E Lucas
December 3 Michelle L. Sorochka
December 3 Nikitas Tsokris
December 11 Charles J. Peles
December 18 Mary Jaakobs
December 29 Robert E. Henry

With a prayerful heart and grateful soul, our parish faith community asks the Lord to continue to bless these birthday celebrants with good spiritual and physical health for the coming year. We invite all to add their intercessory prayers so that with one voice and one heart we may also participate in the grace and joy of their celebration. As we wish them a happy and blessed celebration of their birthday, our ardent prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless them for

Many and Blessed Years!



WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

The Byzantine Fathers of the Church were wont to emphasize how ancient and how venerable marriage is in the sight of our God because it was established yet in paradise before the fall of Adam and Eve and brought to blessed perfection by Christ in Cana of Galilee. Its grace survived the sin of our first parents and it remains a sign of the presence of the Holy Trinity in our midst. It is a living symbol of the deep and abiding love between Christ and His Bride, our blessed Church. It is characterized in the liturgical life of the Church as a happy martyrdom. And it is precisely for this reason the sacramental Mystery of Marriage is such a joyous event. On the third Sunday of this month, we honor those of our good parishioners who observe their marriage anniversaries this month of December. They are specially remembered in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and subsequently receive an individual and personal blessing of the Lord at its conclusion. Celebrating this month are:

December 3 Joseph F. & Kyra A. Choti
December 6 Robert & Joan Henry

We gratefully give thanks to the Blessed Trinity for having guided and strengthened the marriages of these believers, and their cooperation with sacramental grace to remain faithful to one another over the years. Like all who are faithful to Christ, they recognize the presence and necessity of the Holy Spirit not only in the marriage, but in subsequent family life as well. As we praise our God for their witness in our midst, let us also join them with our prayers and thanksgiving before the throne of the Lord. May they continue to praise His Holy Name by their love and devotion to one another for

Many and Blessed Years!



Hell

The denizens of hell crowd to meet you as you enter their domain. World leaders and earth's mightiest kings, long dead, are there to see you. But instead, you will be brought down to the pit of hell, down to its lowest depths Isaiah 14: 9.

You have taken pleasant incense and perfumes to Molech as your gift. You have traveled far, even to hell itself, to find new gods to love Isaiah 57: 9.

I have made the nations shake with fear at the sound of her fall, for I threw her down to hell with all the others like her. And all the other proud trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, the ones whose roots went deep into the water, are comforted to find her there with them in hell. Her allies, too, are all destroyed and perish with her. They went down with her to the nether world, those nations that lived beneath her shade Ezekiel 31: 16.

But God did not spare even the angels who sinned but threw them into hell, chained in gloomy caves and darkness until the judgment day 2 Peter 2: 4.

What is more, those arrogant Chaldeans are betrayed by all their wine, for it is treacherous. In their greed they have collected many nations, but like earth and hell, they are never satisfied Habakuk 2: 5.

You whole body shall be cast into hell Matthew 5: 29.

...in hell he lifted up his eyes in torment Luke 16: 23.

...and I have the keys of hell and of death Revelation 1: 18.

Compassion

in a Cruel World

A man in Burundi falls seriously ill with malaria. He urgently needs to be transferred to hospital. But how? No car is available to transport him. Two of his close friends come to his aid. They put him on a bicycle and push him for five grueling hours over mountainous terrain. They get him to a bus that takes him to the nearest hospital. A few days later, he is significantly better.

On the other side of the globe, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the Gulf area of the United States in August 2005, a group of volunteers chance upon a house crushed under fallen trees. The volunteers, complete strangers to the owner of the house, spend the whole day removing fallen trees and debris with chain saws, “I cannot thank these people enough,” says the owner.

Sensational media reports tend to emphasize atrocities and acts of brutality. Daily acts of compassion and kindness are often eclipsed by these accounts. This, however, does not change the fact that people everywhere are desperate for love, affection, and sympathy. We hunger for compassion! Such sentiments may be more common during the Nativity season, when many speak or sing about “peace and good will toward men” Luke 2:14, but readily dissipate afterwards.

Showing compassion may not be easy in a world that seems predominantly cold and inhospitable. The prevalent attitude is that ruthlessness and insensitivity pave the way for success and triumph. Many appear to live by the creed ascribed to Niccolo Machiavelli that it is more prudent to be cruel than compassionate. Greed and egotism easily cut off the flow of compassion.

As a result, many put themselves first, even at the cost of other people’s feelings or interests and rights. Male sports and entertainment heroes are often presented as ‘real men’ – ‘machos’ who do not show gentle genuine affection. Some political rulers behave similarly.

Therefore, we do well to ask: Why should we be sympathetic? Is compassion a power for good? And what can help us to show compassion?

Never before have so many of our fellow human beings been in such dire need of compassionate help as they face famine, sickness, poverty, crime, civil strife and natural disasters, as well as personal afflictions beyond comprehension. Compassion denotes a sympathetic awareness of another's suffering or adversity combined with a desire to alleviate it. Like the warm rays of the bright sun, compassion can soothe a distressed soul, lessen pain and lift the spirits of an afflicted person.

We can show compassion by our actions and our words, caring for others and being there when they need us. It is good not to limit compassion to family, friends, and acquaintances. We can widen out to include people whom we do not even know. "If you love loving those who love you, what reward do you have?" asked Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. This compassionate man also said, "All things therefore, that you want men to do to you, you must also likewise do to them" Matthew 5: 46, 47: 7: 12.

We all read the words – known as the Golden Rule – in Scripture. Many agree that the Bible is an important guide to showing compassion. They repeatedly express our obligation to help those who for whatever reason, cannot help themselves. Scripture presents its Author and our Creator, Almighty God, as the one who is preeminently compassionate.

Thus, we read, "God defends the rights of orphans and widows. He cares for foreigners and gives them food and clothing" Deuteronomy 10: 18. Our God is "...executing judgment for the defrauded ones, the one giving bread to the hungry" Psalms 146: 7. Regarding disadvantaged immigrants, our God decreed "The alien resident...should become to you like a native of yours; and you must love him as yourself" Leviticus 19: 34.

Displaying compassion, however, does not always come naturally. The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians of Colossae: "Strip off the old personality and its practices and clothe yourselves with the personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new according to the image of the one who created it...As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion" Colossians 1: 9, 10, 12.

as we wish we had, or our actions might be misinterpreted. Here compassion comes to the rescue and helps to preserve peace. It is easy to forgive a person who is known for being compassionate. Compassion helps us to measure up to St. Paul's counsel for Christians: "Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaints against another" Colossians 3: 13.

Moreover, compassion has the power to relieve affliction. As we have noted, it reflects a spirit of sympathy toward those in distress and causes us to suffer with those who suffer. Compassion involves tender regard for people in misery accompanied with positive action to help them.

By being sympathetic, Christians imitate Jesus. He was never too busy to help others in both material and spiritual dimensions. When He discerned that others were in need, He compassionately found a way to assist and affirm. Consider how Jesus reacted when He saw crowds of spiritually destitute people. "On the sight of the crowds his heart was moved with pity. They were lying prostrate from exhaustion; like sheep without a shepherd" Matthew 9: 36. Reading the word here rendered, "moved with pity" we can see it denotes an emotion which moves a man to the very depths of his being. In fact, this word has been called one of the strongest words in Greek for expressing and feeling the sentiment of compassion.

In a similar way, compassionate Christians respond quickly to the material and spiritual needs of others. The apostle Peter wrote "All of you should be like-minded, sympathetic, loving toward one another, kindly disposed and humble" 1 Peter 3: 8. For instance, when a family of needy Christians had to move to a new area for health reasons, fellow believers there let them use a house rent-free for some six months. The husband relates, "Every day they came to see how we were doing, and their encouraging comments made us feel at home."

True Christians are also concerned about the needs of strangers. They gladly give of their time, energy, and means to serve people they do not know. The parish faith community is thus infused with an atmosphere of compassion and loving-kindness. Motivated by love, members of the parish are energized to find ways to serve. Because of various personal problems, orphans and widows in the faith community may need concern, and empathy. Are we not to help them cope with poverty, limited medical care, lack of adequate housing, or other personal difficulties?

Consider a couple in Greece. The husband suffered a stroke. He and his wife were taken to a hospital hundreds of miles away. Their meager income, however, depended on their orange grove being harvested. Who would do that while they were away at the hospital? Communicants of the local parish took action. They harvested and sold the oranges, providing a source of income for the desperately needy couple, as well as giving them peace of mind.

Compassion can be shown in many ways. For instance, compassionate Christians realize that at times the main thing some afflicted ones need is kindly concerned visits from people who will listen with a sympathetic ear, show empathy, and provide comfort. "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have this same attitude towards all. Put away ambitious thoughts and associate with those who are lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation" Romans 12: 15, 16.

Through out the world, faithful believers can provide and have peace and comfort where compassion and kindness are shown. True Christians realize that compassion attracts, while ruthlessness repels. Thus as they imitate their heavenly Father, they strive to be tenderly compassionate in practical ways. Real believers warmly invite all to experience the compassionate, loving, caring atmosphere that permeates the average faith community. They are certain all will find the environment welcoming and appealing. "Accept one another, then as Christ accepted you, for the glory of God" Romans 15: 7.

The Good Samaritan. ²⁵ On one occasion a lawyer stood up to pose him this problem: "Teacher, what must I do to inherit everlasting life?" ²⁶ Jesus answered him: "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" ²⁷ He replied:

"You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your strength,
and with all your mind;
and your neighbor as yourself." "

The Good Shepherd

Christ reveals himself to us when He says, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep” John 10: 11. He continues to explain himself as He says, “I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep” John 10: 14, 15.

These verses and life of service Jesus lived and the sacrificial death He died have inspired the figure of stalwart young Christ carrying a lamb lovingly on his shoulders to become the perfect description of Christ our God as a living reality of the Saviour’s own words.





Be holy and
grow strong in
the LORD'S
LOVE!

THE MANNA OF ST. NICHOLAS

St. Nicholas, the 4th century Archbishop of Myra, is widely revered by Christians throughout the world. In the hymnology of the Orthodox Church, he is acclaimed for being "a teacher of moderation, a model of faith and an example of virtue." His acts of kindness and generosity are remembered and talked about to this day.

Even in death, St. Nicholas continues to have a great impact on the lives of many Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike. From the time of his burial in the basilica of his church in Myra, the body of St. Nicholas has exuded a mysterious, miraculous liquid referred to as "manna." Those who are anointed with it often find themselves unexplainably healed of their illnesses. Countless others have their prayers answered through this special intercession of this beloved saint.

In 1087, the body of St. Nicholas was stolen from its resting place by sailors and taken to the seaport town of Bari, Italy, where a magnificent cathedral was built to house the relics of the famed Archbishop. Down through the centuries, the mysterious manna has continued to flow. In 1954, the crypt of St. Nicholas needed extensive repair and renovation, so it was necessary to exhume the saint's body from its tomb. When it was time for the body to be re-interred, the linen sheet upon which it had rested was found to be soaking wet - saturated from the manna! Since 1980, it has been customary on the Feast Day of the Translation of the Relics of St. Nicholas to Bari from Myra, for the cathedral clergy to collect the manna in an urn for later distribution to the general public. It is interesting to note that since 1966, there has been an Orthodox presence near the crypt of St. Nicholas, with a chapel designated for Orthodox services.