

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday after Theophany

January 11, 2015

**Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor;
Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris,
Cantors**

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ We conclude our celebration today with festival anointing. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we respond, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ We are saddened to share with our faithful the death of our good parishioner, +Ann Sabo this past Sunday. We learned of it this past Thursday. Next Sunday at 9: 15 AM, we will celebrate a Memorial Service for the repose of her soul at 9: 15 AM. Please join us in prayer for her soul.

+++ The next Pirohi Sale will be this Saturday, January 17.

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

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Father George, Anna, Barbara, Betty, James, Yevlogia, Nicholas, Maria, Cynthia, Nicholas, Pani Anna Marie and Andrea.

+++ 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 last Sunday: Tithe Offering, \$464.00; Candles, \$19.00; Kitchen, \$301.00; Food Coupons, \$320.00; Holyday, \$55.00; Diocesan Dues, \$130.00; Parish Dues, \$25.00; Energy Offering, \$50.00; Nativity of our Lord, \$20.00, for a total of \$1384.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offer their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls!

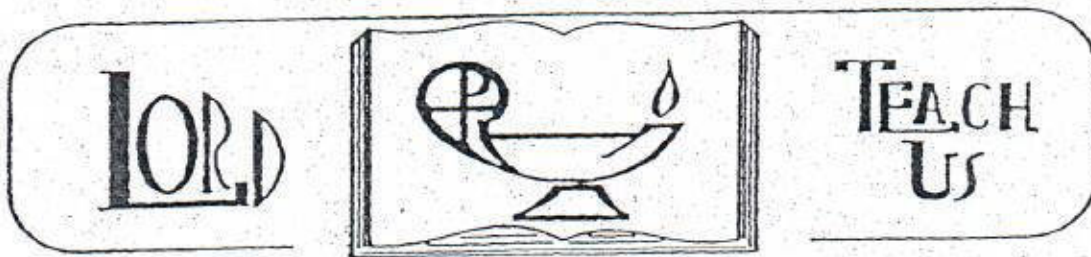
+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Maria Idronmenos, Anna Zacharyczuk, Bob Gorbich, Marilyn Korba and Pani Buletza.

+++ 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 **\$1819.00** from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ Please be certain to see 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 \$5750 on this project to date!

+++ The Clothing Drive is a permanent on-going project in our parish. Please bring any type of clothing and fabrics along with stuffed animals and shoes for the benefit of our parish. The bags can be left in the vestibule or on the front porch of the rectory. Please invite your friends and neighbors to assist us in disposing of unwanted clothing, shoes and fabrics.

+++ We invite all pray the Lord our God grants us the grace of enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory.



Priestly Example

Turn your ear, Lord and listen to me in my helplessness and my need. Protect a life dedicated to you. Have mercy, O Lord, for mercy I plead continually, comfort your servant's heart, this heart that aspires, Lord, to you! Psalms 85: 1 - 4.

I know nothing else but clinging to my God, putting my trust in the Lord, my Master Psalms 72: 28.

But you, O Lord, are a God of mercy and pity, patient, compassionate, true to your promise. Look upon me and be merciful to me, one whose mother bore him for your service Psalms 85: 15, 16.

If anyone is to be my servant, he must follow my way; so shall my servant too be where I am John 12: 26.

Cause me to hear your mercy in the morning for in you have I hoped Psalms 142: 8.

And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me all alone John 8:29.

Be shepherds to the flock God has given you. Carry out your charge as God would have it done, cordially, not like drudges, generously, not in the hope of sordid gain; not tyrannizing, each in his own sphere, but setting an example, as best you may, to the flock. So, when the Prince of shepherds makes himself known, your prize will be that crown of glory which cannot fade 1 Peter 5: 2 - 4.

Clean On The Outside

*If we confess our sin, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and
cleanse us from all unrighteousness*

1 John 1: 9.

At a recent Scripture Study Class a participant told of when she was young wife and her husband brought home brand new kitchen stove as a surprise. A few days later, the man who bought the old stove gave her a humiliating lesson in cleanliness. He inspected every part, looking inside the oven and lifting each burner. Then he raised the top of the stove. To her dismay, a heavy layer of grease and crumbs of every sort coated the entire surface.

It was not until later that a serious introspective thought occurred to her. It was not only her old stove that was clean on the outside, but filthy within. She began to think about how many times her soul is in the same condition. She might appear self-controlled and kind in public, but when she became angry at home, her voice rose in anger, aiming hurtful words at her family and other loved ones without restraint. Judgmental of others' behavior, she was tempted to behave the very same way. She often harbored unfriendly thoughts and could easily be tempted to hold on to a silly grudge.

It is so true we are so eager to appear pleasant, well dressed, urbane and carefully coifed in public, because we spend so much time being pre-occupied with outward appearance. But how much time do we invest in thinking about our interior disposition and attempting to correct it when found to be deficient? Outwardly we can make ourselves look good and smell good, but our soul may be possessed of the worst qualities of human stench possible and we do not seem to mind at all.

We too often forget a sinful smelly soul can be fully cleansed. When we confess our sins with sincerity, our heavenly Father will faithfully forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It depends not only our effort but more on the grace of our God. Just a heartfelt approach to the grace of the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation in the presence of our spiritual Father can change everything for us and restore a pleasant and attractive, even compelling odor of sanctity to the quality of our soul. God's power to cleanse goes far deeper than sin's deepest stains.

Our Moral Responsibility

Beyond questions of politics, abortion fundamentally remains a moral issue that Christians have a duty to oppose

Regardless how long this nation has hypocritically been protecting Roe vs. Wade, one thing remains beyond dispute: Abortion is the issue that will not go away because like all sin, it cries loudly to heaven for vengeance.

Although it is true most Americans consider abortion to be morally reprehensible and sinful and wrong and a large majority wants significant sanctions on its availability. As long as this is the case, Roe vs. Wade cannot be considered "settled." The true reality is that this Supreme Court decision rests on a falsehood, namely that we cannot tell when life of a human being begins. I recall many years ago, there was a Life pictorial magazine edition about life prior to the Court decision. It plainly exposed the willful mischaracterization of the court by stating and showing life begins at conception. The only thing missing is potential. Yet, because they were covered with official looking black robes that supposedly attested to their inspired wisdom, it showed they have no idea what they speak of.

Today we know beyond doubt that a child in the womb is precisely that: a human child. N constitutional system can rest secure when it is premised on what is widely believed by many to be an outright lie.

No legal system can be truly committed to human rights if it supports the principle that it is acceptable to intentionally kill the innocent. Roe vs. Wade not only accepts situational murder as principle, but elevates it to a constitutionally protected right!

There are those who; suggest political candidates in the future cannot hope to be both pro-life and successful. The grand illusion about abortion is that it can be treated in exclusively political terms. Because abortion is fundamentally a moral question we should expect it to be resolved in accordance with philosophical and ethical principles.

Certainly many of those who vote in favor of abortion rights act according to their own principles. For nearly two centuries philosophers of both the left and right have laid the groundwork for the acceptance of abortion by society.

In the 19th century, Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels argued that the traditional family structure oppressed women. The only way women could gain true equality, they said, was to be "liberated" from the responsibilities of motherhood and family, and by finding employment outside the home. For these writers, the demands of family life made true equality impossible. Recently we heard the president of the United States proclaim an enlightened outlook for his daughters. He said he would like abortion to be available for his daughters if they found a need to utilize it. He wanted reparations for slave victims and their descendants, but is willing to encourage the murder of innocent offspring children! Specious socialism on the rampage! Indemnity money to the surviving slave, but quick death to the innocent inconvenient child!

On the other side, the libertarian philosopher John Stuart Mill likewise believed that the communal demands of family life make true individual freedom impossible.

Whether socialist or libertarian, both sides saw family as the problem and agreed that the solution was for women to escape motherhood and family. And so, today, on both the left and right, we find those who maintain that "liberation" depends on the absolute power to control fertility and therefore depends upon the availability of legalized abortion, which for some strange reason, they think the state should guarantee!

Within the Christian tradition, we understand that in regard to transmission of human life we are called to cooperate with our Creator, and that no person is entitled to claim absolute control over another human life already called into existence. The life of every human being is first and foremost a gift of the Creator.

In these circumstances, the responsibility of Orthodox believers remains clear: It is to articulate a clear, consistent understanding of Christian social teaching in regard to the dignity of the human person, marriage and the family. It is our treasured responsibility to do this in season and out of season, regardless of which political party may benefit from it. As believers in Jesus Christ, our course must be set by the moral compass of the Church and not by partisan politics or advantage.

We are called to be faithful, to be steadfast, to come to the defense of those who cannot defend themselves and to remain on the field until the field battle is won!

Atheists who go to Church; Doing it for the Children

He probably will not get down on his knees, but the fellow sitting next to you during the Sunday Divine Liturgy just may be an atheist. And a scientist.

A recent study of Rice University has found that seventeen per cent, almost one out of five scientists who describe themselves as either atheists or agnostics, actually go to church, although not too often, and not because they feel a spiritual yearning to join faithful believers.

More likely, it is because of the children.

What? Why would somebody who does not believe there is a God want his own offspring wasting their time in an enterprise he believes has no foundation in fact? Especially a scientist!

The study, done by sociologists Elaine Howard Ecklund of Rice and Kristen Schultz Lee of the University of Buffalo, found that many atheists want their children exposed to religion so that they can make up their own minds on what to believe as adults. In addition, church may provide a better understanding of morality and ethics, and occasionally attending services may ease the conflict between spouses who disagree over the value of religion to their children. The study contends:

Published recently in the *Journal For the Scientific Study Of Religion*, was based on an in-depth interview series with some 275 scientists at 21 "elite" research universities in the United States. Sixty-one per cent of the participants described themselves as either atheists or agnostics and 17 per cent of the non-believers had attended church more than once in the past year.

In general, their church affiliation followed a similar pattern: most were raised in a family that was not deeply involved in religious profession, and they did not attend church during childhood but established some sort of a relationship with a church when they had children of their own. After the children had grown up, they attended church less and less, if at all.

But why would somebody who believes there is no God want his children exposed to doctrines that he clearly believes to be false?

"Some actually see it as a part of their scientific study," Ecklund said in a telephone interview. "They want to teach their children to be free-thinkers, to give them religious choices, and so they take their children to religious organizations just to give them exposure to religious practice." Let the kids make up their own minds," many told the interviewer.

Still, it may seem a bit odd for some atheists to perceive church as a desired "community" at a time when many leading atheists are calling on their colleagues to come out of the closet and take a public stand against religion. Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, physicist Victor Stenger and others see religion as a source of evil in the world.

They seriously contend that science has moved beyond belief in the supernatural, partly because science has answered some questions that were previously left up to clerics. Evolution, for example, provides a naturalist explanation for how we got here.

True believers, by contrast, regard atheists as among the least trusted people on the planet according to researchers at the University of British Columbia. These scientists emphasized recently that the right word is "distrust" not "dislike."

But however you at it, atheists do have a bit of an image problem. If they feel uncomfortable attending church, that is nothing compared to entering some aspects of public service. They usually find themselves on the outside looking in

Columnist Michael Kinsley confessed to being a "non-believer" in the *Los Angeles Times* recently. In an op-ed piece he conceded, "That puts me in the only religious grouping in America whose members are effectively barred from any hope of becoming president, due to widespread public prejudice against them. There may be a Mormon president, a Jewish president, an openly gay president before there will ever be a president who says publicly that he does not believe in God."

He contrasted that with the current run for the White House in which "four of this year's Republican candidates were personally recruited by God to run for the office." That number has now dropped to three.

Ecklund, who has conducted several studies of science and religion, said in the interview that it is possible for an atheist to become a member of a religious community without feeling like a phony because in so many instances nothing is required or demanded of them. "I do not think they see it as a conflict," she said. That is partly because they have been out of the mainstream for nearly all their lives.

There is a good deal of difference between the science community and the general public, certainly between them and a religious person." She said. "Scientists are less likely to have been raised in religious homes." When they were, she added, "they generally were raised in homes where religion was not taken seriously enough or strongly. It was not part of their fabric of life."

Father knows of two Orthodox priests who have shared with him the fact that in their parishes, self-acknowledged atheists were elected president of the parish council. Over a short period of time, they insinuated themselves in the life of the parish and became popular and admired for their education and insights and approach. This became possible when there is superficial spiritual life demanded and the individual proves himself popular with parishioners and of course, because real believers are not interested in working for the parish and show themselves to be in fact, semi-believers themselves. In both instances after this self-admitted confession to the parish priests and after refusing to approach the sacramental Mysteries, they admitted their lack of belief in Christ and his Body, the Church.

Their explanation for assuming office in a religious organization or what honestly might be described as a pseudo religious or even a secular club was that the preponderance of parishioners wanted them and elected them. They saw it as a popularity contest. It was not possible to publicly make this announcement to the communicants of the parish and it was very difficult to remove them from office. The priests both were subjected to utilizing the sneaky kind of political tactics that take place in so many parishes, to undermine these men so they would not be returned to office since neither bishops nor diocesan structure provided for a solution to the grave problem. And of course, complete scandal and embarrassment had to be avoided!

And of course, silly people without values or conviction feel it is their right to vote for whomever they choose and no standards or expectations are made, simply a willingness to be elected. In time one of the atheists left the parish while the other remained as a social member as he received more benefits with the community than outside it. Since he was not the only social member of the parish, his atheist position was never detected.

So perhaps a scientist who happens to be an agnostic or an atheist sees no problem with turning to religion, if only for a while, or for purely social reasons, or if in some instances, to see if he can maintain his private beliefs and fool those unsuspecting around him in a parish setting.. Some look upon it opening avenues for success and connection for their children. After all, is that not the heart of science?

Did You Know That ...

- ...salvation is what we receive, not what we achieve?
- ...if we are too busy to pray, we are just too busy?
- ...servants of Christ must be masters of themselves?
- ...time spent alone with our heavenly Father can ease the pain of loneliness?
- ...if you let God have your life, you will find He can do more with it than you can?
- ...those who love Christ have love for the lost?
- ...if you put your faith in Christ, He will put your fears to rest?
- ...if faith in Christ is worth having, it is worth sharing?
- ...running from Christ is futile, but running to God brings forgiveness?
- ...the most powerful position on earth is kneeling before the Lord of the universe?
- ...success in marriage is more than finding the right person, it is being the right person?
- ...while you cannot repent too soon, soon it may be too late?
- ...the best gift we can give to our children is time?
- ...if you know that God's hand is in every thing, you can leave every thing in God's hands?
- ...always remembering Christ's death gives us courage for today and hope for tomorrow?
- ...we do not need a long life to lead a good life?



Sing to the Lord! (1 Chronicles 16:23)

The Orthodox Tradition is a Musical, Singing Tradition!~

Shout joyfully to the Lord all the earth, sing praise to his name, give to him glorious praise Psalms 66: 1.

I will sing with understanding 1 Corinthians 14: 15.

All you people, clap your hands, shout to God with cries of gladness Psalms 47: 1.

Sing praise to God, sing praise; sing praise to our king, sing praise. For king of all the earth is God; sing hymns of praise Psalms 47: 7, 8.

You kingdoms of the earth, sing to God, chant praise to the Lord who rides on the heights of the ancient heavens. Behold his voice resounds, in the voice of power: "Confess the power of God" Psalms 68: 33 – 35.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to your name, O Most High Psalms 92: 1.

Come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation Psalms 95: 1.

My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to you, and my soul which you have redeemed Psalms 71: 23.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord Colossians 3: 16.

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the Saints!" Revelation 15: 3.

Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord Ephesians 5: 18, 19.

Singing belongs to one who loves St. Augustine.

When you sing, you pray twice St. Augustine.

We should offer up doxologies to God with fear and a contrite heart in order that they may be accepted like fragrant incense St. John Chrysostom.

Nothing so arouses the soul, gives it wing, set it free from the earth, releases it from the prison of the body, teaches it to love wisdom and to despise all the things of this life, as concordant melody and sacred song composed in rhythm St. John Chrysostom.

Psalmody, bringing about choral singing, a bond, as it were, toward unity, and joining people into a harmonious union of one choir, produces also the greatest of blessings: love St. Basil the Great.

Pray gently and calmly, sing with understanding and rhythm; then you will soar like a young eagle high in the heavens. Psalmody calms the passions and curbs the uncontrolled impulses in the body Evagrius the Solitary.

Together we make up a single choir in perfect equality...whereby earth imitates heaven. Such is the noble character of the Church St. John Chrysostom.



...person by person,
become a choir,
that being harmonious in love,
and taking up the song of God in unison,
you all may,
with one voice,
sing to the Father through Jesus Christ,
so that He may both
hear you and perceive by your efforts
that you are indeed
members of his Son

St. Ignatius of Antioch.



ST. KYRIAKOS THE HERMIT

In the popular vernacular of today, it would not be very complimentary to refer to someone as a "hermit." The term conjures up an image of a person living a life of a recluse, completely cut off from the rest of the world. A 21st century "hermit" would be considered odd and eccentric to say the least. In the early centuries of Church history, however, living a solitary life was quite common, and those who did so for spiritual reasons were held in high esteem by the Church. The fact of the matter is they often received so much attention that it became impossible to simply be alone with the Lord as they had hoped.

St. Kyriakos was a well-known hermit of the sixth century. He was born in Corinth, where his father was a priest. It was only natural, then, for Kyriakos to feel a closeness to the Church, even at an early age. While still a young boy, he was tonsured a reader by a local bishop.

It was then that St. Kyriakos became immersed in reading the Sacred Scriptures. At the age of 18, he decided to embrace a monastic lifestyle, and he set out for the monasteries in the area surrounding Jerusalem, hoping to find inner peace.

The longer St. Kyriakos remained a monk, the greater degree of self discipline he hoped to attain. At times, he completely shunned the confines of monastic communities, choosing instead to remain isolated from everyone. Even on the occasions when he lived with other monastics, Kyriakos would exist under a self-imposed vow of silence -- doing so once for ten years! It is said that his fasting habits were equally severe. For most of his monastic life, this saintly Father ate only one meal a day.

Despite his desire for solitude, St. Kyriakos could not totally avoid involvement in the world and its problems. Those who knew of his legendary spiritual exploits constantly sought his advice and opinions. He died in 557 A.D. at the age of 109.

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