



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of Myrrhbearing Women

April 18, 2010

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel
J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ This Friday we have the simple feast of the Great Martyr, St. George. In anticipation the vespereal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Thursday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please join us in prayer and praise.

+++ We offer thanks to the generous Lord for our faithful who offer themselves to the service of the parish at our Pirohi Sales. This past week we prepared for and secured orders and yesterday the orders were filled and distributed. A thousand thanks to the magnanimity of soul of our faithful. We pray the Lord continues to bless all and their loved ones with continued good health, Christ Is Risen!

+++ Today at 9:15 AM we celebrate a Memorial Service for the repose of the soul of +John, her beloved husband, on the anniversary of his death, requested by Eleanor Korba. We pray the merciful Lord continues to comfort Eleanor and her loved ones in their loss and that He creates a blessed repose and grants Eternal Rest to the soul of +John, Christ Is Risen!

+++ Next Sunday at 9: 15 AM, we will celebrate a Memorial Service for the repose of the souls of his beloved parents, +Andrew and +Haratina, requested by George and Debra Szmaida. We pray the Lord continues to comfort George and Debra and their loved ones in their loss and that He grants a blessed repose to the souls of +Andrew& Haratina and creates for them Eternal Memory, Christ Is Risen!

+++ With deep gratitude we acknowledge the efforts of our good parishioner, George Szmaida in rehabilitating the large kitchen dough table by affixing movable wheels and stabilizing the entire framework so it can continue to serve our needs. For this great task done in professional manner we invoke the blessing of the Lord upon George and his loved ones!

+++ We remind our faithful that at the last Diocesan Council this past summer, the Diocesan Dues were raised, due to inflation and need, from the past \$50.00 per adult individual, eighteen years and older, to \$60.00 per year. Our envelope offering system still has the old amount on it, so please disregard that figure and make your offering according to the new mandated amount. If this offering was made in the old amount, please correct it by submitting the additional amount with a notation on the envelope because the parish must send the entire amount to the diocesan chancery.

+++ 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 this past week-end: Tithe Offering, ~~\$739.00~~; Candles, ~~\$15.00~~; Kitchen, ~~\$100.00~~; Great Fast Self Denial, ~~\$20.00~~; Flowers, ~~\$25.00~~; Holyday, ~~\$40.00~~; Resurrection of our Lord, ~~\$109.00~~; Diocesan Dues, ~~\$20.00~~; Food Coupons, ~~\$280.00~~; Christian Fellowship, ~~\$4.00~~, for a total of ~~\$1352.00~~. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 41 adults and 15 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, Pani Lucas, +Paul Szmaida, Kent Pasquino, Kyle Pasquino, Maria Idromenos 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 ~~\$1572.00~~ from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals ~~\$103,715.00~~. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

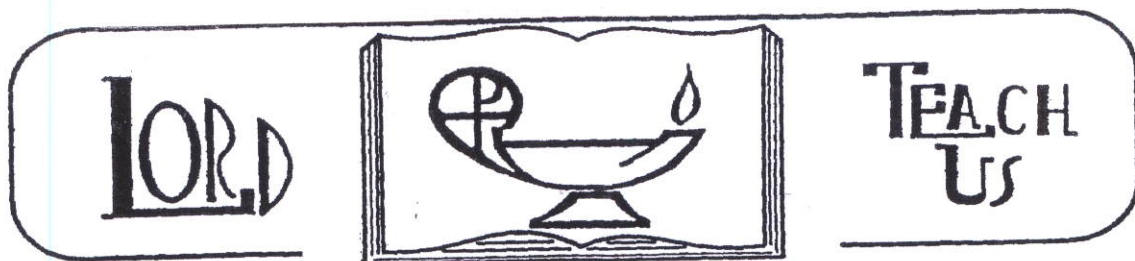
+++ Please check the Sign-Up-Sheet for the weekly Christian Fellowship for the coming weeks. Simple foods without need for preparation are the best. Marilyn Korba coordinates this vital apostolate. Please assist her in making it a success by bringing your donation early so that all are present at the worship of our God.

+++ Be certain your child attends the spiritual formation classes held each Sunday following the Divine Liturgy. We make a serious attempt to share the love of our Lord with all.

+++ Please be certain to see **Helen Karpiak** or 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 ~~\$5100.00~~ on this project to date!

+++ **We remind our faithful only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."**

+++ 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!



Charity

Whereas "knowledge" inflates, charity upbuilds! Corinthians 8: 1.

Now I will show you the way which surpasses all the others. If I speak with human tongues and angelic as well, but do not have charity, I am a noisy gong, a clinging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and, with full knowledge, comprehend all mysteries, if I have faith great enough to move mountains, but have not charity, I am nothing. If I give everything I have to feed the poor and hand over my body to be burned, but have not charity, I gain nothing 1 Corinthians 13: 1 – 3.

There are in the end, three things that last: faith, hope and charity and the greatest of these is charity 1 Corinthians 1: 13.

Seek eagerly after charity and set your hearts on spiritual gifts 1 Corinthians 14: 1.

Over all these virtues put on charity, which binds the rest together and makes them perfect Colossians 3: 14.

What we are aiming at in this warning is the charity that springs from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. Some people have neglected these and instead have turned to meaningless talk, wanting to be teachers of the law but actually not understanding the words they are using, much less the matters they discuss with such assurance 1 Timothy 1: 5 – 7.

It is no more than right that we thank God unceasingly for you, brothers, because your faith grows apace and your charity increases 1 Thessalonians 1: 3.

Myrrh Bearer Sunday

It was the Roman custom to leave bodies of those who were crucified to decay on the cross or to be devoured by wild animals and vultures, unless friends obtained permission to remove a body for burial. Jewish law, however, prescribed that the body of one hanged should be buried the same day (Deuteronomy 21: 23), and this regulation was applied also to those who were crucified. The crucifixion of the Lord took place on Friday, the day of preparation for the Sabbath. The obligation of Sabbath rest began at sunset and as the Sabbath on this occasion coincided with the first day of Passover, it was all the more imperative, in the eyes of the Sanhedrin, that the bodies of the crucified should be buried before sunset, as the Law prescribed.

Consequently they asked Pilate to hasten death by breaking the legs of the victims so that the bodies could then be taken away (John 19: 31 – 37). If our Lord's friends had not intervened His body would probably have been cast into a common grave with the those of the thieves. Joseph of Arimathea, though a member of the Sanhedrin, had not consented in their decision and deeds; he was a good and just man and, secretly, a disciple of Jesus (Luke 23: 50; John 19: 38). Availing himself of his standing as a member of the supreme council of the Jews to have access to the Roman governor, he secured permission to take away the body for burial.

Pilate was surprised that Jesus had died so quickly. Persons condemned to death by crucifixion usually lingered on the cross for a much longer period, sometimes even for days. Jesus, however, had endured exceptional suffering and torment at the hands of His barbarous persecutors from the time of the agony in Gethsemane. In removing the body of Christ from the cross and preparing it for burial, Joseph had the assistance of Nicodemus (John 19: 39). Christ's burial place was a tomb newly hewn out of the rock in which no body had previously been laid. It belonged to Joseph and was close to Golgotha (John 19: 42). The Gospels (Mark 15: 46; Luke 24: 12; John 20: 5, 12) bear out the presumption that it resembled other Jewish tombs of the period, some of which can still be seen near Jerusalem. An outer chamber or vestibule hallowed out on the rock is connected by a low doorway with the inner or burial chamber which contains recesses for the bodies.

At the entrance to the tomb a large circular stone standing on its edge could be rolled into position to close the tomb or rolled aside into a groove cut in the rock. The customary Jewish ritual of preparation of a body for burial included washing and

anointing and wrapping of the body in grave clothes. The Gospels give the impression that the preparations for the burial of Christ were carried out hurriedly. The sabbath rest began at sunset and there was not time to spare. The very brevity of St. Mark's narrative suggests haste.

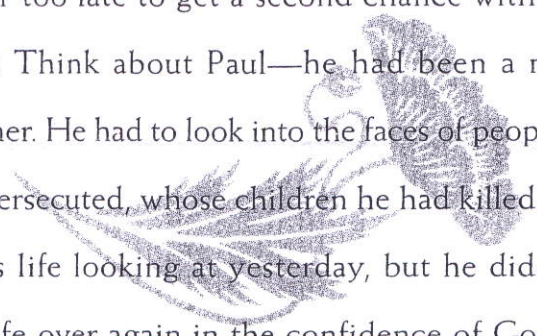
When the Sabbath ended at sunset on Saturday the women bought spices with which to anoint Christ's body. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph had watched the placing of Christ's body in the tomb. They must, therefore, have known that a mixture of myrrh and aloes, brought by Nicodemus had been used in the burial (John 19: 39), but apparently, they felt that because of the haste on that occasion, the burial rites had been performed only in a summary, even provisional fashion. They proposed to complete the rite by anointing the body.

"The sun being risen," John 20: 1, when it was yet dark. Mark talks about reaching the tomb while St. John writes about their setting out to perform their work of mercy. They arrive, anxiety-ridden, to find the stone at the entrance to the tomb rolled back by an angel. (Matthew 28: 2). It was quite natural that the women should wonder how they would have it removed as it was very large. A man would not be able to slide it open without help of some kind of particular lever for rolling it back.

Mary Magdalene may have reached the tomb ahead of the others and apparently did not delay when she saw the stone rolled back and the tomb opened. She immediately went to Peter and John (John 20: 2). The other women possibly believing that the stone had been rolled back by some of the disciples, entered the tomb. What appeared to them like a young man, that in reality was an angelic visitor, seated on the edge at the right side of the tomb told them that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth whom they sought had risen from the dead and instructed them to "go and tell" the disciples, especially Peter that Christ goes before them into Galilee. The special mention of Peter is to remind all that because of his sin, he had separated himself from Christ and was at that moment not a part of the apostolic college.

The women were so driven with fear and anxiety and confusion that they delayed in delivering the angel's message. It is only in the very next verse, not included in today's prescription that Mary Magdalene is clearly identified (Luke 8: 2) as if this were the first time she figures in the narrative. Although the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene is described more fully in St. John's gospel, the evangelists are concerned that these apparitions, visions and encounters have a certain, public and official character. Mightily important is the command to Mary Magdalene to "go and tell" that features the pre-eminence of the Church's evangelization effort down the centuries. It is

our duty, nay our responsibility and lofty dignity to share with the world around us the truth and reality of Christ's Resurrection. Mary Magdalene carries this message to the disciples so that they can be transformed into apostles on the forthcoming feast of Pentecost. The faith and devotion of the pious women who disregarded their own safety, convenience and comfort is rewarded because they become the first witnesses of the astounding truth by the angelic visitor and then by actually seeing and encountering the triumphant and victorious Christ. We honor these pious, holy and devoted women today and ask the Lord to enrich us with their zeal, their enthusiasm for truth, their eagerness to be spreaders and disseminators of the good news as should all the rest of us be.



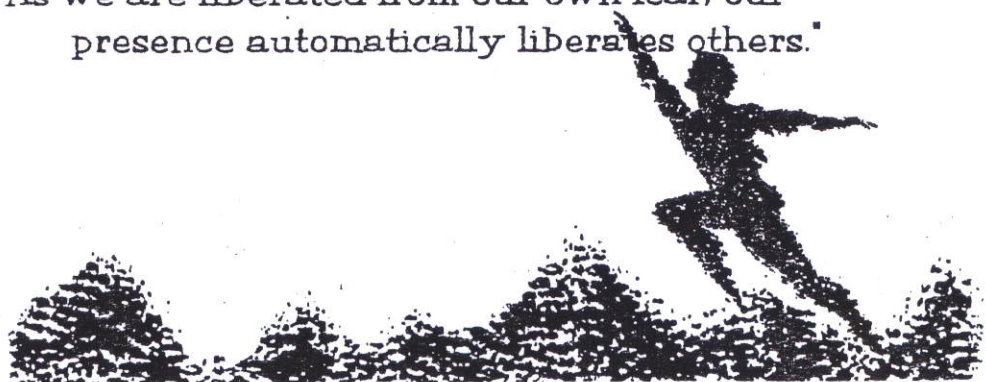
It's never too late to get a second chance with God. It's never too late! Think about Paul—he had been a murderer and a blasphemer. He had to look into the faces of people whose fathers he had persecuted, whose children he had killed. He could have spent his life looking at yesterday, but he didn't do that. He started life over again in the confidence of God's forgiveness.

*Lord, you are kind and forgiving
and have great love for those who call to you.*

PSALM 86:5

★ ★ ★

"Our deepest fear is not that we are
inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful
beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that most
frightens us.
We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous, talented and fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God. Your playing small
doesn't serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure
around you.
We were born to make manifest the glory of
God that is within us.
It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine, we
unconsciously give other people
permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear, our
presence automatically liberates others."



Passover Traditions

The Christian Passover is not only the greatest and gladdest of all the holy days of the Orthodox faith, it is also the one with the most numerous beautiful customs and traditions in both in the church and in our homes.

The procession in the evening of Great and Holy Friday is our participation in the burial procession of Christ from the cross to the tomb. The Holy Shroud is carried about the church and finally placed into a representative sepulcher just as the body of the Lord was carried from the place of the cross and interred in a new tomb by Joseph of Arimathea.

The procession of Great and Holy Saturday evening at the Matins of the Resurrection tells of the women who went to the tomb in search of the body of the Saviour and found it empty!

Bells ring out on the day of Resurrection. Bell ringing is a joyful and happy sound. Our bells are not rung on Great and Holy Friday or on Great and Holy Saturday. Instead, wooden clappers are many times used in parish churches to remind us of the thunder and lightening with which nature expressed itself in sadness at the time of the Lord's death for our sake.

The opening of the church doors by the priestly celebrant at Resurrection Matins by knocking on them with the hand cross shows our Lord opened the gates of heaven for us. The Royal Doors in the church are pushed open from within to show that Jesus rose from within the grave without disturbing the seal or the door.

The Holy Shroud is kept on the altar table until Ascension Day to remind us that Jesus stayed on earth for forty days after He arose from the dead. The Shroud is removed on the vigil of the Ascension because that is when Christ returned to the Father in heaven. It is a sign then of Christ fulfilling his earthly mission among us for the glory of the Father.

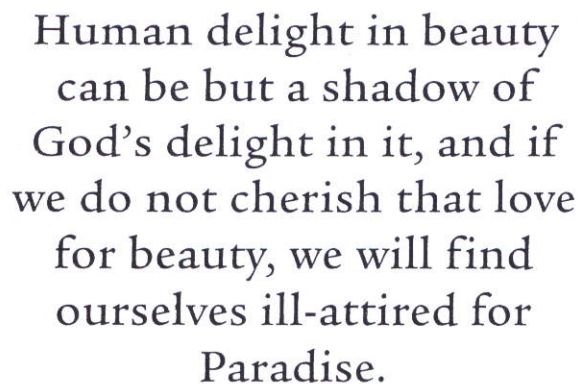
The Royal Doors are kept open to show that the doors of heaven are now open to all who believe in Christ, serve Him and live His truth. Also there is no fasting during Bright Week because of the overwhelming joy of the Resurrection. We stand during the festal period so that we might keep before our eyes the blessing of our personal resurrection from sin in this life and our future resurrection from the grave.

The reading of the Resurrection gospel in various languages on the feast day Divine Liturgy as the church bells joyously are pealed to symbolize the fact that the twelve Apostles carried the Good News of the Resurrection to the whole world, to people of all nations.

In offering the cross to venerate. The priestly celebrant greets is with "Christ Is Risen!" which calls to mind then angelic message at the holy sepulcher.

Believers greet one another with the customary and traditional words, "Christ Is Risen!" which comes from the lips of the angelic witness to the pious women. When the holy women told the disciples and when they in turn told others, they initially said, "Christ Is Risen!"

The salutary custom of blessing paschal foods is one of the oldest traditions of the Church on this feast day. The food especially represents the Passover Lamb of the Old Covenant, which was especially prepared and eaten at the Passover. Also the food is blessed that those who have fasted and abstained from meat and other foods for the entire Great Fast might not be made ill by the richness of the Paschal Foods.



Human delight in beauty
can be but a shadow of
God's delight in it, and if
we do not cherish that love
for beauty, we will find
ourselves ill-attired for
Paradise.

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.

A "SWEET" ACT OF KINDNESS

It is interesting to note that a mysterious substance played an important role in connecting the beginning and the end of our Lord's life. I am speaking of MYRRH, a heavy, fragrant oil whose usage can be traced back thousands of years before Christ's time. In ancient Egypt, myrrh was used in the embalming process - a practice that continued until the 15th century. In Jewish tradition, it was also an ointment for blessing and consecration. It was fitting, therefore, that myrrh was one of the gifts of the Wise Men, for it not only symbolized our Savior's claim of kingship, but also foretold His death as well.

The Gospels tell us that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took the crucified Lord from the Cross and began the process of anointing His Body for burial. Myrrh would be the predominant oil used in this funeral ritual. When the sundown which ushered in the Sabbath put a halt to their labors, the task of completing the preparation fell upon a brave group of women who will forever be remembered as "THE HOLY MYRRH-BEARERS." While Mary Magdalene is, by far, the most famous, the Scriptures mention seven others by name. They had left their homes to help Christ's ministry in whatever way they could; it was only fitting that they care for Him in death.

May the Myrrh-Bearers serve to remind us that the good intentions of the simplest acts of kindness are as pleasing to God as the aroma of sweet-smelling ointments! The Myrrh-Bearers received the greatest of rewards for their faithfulness and their desire to be of service to their Master: they were privileged to be the first to see the empty tomb. Yes, they were the first witnesses to our Lord's Resurrection!