



When Thou, O God, wilt come to earth with glory,
 and all things tremble, and the river of fire floweth before
 the Judgment Seat, and the books are opened and the
 hidden things made public, then deliver me from the
 unquenchable fire, and deem me worthy to stand at Thy
 right hand, O most righteous Judge.

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Meatfare Sunday

February 23, 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.

+++` Because of the construction, we will cancel the luncheon prior to the beginning of the Great Fast next Sunday, March 2, following the Divine Liturgy.

+++ The next Pirohi Sale will be on Saturday, March 15.

+++ Please turn in the All Souls' Day envelope with attached names. The first remembrance took place yesterday.

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Anna, Ryan, Barbara, Betty, James, Yevlogia, Father George and Michael.

+++ 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, \$510.00; Candles, \$11.00; Diocesan Dues, \$65.00; Parish Dues, \$25.00; Web Site, \$25.00 for a total of \$636.00. 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! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ 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, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleanor Korba, Robert 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 **\$1715.00** 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 \$5700 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 to pray the Lord our God grants us an enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory.

+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

Death, Then Moving On

One of the certainties of life is that not all of us can be sure what kind of life will be ours. We dream, we make plans, we have hopes and anticipations and we work for success and happiness, but as we read God's revelation to us, we grow in wisdom, "...you have no idea what your life will be like tomorrow. You are a puff of smoke that appears briefly and then disappears" James 4: 14.

Another truth we come to realize in this life is found in the Old Covenant: "Justice is with the Lord, our God..." Baruch 1: 15; 2: 6, to which we might add, 'and not with man.' Human justice is dependent in our frail court system upon legal technicalities, plea bargaining and '*nolo contendere*,' a type of plea which may be entered with leave of the court to a criminal complaint or indictment by which the defendant does not admit to nor deny the charges though a fine or sentence may be imposed pursuant to it.

Thirdly, we read this certainty in God's wisdom: "All flesh grows old, like a garment, the age-old law is: All must die" Sirach 14: 17. With death to this life, however, there are two uncertainties: we do not know how or when. There are as many 'hows' and 'whens' as there are individual people. This does not

really concern us unless we face this possibility ourselves.

When, however, the prospect of death to this life becomes personal, our reaction may be entirely different. The thought that our life may end imminently, can be frightening. Add to this the concepts that we will have to leave our family and friends, that we have so much yet to do, or that there is yet so much to accomplish, that our temporal affairs are not in order and that we may have to endure horrendous physical and spiritual pain in the process of dying, then, the weight of all these things can be the cause of collapse.

Fortunately, few of us really know how and when we will die. We can count this as a blessing from our heavenly Father because we are free from this worry. We are not burdened with anxiety and fear that could make us immobile physically and spiritually. We continue to lead productive lives, becoming more prosperous in virtue and remaining emotionally and spiritually stable.

The reaction of those actually expecting death varies. One elderly patient whom we attended spiritually said to us, "Father, I am ready and I want to go." On the other hand, another refused

to accept the probability of death, even though he was in an Intensive Care Unit and refused both the sacramental Mysteries of Anointing of the Sick and even a simple prayer. But he died nevertheless.

Some experience depression, particularly when burdened not only with old age and infirmities, but also being shuttled off to a nursing home. Younger persons awaiting death can even become angry because they must depart this only known to them life while more senior persons live on in seemingly good health. Others, of all ages, plead with God for additional life and make promises to Him that they will fulfill provided He but grants them a continuation of their earthly temporal existence.

It is our faith in God that helps us to deal with the fact that we will all die to this life. There is more importantly, eternal life. Do we not read the promises of our God in the words of Christ, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that all who believe in him may not die but have eternal life. Yes, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him may not die, but have eternal life" John 3: 14 – 16.

In this life, we are body and soul. The body is that which contains us. St. Paul teaches us, "Indeed, we know that when the earthly tent in which we dwell is destroyed we have a dwelling provided us by God, a dwelling in the heavens, not made by hands but to last forever"

2 Corinthians 5: 1. This tent is our body.; it is the physical encasement for our soul.

The soul is the spiritual/immaterial part of man; our very personhood, our personality, equipped with the faculties of mind, will and emotions. This soul goes onto eternal life when it separates from the body, a process we call death. St. Paul, writing again says, "...it is appointed that men die once and after death be judged" Hebrews 9: 27. That is, the body lies dead and the soul goes on to judgment. "The Father himself judges no one, but has assigned all judgment to the Son, so that all men may honor the Son just as they honor the Father" John 5: 22, 23.

At the celebration of every Divine Liturgy, we remind ourselves as we profess the Nicene Creed, "I expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." This refers to the resurrection of the body to be reunited with the soul in eternal life. The Sadduces did not believe in any resurrection and they confronted Jesus with this by asking Him whose wife the woman would be in the resurrection when she married in this life seven brothers sequentially after each one died. Jesus replied, "You are badly misled because you fail to understand the Scriptures and the power of God. When people rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but live like angels in heaven. And as to the fact that the dead are raised, have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob? He is the God of the living, not of the dead'" Matthew 22: 23 – 32.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not dead. They live on in eternal life!

At the end of the world, Christ will come again in glory to pronounce Judgment. "The Son of Man will come with his Father's glory accompanied by his angels. When he does, he will repay each man according to his conduct" Matthew 16: 27.

All the dead will rise again on the last day with their bodies, the same bodies they had here on earth. However, the bodies of the just will be remodeled and transfigured to the pattern of the risen Christ. The bodies of the godless will rise again in incorruption and immortality, but they will not be glorified or transfigured.

Our bodies and our souls will be reunited at the end of the world because our bodies were the instruments of our deeds, both good and bad, and thusly, deserve reward or punishment just as do the faculties of the soul. When the body and the soul separate in death to this world, the soul is judged as an individual, or as the Church defines it, the "immediate" and "particular judgment."

At the general judgment, at the end of the world, we will be judged not as individuals but as members of created human society, communicants of His Body the Church., before the entire community. "The dead were judged according to their conduct... Each person was judged according to his conduct... anyone whose name was not found inscribed in the

book of the living was hurled into the pool of fire" Revelation 20: 12, 13, 15.

This second judgment will not change anything; it will just be public. The purpose for this is to show God's everlasting justice and goodness as well as His faithfulness to His own word and promise. His vengeance promises from all time are fulfilled. "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, leave that to God's wrath, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay,' says the Lord" Romans 12: 19. The believer's sense of true justice will then be confirmed for the scoffing world to see and witness.



WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

When You will come to earth in glory, O God, and all creatures will tremble before You, the river of fire will flow before Your judgement seat, and the books will be opened and all hidden things revealed; deliver me from the unquenchable fire and make me worthy to stand at Your right hand, O righteous Judge. Kontakion, Meatfare Sunday.

When You shall come to render just judgement, O righteous Judge, You shall sit upon Your throne of glory. A river of fire shall flow before Your judgement seat; the powers of heaven will be there with You. Filled with fear, all humanity will be judged according to their deeds. At this hour, O Christ, spare us, and because of Your great love, grant that the faithful who pray to You, may be given a place with Your chosen ones. Vesper Hymn, Meatfare Sunday.

The books will be opened and the secrets laid bare before Your awesome judgement seat; and the whole valley of tears shall resound with a dreadful sigh, when it sees sinners sent to eternal punishment by Your just judgement, and hears them weeping hopelessly. Therefore, O God of mercy, we pray to You: Spare us who sing to You, O only Good One. Vesper Hymn, Meatfare Sunday.

The trumpets shall sound and the tombs shall be opened; humanity shall come forth trembling. Those who have done good shall rejoice, as they await the reward they shall receive. Those who have done evil shall shriek in terror, as they are sent to punishment and separated from the elect. In Your goodness, spare us, O Lord of glory, and grant that we may enjoy a place with those who love You. Vesper Hymn, Meatfare Sunday.

I weep and lament when I think of the outer darkness and eternal fire, together with Hades, the worm that consumes, and the gnashing of teeth, the unceasing grief that falls upon those who have sinned without measure, and who have provoked You to anger, O God, most good. Alas, among these sinners, I am the first. But in Your great mercy, O Judge, save me. Vesper Hymn, Meatfare Sunday.

Alas! O my darkened soul, how long will you persist in sin? How long will you lie in laziness? Why do you not think of the dreadful hour of death? Do you not fear the awesome judgement seat of the Saviour? How will you defend yourself? How will you be vindicated? Your works are there to convict you, and your actions to witness against you. Moreover, time is growing short, O my soul; hasten and cry out in faith: I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned; but I know Your love and Your mercy. O Good Shepherd, in Your goodness, do not deprive me of a place at Your right hand. Vesper Hymn, Meatfare Sunday.

FAITHFUL THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

When Joseph was a young man, he was badly treated. Yet through it all, our God was with him in prison, in suffering and in betrayal; God brought him through it all. All the evil things that people - his brothers especially - did against him turned out for the good because he was a faith-filled soul. He took his commitment to God very seriously. Joseph became one of the greatest men of all history. And the Byzantine Fathers of the Church consider him a type of Christ in the Old Covenant because his own loved ones betrayed him and desired his death.

There is an important time in life when we are young and most of vital life decisions are made. We make far-reaching decisions about marriage and about our life's vocation. There is a decisiveness necessary at that time because of the implications involved. This young man Joseph was only about seventeen years of age when we first read anything of significance about him in the Scripture. He faced a personal crisis of both danger and opportunity. He was a young man who experienced deep disappointment and hurt. His greatest disappointment involved his own family. Joseph lived in what people today might call a blended or integrated family. His father had twelve sons and one daughter born of four different mothers. His own mother, Rachel, was dead.

There was a great deal of rivalry and jealousy and anger in Joseph's family. Joseph was in a sense a victim of favoritism because Jacob, his father, loved him more than all of his brothers. So Jacob was impelled to make a special, beautiful coat for Joseph and his brothers were even further enraged. They hated him because he was the favored son of their father. But Joseph was also a victim of cruelty. His brothers were grazing their flocks one day when his father said to Joseph, "*Go then, see if all is well with your brothers and the flocks, and bring back word.*" (Genesis 37: 14) Wearing his beautiful coat, Joseph went to search for his brothers. He found that they have moved their flocks to Dothan.

The brothers saw him coming from a distance, and "*...they plotted to kill him.*" (Genesis 37:8) They put him into a hole in the ground and were sitting around talking about what to do with him. When Reuben, the oldest brother came and said, "*We must not take his life. Instead of shedding blood, just throw him into that cistern there in the desert, but do not kill him outright.*" (Genesis 37:22) When some Midianites came along, the brothers said, "*What is to be gained by killing our brother and concealing his blood? Rather, let us sell him to these Ishmaelites, instead of doing away with him ourselves.*" (Genesis 37: 26,27)

So they sold Joseph as a slave to be taken to Egypt where he was once again placed on the auction block and sold again. All through these events, Joseph was faithful to God even though his siblings wove an elaborate scheme in reporting his absence to the father. Throughout all the events, while being sold as a slave, while he

was on the long journey, in the hot sun and cold desert nights, he never gave up his hope in God. No matter what the cost, he was faithful to God. He had learned well the lesson of faithfulness at the knee of his father, Jacob.

When Joseph was put on the auction block, he was bought by a high official, the captain of the guard of Pharaoh the Egyptian ruler. Joseph no doubt could have become disillusioned against God. He could have invoked some convoluted logic: "If this is how God treats me for being faithful to Him, I do not want anything to do with Him. I trusted Him, I gave my life to Him, I have been faithful to Him, I prayed to Him, and now, here I am, a slave in a foreign country because of the jealousy of my own brothers." But instead, Joseph turned to God and faithfully kept his walk with Him. He cried out all the more and all the louder that he remain faithful in his vocation before the Lord. And the Lord heard the sincerity of his prayer.

There is no question our God wants to be with all of us, but He awaits our invitation. Our God does not force His way into anyone's life, but when we invite Him He comes in. And we notice our God did not intervene and take Joseph out of his difficult circumstances, instead gave him the grace and the strength to respond to the difficulties he found himself in and to overcome them. God comes to all of us if we recognize His presence. It may be that we are failing at something. Or it may be that our dreams have been shattered and we wonder what is happening in our lives. God can easily meet us at these junctures. And he does, if we let Him.

God came to Joseph. Scripture reminds us, "*But since the Lord was with him, Joseph got on very well.*" (Genesis 39: 2) So in all these adversities, Joseph prospered. Potiphar, the noble who had bought him, began to recognize that Joseph had unusual talents above anyone whom he had ever met, and so he put him in charge of his entire estate. Because Joseph was faithful to God, he was also a faithful servant to his master so that "*...the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake....*" (Genesis 39: 5)

Joseph was consistent in his faith commitment and he practiced unwavering dedication. He was serious about his decision to be faithful to God and obey His commandments. He was just as faithful as he managed the rich man's palace. All the other servants were under his command. He was "*strikingly handsome in countenance and body*" (Genesis 39: 6) and he attracted the attention of Potiphar's wife, who began to "*...look fondly on him....*" (Genesis 39: 7) And one day she said to him, "*Lie with me.*" (Genesis 39: 7) Joseph's response was immediate, "*How, could I commit so great a wrong and stand condemned before God?*" (Genesis 39: 9) Time after time she persisted. She constantly was after him, but he continued to refuse. One day, in desperation, she grabbed Joseph's coat and pulled it off him as he fled.

Of course, there are some in similar circumstances who would say, "Who's going to know?" Others might think, "Why not, after all she's inviting me." Joseph could have said within himself, "No one is going to know, after all I am hundreds of miles away from home. What difference would it make? The husband is so rich, he will never know because he's so preoccupied with all his wealth!" But for Joseph, the answer was wrapped up in his relationship with God. He refused, not out of fear of the consequences, not out of fear of disease, not out of fear of losing his position. He refused for the right reason: out of His love for God. That too, should be the

motivation in saying “no” to things and circumstances that are wrong. And not just to sex outside marriage, but to cheating in school, to taking drugs, to all of the things that destroy and diminish us as people created in the image of God. To many people, it would seem that God should have rewarded Joseph for being so faithful and so true to himself and God’s eternal values. Instead, Joseph was falsely accused because Potiphar’s wife lied. When the other servants came in, *“Then she told him the same story: the Hebrew slave whom you brought here broke in on me, to make sport of me. But when I screamed for help, he left his cloak behind and ran outside.”* (Genesis 39: 17) Of course, Potiphar believed his wife and threw Joseph into prison. From a purely human perspective, it seems God rewarded Joseph for being virtuous by allowing him to be jailed. Yes, Joseph was in prison, but God was there with him.

Anyone who takes a stand for the Lord, whether in school, in the place of work, in the home, in the community, finds it may very well cost something. You may lose your job, your friends, a promotion or something you legitimately looked forward to receiving. It may cost you deeply, but Joseph remembered that God had something wonderful planned for him if he remained faithful.

So we see, once again, the Lord was with Joseph. Physically Joseph was in prison, but his soul was free. It was as if St. James were reminding him: *“There is, on the other hand, the man who peers into freedom’s ideal law and abides by it. He is no forgetful listener, but one who carries out the law in practice. Blessed will this man be in whatever he does.”* (James 1: 25) Sinfulness enslaves us, but being obedient to God’s will for us truly sets us free. Joseph endured all this which is beyond the imagination of most people: being a prisoner, enslaved in Potiphar’s home, suffering over and again. But through all this he is faithful and true to God!

If he thought like many today do, he would have said, “God is letting me down. I put my trust in God and now look what happened.” But of course, the story is not over. God’s purpose is not yet fulfilled. Through a series of events, God brought Joseph out of prison and gave him a place of authority in Egypt. At the age of thirty years, Joseph found himself in very high political position in Egypt. Years later, Joseph’s brothers, who sold him into slavery, experienced famine in Canaan. They heard that there was plenty of grain in Egypt, so all the brothers went there except Benjamin. And of course, Joseph heard they had come, but he did not want them to know he was the brother whom they sold into slavery. They had come to buy food, to survive. Instead of taking revenge on them, Joseph finally was able to see the guiding hand of God in his life, so he could say honestly and truthfully to his brothers, *“It was not really you but God who had me come here, and he has made me a father to Pharaoh.”* (Genesis 45: 8)

If you found yourself in similar circumstances, what would you have said to your brothers? If you had the authority, what would you do to them?

But Joseph only offered them forgiveness. He said, *“I am Joseph your brother, whom you once sold into slavery in Egypt. It was really for the sake of saving lives that God sent me here ahead of you....to save your lives in an extraordinary deliverance.”* (Genesis 45: 4-7) We do not know God’s will in our lives. We always

try to figure things out, but we do not seem to realize God knows what is best for us. If we submit to His leading us, we will be overwhelmed at the blessings we receive! God used the difficult circumstances of Joseph's life to help him break out of the prison of himself and discover what grace united to the individual believer can accomplish. All the supposed opportunities Joseph had for turning away from God in anger and disappointment, he overlooked and didn't respond to; instead he turned to God over and again. He allowed all the circumstances of his life to lead him to greater fidelity. And when the temptations came, he resisted them in the name of the Lord. Joseph is one the few people in all of Scripture of whom nothing negative is said.

God's revelation teaches us, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*" (Proverbs 9: 10) In all the circumstances of his life, Joseph was faithful. When temptations came, he resisted them in the name of the Lord. So, he teaches us an enduring lesson that in our time and our circumstances, we too, can resist. "*No test has been sent you that does not come to all men. Besides, God keeps his promise. He will not let you be tested beyond your strength. Along with the test he will give you a way out of it, so that you may be able to endure it.*" (1 Corinthians 10:13)

The moment you are tempted to become discouraged, to submit to sin, our God will provide a way of escape if you are willing to follow His lead. You need to have that willingness, you need to totally surrender your will to that of the Lord!

Everybody Needs Prayer Sometime

We are often asked to pray for someone almost apologetically. Some say, "*Oh, I've just never imposed upon you for intercessory prayer before, but....*" Please do not consider asking for our parish prayer an imposition! That is precisely what we are here for. That is why we ask the prayers of our faithful parishioners from time to time, as we are made aware of a prayerful need. "*You will receive all that you pray for, provided you have faith*" Matthew 21: 22. We welcome requests for prayers and remembrances in the Divine Liturgy because "*...the prayer of the upright is his delight* Proverbs 16:8, and "*The fervent prayer of a holy man is powerful indeed*" James 5: 16. Do not pray alone. Permit us to join you!

.....

The Golden Rule

(Luke 6:31)

As you wish that men would do to you,
do so to them.

.....

CHRIST'S WORDS PAINT A MAJESTIC SCENE

What profound lessons are contained in the words of Christ on this Meat Fare Sunday before the Great Fast! What a majestic scene is painted as Jesus depicts Judgement Day when He comes in glory and before Him are gathered all nations! There the words of the Lord are proclaimed: "Come, you blessed of My Father," spoken to one group; and then, "Depart from Me," spoken to another group.

It is important to note that Jesus identifies Himself with the hungry, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned, the outcasts of society. Whatever is done for them, the Lord insists, is done to Him. And conversely, whatever people fail to do for these unfortunate and needy ones, they fail to do to Christ. What an indictment this is on society today, with the many hungry, homeless, the sick of body and spirit, the refugee in strange places, who seek help and care.

There is an old story told about St. John Chrysostom, the great Patriarch of Constantinople. Some people once came to him asking to see the rich gold altar of the magnificent Church of Holy Wisdom. He is said to have taken them to the street, pointed out the hungry, the homeless, the needy of the city and said: "Behold, the altar on which you may bring sacrifice and offering to God!"

Another important aspect of the Gospel narrative is the identity of those in need. Nationality plays no part. Creed and color are not mentioned. What matters is need. What matters is the response of people to that need.

As we draw near to the Great Fast, we have our Lord's instruction for us. This is a time of renewal, of repentance, of commitment to Christ and Church and of rededication to the teachings of our Lord.