

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost

September 7, 2014

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

+++ The first Pirohi Sale will be this Saturday, September 13.

+++ 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.

+++ Monday is the solemn feast of the Nativity of the Birthgiver of God. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise.

+++ 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, 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, \$248.00; Candles, \$14.00; Icon Fund, \$1200.00; Food Coupons, \$320.00; Kitchen, \$70.00; Holyday, \$45.00, for a total of \$1897.00. 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, Eleanor Korba, 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 **\$1809.00** 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.

+++ Work is about to begin on the exterior of our building with the soffit being replaced completely so that new gutters and down spouts may be installed. Plans are being made to have the dome refurbished and reinstalled on the roof.



Honesty

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity
Proverbs 11: 3.

He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up hi soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from his Saviour
Psalms 24: 45.

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways, we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyman's conscience in the sight of God 2 Corinthians 4: 2.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ Ephesians 4: 15.

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place
Psalms 51: 6.

The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him 1 John 2: 4.

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long Psalms 25: 5.

For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men 2 Corinthians 8: 21.

The Parable of the Three Trees

Once upon a mountaintop, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.

The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!"

The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. "I want to be traveling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world!"

The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me, they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world."

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain. The first woodcutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the first tree fell. "Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest, I shall hold wonderful treasure!" The first tree said.

The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the second tree fell. "Now I shall sail mighty waters!" thought the second tree. "I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!"

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last woodcutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven.

But the woodcutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me." He muttered. With a swoop of his shining axe, the third tree fell. The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought her to a carpenter's shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feedbox for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, nor with treasure. She was coated with saw dust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead the once strong tree was hammered and sawed

into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail to an ocean, or even a river; instead she was taken to a little lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. "What happened?" The once tall tree wondered. "All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God..."

Many many days and night passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams.

But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feedbox. "I wish I could make a cradle for him," her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and the sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful" she said.

And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveler and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through with the wind and the rain. The tired man awakened. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, "Peace." The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hands to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel.

But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth tremble with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God's love had changed everything. It had made the third tree strong. And every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

So next time you feel down because you didn't get what you want, just sit tight and be happy because God is thinking of something better to give you

Author Unknown



Avoiding Idle Talk

Shun the gossip of men as much as possible, for discussion of worldly affairs, even though sincere, is a great distraction inasmuch as we are quickly ensnared and captivated by vanity.

Many a time I wish that I had held my peace and had not associated with men. Why, indeed, do we converse and gossip among ourselves when we so seldom part without a troubled conscience? We do so because we seek comfort from one another's conversation and wish to ease the mind wearied by diverse thoughts. Hence, we talk and think quite fondly of things we like very much or of things we dislike intensely. But, sad to say, we often talk vainly and to no purpose; for this external pleasure effectively bars inward and divine consolation.

Therefore we must watch and pray lest time pass idly. When the right and opportune moment comes for speaking, say something that will edify.

Bad habits and indifference to spiritual progress do much to remove the guard from the tongue. Devout conversation on spiritual matters, on the contrary, is a great aid to spiritual progress, especially when persons of the same mind and spirit associate together in God.

*"Every act which cannot be
preceded by prayer
without feeling troubled,
is better avoided."*

St. Silouan

In the School of Christ

An educated priesthood is not matter of preference; the necessary gift carries with it the requirement, among others, of intelligence and knowledge, lack of either being a sign it has not yet been given. This, however, is very ambiguously related to accredited schooling amongst either the priests or the prophets, which should be taken for what it is worth in candidates to be sought first and only in the school of Christ.

For he who is possessed of but a modicum of intelligence realizes serious preparation and study is required of all endeavors which look to God's blessing for their success. Imagine what genuine confusion the disciples would have encountered had not Christ invested three years of himself in their preparation! What subject matter would they have had to judge vital and absolutely necessary for salvation! How would zealous faith have generated itself within them without the example of the Lord! He who is possessed of a genuine vocation would never submit to ordination without adequate formal preparation even when the ordaining bishop shows him no respect for even entertaining the idea of elevation to nothingness from emptiness.

It has been the tradition of the Church of Jesus Christ that the soul with a priestly vocation is advanced and prepared carefully for this exalted life. Foremost is being possessed of the mind of Christ which is carefully cultivated within seminary walls, the place where the seed of faith is devotedly cared for that the disciple's soul is equipped to become an example to souls.

One can thus appreciate the old Rusyn proverb on what we would call seminary education or training, that you can send a jackass to Paris but it will not make a horse of him. A good horse can become a better one in Paris, but only if he remembers what he is and where he comes from, keeping in mind the many jackasses who have gone there to gain nothing but longer velvet ears and a louder offensive bray.

A Priestly Prayer For Eternity

**Dear Lord, permit me to close my eyes
to earthly living that I may see You,
the only true God and let me see You that I may eagerly die.
I desire no longer to live this life which deprives me of your life.
I desire to die that death which unites us to You
and since my earthly body in its obscure veil
which hides from the soul the vision of
Your infinite goodness,
do You now part the veil and then at last I shall behold You.
O unchanging Truth, holy desirable death do I seek,
open my heart,
that my soul have the liberty to approach your
Divine Son, Jesus Christ
and contemplate his glory for all eternity.
I can bear no longer this life
which keeps me from my Master,
which hides his appealing beauty from me.
Yet, not from the stroke of death
do I expect this grace,
but from the swift arrow of your enduring love.
Divine Son of the Eternal Father,
it is for You to receive my soul,
my life,
my joy,
my inspiration.
Into your hands I commend my soul,
take me to yourself.**

Prayers

O God, I feel so insignificant sometimes when I realize how many people you have to care for. My problems seem monumental to me, but they are small in comparison to the misfortune and tragedy some face. Yet you have so much love for me. I am as important as a head of state or a saint. You are never too busy. You are patient when I fail to take time to say even a few words to you. How do I rate such a faithful and loving friend? How can I say thanks properly? I offer you, O God, my every thought, word and deed this morning. You deserve more than I can give. Still, I know good intentions please you, and so those I freely offer you. Amen. □

Jesus, before you ascended into heaven, you promised to be with us always. I want to believe your promise. But sometimes I find it hard to see you. Help me see and feel your presence in this hectic world.

In the innocent face of a newborn baby, help me find the new life you gave me through your death and resurrection. In the quick change from tears to laughter on the face of a child, help me find consolation in your forgiveness when I'm afraid. In the confident features of a young adult, help me find the courage to carry on your work in the world. In the still-bright eyes of the elderly, help me find the reassurance that the sorrows of this life will turn eventually to joy.

Jesus, you are here this day—in the faces of all people of all ages. Help me always to see you in them. Amen. □

Uncomfortable Calls

A disciple said to him, 'Lord let me go and bury my father first' But Jesus told him, 'Follow, me, and let the dead bury the dead' **Matthew 8: 21, 22.**

It is human nature to complain when asked to do a tough task or fulfill a demanding responsibility. So we identify with people in salvation history who tried to beg off sticky assignments. Moses and Jeremiah resisted, but God persisted. Do you think the Birthgiver of God was immediately at ease with the announcement she was pregnant? Was Jesus comfortable with torture and crucifixion? So it must have been with the nameless disciple who seemingly had a rock solid excuse to bury his dead father. Talk about being put on the spot!

The harsh truth from Scripture appears to be that a Christian's comfort does not have an exceptionally high place on God's priority list. God calls, we respond. Instead of releasing chosen ones from their expected tasks, our God provides other comforts, guidance, the grace to cope, strength to respond, encouragement to endure.

Our reluctance to be uncomfortable may be a stumbling block to accomplishing God's will and to our own growth. Yes, we must develop our talents and natural abilities. But we must not avoid God's calls just because they make us squirm.

He must be first in our lives!

THE NINE ASPECTS OF LIFE

The adventure of life is to learn.

The purpose of life is to grow.

The nature of life is to change.

The challenge of life is to overcome.

The essence of life is to care.

The opportunity of life is to serve.

The secret of life is to dare.

The spice of life is to befriend.

The beauty of life is to give.

Liturgical Prayer

Liturgical prayer is not simply the prayers of individual Christian believers joined into one. It is not a corporate "prayer service" of many persons together. It is rather the official prayer of the Church formally assembled; the prayer of Christ in the Church offering His "body" and "bride" to the eternal Father by the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is the Church's participation in Christ's perpetual prayer in the presence of the Father in the kingdom of heaven. "...but Jesus, because he remains forever, has a priesthood which does not pass away. Therefore he is always able to save those who approach God through him, since he forever lives to make intercession for them... For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by hands, a mere copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself that he might appear before God now on our behalf" Hebrews 7: 24, 25; 9: 24. The model of liturgical prayer is in the Book of Revelation and not in the gospel events of Jerusalem or Galilee.

In the Orthodox Church there is no tradition of corporate prayer which is not liturgical. Some consider this a lack, but it is based on Christ's teaching that the prayer of individuals should be done "in secret" Matthew 6: 5, 6. This protects against vain repetition and the expression of personal petitions which are meaningless to others. It also protects persons from being subjected to the superficialities and shallowness of those, who instead of praying, merely express their misguided opinions and the desires of their own minds and hearts.

When a person participates in liturgical prayer, he can only do so effectively to the extent he prays by himself at home and in his own mind and heart so that his public or liturgical prayer then becomes a manifestation of his authentic faith commitment to Christ. It is done by one who "prays without ceasing," and who thereby receives the most benefit in liturgical prayer.

When one participates in the liturgical prayer of the Church, he should make every effort to join himself fully, wholly and totally with all the members of the believing body. He should not "say his own prayers" or "do his own thing" in church at worship, but should pray along with the Church. This does not mean he forgets his own needs and legitimate desires, depersonalizing himself and becoming but one more voice in the crowd. It means rather that he should unite his own person, his own needs and desires, all of his life with those who are present, with the Church throughout the world, with the angels and saints, indeed, with Christ Himself in the one great "divine and heavenly liturgy" of all creation before God.

Practically, this means that one who participates in liturgical prayer should put his entire being, his whole conscious and subconscious mind and heart, into each prayer and petition and liturgical action, making it come alive in himself. If each believing person does this, then the liturgical exclamations become genuine, honorable and truthful and the whole assembly as one body will glorify God with "one mouth, one mind and one heart."

Did You Know That ...

...our light ought be soft, steady, inviting and joyful instead of a harsh floodlight that blinds, even burns all?

...our prayer ought not be the God-show-me-a-miracle prayer of Elias but the your-will-be-done prayer of Christ?

...sacramental reconciliation ought be a regular and integral part of our spiritual life?

...worship for the believer is a genuine privilege?

...we ought to be just as careful that we cheat no one as we are that nobody cheats us?

...we ought to discern quickly what is lurking in our heart that makes us bitter?

...every believer should learn Zachary's secret of waiting in silence for an answer to prayer?

...you should not be lulled by false prophets and false visions of what life should be like?

...fear is useless; what is needed is trust in God?

...the best and easiest way to thank God for His blessings is at worship Sundays and holy days at the Divine Liturgy?

...we ought to love out of the wisdom and perspective God's grace places in our hearts?

...too often we look to the sky for lightening instead of simple signs in our heart and soul?

...the believer can know no greater joy than to regularly glorify God at worship in the Divine Liturgy when he can receive Communion and become like Christ himself?

...the only reason for going to church is because we respond to God's enduring love for us?

...our Saviour, Jesus Christ is always present in our parish church?



THE SECOND BOOK OF TIMOTHY

Author—St. Paul the Apostle. By the second half of the second century the whole Church accepted 2 Timothy as Pauline and canonical.

Date—AD 65–67. This letter was written from Rome (1:17) when Paul was chained, suffering, and near his execution.

Major Theme—*Overcoming hardship in the ministry.* Ordained ministers use their spiritual gifts in the Church to keep and pass on her living tradition (1:13, 14; 2:2, 8, 11–13, 15; 3:14–17; 4:3). Through living tradition—the Bible and the ongoing life of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ—the Church remains essentially as she was at her inception.

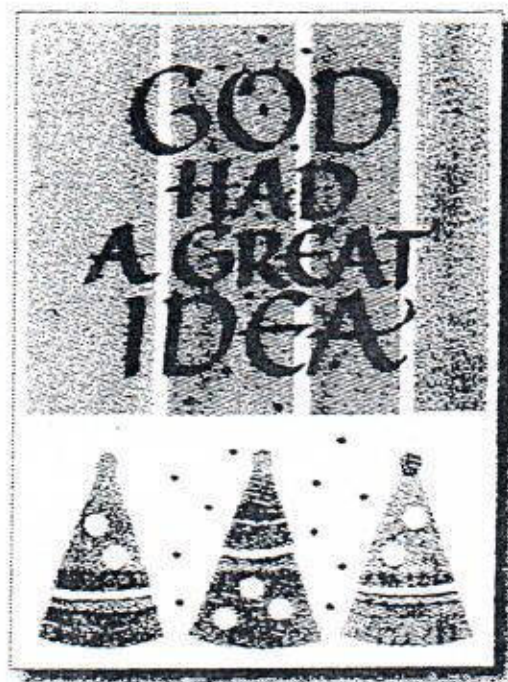
Background—Paul has been a prisoner in Rome for some time. Although no one stood with him at his first hearing, he successfully defended himself and “was delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (4:16, 17). Nonetheless, he has no hope for acquittal. He knows his end is at hand (4:6–8). Worse, friends have turned against him (1:15; 4:16–18); only Luke is assisting him. Paul longs to see Timothy once more.

This is probably Paul’s last letter. He knows his martyrdom is near and looks forward to being with the Lord (4:8). Paul was martyred under Emperor Nero about AD 67.

Outline

- I. Greeting (1:1, 2)
- II. Ministry: Exhortation to Strength (1:3–2:13)
 - A. To the bishop, Timothy: be bold! (1:3–18)
 - B. To other faithful men (2:1–13)
- III. Orthodoxy: Exhortation to Faith and Practice (2:14–4:8)

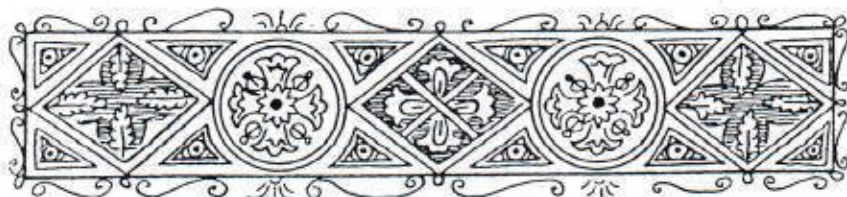
- A. Against false teachers (2:14–26)
- B. In the face of persecution (3:1–4:8)
- IV. Conclusion (4:9–22)
 - A. Fellow workers and evil workers (4:9–15)
 - B. Paul’s first defense (4:16–18)
 - C. Greetings and benediction (4:19–22)



and

then

He created You!



THE MIRACLE OF ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

Mention angels and most people will think of the Feastday of St. Michael and All Angels. But there are other days in the Church Calendar dedicated to the Archangel Michael. One of these involves a miracle that occurred centuries ago in the ancient country of Phygria, Asia Minor, now part of Turkey. The intervention of the Archangel took place in the city of Colossae. It was to this area that the Apostle John and St. Phillip came to preach the word of God in the first century.

Pagans worshipped a serpent in the area, and the preaching of the missionaries brought hostility. This resulted in the death of St. Phillip. A sudden earthquake followed, frightening the people, but Apostle John continued to preach and converted many. He soon left the area, telling the faithful that a miraculous well would be found there.

It was this well that was named for St. Michael and it attracted throngs of people. A Church was built, again named for the Archangel. But the non-believers did not give up their struggle against Christ. They conceived a plan to divert a nearby river and engulf the well of St. Michael. At this point, a pious Christian prayed in the Church for divine intervention. St. Michael appeared with sword in hand, struck the river, diverting it into two streams around the well. It was thus saved from destruction. It is this event that is commemorated by the Church.

