
HOLY FOREFATHERS



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Twenty Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday of the Forefathers

December 14, 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 recall all the faithful souls of the Old Covenant who espoused and believed in genuine faith the promise of our heavenly Father that a Saviour would be sent to redeem us and undo the separation caused by the sin of Adam and Eve.

+++ We extend a multitude of sincere Thank You messages to all our faithful who labored to make the Nativity Bake Sale a success. Those who worked, prepared for and secured and delivered orders are the focus of our loving attention. We pray the good Lord continues to bless us all with good health for Many and Blessed Years that into the future we may continue to sing the glory of our God! What a delight to experience the loving mercy and blessing of our God!

+++ To all who labored and invested their time in making the St. Nicholas Dinner a success we assure of our prayers of gratitude. The abundance of food, a usual occurrence, was delightful and tasty. The visit from St. Nicholas was delightful as was the presentation by our Jesus School Children. God bless all devoted souls in our parish!

+++ The offering for flowers for the coming feast of the Nativity of our Lord was taken this past Sunday. While we are pleased with the initial response, we do not want anyone left out. If you were not with us, you may still bring in your offering for this purpose to beautify our humble parish church on the birthday in the flesh of our Lord!

+++ 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. **TODAY IS THE DEADLINE FOR PAYMENT.** Make checks out to our parish and choose from among choices for the dinner meal. Father will meet with those who will attend so that perhaps duplicate cars can be avoided and we can form a caravan.

+++ 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: Tithing Offering, \$~~100.00~~; Candles, \$~~100.00~~; Food Coupons, \$~~100.00~~; Holyday, \$~~100.00~~; Rental, \$~~100.00~~; Raffle, \$~~100.00~~; Flowers \$~~100.00~~; Kitchen, \$~~100.00~~, for a total of \$~~1000.00~~. 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 your 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, Sophia Choit, Delores Waller, Paul Szmajda, 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 \$~~100.00~~ 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 ~~577,000.00~~. 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 ~~\$200.00~~ 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.**

+++ We acknowledge the firm intention of our children for the good of the parish. Sophia Choti saw everyone buying tickets for the drawing at the dinner this past Sunday and begged her mother for funds so she could win some money for the church. She was bent on winning and bought her five dollars worth and in fact did win and turned the entire amount over for our building campaign. Then she wanted a dollar to light two small candles in thanksgiving for this blessing! God bless all the children of the parish who love the beauty of God's Temple.

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

+++ We express our gratitude to Pani Marlene, Kyra Choti, Robin Pasquino and Joan Henry for sacrificially and lovingly investing their time and effort baking and preparing the cookies which were sold at the Bake Sale. Some one hundred pounds of the confections were made for the benefit of the parish! We invoke upon all of them and their loved ones as well as on those who supported their sale a multitude of gracious blessings for continued good health for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ In devoted prayer and serious introspection, we invite all our faithful to seek the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in making a realistic and generous birthday offering to the parish on the coming grand feast of the Nativity of our Lord.

+++ There are still a number of souls who have not approached the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation to confess their sins so that by grace they are enabled to then worthily celebrate the coming feast of the Lord's Birth. Father hears confessions prior to and after any service. Please avail yourself of this gracious benefit that our hearts and souls become worthy mangers in which the Christ Child may repose.

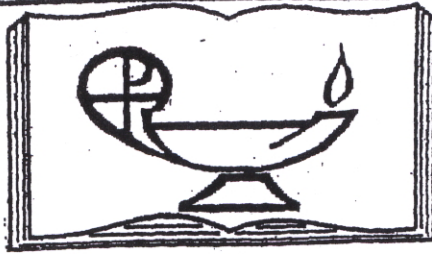
+++ We remind our faithful to plan on offering a seven daylight to prayerfully burn in gratitude for the gift of salvation we have in the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh on the feast of the Nativity of our Lord!

+++ 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!

**AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE,
WE WILL SERVE
THE LORD**

Joshua 24:15

LORD



TEACH
US

Priesthood

...therefore he had to become like his brothers in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God on their behalf, to expiate the sins of the people. Since he was himself tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are tempted Hebrews 2: 17, 18.

You too, are living stones, built as an edifice of spirit into a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Chris...You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, people he claims for his own to proclaim the glorious works of the one who called you from darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people, but now you are God's people; once there was no mercy for you, but now you have found mercy 1 Peter 2: 5, 9, 10.

May your priests, Lord God, be clothed with salvation; may your faithful ones rejoice in good things 2 Chronicles 6: 41.

Her priests I will clothe with salvation and her faithful ones shall shout merrily for joy Psalms 132: 16.

Holy are they who share in the first resurrection. The second death shall have no claim on them; they shall serve God and Christ as priests and shall reign with him for a thousand years Revelation 20: 6.

The priest and prophet have erred...they err in vision; they stumble in judgment Isaiah 28: 7.

DO not depend on the hope of results...

When you are doing the sort of work you have undertaken, you may have to face the fact that your effort will be apparently worthless and even achieve no worth at all, if not perhaps, results opposite to what you expect.

As you get used to this idea, you will start more and more to concentrate not on results but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the endeavor itself!

COME...Lord Jesus!

The Nativity Fast is a season of joyful anticipation of the coming of the kingdom of God among us. We look forward to the Birth of our Saviour. To do both is not easy as: Nativity feast day preparation can overwhelm us with all sorts of activities which in reality do not even belong integrally to the season. Shopping lists and hustle and bustle of making purchases actually detour us from reality. While all the Scripture readings prescribed for this time point to the coming of the Lord, we may have a hard time looking forward to "the end of the world" as we understand it, so that we can embrace the "reign of God" inevitably arriving. Pray earnestly that the Lord comes into our lives so we might get more out of the season than simply buying and buying more and running around for more unique, novel and different gifts for each other. After all, the Lord only wishes for the gift of a pure heart!

The Bishop Of Hippo

A prolific and widely read author, his search for salvation and witness to the Gospels finally brought Augustine in the West to Christ. He avoided Christ for so many years because he wanted to pursue his own agenda. Many are familiar with his best known work, *Confessions*, a prayerful reflection on his life in which he understands his own sinfulness and praises the Lord's grace and abiding mercy. In *City of God*, Augustine describes the tension between two cities: the earthly city that springs from love of self and indifference to God, and the heavenly city which is born from love of God and indifference to self. He teaches us in this life it is never too late to enter into a relationship with our Creator God.

Nonetheless, one cannot discover the love of God too soon. Augustine discovered God's love relatively late in life. Yet, recounting his conversion in *Confessions*, he proclaims, "...late have I loved you, O Beauty so ancient and so new!...I tasted of you and now I hunger and thirst for you. You touched me and I am aflame for your peace..."

May we learn from his example and ask for heavenly grace so that our witness is strong as we share the Good News with others.

BE THEREFORE
WISE AS SERPENTS,
AND
HARMLESS AS DOVES.

Matthew 10:16

Twenty Sixth Sunday

"That is the way it is for the man who grows rich for himself instead of growing rich in the sight of God"
Luke 12: 21.

There are people in our midst today who approach life by presenting a negative image because they do not comprehend the meaning of the gift our heavenly Father offers us on the coming august feast of the Nativity of our Lord. Many people approach life by saying, "Our ancestors were annihilated in Europe, therefore our people should be subsidized. Our grand parents were enslaved, our parents deprived, therefore we ought to be given a hand-out head start." Those who do poorly in examinations in our schools fault the standards that they say prejudice non-white, middle or upper classes. Smokers sue tobacco companies because they have lung cancer as if they were coerced into acquiring the habit.

People who don't know how to hold a cup of coffee sue the national corporations because they spill hot liquid on themselves. Some women so often understand themselves to be victims of a world dominated by sadistic men. In our contemporary society, the game is to project elsewhere the blame for our economic, physical and even spiritual shortcomings. There are many who are troubled by all this, this silly method of self-defense and exoneration of all guilt and blame and responsibility. But where did it really begin?

The rich man in today's gospel narrative is a perfect example of all this superficial nonsense we have so willingly introduced into our lives. Instead of being introspective and responsible, he sincerely thanks himself for all his efforts and thinks that more of the same is going to overcome his short-sightedness.

It is precisely for this reason that the gift of the eternal Father of redemption in Christ became necessary because all these problems really began in Eden with Adam and Eve who sinned not merely by eating the forbidden fruit, but also, and this is most important, by responding to our God as innocent victims rather than as repentant sinners. When confronted by the Lord our God with this act of disobedience, Adam was given the opportunity to realize that the bond of trust and love had been broken by his stupidity and sinfulness, and thus, then to open himself to restoring the former relationship he had with our God and Creator.

But how did he respond? By claiming to be an innocent victim of circumstances: "I did nothing wrong" he pleaded, "except to succumb to the wiles of the woman." The rich man says today, "I did nothing wrong except achieve so much success, I had to recognize my extraordinary giftedness and build even greater barns for my physical riches."

And as if to suggest that everything was in proper working order before the woman's arrival, he asked God, "How did she get here? It is you who gave her to me!"

Did you notice the audacity? Adam blames God for placing temptation in his way! Imagine the reaction of God on hearing such nonsense! The rich man accepts success, but never recognizes its source. The very creature God creates and instills with an ability to feel, to think, and most of all to know himself, the one singular being given the gift of free choice, freedom of will, created with the ability to comprehend the truth that God loves him and want to commune with him, instead converts himself in an object apart and independent of God!

He seeks and uses knowledge not in association with God, but within himself, apart from the Creator and from his own soul. It is seemingly a magical method of doing something that will bring him enlightenment from the outside, outside a relationship with the Source of life, outside of a relationship without Creator and God.

BUT it results only in darkness, sin, separation, finally even physical death. And so, the woman takes her cue; if Adam blames her, then she eagerly pins the blame on the serpent. No-fault reassurance, as if our God will buy it! We often catch two-year-olds denying they ate sweets, even though the evidence is seared on their lips. Clever parents laugh at and dismiss their cuteness while others take steps to teach a life-long lesson.

The effects of Eden, however, appear to be instinctive. To follow in all seriousness this Infant of Bethlehem whose Nativity we will soon be celebrating is to begin with the message that introduced him publicly to the world: it was uttered by his own cousin, John the Baptist, and goes like this: "REPENT!"

This means rejecting that instinct within ourselves to justify our sins by blaming others for the cause of our plight, our shortcomings, our sins. It means taking responsibility for every thought and action without presuming ourselves as victims of circumstances.

Our heavenly Father wants us to love and submit to him freely and willingly, even eagerly; the Son of God about to appear in Bethlehem shows us the way and the Holy Spirit guides us to the Father by affirming the life of Christ within us. Let us eagerly look forward and prepare ourselves for the appearance in the flesh of our God.

Man enriched with his own imagined values and insights is a pauper and a loser!

HUMAN CONCERNS

Mary Had a Little Lamb



Mary had a little lamb,
His fleece was white as snow.
And everywhere that Mary went,
The Lamb was sure to go.
He followed her to school each
day.
Twasn't even in the rule.
He made the children laugh and
play.

To have a Lamb at school.

An then the rules all changed one day,
Illegal it became;
To bring the Lamb of God to school,
Or even speak his Name.
Everyday got worse and worse,
And days turned into years.
Instead of hearing children laugh,
We heard gun shots and tears.
What must we do to stop the crime,
That's in our schools today?
Let's let the Lamb come back to school,
And teach our kids to pray.



Strive to struggle against laziness and drive it away, and force yourself to labor in prayer. Remember, that you must unfailingly force yourself in order to receive salvation.

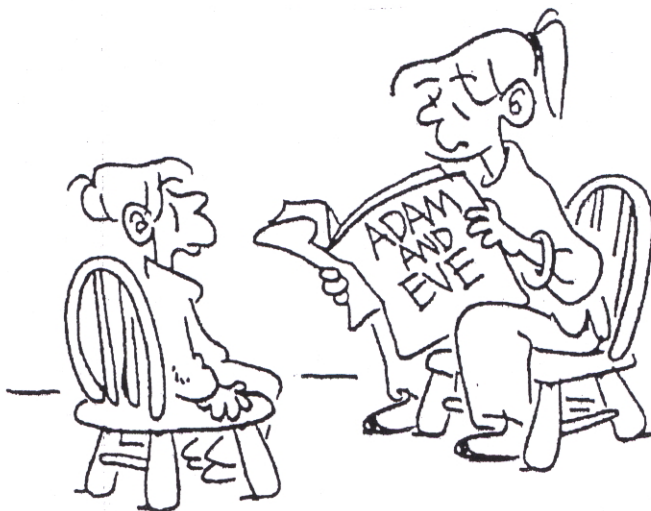
St. Joseph of Optina

Pray and sigh, pleading with God Himself to grant you zeal and inclination: for without Him we are good for no task whatsoever.

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

ARIUS, THE NON-BELIEVER SAYS:

Don't worry about your soul when you
gotta take care of your heart!



"Then God said, 'I have some good news
and some bad news. The good news is,
the apple had zero cholesterol.'"

Did You Know That ...

...unless you continually try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow to become what God expects of you?

...character is revealed by the promises you keep?

...a true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions and the compassion to listen to the needs of others?

...courage does not always roar; sometimes it is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I will try again tomorrow"?

...character is revealed by the choices we make?

...believers hold strongly to Christ's principles and refuse to follow the currents of convenience?

...what we say and do defines who we are?

...a true leader is recognized by the integrity of his intent?

...thoughts must be watched because they become words?

...leaders are like eagles; they do not flock and are found only one at a time?

...words are important because they turn into actions?

...actions are vital because they ascend to becoming habits?

...believers travel the path of integrity without looking back, for there is never a wrong time to do the right thing?

...you should study your habits for they identify your character?

...we must develop good character because it becomes our destiny?

...a true leader does not set out to become a leader, but becomes one by the quality of his actions?

SEEING CHRIST IN THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

The term "Holy Forefathers of Christ" includes all of the righteous men and women we read about in the Old Testament who patiently awaited the coming of the Messiah, living their lives in anticipation of God's promise to mankind coming to fruition. When we study their lives, we can see many ways that they prefigured the life of our Lord hundreds of years before His Birth.

ABEL - murdered by his brother Cain, prefigured Christ, Who was also murdered by men.

MELICHIZEDECK - the high priest mentioned in the Book of Genesis, prefigured Christ, our High Priest.

ENOCH & ELIJAH - who were taken up to heaven, prefigured Christ, Who was also taken up to heaven after His earthly mission was accomplished.

JOB - the long-suffering one, prefigured the long-suffering of Christ.

ABRAHAM - who was asked to sacrifice his only son Isaac, prefigured the sacrifice that God the Father made with His Only-Begotten Son.

JOSEPH - who was betrayed by his brothers, prefigured Christ, Who was betrayed by one of His Apostles.

JONAH - prefigured the three-day burial of Christ through his three-day stay in the belly of the whale.

We solemnly commemorate the Holy Forefathers of Christ today. May their faith inspire us to a fuller, richer and more complete service to the One Whose coming they were never privileged to witness.