



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

April 26, 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

+++ Today we have festal anointing on the occasion of this past week's feast of St. George the Martyr. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Risen!" to which we respond, "Indeed, He Is Risen!"

+++ The next Pierogi Sale is this Saturday, May 2.

+++ We remind our faithful diocesan and parish dues are DUE. Only thirteen diocesan dues are received. Please fulfill this obligation during this sacred season.

+++ 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, Barbara, Betty, James, Yevlogia, Nicholas, Maria, Cynthia, Pani Anna Marie, Father Myron, Pani Delores 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, \$251.00; Candles, \$6.00; Holy Day, 5.00; Food Coupons, \$420.00, for a total of 682.00. 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.



Resurrection

I wish to know Christ and the power flowing from his resurrection, likewise to know how to share in his sufferings by being formed into the pattern of his death. Thus do I hope that I may arrive at resurrection from the dead Philippians 3: 10, 11.

Let us, then, go beyond the initial teaching about Christ and advance to maturity, to laying the foundation all over again; repentance from dead works, faith in God, instructions about baptisms and laying-on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God, permitting, we shall advance! Hebrews 6: 1 - 3.

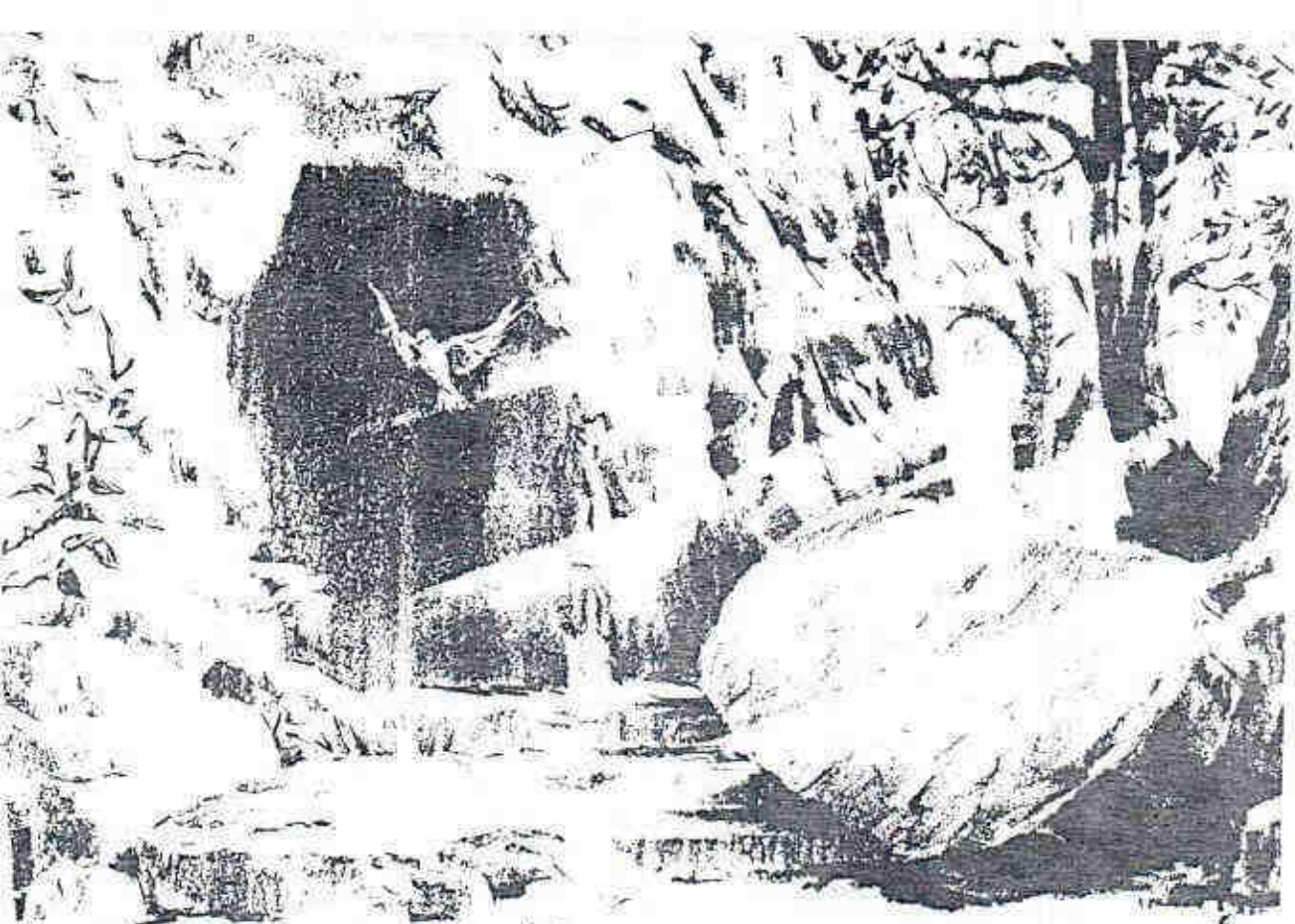
Women received back their dead through resurrection. Others were tortured and would not receive deliverance, in order to obtain a better resurrection Hebrews 12: 35.

Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he who in his great mercy gave us new birth; a birth unto hope which draws its life from the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 1 Peter 1: 3.

You are now saved by a baptismal bath which corresponds to this exactly. The baptism is no removal of physical stain, but the pledge to God of an irreproachable conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ 1 Peter 3: 21, 22.

This is the first resurrection; happy and holy are they who share in the first resurrection! Revelation 20: 5, 6.

God freed him from death's bitter pangs, however, and raised him up again, for it was impossible that death should keep its hold on him Acts of the Apostles 2: 24.



"He is Risen"

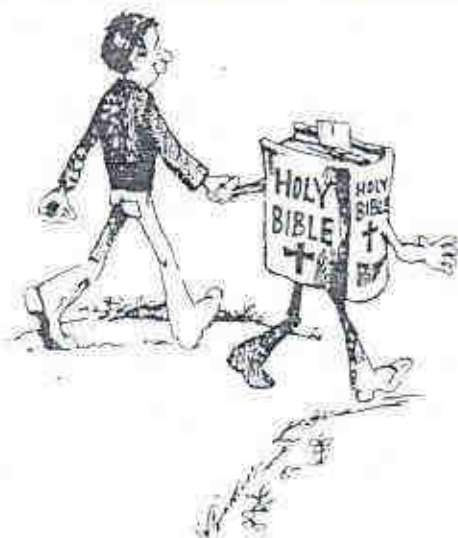
How calm it is! Our eyes are cast afar upon a lonely hilltop, wet with dew, whence three lone crosses stand, now quiet, too, beneath the solitary morning star.

We wander to the lonely crypt once more, where three days since we laid our fallen Lord. We hoped to gain His kingdom by the sword. His body took our hopes behind that door.

But what is this? The stone is rolled away. An angel, clad in white, stands guardian there, and tells us "He is risen!"

*Let us sing and make joyful in this glorious day!
A golden sun is dawning bright and fair.
All hail our risen Lord and King!*

*He who walks with
God always gets to
his destination...*



Proverbs 16:17

*The path of the godly leads away from evil;
he who follows that path is safe.*



*They went to the
tomb when the Sun
had risen.*

CALLS FROM GOD

WHY should we stir up still waters? They are calls from God. If these thoughts take shape in my mind it is a certain indication that God wants me to draw nearer to Him, to do better. Our Lord has different ways of calling different people. St. Andrew and St. John were walking with St. John the Baptist, who said, "Behold the Lamb of God." St. John and Andrew followed after our Lord and asked Him where He was lodging. Our Lord said, "Come and see." They went with Him, stayed all night, and next morning said, "Now we have found the Messiah." St. Peter was called while mending his nets. The rich young man said, "Good Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" "Keep the commandments." "I do so." Our Lord looked at him and loved him. "Then if thou wouldst be perfect, go sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and come follow Me."



HE IS RISEN

Did You Know That ...

- ...failure to prepare is preparing to fail?
- ...if you get ready, perhaps your chance to shine will come?
- ...ability can get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there?
- ...humor is the shock absorber of life; it helps us take action?
- ...the essence of genius is knowing what to overlook?
- ...few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon him and to let him know you trust him?
- ...the only thing that remains constant is change?
- ...it is better to trust and be disappointed occasionally than to distrust and be miserable all the time?
- ...down deep in every soul is a hidden longing, impulse, and ambition to do something fine and enduring?
- ...if you are willing to cooperate with God's grace, great things are possible to you?
- ...words to live by are just words, unless you live by them?
- ...you should not fear going forward slowly; fear only standing still?
- ...there is a gigantic difference between earning a great deal of money and being rich?
- ...it is the storm within you that endangers you, not without?
- ...the wise man in the storm prays not for safety from danger, but for deliverance from fear?
- ...in the long run, you hit only what you aim at?
- ...though you fail immediately, you should aim at something high?

them. He does good even to the unwilling and compels them by His love. Even when we would wish to avoid His kindness we are not able to do so.

To Accept Or Reject

Such is the gift of the Resurrection. It is not within our power to be born or not born into this world; nor is it in our power to return to life, or not to do so, after we die. But as for the things that depend on human willingness, such as choosing what is good, forgiveness of sins, uprightness of character, purity of heart, love of God - whose reward is final beatitude - these things we have the power to accept or to reject. Those who are willing are able to enjoy them, but as for those who are not willing, how would that be possible? It is impossible for the unwilling to desire them, or to be forced to be willing to receive them.

The Lord has released human nature from corruption. He is the first born of the dead. "It is he who is head of the body, the church, he who is the beginning, the first born of the dead so that primacy may be his in everything" Colossians 1: 18. He has entered for us as the forerunner into the Holy of Holies in the heavens. "...through which Jesus, our forerunner, has entered on our behalf, being made high priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek" Hebrews 6: 20. He has slain sin and

reconciled us to God. "It is he who is our peace, and who made the two of us one by breaking down the barrier of hostility that kept us apart" Ephesians 2: 14. He has consecrated Himself for us. "I consecrate myself for their sakes now, that they may be consecrated in truth" John 17: 19.

He has done all these things so that we too, who have both a nature and will in common with Him, might be justly freed from corruption and from sin. The nature we have in common with Him simply by being human. The will we have in common with Him by loving His appearing among us and His passion, and by being obedient to His commandments and willing what He Himself wills. "...train yourself for the life of piety, for while physical training is to some extent valuable, the discipline of religion is incalculably more so, with its promise of life here and hereafter. You can depend on this as worthy of complete acceptance" 1 Timothy 4: 8.

Some people fulfill but one of these two conditions: they are human, but do not entrust their salvation to the Saviour and are not at one with Him in the goodness of their willing. These people fall short of the forgiveness of sins and the crown of righteousness because they are at variance with Him in will. But since they have the same human nature as Christ does, nothing hinders them from being set free from death and

The Gift Of Resurrection

One might well be astounded at the fact that it is not only those who have been baptized who will be raised from the dead, but even those for whom it was impossible to be prepared for immortal life through the power of the holy sacramental Mysteries. In short, it is all people who will receive ageless bodies and rise incorruptible.

It is indeed amazing that they who have not received the baptismal washing whereby we share in Christ's life-giving death should share in the Resurrection which Christ's death, and only His death, has brought into the world. If they have fled from the Physician and refused His aid and shunned the only cure, what else would there be that can secure their immortality? It would seem reasonable, therefore, that either of two things should happen. Either all people should enjoy the benefits which Christ bestows as the Author of Life by His death and rise with Him in blessedness, or else, since it is necessary that we contribute something, that those who have not offered Him the response of faith commitment should simply not live again with the Saviour.

With Or Without Our Willing

We reply to this as follows. The Resurrection is the restoration of our human nature. Such things God gives freely. Just as He forms us in the beginning without our willing it, so He forms us anew though we contribute nothing to it. On the other hand, the kingdom of God and our vision of Him and union with Him in the kingdom are privileges which depend on our willingness. They are possible, therefore, only for those who have been willing to receive them and have loved them and longed for them. For it is fitting for people to enjoy the presence of the things which they long for. It is impossible to enjoy things for which they have no desire. For how can people possibly find joy in the presence of something for which they had no desire when it is absent?

One need not marvel at the fact that while all people will live in immortality through the Resurrection of Christ, not all people will live in blessedness. All equally enjoy God's providence toward our human nature, but it is only those who are devoted to God who enjoy the gifts which adorn their willingness.

God indeed wills all good things for all people, and He grants everyone all of His gifts which pertain to their nature. He gives even to those who do not desire these gifts, and they cannot escape

rising again with him. It is not of life alone, but of the blessed life in Christ that baptism is the cause. In a word, it is the fact that Christ had died and risen that immortality is given to everyone alike.

For Those Who Cooperate

The Resurrection is the gift common to all people. But the remission of sins, the heavenly crowns and the kingdom of God are only for those who have given due cooperation and have so ordered themselves in this life so as to be one with the Bridegroom in the life to come. They have been born anew since He is the new Adam. They are resplendent in beauty with Him Who is more beautiful than all the sons of men. "So shall the king desire your beauty; for he is your Lord and you must worship him" Psalms 45: 12.

They stand with lifted heads like Olympic victors because He is their crown. They listen to Him because He is the Word. They lift up their eyes because He is the Sun of Righteousness. They breathe deeply because the Bridegroom is a sweet fragrance. They are stately in vesture because they are clothed in the garments of the marriage feast of the Lamb of God. St. Nicholas Cabasilas. He lived in the fourteenth century in Thessalonica where he was canonized some time ago. This is a passage from his classic, *Life in Christ*.



Wisdom, Be Attentive!

The noble Joseph took down your most pure body from the cross. He wrapped it in a clean shroud, and with fragrant spices, laid it in burial in a new grave. But You arose in three days, O Lord, bestowing great mercy upon the world Troparion, Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

The angel stood by the grave and cried out to the women bearing ointment: "Ointment is for the dead, but Christ has shown himself not subject to corruption. So now cry out: 'The Lord is risen, bestowing great mercy upon the world!'" Troparion, Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

When You descended to death, O Immortal Life, You destroyed the Abyss through the radiance of your divinity; and when You raised the dead from the depth of the earth, all the heavenly powers cried out: "O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to You!" Troparion, Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

By your resurrection, O Christ God, You told the women bearing ointment to rejoice and you stilled the weeping of Eve, the first mother. You instructed the women to announce to your apostles, "The Saviour is risen from the tomb!" Kontakion, Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

Although You descended to the grave, O Immortal One, You destroyed the power of death; You arose again as a Victor, O Christ God! You announced to the women bearing ointment, "Rejoice." You gave peace to your apostles and resurrection to the fallen Kontakion, Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

Save your people, O Lord, and bless your inheritance Prokimenon, Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

Receive the Body of Christ! Drink the Source of immortality! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Communion Hymn, Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN

We should not be surprised that the icon on today's bulletin does not include the figure of the Risen Christ. The actual rising of Christ from the tomb was not witnessed by anyone; therefore the Evangelists as well as the iconographers keep sacred silence about that mystery.

But the writers of the Gospels do mention what happened when the Myrrh-Bearing women came to the tomb of Christ early on that first Resurrection morn. They came to the grave bearing the spices and ointments to complete the anointing of the Lord's body. Notice how faithful the icon is to the description of the scene by St. Luke: "And entering the sepulcher, the women saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were afraid. And he said to them: Be not afraid: You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; He is risen, He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him . . ."

The icon graphically depicts the scene. The women approach cautiously. The Angel is garbed in glorious white and points to the empty tomb. Note the linen clothes, undisturbed, retaining their form as when they encompassed the Body (Just as Jesus was born of a Virgin who retained her virginity at His birth, so now He rises from the grave without disturbing the burial clothes). Note also the handkerchief "that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself" (John 20:7). The icon tells the ENTIRE story!

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin West, Cliffwood, New Jersey Latin USA.