



Hagia Sophia

A Landmark of Human Creation



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost

July 30, 2017

**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 insightful riches 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

+++ His Grace, Bishop Gregory will be visiting our parish the week – end of November 4, 5, to bless the icons on the icon screen and to impart his episcopal blessing to our

faithful. We will have a service Saturday afternoon honoring our tear - shedding icon and the Sunday morning Divine Liturgy followed by a dinner in honor of the Most Blessed Bishop. Please set aside these dates to assure your presence with the parish family for this auspicious event.

+++ Next Sunday is the solemn feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord.

+++ The Dormition Fast begins August 1. Please impose on yourselves the appropriate fasting regulations of the Church so we can advance in a richer faith experience.

+++ With regret we note many of our faithful are not offering their Diocesan Dues. Please bring them in because the parish is responsible for remitting \$65.00 per adult for support of the diocese.

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Betty, James, Yevlogia, Nicholas, Maria, William, 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, \$337.00; Candles, \$20.00; Holyday, \$40.00, for a total of 397.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offer one tenth of their God-given treasure and labor for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls!

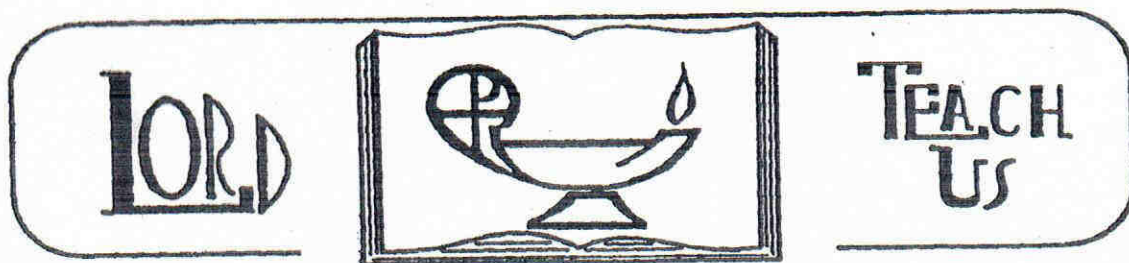
+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Maria Idromenos, Anna Zacharyczuk, Marilyn Korba and Pani Buletza.

+++ 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.

+++ 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, blankets and fabrics.

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

ALLELUIA



Answered Prayer

Before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will answer them Isaiah 65: 24.

Ask and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For the one who asks, receives. The one who seeks, finds. The one who knocks, enters Matthew 7: 7, 8.

Again, I tell you, if two of you join your voices on earth in prayer for anything whatever, it shall be granted you by my father in heaven. Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst Matthew 18: 19, 20.

I give you my word, if you are ready to believe that you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer, it shall be done for you. When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your faults Mark 11: 24, 25.

Whatever you ask in my name I will do, so as to glorify the Father in the Son. Anything you ask me in my name, I will do John 14: 13, 14.

We can be sure that God is with us and that we will receive at his hands whatever we ask. Why? Because we are keeping his commandments and doing what is pleasing in his sight 1 John 3: 21, 22.

Call to me and I will answer you; I will tell you things great beyond reach of your knowledge Jeremiah 33: 3.

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

You have destroyed death by Your Cross, You opened paradise to the thief. The sorrow of the women You turned to joy. You commanded Your apostles to proclaim to all: "Christ our God is risen, granting great mercy to the world" Troparion, Resurrection Tone Seven.

No longer can the might of death rule over men; Christ has come destroying and crushing its power. The Abyss is now in chains. The prophets with joy unite in proclaiming "The Saviour has appeared saying to those who believe: 'Come forth, you faithful, to the Resurrection'" Kontakion, Resurrection Tone Seven.

May the Lord give strength to His people; may the Lord bless His people with peace Prokimenon, Resurrection Tone Seven.

The Apostles saw the Resurrection of the Creator. They were amazed and sang the angelic hymn of praise. This is the glory of the Church; the devil has been defeated. This is the wealth of the kingdom. O Lord, You suffered for us; glory be to You! Vesper Hymn, Tone Seven.

Christ fulfilled the prophecies of David. On Sion He manifested His greatness to His disciples. He showed Himself praised and glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, first as the Word before He became man; now incarnate He died for us as man. He rose by His own power. He is the Lord and Lover of mankind Vesper Hymn, Tone Seven.

Mother of God, you became a mother outside the law of nature. In birthgiving you remained a virgin. This is beyond understanding and human speech. Words cannot describe the wonder of your birthgiving. More glorious is the nature of conceiving, O Pure One! The manner of your birthgiving is beyond our understanding. For when God wills, the laws of nature are broken. We firmly believe you to be the Mother of God. We hasten to you in prayer: Intercede for the salvation of our souls Vesper Hymn, Tone Seven.

O Christ, You descended into the Abyss; You despoiled death and arose on the third day; You raised us with you; We glorify Your all powerful Resurrection. O Lord, You alone love mankind Vesper Hymn, Tone Seven.

Liturgically Speaking

The very short word, *Amen*, so richly interspersed and integrated into our liturgical life, is a wonderful and pregnant little word, a word of downright emphasis, of enthusiastic faith, of categorical and enduring assent as well as dogmatic assertion. It makes nonsense of *Amen* to simply mutter or whisper it. *Amen*, of its very nature, demands to be spoken enthusiastically and vibrantly and spoken and sung with firmness and assurance, to be exclaimed, even to be shouted with profound conviction. From a believing, faith-filled congregation, *Amen* should be a most powerful unison, a roar, an acclamation, a stentorian pronouncement. The nave of the church begins to be genuinely alive when resounds in it a sonorous *Amen* at the very beginning of the Divine Liturgy and throughout it. But we have to admit, in too many instances, those who participate with us, do not always sing or cry out *Amen*; they barely whisper it or do not even say it at all. It would seem that we Orthodox faithful who have treasured the melodious singing response in all our prayers to our heavenly Father, no longer understand what this simple *Amen* actually means.

HELP FROM A HEBREW DICTIONARY

So let us investigate *Amen*. Experts tell us that it comes from a Hebrew root, "*MN*". The Jews could make all sorts of words and derive various meanings from "*MN*" by putting vowels in various combinations with these consonants, but all such derived words have a common element in their meaning; they refer to something "fixed", "settled", "agreed", "steadfast", and thus "true". A learned colleague offered a Hebrew dictionary which points out a column and a half of them, which are all derived from the root "*MN*" and we can at least read the translations of these. Among them we find, true, faithful, sure, genuine, orthodox, assent, acknowledgment, conviction...and all the adjectives, adverbs, related to these and similar words. These should suffice to show us what the word *Amen* attempts to convey spiritually and therefore, liturgically.

In view of this, it is not at all surprising that the Jews used to connect the root "*MN*" and the word *AMEN* with God, for He is supremely faithful, sure, enduring, constant, trustworthy. The Israelites longed for God's truth as they longed for His sure mercy and righteousness; and they looked forward to the promised Messiah as the One In Whom God's truth would be revealed in its fullness.

It is made use of in salvation history to affirm anything, and was an affirmation word used often by our Saviour, which is rendered in various translations, "verily, verily," "amen, amen. I say to you" John 3: 3, 5. All the promises of God are **Amen** in Christ, that is, certain and firm, "therefore it is through him that we address our Amen to God when we worship together" 2 Corinthians 1: 20. Christ Himself, the faithful Prophet and Teacher of His Church is called the **AMEN**, "The Amen, the faithful Witness and true, the Source of God's Creation, has this to say..." Revelation 3: 14. In the Old Covenant, we read, "shall bless himself in the God of truth, and swear by the God of truth..." Isaiah 65: 16, which in the Hebrew is the God, **Amen**. And it is used in the conclusion of praying as a testimony of an earnest wish, desire, or assurance to be heard. **Amen** literally means for believers, "so be it, so shall it be." The word **Amen** is used in many languages in its original Hebrew form and has not therefore suffered any loss in translation.. Even the four beasts in the final book of God's revelation to us shout out **Amen** Revelation 4: 10.

JESUS IS THE PERFECT AMEN

For us who are Orthodox believers, **Amen** refers to the fulfillment of God's promises, but the reference is, so to speak, in a different tense. In Christ the promises are fulfilled. God's eternal truth is revealed in our Saviour most perfectly and completely. That is what St. Paul means when he tells the Corinthians, "In him all the promises of God become certain; that is why, when we give glory to God, it is through him that we say our Amen" 2 Corinthians 1: 20. We do this for example, through the Divine Liturgy and other liturgical prayer services, at the end of the Anaphora of the Eucharistic celebration which is why it is called the great **Amen** because it is our personal and individual affirmation of the most important portion of the Divine Liturgy.

EXPLANATION BY A SAINT

To the various official prayers as well as those personal and spontaneous in our lives, we add this very same response, **Amen**. A Western Father of the Church, St. Augustine used to explain it to his faithful parishioners by likening it to their signature. He spoke to them about asking favors of God in the Divine Liturgy and other liturgical devotions and went on, "Do we ask Him for all these things in vain? NO! For you have willingly and wittingly subscribed to it by saying **Amen**. Your **Amen**, my brethren, is your signature, your approbation, your consent, your agreement, your assent, your making the request and petition of the Church, along with its praises your own."

YOUR PERSONAL SIGNATURE

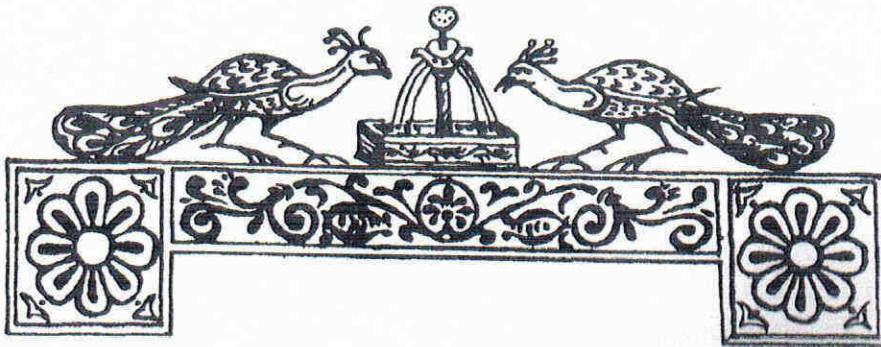
A signature is something very personal; nobody else can sign your name for you; if he tries to do so, he commits forgery. You alone can sign a document which readily commits you to do something, such as a will, an affidavit, or a petition. If the prayer of our Orthodox liturgical life is truly to become your own prayerful petition to God, you have got to make it your own, you are expected to sign it with your vocal

signature, with your heartfelt and soulful signature, which is your personally spoken and sung *Amen*. Sing your *Amen*, as you do all the prayers and hymns of the Church, as though you sincerely and seriously mean it. What you really want to say is: "I agree with what the priest and Christ in the Church is saying and teaching; I subscribe to it, I am making it my own *Amen*."

SIGN IT!

But if you do not say both the liturgical and spontaneous prayers of our holy Church faithfully with fullness of heart and soul, then your *Amen* is going to be empty and perfunctory as well as shallow, without any life given to it by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within you. What right, then, do you have to expect our heavenly Father to do anything for you in connection with the petitions and prayers to which you have in no way manifested your assent? If you take no notice, remain impassive, you seem to imply: "I have no particular interest in this petition or prayer which the people of God, gathered together by the Holy Spirit are offering to the Eternal Father. I suppose it is all right, but I have not anything against it nor for it. Let it pass! It hasn't anything to do with me. I raise no objections to it, but neither do I assent to it by praying sincerely and devoutly and completing my prayer with a soulful resounding, convincing *Amen*."

This is hardly the attitude qualifying for the reception of God's blessings and grace. If, on the other hand, you voice a loud and emphatic *Amen* because your prayers and petitions have come from the sincerity of the depths of your soul, a definite personal assurance that you are adopting this prayer and petition as your own, you are far more likely to be granted some share in the grace which our God will respond with in answer to prayer and praise.



O Lord, Forgive!



"My failure to be true even to my own accepted standards:

O Lord, forgive!"

"My self-deception in the face of temptation:

O Lord, forgive!"

"My choosing of the worse when I know the better:

O Lord, forgive!"

"My failure to apply to myself the standards of conduct I demand of others:

O Lord, forgive!"

"My blindness to the sufferings of others and my slowness to be taught by my own:

O Lord, forgive!"

"My complacency toward wrongs that do not touch my own case and my oversensitiveness to those that do:

O Lord, forgive!"

"My slowness to see the good in my fellows and to see the evil in myself:

O Lord, forgive!"

"My hardness of heart towards my neighbor's faults and my readiness to make allowance for my own:

O Lord, forgive!"

"My unwillingness to believe that You have called me to a small work and my brother to a great one:

O Lord, forgive!"

OPTIMISM

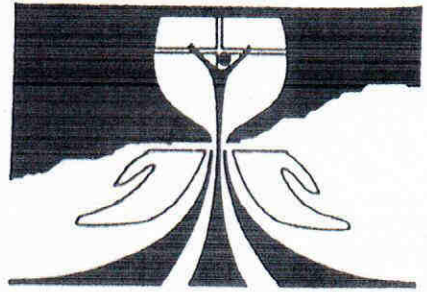
*COUNT your blessings
instead of your crosses,
Count your gains
instead of your losses,
Count your joys
instead of your woes,
Count your friends
instead of your foes,
Count your smiles
instead of your tears,
Count your courage
instead of your fears,
Count your full years
instead of your lean,
Count your kind deeds
instead of your mean,
Count your health
instead of your wealth,
Count on GOD
instead of yourself.*

SCIENCE SAYS THAT
SUCCESS IS RELATIVE.

*the more
success...
the more
relatives.*

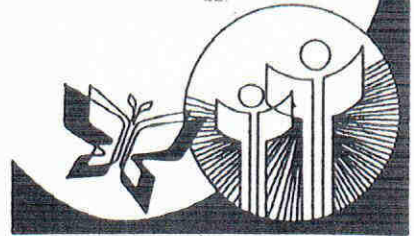


LOVE WILL CONSUME US ONLY IN THE
MEASURE OF OUR SELF SURRENDER



HE EMPTIED HIMSELF

HOW GOOD -TO BE ALIVE!
HOW INFINITE TO BE
ALIVE - TWO FOLD - THE BIRTH I HAD
AND THIS - BESIDES IN - THEE!



I SHALL NOT DIE
BUT LIVE

SPRING IS THE UNFOLDING OF
THE JOY OF BIRTH...
THE FULLNESS OF LIFE...
THE WARMTH OF LOVE



YOU PUT GLADNESS
INTO MY HEART

Tonight, my soul, be still and sleep;
The storms are raging on God's deep—
God's deep, not thine: be still and sleep;
Tonight, my soul, be still and sleep;
God's hand shall still the tempest's sweep—
God's hand, not thine, be still and sleep.

Did You Know That ...

...man sometimes credits himself with success and God with his failures?

...freedom not to listen to those who undermine our faith commitment to Christ is just as precious a right as freedom of speech?

...broken friendships may be patched up, but the patch is apt to show if we do not live our Christian commitment?

...it does no good for a person to sit up and take notice if he just continues to sit?

...in our society, there is a growing tendency to play religion on Sunday and play the fool during the week?

...one problem with worldly success is that when your ship comes in, most of your relatives are standing at the dock?

...the nicest people in the world are those who minimize your faults and magnify your virtues?

...gossip is like mud thrown on a clean wall; it may not stick, but it leaves a dirty mark?

...if your life is an open book, do not bore your friends by reading out of it?

...there would be less juvenile delinquency if parents would lead the way instead of just pointing to it?

...a grouch adds much to the happiness of others by staying away from them?

...when we get the daily bread we have been praying for, we should not grumble because it is not cake?

...it is getting more and more difficult to support the government in the style to which it has become accustomed?

...happiness makes up in height what it lacks in length an depth?

VESPER VERSES ACCORDING TO THE EIGHT TONES

TONE 7

1. Come, let us rejoice in the Lord :
He has crushed the power of death;
He has enlightened the human race.
Let us cry out with the angels of heaven :
“ Our Maker and Savior, glory be to you! ”
2. You suffered the crucifixion and burial for us,
O Savior.
Being God, you put Death to death by your
death.
Therefore, we bow to your resurrection,
O Lord.
Glory be to you!
3. The Apostles saw the resurrection of the
Creator.
They were amazed and sang the angelic hymn
of praise.

This is the glory of the Church;
The devil has been defeated.
This is the wealth of the Kingdom.
O Lord, you suffered for us :
Glory be to you!

4. Arrested by sinful men, O Christ,
You are still my God; I am not ashamed.
Seeing You scourged, I will not deny You;
Seeing You on the cross, I will not hide.
I praise your resurrection : your death is life
for me.
Almighty Lord, Lover of mankind, Glory be
to You!
5. Christ fulfilled the prophecies of David.
On Sion He manifested his greatness to his
disciples.
He showed Himself praised and glorified
With the Father and the Holy Spirit,
First as the Word before He became man;
Now incarnate He died for us as man.
He rose by his own power.
He is the Lord and Lover of mankind.
6. O Christ, you freely descended into the Abyss.
As God and Lord, You conquered Death.
You arose on the third day.
You freed Adam from the bonds of death.
He cried out in song and said :
" Glory be to your resurrection; You alone
love mankind! "

7. O Lord, You were buried in the tomb as asleep.
Powerful and strong, You arose on the third
day.

You raised Adam from the corruption of
death :

You are the Almighty Lord.

8. Glory be to the Father ✙, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
forever. Amen.

Mother of God : you became a mother outside
the law of nature.

In birthgiving you remained a virgin.

This is beyond understanding and human
speech.

Words cannot describe the wonder of your
birthgiving.

More glorious is the nature of your conceiving,
O Pure One!

The manner of your birthgiving is beyond our
understanding.

For when God so wills, the laws of nature
are broken.

We firmly believe you to be the mother of God.

We hasten to you in prayer :

Intercede for the salvation of our souls

At the Apostichon

1. You rose from the dead, O Savior of mankind.
Through your body, you raised mankind.
O Lord, glory be to you!

2. Let us worship the Lord :
He has risen from the dead and enlightened
mankind.
By his resurrection, He has freed us from the
suffering of the Abyss.
He has granted us life and great mercy.
3. O Christ, you descended into the Abyss;
You despoiled Death and rose on the third day;
You raised us with you :
We glorify your all powerful resurrection.
O Lord, you alone love mankind.
4. O Lord, you were awe-inspiring :
Even when in the tomb as asleep,
Being all powerful, you rose on the third day.
You raised Adam who cried out :
“ Glory to your resurrection; You alone love
mankind! ”
5. Glory be to the Father ✝, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
forever. Amen.
O most pure Lady :
All on earth take refuge under your protection.
We cry out to you : Mother of God and our
hope,
Deliver us from our many sins
And save our souls.

THE GREAT CHURCH OF HOLY WISDOM

Between two seas and two continents stands the greatest monument of Eastern Christianity, the Great Church of old Constantinople, the **HAGIA SOPHIA**. While no longer a Christian edifice (it is a Turkish museum), it still houses some of the most remarkable mosaics ever produced by man. These are still being restored by modern-day artisans. The vivid colors gleam through the myriad pieces of tiny glass, creating flashes of light and shade in the cavernous vault of the cathedral.

Dedicated to Christ the Lord, as the embodiment of Holy Wisdom, this "*earthly throne of the glory of God*," was founded by Constantine, renovated a number of times, and finally rebuilt in all its splendor by Emperor Justinian between the years 537 and 562. There are no side chapels or aisles, nothing but a huge expanse; and soaring 200 feet above is the magnificent dome, unequaled in all the architectural forms of the world.

Through the centuries, the walls and arches of this temple have been decorated by the most skilled of craftsmen. In the early 12th century, the mosaic of our bulletin was placed in the south gallery. It features an exquisite portrayal of Christ in the center, flanked by the Emperor Constantine IX and Empress Zoe. The emperor and empress were pious Christians who ruled from 1042 to 1050. They are depicted bringing their gifts to our enthroned Lord. Although it is many centuries old, this mosaic still has a fresh and striking quality.

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