



*Just as the youthful Jesus taught the Elders,
may we too use our voice and wisdom
for the purpose of enlightenment.*

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of the Paralytic

May 26, 2013

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Today we celebrate a Memorial Service for the men and women of our nation who sacrificed their lives in defense of our nation. Memorial Day fittingly recalls their dignity to us. We pray the merciful Lord grants them a blessed repose and creates for them Eternal Memory, Christ Is Risen!

+++ Many, many thanks to the good souls who made the Memorial Day Bake Sale a success. God bless you devoted souls with continued good health for Many and Blessed Years, Christ Is Risen!

+++ The last Pirohi Sale for the season will take place this Saturday, June 1. Please secure orders for both events. Order Sheets are available in the kitchen today.

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Anna, Ryan, Betty, Mary, Beth, Ann Helene, Delores, Debra 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, \$168.00; Candles, \$14.00; Food Coupons, \$120.00; Web Site, \$25.00, for a total of \$327.00. 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, Pani Lucas, Eleni Pallas, Anna Zacharyczuk, Debra Szmaida, Marilyn Korba, Nina Harrison, Sophia Choti, Alexander Choti, Eleanor Korba, Michael Douglas, Robert Gorbich, Maria Garcia 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 \$1694.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

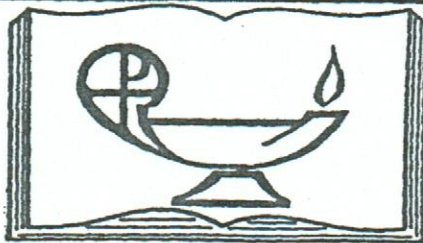
+++ Please be certain to see a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using Shop Rite Food Coupons available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite ALL to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5550.00 on this project 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.

+++ Please 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!

LORD



TEACH
US

Eternal Life

My purpose is to give life in all its fullness. My sheep recognize my voice and I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one shall snatch them away from me John 10: 10, 27, 28.

Jesus told her, I am the one who raises the dead and gives eternal life again. Anyone who believes in me even though he dies like anyone else, shall live again. He is given eternal life for believing in me and shall never perish. Do you believe this, Martha? John 11: 25 26.

If you love your life down here, you will lose it. If you despise your life down here, you will exchange it for eternal glory. And I know his instructions lead to eternal life John 12: 25.

But you should not be so concerned about perishable things like food. Instead, spend your energy seeking the eternal life that I, the Messiah can give you. For God the Father sent me for this very purpose John 6: 27.

For you have given him authority over every man and woman in all the earth. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to eternal life, by knowing you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent to earth John 17: 2.

Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, It was necessary that the Good News from God should be given first to you Jews. But since you have rejected it and shown yourself unworthy of eternal life, well, we will offer it to the Gentiles. When the Gentiles heard it, they were very glad and rejoiced in Paul's message and as many as wanted eternal life believed Acts of the Apostles 13: 46 - 48.

God's Healing

You, O Lord, be not afar off. O my Strength, come quickly to help me
Psalms 22: 19.

Charging out of the kitchen after a bitter family argument, the fifteen year old girl ran upstairs and slammed her bedroom door so hard, it left a crack in one panel. Moments later a single shot rang out and her lifeless body hit the floor with a dreadful thud. The autopsy showed no drugs or other physical reason for her distress, and her suicide was said to be due to "momentary insanity."

The girl was an only child and died some years ago. Not one day goes by that her mother does not think and ask, "Why?" What could she as a parent have done? What signs did the parents miss? How did she reach that point of despair? The loss these parents of that girl suffered was almost overwhelming, and as is common in these cases, divorce followed.

The devastating tumult served on this family by this sad event is not easy to overcome. Initially it implies a lack of genuine commitment to the Lord in the first instant. It is only through Christ that we find "...the peace of God which transcends all understanding" Philippians 4: 7.

The same lack or difficulty in life which precipitates such circumstances and devastates lives also prevents us from healing in its aftermath. Thus we would also know, believe and understand that while we cannot change the past, our heavenly Father offers us peace and new life in the present.

Ours ought to be the consistent prayer the Lord grants his peace to those facing tragic loss; that they are refreshed and strengthened daily. We must be convinced in heart and soul no matter what we encounter, what devastation might visit us, we still have heavenly company and walk with God our Father.

The Lord will bind our wounds if we but seek him and ask.

No More, No Less

Try hard to make yourself worthy of God's approval, a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, following a straight course in preaching the truth
2 Timothy 2: 15.

People recently were discussing how easy it is to mishandle the message of the Church and of God's revelation to us in Scripture. We may try to make them support what we already believe is true instead of following them or allowing them to speak to us with God's intended message. Some people use what they think the Church teaches or what they think is in the Bible to defend their side of an issue, while others use both to attack the same issue. Both like to quote Scripture to support their view, but both cannot be right if they are divergent.

It is important as we use God's Word that we are committed to saying no more and no less than the Scriptures actually say and teach. If we mishandle the Word of God or what the Body of Christ teaches, we misinterpret it, which ultimately misrepresents God's character. This is precisely why St. Paul challenged St. Timothy. A key priority for unashamed, approved workers for Christ is to accurately interpret God's Word. We ourselves must know God's Word if we are to explain it to others. As we pray and study, we depend on the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Scriptures, to grant us understanding and wisdom consistent with life in Christ's Bride, our Church.

Through our words and action, in our daily living and lifestyle, we have multiple opportunities to represent fully and faithfully God's Word in ways that genuinely reflect God's heart. It remains our greatest life privilege to give expression to the lofty and exalted challenges found in Scripture and in the life of Christ's Body, the Church, for daily expression.

The believer is grateful for guidance found in the Church, in God's revelation to us. Thus we seriously accept with humble submission to the will of Christ the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our actions and attitude. We handle God's Word and what Christ teaches with care.

Before the Beginning

Father, do you now glorify me at your side, glory I had with you before the world began
John 17: 5.

A devoted father tells of his teenage son and a serious query he presented that make you earn your pay as a parent. "Dad," the young man inquired, "if God exists for eternity, what was He doing before He created the universe?"

So what was happening in the eons before "God created the heavens and the earth" Genesis 1: 1? For one thing, we are well aware there was "wisdom" before creation itself, which comes from God's essential character. Wisdom, personified in the Old Covenant, says "I have been established from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth" Proverbs 8: 23.

Additionally, we know that God's salvation plan of grace was in the works before the world was hung in its place. In Scripture we read, "...the grace .was held out to us in Christ Jesus before the world began" 2 Timothy 1: 9. Likewise, God's revelation reveals that eternal life was planned and promised, "...which God who cannot lie, promised in endless ages past" 2 Titus 1: 2. We have been made aware that Jesus was glorified and loved in the presence of the eternal Father "...before the world began" John 17: 5. "...because of the love you bore me before the world began" John 17: 24.

These tiny glimpses of our heavenly Father before the earth was created help us see a little of the essence and magnitude of our awesome, eternal God. We see his majesty and greatness manifested. Amazing is it not? We worship a God who existed from beyond eternity, or as the Fathers of the Church sometimes put it, from pre-eternity!

Now we can begin to understand what the Lord was speaking of when He described himself as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end Revelation 1: 8, but actually so much more. It makes us appreciate we can understand the created world is but a small parenthesis in eternity.

Prayer
of Gratitude



O Lord



You have given me
so much.



Please give me
one thing more,



a grateful
heart

Sunday of the Paralytic

The man waiting patiently for a cure by the Sheep Pool in Jerusalem lay there off and on for some thirty eight years! Talk about long-suffering and patience. It even exceeds the patience of Job, the righteous Old Testament man characterized by patience in his suffering! Patience is a gift from God, a strength offered us by the Holy Spirit. This unfortunate soul had to learn how to develop a new perspective on life in his limitations and suffering. He was a paralytic. When we are impatient, we have very limited perspective. All we see is ourselves, our needs, our desires, our goals, our wants, our schedule, and how others are messing up our lives.

There was no one there at the pool to place him in the water when the angel of mercy descended for a cure. Someone in better condition always entered the pool before him! No wonder; he couldn't move. So he learned the hard way that impatience is selfishness and he needed a new outlook. He became a very patient man. He needed to learn to see things from a divine, heavenly perspective. The lessons were not lost on him. If we desire success on any level, it is necessary we see things through the other person's eyes. If you want to be a successful husband or wife, see things from your partner's point of view. If you want to be a good parent, see things from your child's point of view. If you desire to save your soul, look for God's perspective in your situation.

Look at what the writer of the Book of Proverbs has to say: "A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense" Proverbs 19: 11. Wisdom is seeing life through God's eyes. Now we certainly do not know the origin and continued frustration this man bore in paralysis, but he apparently learned that he was only human, he is not God. He is not perfect and not in control of life, God is. No one else is perfect either, so he was not surprised others who needed help jumped in before him for a cure. God is in control and He can use the situations the irritations, the limitations and the problems that come into our lives to accomplish his purposes for us.

The Book of Proverbs teaches us in another instant, "A man's steps are directed by the Lord" Proverbs 20: 24. This means that we may experience some divine delays, some heavenly interruptions. Sometimes God will put irritating people around us for the purpose of teaching us something worthwhile if we wish to learn from them. Throughout salvation history, our heavenly Father equates patience with maturity. "A patient man has great understanding, but a quick tempered man displays folly" Proverbs 14: 29. Most children are very impatient. They do not yet know the difference between "No" and "not yet". Maturity involves the ability to patiently wait on God and let him be God; it means living with delayed

gratification. A person of understanding and wisdom who sees life from God's point of view can be patient. An important step in becoming a patient person is to deepen your love.

St. Paul echoes this sentiment when he teaches "Love is patient" 1 Corinthians 13: 4. This means when we are impatient, we are being unloving because love is certainly patient. When you love someone, you care about that person's needs, desires, hurts, and point of view, not just your own. When you are filled with love, almost nothing can provoke you to anger because you want to be patient. When you are filled with anger, anything will provoke you to an outburst. So we must deepen our love as apparently did the paralytic in today's gospel. "Be patient with one another, making allowance for each others' faults because of your love" Ephesians 4: 2.

Wasn't this the case with this unfortunate man? Finally, the most important step in achieving patience in this life is to depend on the Lord. Patience is not merely a matter of human will power; it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. You cannot psych yourself up and say, "I am going to be patient if it kills me." Believe me, it will! Patience is not will power. Patience is not a fancy, attractive, lofty slogan. We cannot simply say, "He does not really irritate me" when in fact he is cutting you up inside. Patience is not wearing a mask and pretending. If it is God's patience you sense, if it is the genuine fruit of the Holy Spirit, you will have a genuine inner peace.

Certain situations won't bother us they way they used to. Simply because you depend on the Lord! Patience is a manifestation of faith. It says, "I trust God. I believe God is bigger than this problem. And I believe that God has his hand in these irritations and can use them in my life for good." Faith helps us look at life from God's point of view. Faith helps us say, "Eternal Father, what do you want me to learn from this situation?" instead of "Why has this happened to me?" Because of faith we no longer need ask God, "Why did I get a flat tire while I was on the way to an important appointment?" Instead we can ask, "Lord how do you want me to grow and be a better person after this situation?"

Noah had to wait 120 years before the promised rain came. That is a long time to be patient. Abraham waited a hundred years to have a long promised son. That is a long time to be patient. Moses waited forty years in the desert to be called to God's service and then spent another forty years leading the children of Israel across the desert into the Promised Land. That is a long time to be patient. And near the end, unfortunately, he lost patience and God would not let him into the Promised Land. He knew what God wanted, and Moses understood it, that an entire span of a generation, some 40 years would pass before anyone would be allowed into the Promised Land because of their lack of faith and exercise of patience and trust in God. At the very end Moses forgo his commitment in faith and instead

listened to the people and succumbed to their questioning of God's purposes. He too then was not allowed in the Promised Land.

Jesus himself appeared among us in infancy only when the fullness of time had come, not according to our schedule, but only according to God's time. In New Testament times, the disciples waited in the upper room for the coming of the Holy Spirit. All of Scripture, all of God's revelation to us in Scripture is a description of waiting, of being patient. Why? Because waiting demonstrates faith and faith alone pleases God. The hardest kind of waiting happens when you are in a hurry and God is not. It is hard to be patient when you are waiting for an answer to prayer, waiting for a miracle to happen, or waiting for God to change your financial condition or your health problems or your children, your wife, your husband or that relative who is a kook.

It is hard when you are in a hurry and God isn't, but waiting precisely is an evidence of faith, with hope coupled to it so that we do not become forlorn. Patience is a test of faith. How long can you wait? Lazarus was a good friend of Jesus who became gravely ill. Martha and Mary, his sisters sent word to Jesus saying, "Lord, the one you love is sick" John 11: 3. Scripture tells us when Jesus heard this He purposely waited a few more days before He set out for Bethany, the town where they lived. By the time He arrived, Lazarus was already dead and in the grave. From all appearances, from our perspective, Jesus arrived too late. Yet Jesus was not too late. He simply walked up to Lazarus in the tomb and called out, "Lazarus, come out!" John 11: 43. And Lazarus did come out – alive!

The point in today's gospel narrative is that God is never late; his timing is perfect. He may not move according to our schedule and most often doesn't, but He always is on time and purposeful. He wants us to trust him and wait for him. The Psalmist puts it this way; "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him" Psalms 37: 7. Earlier on the psalm writer instructs us to "trust" in the Lord, to "delight" in him and to "commit" our way to him. Psalms 37: 3 – 5.

God longs for us to trust him more than anything; patience is evidence of our faith in his good works and loving concern. He will act when it is best for us that He so act. So why should we be patient as was the paralytic in today's gospel lesson? Firstly because God is patient with our sinfulness and we are called to be like him. Peter urges us, "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation" 2 Peter 3: 15. God is patient. We must be patient. If we are his children, we should bear the family likeness. That is why the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives producing patience in us. It is a necessary part of the character of Christ. The paralytic was patient and lo and behold what occurs. The Son of God comes to him and cures him. What greater reward can anyone ask regardless how long is the suffering he endures!

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Now we can begin to understand what the Lord was speaking of when He described himself as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end Revelation 1: 8, but actually so much more. It makes us appreciate we can understand the created world is but a small parenthesis in eternity.

Wisdom, Be Attentive!

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; with His arm, the Lord has won victory; by His death, He has conquered death; He has become the first born of the dead; He has delivered us from the depth of the Abyss and has granted great mercy to the world Troparion, Sunday of the Paralytic.

With your divine protection, O Lord, as you once raised the paralytic, now lift up my soul paralyzed with all kinds of sins and evil deeds of wickedness, so that saved I may cry out to You: "Glory to your might, O merciful Christ!" Kontakion, Sunday of the Paralytic.

Although You descended to the grave, O Immortal One, You destroyed the power of death; You rose 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 Paralytic.

May your kindness O Lord, be upon us who put our hope in You Prokimenon, Sunday of the Paralytic.

Receive the Body of Christ! Drink the Source of Immortality! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Communion Hymn, Sunday of the Paralytic.

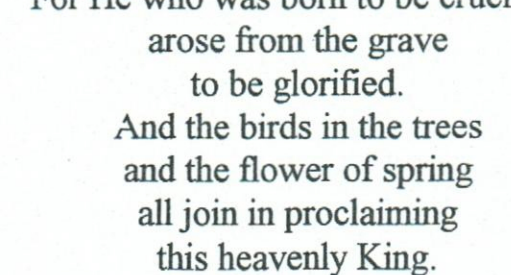
When the Paschal Feast is half-completed, quench my thirsty soul with the waters of devotion, for You, O Saviour, have announced to all: "Let him who is thirsty come to me and drink," O Christ God, Source of our life, glory to You! Troparion, Feast of Mid-Pentecost.

O Christ God, Creator and Lord of all, when the Paschal feast was half-completed, You told those present: "Come and draw the water of immortality." Let us therefore adore You and cry out with faith: "Grant us your goodness, for You are the Source of our life!" Kontakion, Feast of Mid-Pentecost.



Spring Song

“The earth is the Lord’s
and the fullness thereof.”
It speaks of his greatness
and it sings of his love.
And the wonder and the glory
of first Resurrection morn,
like the first Nativity night
when the Saviour was born,
are blended together
in symphonic splendor
and God with a voice
that is gentle and tender
speaks to all hearts attuned to his voice,
bidding his listeners
to gladly rejoice.
For He who was born to be crucified
arose from the grave
to be glorified.
And the birds in the trees
and the flower of spring
all join in proclaiming
this heavenly King.



THE FEAST OF MID-PENTECOST

Halfway between the great Holy Days of Pascha and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, our Church celebrates what is appropriately referred to as the “**Feast of Mid-Pentecost.**” It is observed on the Wednesday after the Sunday of the Paralytic and is viewed as a “bridge” between the two most important days on our Church Calendar. The theme of the Feast centers on Christ being our great “Teacher.” The Gospel lesson for the day is taken from John 7, when our Lord comes to Jerusalem for the autumn Festival of Tabernacles. He goes to the Temple and proclaims: *“My teaching is not My own, but His Who sent Me. If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”* The troparion for the Feast hints at the encounter of Christ with the Samaritan Woman, which will be commemorated the following Sunday: *“In the middle of the Feast, O my Savior, fill my thirsty soul with the waters of godliness.”*

In the traditional icon of Mid-Pentecost, we see the young Jesus seated among the elders in the Temple. This is viewed as His first “teaching experience” – when He truly was going about “His Father’s work.” St. Luke records this event in his Gospel, relating how Joseph and Mary frantically search for their Son after realizing He was not with other relatives in the caravan that had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. This is the only glimpse we get of the childhood of our Lord in all of the Gospels. Note that the Child is shown to be larger than those He is questioning, clearly pointing out His superiority to them.

This Feast attempts to strengthen our faith in the Risen Christ as well as prepare us for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. One of the sticheras for Matins on this day brings this out beautifully: *“Having been enlightened by the Resurrection of Christ and having reached the halfway mark of the Feast of the Lord, let us sincerely keep the commandments of God, so that we may worthily celebrate His Ascension and receive the coming of the Holy Spirit.”*