



## CHRIST & LAZARUS



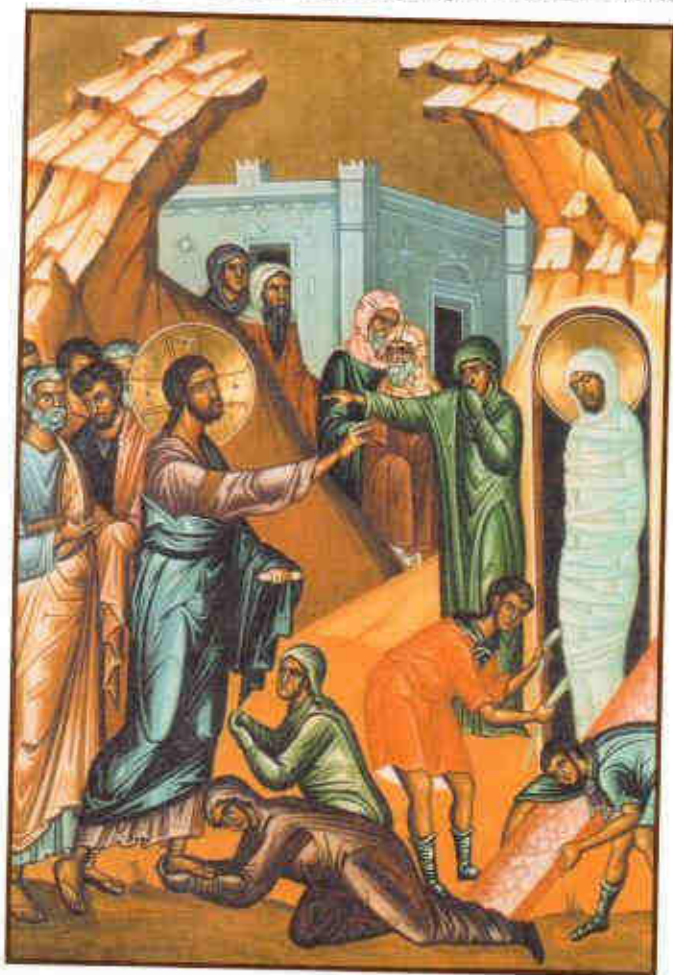
**T**hroughout Christ's earthly travels, He met many people. Among them, He befriended a man named Lazarus. This pious man lived with his 2 sisters, Mary and Martha, in a place called Bethany.

The Lord was a distance away from Bethany one day when a messenger came with some news: "Master, he whom You love is sick." The message was sent by the 2 sisters.

Although Lazarus was deathly ill, Jesus waited for about 2 days before

starting out for Bethany. By this time, Lazarus had died and been buried. This was not a case of our Lord not knowing what happened to His friend. When Christ first spoke to His apostles about the sleep of Lazarus, they understood this to mean slumber. But Jesus told them plainly: "Lazarus is dead . . . let us go to him."

As Christ approached the town, Martha cried out to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Then she added a significant thought that seems to foreshadow things to come: "But I know that even now, whatever You will ask of God, He will give it to You."



# **Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church**

**24 BURKE ROAD**

**FREEHOLD, NJ 07728**

**Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast**

**April 17, 2016**

**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**

**+++ This Saturday is the simple feast of St. George the Martyr as well as Lazarus Saturday. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 9: 00 AM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise.**



+++ Next Sunday a special offering will be taken on the occasion of our Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem. Palms and Pussy Willows will be blessed and distributed. The new Trinity Candle offered by Mrs. Helen Pallas in blessed memory of her beloved husband, +Paul Pallas will also be blessed for initial use on the feast of the Resurrection of our Lord.

+++ May this season of the Great Fast be an encouragement to all of us in growth of the soul in our advancement towards heaven. Come early for Confessions are heard before the Divine Liturgies.

+++ The next Pirohi Sale is this Saturday, April 23. Please secure orders and plan on assisting as we are in need of helping hands..

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Barbara, Betty, James, Yevlogia, Nicholas, Maria, Cynthia, Patricia, 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, \$397.00; Candles, \$10.00; Kitchen, \$15.00; Holydaay, \$20.00; Food Coupons, \$320.00, for a total of \$762.00. 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 **\$1860.00** 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 \$6750 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.



### The Passion of Christ

*This is why he is mediator of a new covenant: since his death has taken place for deliverance from transgressions committed under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance Hebrews 9: 15.*

*In my Father's house there are many dwelling places; otherwise, how could I have told you that I was going to prepare a place for you? I am indeed going to prepare a place for you, and then I shall come back to take you with me, that where I am you may also be. You know the way that leads to where I go John 14: 2-4.*

*Then I saw new heavens and a new earth. The former heavens and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer. I also saw a new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God, beautiful as a bride prepared to meet her husband Revelation 21: 1, 2.*

*For, to me, "life," means Christ: hence dying is so much gain. I am strongly attracted to both; I long to be freed from this life and to be with Christ, for that is the far better thing Philippians 1: 21-23.*

*And Jesus replied, "I assure you: this day you will be with me in paradise" Luke 23: 43.*

*Indeed, we know that when the earthly tent in which we dwell is destroyed we have a dwelling place provided for us by God, a dwelling in the heavens, not made by hands but to last forever. We groan while we are here, even as we yearn to have our heavenly habitation envelop us. This it will, provided we are found clothed and not naked. While we live in our present tent we groan; we are weighed down because we do not wish to be stripped naked but rather to have the heavenly dwelling envelop us, so that what is mortal may be absorbed by life 2 Corinthians 5: 1-4.*



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



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

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

### Lamb who was slain...

*The beast will be worshipped by all those inhabitants of the earth who did not have their names written at the world's beginning in the book of the living, which belongs to the Lord who was slain*  
Revelation 13: 8.

Our Lord was predestined and ordained from the foundation of the world to suffer upon the Cross for our sins. The death and passion of Christ is efficacious to put away and conquer sin. The only means of salvation for man is in the shedding of His precious blood. That was foreknown and foreordained by our Eternal Father. What an important place in our hearts and souls should the Lamb of God have! How precious is the blood of the Saviour, spilled for our salvation! It washes away our sinful past and brings redemption into our lives. Without the shedding of Christ's blood, there is no remission of sin and no possibility for a Godly life. We are gathered in worship of the Blessed Trinity by the grace of the Holy Spirit each Sunday and feast day because we recognize the treasure heaven has bestowed upon us. We are not only immersed in His precious blood for forgiveness, we are nourished by it for life everlasting. The Lamb who was slain is not a victim, but a willing Saviour and Redeemer. He shows us our true value in the sight of our Heavenly Father. He brings our attention to our baptismal dignity for all eternity. Blessed Lamb of God! We praise You and we worship Your name. We rejoice we are washed in Your precious Blood. We recognize and need no other Mediator between us and our God!



### The Old Country Priest says...

Habits may be lost, corrupted, or diminished. The violin player who stops playing and the tennis champion who stops practicing will soon fall from loft eminence. And though the moral virtues are among the most durable of all goods we possess, they, like other habits may be lost, and for precisely the same reason. Begin seriously to not only practice, but actually live your Orthodox faith!

### Humility

Humility points us in two directions. First, it draws our attention to the majesty of God and the marvels of revelation. Oceans, mountains, the face of an infant, the gift of serious and sincere faith commitment in the life of His Body, our blessed Church, the soul of an aspiring saint; so much our loving God has shown to each of us. But there is a second focus in humanity's lexicon: human inadequacy. Yes, it is true each revelation demands the honest response of an entire library, but we are constrained to speak or write only a small word, a faltering paragraph. We are so much like the tiny honeybee who stumbles upon the wealth of an overflowing flower. All the bee can carry away, in awesome humility, is a tiny speck of life-imparting glory. What has our loving Heavenly Father shown you in the last twenty-four hours? Thank God for the myriad tiny specks of glory that have attracted you to seek His loving goodness today!



"Through the Holy Spirit, we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God, "Father" and to share in Christ's grace called children of light and given a share in eternal glory." Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 15, 36.

The coming of the Holy Spirit is the establishment of the Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount. We have not entered the last days. The Kingdom is "already and not yet." We have in our midst signs of the Kingdom. In the Church we have the

Holy Mysteries where we personally encounter God. Yet, we do not have the fullness of the Kingdom, the restoration of the world to the way it was at creation. We must remember that God is not subject to time. From the heavenly perspective the creation of the world and the end of the world have both already been accomplished. The priest as part of the anaphora prays, "Remembering all that has been done in our behalf, the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven and the second and glorious coming." We remember the second coming of the Christ at the end of the world.



## **WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE**

*In you, O Mother Mary, the faithful divine likeness shone forth, for by taking up the cross, you followed Christ. You gave us an example to be not concerned with the flesh, but to be diligent over the eternal things of the spirit. Therefore, O Venerable Mary, you now rejoice with the angels Troparion, St. Mary of Egypt.*

*Once filled with all kinds of vices, today, through repentance, she appears as the bride of Christ. Leading an angelic life, she crushes the devil with the help of the cross. Therefore, O venerable Mary, you now rejoice with the angels Kontakion, St. Mary of Egypt.*

*O Christ God, You confirmed the resurrection of all before the time of Your passion by raising Lazarus from the dead; therefore we, as the children of Israel, carry the symbols of victory and cry out to You, the Conqueror of death: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord" Troparion, Lazarus Saturday.*

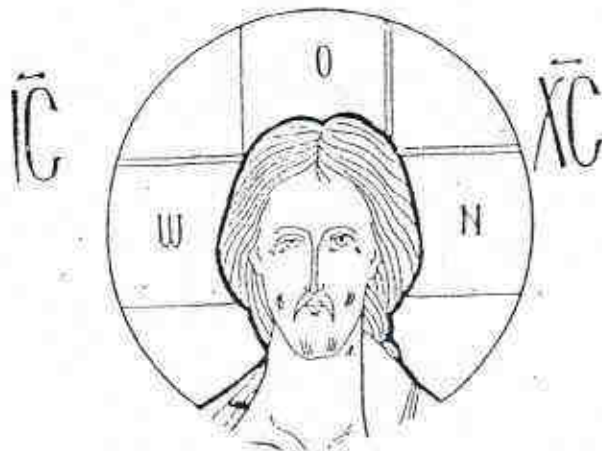
*Christ, the Joy of all, the Truth, the Light, the Life, and the Resurrection of the world appeared to those on earth. Because of His goodness, He became also the image of Resurrection, granting divine forgiveness to all Kontakion, Lazarus Saturday.*

*The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; Whom shall I fear? Prokimenon, Lazarus Saturday.*

*Let us gloriously honor the pure Mother of God. She bore the divine Fire and was not consumed. With ceaseless praise, let us extol her Hymn instead of "It is truly proper...", Lazarus Saturday.*

*Out of the mouths of babes and infants, You have fashioned praise. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Communion hymn, Lazarus Saturday.*

*All you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia! Hymn Instead of "Holy God", Lazarus Saturday.*



**LORD  
JESUS CHRIST**

*Son of  
God,  
have  
mercy  
on  
me a  
sinner*

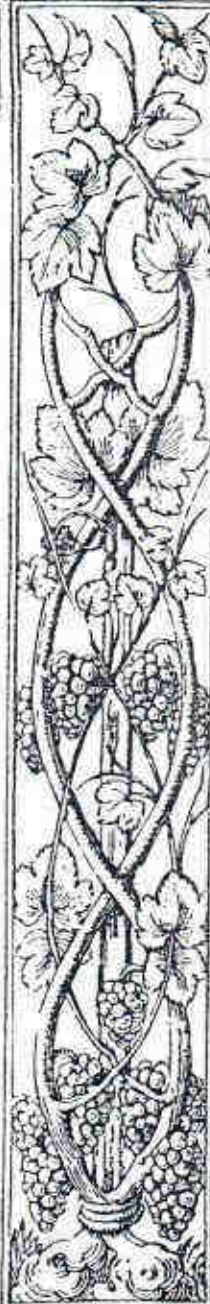
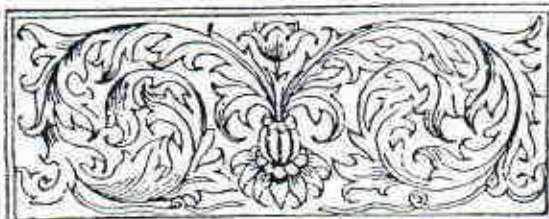




St. Paul captures and emphasizes a value and quality of the blessed Eucharist, the Body and Blood of our Saviour, *This is my Body which is broken for you* 2 Corinthians 11: 24.

Pointing out the sacrificial aspect of the Passion with the matter of bread and wine confectioned for this salutary heavenly nourishment which pre-eminently transforms and confirms the communicant to life everlasting.

Both the grain of wheat and the grape undergo their own passion and suffering. In milling the grain of wheat into flour it loses its identity and is transformed. By dying to itself and being changed by leaven assuredly as the Holy Spirit alters and elevates our human nature to holiness, so is the apparent bread elevated into the Body of Christ As the grape is crushed to release its tasty essential essence for the spiritual nutrition of man's soul





and body as well as spirit, it too experiences its own transformative passion and by the command of the Lord becomes the salutary blood of the Saviour.

Both grain of wheat and grape participate in Christ's salutary passion to rise in faith after it is associated in prayerful intercession with the power of the Holy Spirit at the Divine Liturgy.

Just as with Christ our Saviour and Redeemer, so with the fundamental elements He bequeathed to us for our transformation into eternal life. *I solemnly assure you unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit* John 12: 24.

It is the Body and Blood of the triumphantly risen Christ we receive in soul nourishing Communion at the Divine Liturgy!





## Mining the Treasure Trove that is our Triodion

The liturgical calendar of the Church of Christ never allows us to come unprepared for the major feast days of the Church. There is always a period of preparation that permits us to be eased gradually into the soulful spirituality of the feasts and there is usually a post – festive period as well that gently brings the solemn day to an appropriate conclusion which we call its leave taking.

Our preparation for the Great Fast is no different. Beautifully and succinctly, we see described in the time period prior to the Great Fast the values of Christ we are to embrace. The pre-Great Fast Sundays are meant to encourage us to first ponder and meditate on the meaning of the Great Fast before we make the effort to put it into practice. We begin with Zacchaeus' ardent desire just to see the Lord. Then we strive for the humility of the publican, so that in humility we can grow in the self – awareness and repentance of the Prodigal Son and return to our Father who is in heaven. Having received the Father's welcome home from the land of exile that we have freely made for ourselves and now saved for the doing of good works, we express love for those in need, for the Church, for the Word of God found in Sacred Scripture, so that we can be merciful, by granting forgiveness to others and asking the same for ourselves.

Of all these themes, the one that seems to reappear over and over again during the Great Fast is that of the Prodigal Son, certainly one of the most profound parables that our Lord gives us. The Church in her wisdom received from the Holy Spirit also gives us a living example of the Prodigal Son, or rather the Prodigal Daughter – Holy Mother Mary of Egypt whom we commemorate on the Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast. She is also a major figure in the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete that we pray at Thursday Matins during the sixth week. St. Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, wrote an account of her life, half of which we read at the beginning of the canon and the remainder is recounted before the fourth canticle.

Like the Prodigal Son, Saint Mary of Egypt ran away from home and the love of her parents at the age of twelve. She made her way to the "big city" of Alexandria, Egypt where she gave herself over to unbridled sexual pleasures and encounters. She never took money for her "work." She relied on handouts and weaving to buy necessities. Hearing that a boat was

leaving for Jerusalem for the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, she went to the docks and seeing many handsome young men embarking for the voyage, she contracted passage on the boat. On the day of the feast, Mary tried to enter the Church of the Resurrection, making it only as far as the vestibule, she could not enter the nave of the Church in order to see and venerate the precious Cross of our Lord.

Some sort of force would not permit her to cross the threshold of the shrine, so while standing dejectedly in the corner of the courtyard, she gradually began to comprehend why she was repeatedly prevented for entering the church, her preference for the far distant exile from God. Tears of repentance came to her and like the Prodigal Son she now desired to return to her true parent, her heavenly Father. She happened to see an icon of the Birthgiver of God and asked for intercession to her son Jesus Christ. She asked to be allowed to enter the church and gaze upon the holy and precious life-giving Cross of Christ. When she arrived at the doors of the nave, she was permitted to enter and step over the threshold, behold the Cross of Christ, and know in no uncertain terms our Lord welcomes back one of his repentant daughters or sons.

In reflecting on this wondrous and amazing saint of our holy Church, by mining from the treasure that is the Triodion in preparation for the glorious feast of the Resurrection of Christ.

At Saturday evening vespers, the following verses are sung at Psalm 140:

"Alienated at first from divine contemplation, because of the weight of passions, you then turned your thoughts and deeds to higher values, meditating upon the icon of the most pure Virgin and henceforth turning yourself away from all sin, in faith you venerated the precious Cross."

"You visited the holy places with joy, having built up a reserve of virtue on the way of salvation, you made haste on the road to holiness. You crossed the stream of the Jordan, and you dwelt in the desert of the Baptist, controlling the power of the passions of the flesh, you made the savage nature of the passions disappear by your holy life, venerable Mother."



“Dwelling in the desert, you put the images of the passions far from your soul, and, with the light of virtues, you inscribed the image of God. You were resplendent with such brightness that you walked upon the surface of the waters and on earth you were caught up in prayer to God. Because you have great influence with Christ, pray to him for the salvation of our souls, blessed Mother.”

“With the sword of temperance, you have cut down the passion of the soul and flesh; you choked evil thoughts with the silence of ascetical life. Watering the desert with a stream of your tears, you bore the fruit of repentance. We now celebrate the memory of your holiness, venerable Mother.”

The vesperal Troparion: “In you, Mother Mary, the faithful image of God shone forth; for you carried your cross and followed Christ. You taught by your deeds how to spurn the body, for it passes away; and how to value the soul, for it is immortal. Therefore, your soul is forever in happiness with the angles.”

At Sunday Matins, in Ode 3, we sing, “She was once an implement of sin, longsuffering Lord; You have completely turned her life around from the deceitful works of the Demon, through the veneration of your Holy Cross.”

“The one who once poured out his own blood for the forgiveness of all sin, and who brings everyone into being, has completely purified you from the horrible leprosy of your sins through the baptism of your tears.”

At the Sessional Hymn, we sing, “Through asceticism you curbed all the forces of your flesh, and you showed the strength and steadfastness of your soul; desiring to contemplate the Cross of the Lord, who was crucified for the world, you patterned your life to that of the angels, ever blessed one. Therefore, we celebrated your memory in faith, to obtain the forgiveness of our many sins, through your intercession, O Mary.”

Ode 3: "Formerly Moses was glorified by the vision of God on Sinai, thus sketching a new mystery; and now Mary bows before the most pure icon, before the vessel that contained manna, and she shares the life of the angels."

"She who once defiled your temple in the flesh, wished to see, as David sang, the beauty of your house and the glory of your spiritual temple. O Christ, through the intercession of your Mother, the spouseless temple, make me the temple of your Spirit who is everywhere present."

"She whose glance once captured many men with the bait of the flesh, for a passion pleasure, so that they became the prize of the devil, now herself is caught by divine grace in the hook of the Cross as she brings delight to Christ."

"We now praise you with our hymns, Lamb and daughter of Christ; for you came forth from the stock of Egyptians, and you have become a precious flower for the Church, struggling in temperance and prayer beyond the measure of mortals thus you were exalted in Christ, for the merits of your life and deeds; therefore, the venerable Mary has become a bride of the kingdom."





## My Cup Runs Over

*...You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over*  
Psalms 23: 5.

To fully appreciate the expression, *My cup runs over...*, one must understand the biblical and oriental way of showing hospitality. It is totally without limit. When a generous host poured for his guests, he spared nothing. No dainty, polite, half measures would do. He lavishly filled each vessel to overflowing to demonstrate his hearty welcome and warm friendship. It is the Good Shepherd's unstinting love for us that is emphasized by the flooded cup of blessing.

Sometimes the wells where shepherds brought their sheep were very deep. The water then had to be brought to the surface by a rope with a leather bucket at the end. This was let down and drawn up by hand over hand, by a slow, laborious process and the water poured into large stone cups beside the well. If the shepherd had a hundred sheep, he might have to draw for hours if he allowed the flock to drink all they wanted or needed. Here is where the hireling shepherd displayed his heartlessness. As soon as a poor sheep had taken just a few mouthfuls of water he would push it aside in order to save himself work and time. But the Good Shepherd has no such disposition. He would draw and draw and fill the watering cups to overflowing until all of his thirsty sheep were completely satisfied. So, too, God's giving to us, his children, has always been "good measure, pressing down and running over" Luke 6: 38.

It is interesting to note that the overflowing cup was not provided until the sheep had first been anointed and refreshed with oil. This is true also in the Christian's life. There is never a constant stream of overflowing joy until the heart has been surrendered to Christ and anointed by with the oil chrism of the Holy Spirit.

Our God does not make our cup run over simply to give us the selfish joy of superabundance, but more particularly that through us the lesson might overflow to others around about us. Is your cup running over? Let us not forget that a cup of true overflowing spirituality is worth a whole barrel of pumped up religious piety!

In the midst of afflictions my table is spread;  
With blessings unmeasured my cup runs over;  
With perfume and oil You anoint my head;  
Oh what shall I ask of your Providence more?

# The Divine Liturgy



THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT in an Eastern Christian's life is the worship of the Church, especially the Divine Liturgy. *Liturgy* means "common work" or "common action". The Liturgy of the Church is the work of all God's people — priests, laity, singers, servers — who come together to proclaim their common faith and vision in the saving work of Jesus Christ. It is particularly the work of the Head of the Body, Christ Himself, who offers Himself to the Father for us.

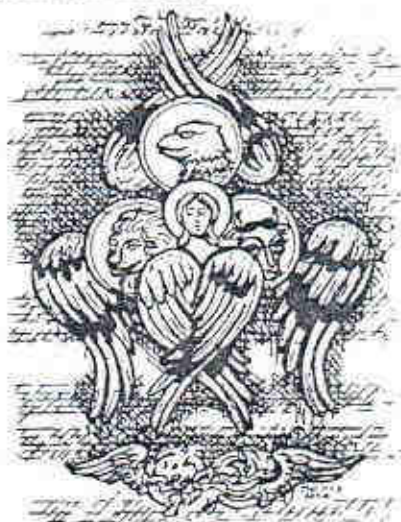
## *The Good News Proclaimed ...*

The first portion of the Divine Liturgy focuses on the *proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ* as recorded in the Scriptures. It consists in the following elements:

- **The Opening Doxology**, "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ..." in which we acknowledge that we are entering, through worship, the very Kingdom of God;
- **The Great Litany**, during which we bring all the aspects of this world into that Kingdom and entrust them to the mercy of God;
- **The Antiphons**, verses from the psalms usually sung with a refrain, which connects these Old Testament praises with their fulfillment in Christ.
- **The Hymn to Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God**, in which we proclaim Jesus to be true God and true man, while imploring Him to save us;
- **The Beatitudes**, often sung while the Gospel Book is carried out of the sanctuary, as the summary of Christ's teaching;



- **The Little Entrance**, during which we solemnly invite all to worship Christ, present in the Scriptures,
- **The Troparia and Kontakia**, through which we hear the theme of the day's celebration, and
- **The Trisagion**, "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us" in which we glorify the Trinity.



Following these introductory hymns, the Scriptures are read:

- **The Prokimenon** is a responsorial psalm chanted alternately by the reader and the people. It prepares us for
- **The Apostolic Reading**, which is taken from the Acts of the Apostles or the New Testament epistles, and reflects the life and concerns of the early Church;
- **The Alleluia**, consisting of two psalm verses, separated by the singing of "Alleluia", which means "Praise the Lord".
- **The Gospel**, the public proclamation of the Word of God, taken from the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. After the Gospel we listen to

- **The Sermon**, during which the priest continues to proclaim the Good News of Christ while applying it to our daily lives.

## *The Eucharist Celebrated ...*

Having been fed by the Word of God, we now turn our sights to the central mystery of our faith — *participation in the death and resurrection of Christ* through the celebration of the Eucharist. The word Eucharist literally means "thanksgiving" — for all the gifts of God, but especially for the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. The word also refers to our thanksgiving gifts, which are returned to us as the body and blood of Christ. During this part of the Liturgy we participate in:

- **The Great Entrance**, performed during the singing of the Cherubic Hymn. As we offer our gifts of bread and wine to God, we are invited to unite ourselves with the angels and to "lay aside all earthly cares so that we may receive the King of all";
- **The Peace**, which expresses our faith that "Christ is in our midst" and invites us to worship the Trinity with one heart and one mind;
- **The Creed**, which expresses our common faith in the Trinity and the other tenets of the Church's doctrine;
- **The Eucharistic Canon**, which proclaims the holiness and love of God, while recalling the institution of the Eucharist by Christ at the Last Supper as well as His death, resurrection and ascension;
- **The Consecration**, the changing of our gifts of bread and wine into the very body and blood of Christ through the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit;

- **The Commemorations**, which enable us to recall all for whom this Eucharist is offered;
- **The Lord's Prayer** our acknowledgement that God is indeed our heavenly Father;
- **The Breaking of the Bread**, during which we express our belief that God alone is holy; and
- **The Reception of Holy Communion**, the climax of the Liturgy. We fulfill the purposes of our worship by uniting ourselves with Christ "for the forgiveness of sins and unto life everlasting".

After we receive God's greatest blessing in the Eucharist, we express our thanks to God for receiving the heavenly Spirit by worshipping the Trinity, who saves us. We are invited to:

- **Depart in Peace**, in the name of the Lord, in order to bear witness in our daily lives to all that we've experienced during the Divine Liturgy;
- **Pray for Salvation** and guidance during the closing prayer recited by the priest in the center of the church; and
- **Receive the Lord's Blessing**, proclaimed by the priest, through the veneration of the cross.



The end of every Divine Liturgy prepares us for the beginning of the next. If we strive to live all that we've experienced in our public worship of God, our lives become a part of the Liturgy and the Liturgy becomes a part of our lives. Having placed ourselves in the very presence of God through thanksgiving, prayer and the reception of the Eucharist, we are no longer children of this world, but inheritors of the Kingdom of God and everlasting life.

### *The Divine Liturgy ...*

- enables us to praise and worship God in Christ, together with our brothers and sisters;
- is always celebrated in thanksgiving for the blessings and mercy offered us by God;
- unites us to Christ through the reception of Holy Communion — His very body and blood — which He offers us for the forgiveness of sins and unto life everlasting;
- is the very revelation of God's Kingdom in this world.





Wisdom Of  
The



Byzantine  
Fathers

*If the priesthood established by the law has come to an end, and the priest Who is 'in the order of Melchizedek' has offered His sacrifice, and has made all other sacrifices unnecessary, why do priests of the New and Everlasting Covenant celebrate the Mystical Liturgy? Now it is clear to those instructed in divine matters that we do not offer another sacrifice, we are not renewing His sacrifice, but we participate in the one and unique salutary offering and sacrifice of Christ. For this was the Lord's own command: "Do this in remembrance of me" 1 Corinthians 11: 24. So our participation in the Divine Liturgy ensures that by contemplation we may recall what is symbolized, the sufferings endured on our behalf and may kindle our love towards our Benefactor, and look forward to the blessings that are yet to come - Theodoret of Cyrus.*

*It is right to submit to higher authority whenever a command of God would not be violated - St. Basil the Great.*

# Wisdom

In the Book of Psalms we read, "Happy the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked, nor walks in the way of sinners" Psalms 1: 1. Life has been called "the way" because everything that has been created is on the way to its end.

When people are on a sea voyage, they can sleep while they are being transported without any effort of their own to their port of call. The ship brings them closer to their goal without their even knowing it. So we can be transported nearer to the end of our life without our noticing it as time flows by unceasingly. Time passes while we are asleep. While we are awake, time passes although we may not notice it.

All of us have a race to run towards our appointed end. So we are all "on the way."

This is how you should think of the "way." You are a traveler in this life. Everything goes past you and is left behind. You notice a flower on the way, or some grass, or a stream, or something worth looking at. You enjoy it for a moment, then pass on. Maybe you come on stones or rocks or crags or cliffs or fences, or perhaps you meet wild beasts or reptiles or thorn bushes or some other obstacles. You suffer briefly, then escape. That is what life is like.

Pleasures do not last nor does pain remain permanent either.

The "way" does not belong to us nor is the present under our control. But as step; succeeds step, enjoy each moment as it comes and then continue on the "way." All this is related to us by St. Basil the Great in his *Commentary on Psalm 1*.

A pious old nun tells the story of an elderly woman whose only son died. In her grief, she went to a holy man in her village and said, "Please give me some prayers, some magical prayers that will bring my son back to life."

The holy man, being wise as well, looked at the distraught woman and took pity on her. Realizing that trying to reason with her would be futile, he said, "Fetch me a mustard seed from a home that has never known sorrow. We will use to drive the sorrow out of your life. The woman went off in search of that magical mustard seed.





*Icon of Saint Basil the Great.*

She came first to a splendid mansion, knocked on the door and said, "I am looking for a home that has never known sorrow. Is this such a place?" In honesty and plaintive words they described all the tragic things that recently befallen them.

The woman said to herself, "Who is better able to help these poor unfortunate people than I, who has had some misfortune of my own?" She stayed to help them, then went off in search of a home that had never known sorrow.

Home after home, mansions and hovels, she discovered tale after tale of sadness and misfortune. She became so involved in minister to these suffering people that she forgot her quest for the magical mustard seed. Actually the very search for the seed drove the sorrow from her life.

The constant theme that is playing in our world reminds us that we should "...eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

This creates the background music against which we think we are forced to live our lives.

The message of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is vastly different. Christ is risen from the dead. And the same promise He made to the thief on the cross, He makes to each of us. "This day you will be with me in paradise" Luke 23: 43. This is the music of the heartbeat of God, the music of the Kingdom of God, a melody filled with joy and permanent peace.

We participate in the worship of the Divine Liturgy every Sunday and holyday in order to join in the music of the heartbeat of our Creator and Saviour. The very first letter of St. John tells us, "We are God's children now, what we shall later be has not yet come to light. We know that when it comes to light we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is" 1 John 3: 2.

Today is the acceptable time. The kingdom of God is NOW! Today we need to turn from our wickedness and live. God does not desire the death of a sinner but that he should turn toward him and find joy and peace. In baptism we died with Christ to sin and death, and were resurrected with him to newness of life. We are called by our heavenly Father to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Jesus prayed, "Father, all those you gave me I could have in my company where I am, so this glory of mine which is your gift to me, because of the love you bore me before the world began" John 17: 24. Jesus is speaking of each one of us here. He wants us to be in the Kingdom of God for all eternity to behold his glory.

During the Divine Liturgy the priestly celebrant or deacon intones, "Wisdom let us stand and be attentive....to listen to the holy Gospel. And the prescribed gospel of the day is chanted.

Notice we are not called to merely "hear" the Gospel, but to actually pay attention and "listen," to open our hearts as well as our ears. The word gospel means "good news." So the ritual phrase really means, "Let us listen to the holy good news." Every passage of the Gospel contains good news, a joyous message, the annunciation of something of supreme importance and value. Perhaps we are tempted to hear the first part of the passage and say to ourselves, "Oh, I heard this one before and there is nothing of importance for me here." Absolute nonsense, such dangerous thinking! Every selection of the Gospel; has something to say to us even if we have heard it countless times because we now listen with experiences and insights we did not have before.

If we listen to the Gospel with humility and fervor, each and every time we will discover a phrase or a sentence, or perhaps even just a single word that will strike us as it never has before. This is the message we need to hear plainly, to drown out the stultifying music of the world. This is the heart beat of our God. Listening to the gospel, we need to accept its message personally, realizing that God has preserved his word especially for us today in our ever changing circumstances.. This is what He wants to communicate to us here and now. This is what He wants to say to us today. We need to guard his word with care in the depths of our hearts.



## God Help Me!

*Where are your gods that you have made for yourselves? Let them arise, if they can save you in the time of your trouble.*

**Jeremiah 2: 28.**

Ever notice how people react to tragedy and difficulties in life? Even the nonreligious try to get the attention of God, whom they always almost previously ignored. Accounts of plane crashes, floods, tornadoes, or hurricanes often tell of someone who calls on the Lord for help.

It would be nice to think that our heavenly Father is just waiting for such times of panic so He can send all the emergency equipment of heaven to the rescue. But God's revelation to us in Scripture and in the life of his Body, the Church indicates otherwise. Through Jeremiah the Lord challenges his people who were in trouble to get help in the hour of death from the idols they had worshipped. He wanted them to see the futility of trusting false gods. He is the only One who can help!

The Lord may ask the same question of us. In an hour of distress, He may say, "Why do you cry for me now? Where are your sports heroes and movie stars, your favorite politicians? Why don't you seek help for the TV, or appeal to your paycheck, the comfort you find in your possessions, or rely on your credit cards? Will that comfortable car seat provide you with what you now need? Let the gods, whom you have served so faithfully and even conscientiously serve you now!

Our loving heavenly Father does not want us to go on thinking we can go on trusting false gods and still expect him to protect us from trouble. He graciously grants us forgiveness of our shortcoming sins if we are truly repentant. And He offers hope and help to those who have learned to depend on him *all* the time.

The gods of this world are empty and vain and cannot give peace to one's heart. The Living and True God deserves all our love so that from him we may never depart!

Jesus answered: "Your brother shall rise again." Martha said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

At this point, the Lord spoke these amazing words: "I am the resurrection and the life . . . and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" Martha responded in a wonderful way: "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God . . ."

Mary also poured out her heart to Christ. While attempting to console the agonizing sisters, the Lord Himself wept. Finally Jesus asked, "Where have you laid him?"

They all went to the grave where Lazarus was buried. The Lord asked that the stone be removed from the tomb. Martha protested, saying that Lazarus had been dead for 4 days and that the body was decaying. But Jesus insisted and the grave was opened. He prayed to the Heavenly Father and then commanded: "Lazarus, come forth!"

How can one visualize this amazing event? Lazarus came forth, wrapped in burial clothes. Christ told the people, "Loose him and let him go." Many of the people, witnessing this remarkable resurrection, believed in Christ and began to follow Him. Little did they realize the significance of this miracle.

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