



Sometimes groups of Saints are portrayed in iconography. Today's Icon features Sts. Hilarion, Abercius & Ioannikios. This is called a "collective icon," since the Saints are all honored together in the same month.

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost

October 19, 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

+++ 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.

+++ The next monthly Pirohi Sale will be held November 8 and the thanksgiving Bake Sale will be on November 21, 22..

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

+++ Next Sunday is the simple feast of St. Demetrius,

+++ 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, \$412.00; Candles, \$9.00; Food Coupons, \$120.00; Kitchen, \$83.00; Webpage, \$25.00; Holyday, \$12.00, for a total of 661.00. 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 **\$1818.00** 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.



Seed

A farmer went out to sow some seed. In the sowing, some fell on the footpath where it was walked on and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, sprouted up, then withered through a lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns and the thorns growing up with it stifled it. But some fell on good ground, grew up, and yielded grain a hundred fold Luke 8: 5 – 8.

Your rebirth has come, not from a destructible but from an indestructible seed, through the living and enduring word of God 1 Peter 1: 23.

No one begotten of God acts sinfully because he remains of God's stock; he cannot sin because he is begotten of God 1 John 3: 9.

That means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God; it is the children of the promise who are to be considered descendants Romans 9: 8.

Unless the Lord of hosts has left us a scanty remnant, we would become as Sodom, we should be like Gomorrah Isaiah 1: 9.

Sons I have raised and reared, but they have disowned me Isaiah 1: 2.

They shall not toil in vain nor beget children for sudden destruction; for a race blessed by the Lord are they and their offspring Isaiah 65: 23.

Like the host of heaven which cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea which cannot be counted, I will multiply the descendants of my servant David and the Levites who minister to me Jeremiah 33: 22.

The Four People Who Go To Church

Parable Of The Four Soils

Matthew 13: 3 – 23; Mark 4: 2 – 20; Luke 8: 4 – 15.

THERE ARE FOUR TYPES OF PEOPLE WHO GO TO CHURCH. And the tragedy is that three out of four receive no lasting good by going. The resounding glory is that the life of one out of four is supremely blessed. Whether one is helped, ennobled and enriched by worship depends not so much on the Church or the parish priest, but often enough on himself. Jesus makes all this clear in a story He told about a farmer who went out to sow his seed.

The seed represents the word of God and the sower represents the Church. Yes, it is true that priests as preachers often do a poor job at sowing the seed. To how many is given the blessed privilege of preaching and explaining and making plain and simple, as well as compelling the word of God. Heaven's eternal profound truths are transformed into understandable salutary human guidelines. As best as can be done, with some real effort, prayer and devotion, the parish priest can render his homilies or sermons simple and easy to understand, make them effective as possible that the soil of man's heart and soul is transformed and cultivated so salvation becomes reality. How many times the priest returns to his living quarters once again humiliated because of the shoddy ineffective job done that day. He has sown the seed, but few are concerned, few are compelled or drawn to put it into practice. Few there are that desire transforming it from simple challenging word into life-giving daily concrete practice.

The priest must readily understand as he offers the salvation of Christ to his listeners, that if one explanation does not work, he must try another, but he must never give up. He must change the soil so that it is receptive for impending growth, that the growth then leads to change of lifestyle and enriched living. The vibrant priest can never simply lull his flock into comfort, or make them uncomfortable; he must elevate the individual sheep into comforters of other souls. Just as the farmer recognized not all his acreage is good or disposed for growth production, and takes steps to enrich it, make it eager for cultivation by applying fertilizer and together with tender plowing care, be certain that the right ingredients of faith response combine with the natural raw material to produce a bumper crop.

On the other hand we can all recall there was One who spoke the words of eternal life as no other had ever taught. His was the most winsome voice the word has ever known and they nailed him to a cross. Every man is a prisoner of his fate and we might add, every parish priest is a prisoner of his parish if he allows this to happen, always to his own chagrin. We say this because the very nature of our worship

makes the priest the spiritual leader of the parish. His back is turned to the congregation, not because he ignores its needs, but because he is intent on leading it forward, assaulting with spiritual aggressiveness the portals of heaven. The priest is the shepherd, the leader, not the follower of the congregation, the parish. His education and vocation have endowed him not only with the necessary leadership skills, but with heaven's grace to strike forward, to lead as did Moses and Joshua, even in the dark wilderness of the desert so that souls are saved. The path may be difficult, but he must still lead. Sheep follow their shepherd, not vice-versa. That is precisely why we do not face the people at our worship. Together we look toward the goal, the objective, to God himself. People in the pews have nothing to offer souls; it is God alone who draws us, priest and people together, forward, toward the fulfillment of the noblest desires of the soul.

The emphasis in Jesus' story is not so much on the seed, neither is it on the sower, but rather the final determining factor is the quality of the soil upon which the seed falls. Look at and examine the four soils and decide which type you are.

The Wayside

Some seed fell "by the wayside." The wayside was a hardened path or roadway in which the seed could find no lodgment. In any congregation or parish you find some people of "wayside" nature. For some every question has been settled to their liking, they do not want to be disturbed by any fresh ideas or new growth, certainly not by a new or different priest who challenges, even probes the soul for responsible growth and advancement. Most importantly, they do not wish to prove they are in fact followers of Jesus Christ living in a hostile world.

How well some priests recall the difficulty of persuading a parish to lift its eyes and do more to spread the Kingdom of God. Complacency in faith is dead faith, is existence on the wayside. As the parish approaches the time when it will finally decide such long reaching challenges as church support, the priest may do his best to find language and persuasiveness immersed in sincere prayer in speaking to his flock. But when the question comes up for resolution and decision-making, all that is needed is one man, one whom the others consider a so-called leader, speaks up and says, "I move to continue whatever it is that we have been doing." Such a mind is completely closed to the thought of any progress in Christ. In our Church it is the bishop who transfers priests. Sometimes I think he ought to move the congregation or the parish and let the priest remain, eager to engage and challenge the genuinely interested and attract a new group of real, not pseudo believers.

There are those who are self-righteous and spiritually complacent. It would never occur that the sermon preached is for them and their soul's benefit. They are always thinking of the sins of somebody else and hoping the preacher will "put it on them" even thicker. We talk about hardened sinners, but so many

times, self described hardened saints are a lot worst. Those who listen to and honor them reason they live in the area and will always be around, but the priest is the one who moves and may leave. Which one should they really listen to, the one who will always be physically there, or the one who is dispatched and moved by the bishop, the steady resident, or the one who can easily be here today and gone tomorrow, the who is immersed in reality or the one who is motivated by exorbitant ideals, the one who has his feet on the ground, or the one whose mind is in the sky?

Some people's hearts are hardened by bitter disappointments in life. Some person they believed in and trusted failed to measure up and then they refuse to believe ever again. They have been hurt and enjoy grievance carrying and collecting. It seems like a legitimate excuse for disbelief. Maybe some prayer was not answered as they intended or expected and they become embittered. How dare God do that to them! By habitual thinking, self-righteousness, disappointment, sorrow and in many other ways our hearts can become hardened. It always brings a tear to the eye for the genuine believer to read the story of Felix in the early Church. One day as he listened to St. Paul talk about faith in Christ, Felix trembled. He felt a pull at his heart's door. Faith was moving him but he failed to follow up. He did not do his part while God did what was necessary from heaven. But then he said, "That is enough for now! You can go. I'll send for you again when I find the time" Acts of the Apostles 24: 25. His heart never trembled again. Each refusal of God's eagerness to enter our lives adds to the hardening crust around a heart, a crust like the one that covers the wayside path and makes it impossible to grow and advance in genuine faith.

Stony Ground

Some seed fell on "stony ground." Much of the land in Palestine is extremely rocky. The soil is rich but it has no depth and though the grain would spring up quickly and give promise of a fine harvest, when the hot sun of summer began to beat down, it would wither. There are a lot of "stony soil" people. They get most enthusiastic and excited about their religious faith and that much is good.

We sometimes refer to certain people as "religious fanatics" and it is easier to restrain a fanatic than to resurrect a corpse. If some new spiritual stirring of the soul brings tears to the eye or a shout of praise to God in your voice, be glad. True religious profession always begins with the emotions and the tragedy comes when it is permitted to end there and get no further.

The story is told of a frail little woman who approached her parish priest saying she would like a place of service. Her heart had been stirred and she wanted to offer something in return to the Lord for his many blessings in her life. The priest gave her a class of youngsters to teach. That was over thirty years ago and she has continued to teach faithfully. There were Sundays when the weather was bad, or when she wanted to go somewhere else or when she was not feeling well, but except for a few times when she

was out of the city or sick in bed, she has been at her place of service. She has been steadily faithful to her commitment.

Once a man got so enthusiastic he said to Jesus, "Lord, I will follow you wherever you go" Luke 9: 57. But Jesus could see he was only gushing with simple emotional feeling and was not prepared to pay the price. So the Lord said, "Foxes have lairs, the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" Luke 9: 58. The Lord is telling the man there is sacrifice involved, a negation of self that God's glory might be revealed.

Every parish contains names of a number of people who are registered without their realizing what it takes time, patience and real effort to become a communicant of the Church. They are not willing to work their way in and are disappointed when the program of the Church does not revolve around them and their perceived needs. A man said, "I will join your church if you will give me a place of fulfilling service." The priest told him, "You can join us, but you must win your place." With every accorded privilege, there is commensurate responsibility.

After that great experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, St. Peter wanted to stay up there. It had been such an exhilarating encounter, he wanted to continue experiencing it. But Christ knew that down below was an opportunity for service, for meeting the spiritual needs of interested people. Many want the experience, but fall out when the time for responding service begins. It is as the priest once told a very late comer to the church who asked, "Is the service over?" The priest replied, "Worship is over, but our service has just now begun." That is as it should be.

Among Thorns

Some seed fell "among thorns." There are a great deal of fine and capable people represented here. They receive the word of God and they earnestly desire to serve him. But then they assume so many other interests that gradually God is choked out. We hear a lot about the possibility of being destroyed by atomic bombs. But the greatest danger in America is that we are "clubbed" to death. There are a lot of people running themselves sick trying to get to all their variety of commitments to various activities.

In the spring of the year a farmer will thin out his cotton, because he knows the land will produce a better yield with fewer stalks. We need to thin out our activities and give ourselves time to concentrate on the ones that really matter. Someone has well said, "Many people give first-rate loyalties to second-rate causes." The three most important institutions are the Church, the home and the school. These ought occupy our primary interest and support.

There is still something more important to say. One of the mightiest knights of old was Sir Lancelot, but he failed in his quest for the Holy Grail. He honestly tells us why he failed:

...but in me lived a sin
so strange, of such a kind, that all of pure
noble and knightly in me twined and clung
round that one sin, until the poisonous grew
together, each as each,
not to be plucked asunder.

No doubt the Word of God can grow in your heart. Also, a sin, even a small sin grows. And they both cannot grow together. If we do not want God enough to give up that wrong, eventually the garden of our souls will be overrun with wrong. It works this way: First it is your sin, but little by little, your sin becomes you.

We have a way of doing acceptably what we know is wrong, but we excuse ourselves by saying, "It won't count this time." We may not count it, but it is being counted just the same. Down among your nerve cells and fibers and molecules, it is being counted, registered, stored up to be used against us when the next temptation comes. Our resistance to evil is being washed away until it finally withers. Yes, your sins will eventually become you because they envelope you.

Good Ground

Finally, some seed falls on "good ground." No one can explain the miracle of the seed, neither can your best-intentioned friend. We hold in our hand a tiny grain of corn. We throw it into the ground. Soon the life in that seed bursts forth and a green shoot appears. Gradually the stalk grows and at the proper time the ear of corn develops. Then comes the harvest and our prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread" is answered. "Your rebirth has come, not from a destructible but from an indestructible seed, through the living and enduring word of God" 1 Peter 1: 23.

The allusion to the customary practice of farmers who spend the greatest part of their corn in bread and other food, reserving a small quantity of the choicest and best for seed. So would our heavenly Father deal with the Israelites, though they were innumerable as the sand, or as the stars, yet only a few of them would be delivered out of Babylon and He would afterwards bring only a few of them, comparatively speaking to believe in Christ. "The farmer sowing good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the citizens of the kingdom" Matthew 13: 38.

Far more wonderful is how the Word of God takes lodgment in our hearts and souls so that it inspires all of our daily living. It grows and gradually takes possession of our desires, our emotions, our thoughts, and of our actions. Little by little, our life gradually becomes happy, fruitful and like God. Some people are "good ground." Because they cooperate in letting the good God inspire good and proper activity in their lives. They recognize they are not the source of their own goodness. They know they cannot be their own saviour.

"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. The man who loves his life loses it, while the man who hates his life in this world preserves it to life eternal. If any man would serve me, let him follow me; where I am, there will my servant be. If anyone serves me, him will the Father honor" John 12: 24 - 26.



The Sower

Did You Know That ...

...while Orthodoxy is rooted in eternity, it can definitely be a balm for today?

...only Jesus knows the answer to your question before you ask it?

...the main characteristic of Orthodox Church growth are parishes where the love of Christ is most inviting and compelling?

...we can never quit because Jesus didn't?

...it is easy to find Russian Orthodox Christians who are Russian first, Orthodox second and Christian last?

...icons are a visual reminder that all who have died in Christ are truly alive in Christ?

...there is no place where we can be so much a part of the present as when we are at worship in the eternal Liturgy?

...when we are at worship, it is also like meeting once again cousins we did not know as we encounter the saints who intercede for us?

...icons are not only looked at with reverence, but greeted with a devoted kiss?

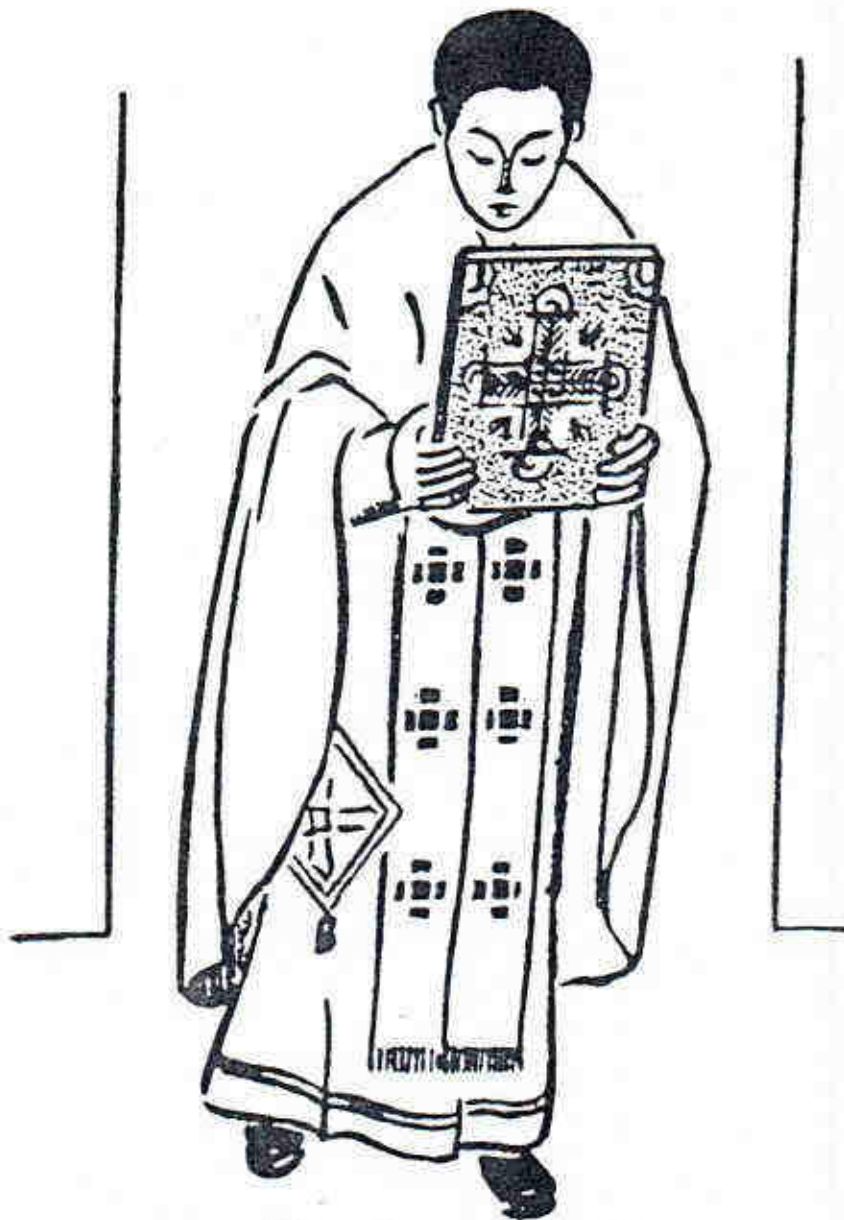
...our parish is not an ethnic enclave, but we respect and love the traditions handed down to us by our parents?

...the only non-American language we speak in our parish is that of Christ's love?

...in liturgical practice, our Church ignores no human capacity in trying to open our hearts to God's pervasive presence?

...icons are objects of reverence, not worship?

...Orthodoxy teaches us that Christian worship does not have to be a classroom with hymn breaks?



The Gospel Book

Thee Gospel Book or Evangelion, Evanhelija, is kept enthroned on the holy altar table. The Church has a great devotion to this book, for it is considered as Christ himself living in his word. That is why it is always kept in the sanctuary, on top of the folded *antimension*. It is used in the

beginning of the Divine Liturgy to initiate the celebration, by the priestly celebrant who makes a large sign of the cross with it over the altar table. It is solemnly carried out processionally in the Little Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, a solemn moment in the liturgy of the catechumens. Its prescribed readings are solemnly chanted with great devotion. During the liturgy of the faithful, after the *antimension* has been unfolded, it is set upright on the altar table in front the tabernacle and remains there even after the consecration of the offered gifts. Its protective cover may not be made of animal skin, but should be of cloth, gold thread, wood or metal. Often it is embroidered, engraved, or richly decorated with jewels to emphasize its particular value in the life of the Body of Christ.

On its cover we see the triumphant and victorious risen Christ depicted in iconic fashion with the four evangelists and their symbols in each corner. On the reverse back side are shown an icon of the crucified Christ on the Cross with Old Testament prophets in each corner. On week days the side of Crucifixion is shown and displayed and on Sunday the Resurrection iconic view is manifest.

The gospel book is always treated with the greatest respect and veneration and many times, after the lesson has been announced from it, it is many times venerated by those in attendance. At times, it is held over the heads of believers at worship in the highest form of blessing. Whenever the gospel lesson is chanted, faithful believers always stand out of respect.

During the consecration of a hierarch, it is placed atop his head as sign of heavenly benediction, that his elevation is commensurate with the descent of heavenly grace.

The gospels are read in four series:

The series of St. John is utilized from Resurrection until Pentecost Sunday inclusive and emphasize and give witness to the divinity of Jesus Christ as Son of God, triumphant Conqueror over death. Thus its prologue is chanted for the glorious feast of the Resurrection and his witnessed insights are prescribed for Pentecost or the Descent of the Holy Spirit. Most of the Resurrection gospels for the Sunday Matins services are from this inspired writer.

The series of St. Matthew, distributed over seventeen weeks, beginning with the Monday after Pentecost. From the twelfth week, it is read only on Saturdays and Sundays, the Gospel of St. Mark being read on the other days. His version of the birth of Jesus Christ is read on the solemn feast of the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The series of St. Luke, distributed over nineteen weeks beginning on the Monday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. From the thirteenth week, it is only read on Saturdays and Sundays, the Gospel of St. Mark being read on the other days.

The series of St. Mark is read during the Great Fast on Saturdays and Sundays and at the times indicated above during the periods of St. Matthew and St. Luke.

St. John, the brother of James the Great, became disciples of the Lord and the one whom the Lord loved. He preached the gospel of Christ in Asia, and because he zealously preached the Lord, he was exiled to Patmos by the Emperor Trajan. On that island, he wrote the holy gospel and sent it to Ephesus with Gaius the deacon, the host to travelers, about whom St. Paul wrote: "Gaius, my host, and the host of the whole church greets you" Romans 16: 23. After the death of Trajan, John returned from the island of Patmos and stayed in Ephesus. He lived to be one hundred and twenty

years old. Some say that he was exiled to Patmos not under Emperor Trajan, but under Domitian, the son of Vespasian.

St. Matthew, also called Levi, was a pharisee. He wrote the Gospel on Christ in Judea, in the Hebrew language and with Hebraic expressions, for the benefit of the Jews who embraced the faith of Christ. We still do not know who translated it into Greek. As for the Hebraic original, it is in the library of Caesarea, which was erected with utmost care by Pamphilius the Martyr. The people of Neory in Syria who traditionally used the translation have allowed copies of it to be made. Because of the quotations from the Old Testament in which Matthew followed the Hebraic version, and from which he got his expressions such as *From Egypt, I called my son*, and *He shall be called a Nazarene*, the reader will easily understand why the evangelist did not follow the official Septuagint version of the Old Testament.

The Evangelist Luke came from Antioch and was a physician by profession. He wrote his gospel by order of the apostle Peter, and his *Acts* by order of the apostle Paul. He accompanied the apostles on their journeys, especially Paul who mentions him in his epistles and says of him, *Luke, the beloved physician salutes you* Galatians 4: 14. He died at Ephesus and was buried there. His bodily remains were transferred later to Constantinople, together with those of the apostles Andrew and Timothy, under the reign of Constantine, son of Constantine the Elder.

The Evangelist Mark, first Bishop of Alexandria, preached the Gospel of the Lord in that city, in all the surrounding country, and as far as the Five Cities. Under the Emperor Trajan, pagans put a rope around his neck and dragged him from the place called *Fokollos* to the place called *Ankalon* where they burned him at the stake during the month of April. He was buried in *Fokollos*.

A MAN OF GREAT FAITH

Today's Bulletin message highlights the life of ST. HILARION THE GREAT. It is a story of a man who was able to rise above heavy pagan influence to become someone who is revered as a Church Father. He was born in the Palestinian village of Tabatha in 293 A.D. His pagan parents were determined to see that their son received the finest secular education possible. Little did they suspect that while in school in the ancient capital of Alexandria, Hilarion would become well versed in the ways of Jesus Christ! He embraced Christianity and set out to broaden his SPIRITUAL EDUCATION by seeking out hermits and ascetics in the deserts of Egypt.

St. Hilarion became a devoted pupil of St. Anthony the Great, the most famous of monastic saints in the early Church. He spent several years with him before returning to his hometown. To his dismay, St. Hilarion discovered his parents had both passed away, leaving him a veritable fortune! A man of weaker faith would certainly have been tempted to revert back to his former way of life, but Hilarion never wavered. He gave away his entire inheritance and went back to the contemplative life in the desert that he had grown to love. Soon he became almost as well-known as his mentor, St. Anthony. Christians and pagans alike sought out his wise counsel and healing powers.

In his later years, St. Hilarion would travel extensively, preaching the Word of God. In 372 A.D., he fell sleep in the Lord on the island of Cyprus. His remains were returned to the desert monastery he founded in Palestine.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.