



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

August 14, 2011

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

+++ Monday is the most solemn feast of the Dormition of the Birthgiver of God. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated in the evening at 7: 30 PM. Flowers will be blessed and distributed at this celebration. Please come and join us in prayer and celebration.

+++ We express our sincerest sympathies and condolences to Joseph & Kyra Choti family at the recent death of his paternal grandmother, +Margaret Choti. We pray the merciful Lord comforts the Choti Family in their loss and that He grants to the soul of +Margaret a blessed repose and Eternal Memory!

+++ We sincerely acknowledge the kind concern of our good parishioner, George Szmaida in repairing the broken bindings of some of our pew books, thus extending their usage. His genuine concern is appreciated as we pray he and loved ones are blessed with continued good health for Many & Blessed Years!.

+++ 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 thank Nina Harrison Family for donating some scrap metal items to the parish and Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Frank Pashos for delivering them to the local collector and obtaining the benefit of \$370.00 for our parish. God bless you devoted souls with good health for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ 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: Tithe Offering, \$418.00; Candles, \$14.00; Holyday, \$45.00; Building Fund, \$1185.00; Kitchen, \$96.00; Scrap Metal Sale, \$370.00; Christian Fellowship, \$2.00, for a total of \$2130.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered 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, Ryan Pallas, anna Zacharyczuk, Debra Szmaida, Paul Szmaida, 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 \$1631.00 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 \$109,000.00. 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 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 \$5350.00 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.

Pirohi Volunteers

Father Lucas 215-862-9227
Pani Lucas 215-862-9227
Kyra Chotl 609-397-7281
Joseph Chotl 609-397-7281
Nadya Chotl 609-397-7281
Elizabeth Simon 609-397-7281
Robert Gorbich 732-780-1619
Eleanor Korba 732-845-5304
Betty Samaris 732-868-9468
Michael Garcia 732-780-6359
Marla Garcia 732-780-6359

Subdeacon Daniel 732-845-4715
Marilyn Korba 732-845-4715
Rachel Korba 732-845-4715
Eleanor Korba 732-845-5304
Betty Samaris 732-868-9468
Mary Demyan 732-929-3051
Steve Demyan 732-929-3051
Nina Harrison 215 862-9227
Robin Pasquino 732-780-7914
Marla Pashos 732-833-1342
Frank Pashos 732-833-1342
Anna Zacharyczuk 732-780-0169

September 3, November 4

October 1, December 10

Bake Sales

November 18, December 16

Thursday Before

Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Eleni Pashos,
Joan Henry, Debra Szmaida, Betty Samaris,
Eleanor Korba, Anna Zacharyczuk

LORD



TEACH
US

Developing A Prayer Life

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it John 14: 13, 14.

In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I will tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete John 16: 23, 24.

O People of Sion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you Isaiah 30: 19.

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you Jeremiah 29: 12.

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to the Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil Matthew 6: 5 - 13.

The Power Of God's Word

The Word of God in His revelation to us, is compared to water for three distinct purposes. When Scripture speaks of water for drinking purposes, it refers to regeneration through the Holy Spirit, *"I solemnly assure you, no one can enter into God's kingdom without being born of water and the Spirit"* John 3:5. When it is used as a figure of floods and torrents, it signifies the judgment of God, *"By water the world was then destroyed; it was overwhelmed by the deluge"* 2 Peter 3:6. Water used for cleansing and washing points to the sanctifying power of the Word of God. Jesus prayed, *"Sanctify them through your truth; your word is truth"* John 17: 17. Our Byzantine Catholic Church is cleansed by the washing of the water by the Word. It is immersed in Scripture. Scripture is its life expression. Just as no believer can be physically clean without regular "bathing," so it is equally true as concerns our spiritual nature; we cannot be spiritually clean unless we read and live the Word of God and apply it to our lives. Even reverently reading the Bible as so many do will be a sanctifying experience, even though you may not remember much of what you have read. Some people have very poor memories. A man once complained to his priest, "I might as well stop reading the Bible for I get so little out of it and remember so little of it afterwards."

Is this your problem? Listen to a short story of a simple Hindu convert. A missionary diligently tried to teach her the Word of God daily and became greatly discouraged because the new convert was so slow in remembering what she had been taught. One day the missionary complained, "I guess its not use trying to teach you the Word of God because you seem to forget all I tell you. Your mind seems like a sieve. As fast as I pour the water in, it runs out again." The reply of the poor woman reveals a great truth. She said, "Yes, I realize my mind is like a sieve. I do forget so much, but even when you pour water through the sieve it makes the sieve clean even though the sieve seems to retain none of it. I am sorry I forget so much, but please do not stop pouring the Word of God into me. It makes my heart and my mind feel so clean afterwards. It strengthens me to hear the Word of God. I am attempting to apply it to my daily living. The water is not wasted."

We recall the words of our Lord to His disciples, *"Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you"* John 15: 3. We can and should learn it is not how much Scripture we can memorize, but how much it does to us, how it alters and redirects our life in the pathway of the Lord. That is precisely why Scripture is so important in our worship at the Divine Liturgy which is so overwhelmingly composed from and based upon God's Word. Not only is the Word of God proclaimed in the epistle and gospel readings, but the hymnology and the very form of our worship is based upon God's Word to us. It is not enough to esteem and respect God's Word, but to sincerely pay attention when it is chanted, read and announced to us. Then we must sincerely and seriously attempt integrating in our lives. If we are devoted to this salutary task, the grace of the Holy Spirit will assist us. The vigor of our spiritual life will be in proportion to the place held by the Word of God in our life and thoughts. If we expose our soul to the Word of God, it will have an influence on our lives.

Is Your Tongue Out Of Control?

It has been said the tongue is one of the most exercised muscles of the body. It has been estimated that in a typical week, the average person will speak enough words to fill a 500 page book! However, for the Christian, the use of the tongue must be a matter of careful forethought and discipline. Scripture warns that believers who do not bring restraint to their tongue and speech have been deceived and without such control over their words, their religious acts are worthless and hypocritical. "If a man who does not control his tongue imagines he is devout, he is self-deceived; his worship is pointless" James 1: 26. It is deception for anyone to think that Jesus can be Lord over our life without also becoming Lord over our tongue.

St. James goes further on to say: "When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide the rest of their bodies. It is the same with ships; however large they are, and despite the fact that they are driven by fierce winds, they are directed by very small rudders on whatever course the steerman's impulse may select. The tongue is something like that. It is a small member, yet it makes great pretensions. See how tiny the spark is that sets a huge forest ablaze! The tongue is such a flame. It exists among our members as a whole universe of malice. The tongue defiles the entire body. Its flames encircle our course from birth and its fire is kindled by hell" - James 3: 3 - 6.

In some manner, believers in Christ must allow the Holy Spirit to bride their tongues and bring restraint to their words. King David of old used a similar device as a metaphor to describe his tight control on his mouth to avoid sinning with his tongue, especially when the ungodly were around, where it is easy to develop a critical tongue or pick up their bad habits, such as profanity. "I will watch my ways so as not to sin with my tongue; I will set a curb on my mouth" Psalms 39: 1.

Hypocrisy Of The Tongue

St. James gives us so many insights about the evil the tongue can produce. He described some who try to use their tongue as praise and blessing for God, then turn around to use

that same tongue to speak evil of one another. "We use it to say, 'Praised be the Lord and Father' then we use it to curse men, though they are made in the likeness of God. Blessing and curse comes out of the same mouth. This ought not be, my brothers! Does a spring gush forth fresh water and foul from the same source?...no more can a brackish source yield fresh water" James 3: 9 – 12. Believers may not use their tongue to curse and bad-mouth our brethren, then continue business as usual with our relationship with God. Scripture tells us that such tongue behavior is characteristic of hypocrites. "With his mouth the impious man ruins his neighbor" Proverbs 11: 9. In the very same way, the Psalmist warned that the wicked who use their mouth for evil and who speak against others violate the sacredness of God's covenant and forfeit the right to use that same mouth as a vessel of God's Holy Word and promise. "But to the wicked, God says 'Why do you recite my statutes, and profess my covenant with your mouth, though you hate discipline and cast my words behind you? When you see a thief, you keep pace with him, and with adulterers, you throw in your lot. To your mouth you give free rein for evil, you harness your tongue to deceive. You use it speaking against your brother; against your mother's son you spread rumors...Consider this, you who forget God, lest I rend you and there be no one to rescue you. He that offers praise as a sacrifice glorifies me, and to him that goes the right way I will show the salvation of God'" Psalms 50: 16 – 20, 22, 23.

Mouth Sins Not Trivial

Unfortunately, mouth sins have somehow been domesticated and entertained by moderns and seemingly made acceptable. Gossip, backbiting and slander have become viewed as simply 'naughty' little habits that are not really so serious. Even communicants of the Church like to indulge themselves in this dreadful compulsion. However, St. Paul wrote to the Church at Rome and sternly contended that gossips, slanderers, and bad-mouthers were in the same league as murderers, sexual perverts, and haters of God. Furthermore, he insists such sins are worthy of the death sentence obviously because they are the result of a dead and lifeless soul. "They are filled with every kind of wickedness: maliciousness, greed, ill will, envy, murder, bickering, deceit, craftiness. They are gossips and slanderers, they hate God, are insolent, haughty, boastful, ingenious in their wrongdoing and rebellious toward their parents. One sees in them men without conscience, without loyalty, without affection, without pity. They know God's just decree that all who do such things deserve death; they not only do them, but approve them in others" Romans 1: 28 – 32.

Some believers have experienced problems and misfortune, or fail to get answers to their prayers because of their mouth sins. Using their tongue to ridicule, gossip about, or to slander their brothers and sister is clearly sin, and as we know, unrepentant sin cuts off the flow of God's answers to prayer. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" Psalms 66: 18. Those who have mouth problems are destined to experience much trouble in their life and will not find it easy to obtain God's help with their problems. The devil takes advantage of those whose mouths are undisciplined and are used wickedly. "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles" Proverbs 21: 23.

God's revelation to us in Scripture teaches that they who desire to dwell in the presence of God, to experience His blessings, are those who live righteously and who will not backbite or bad mouth their neighbor. "Lord, who may abide in your tabernacle and who may dwell on your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness. And speaks the truth in his heart; he who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend" Psalms 15: 1 – 3. Furthermore, our God promised a long blessed life to those who keep their tongues from evil. "Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit" Psalms 34: 12, 13.

Accountable For All Our Words

Our Lord taught us our words are so important that they will actually determine our condemnation or justification. He said we will be held responsible for all our words, even our careless, idle words. "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give an account for it on the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" Matthew 12: 36, 37.

Elsewhere, St. Paul cautioned believers to disallow any corrupt or worthless talk to come from our mouths. Only those things which lift up, encourage, and are gracious should be expressed to others. "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearer" Ephesians 4: 29.

Obscenities, profanity, cursing, dirty jokes, using the name of the Lord in vain, or making fun of others is not something that should ever be found falling from the mouth of a believer. "Nor should there be any obscenity, foolish talk, or course joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving" Ephesians 5: 4.

Confess And Forsake Sin

We can thank God in our blessed vessel of salvation, there is remedy for mouth sins. His grace and forgiveness is available for all manner of sin, wherever it may be found. Jesus will forgive all sins that we confess to Him in the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation. "But if we acknowledge our sins, he who is just can be trusted to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrong. If we say, 'we have never sinned', we make him a liar and his word finds no place in us" 1 John 1: 9, 10. It is important for us to recognize sins must be forsaken, must be abandoned, must be left behind. "He who covers his sins will not prosper. But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" Proverbs 28: 13.

Scripture strongly advises us to repent of sin. "Whoever is dear to me I reprove and chastise. Be earnest about it, therefore, 'Repent'" Revelation 3: 19. We are obliged to turn away from sinful behavior. True repentance means that we will make every effort not to repeat our former sins and will seek earnestly to walk in the nature of Christ. Since mouth sins really originate in the heart of man, the heart must be reoriented. "The mouth speaks what fills the mind. A good man produces evil from his evil store. I assure you, on judgment day people will be held accountable for every unguarded word they speak" Matthew 12: 34. Repentance requires a change of attitude deep within. Such was King David's desire in his repentant prayer, "Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" Psalms 51: 9, 10.

If you realize your tongue is out of control, seek His forgiveness and allow Him to change the attitude of your heart and your mouth, so they will be pleasing to Him. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" Psalms 19: 14.



God Who???

A God Who Cares..."Cast all your cares upon him for he cares for you" 1
Peter 5: 7.

A God Who Loves..."God demonstrates his own love toward us in that
while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"
Romans 5: 8.

A God Who Forgives..."Who forgives all your iniquities"
Psalms 103: 3.

A God Who Understands..."Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his
understanding is infinite. He heals the broken hearted and binds up their
wounds"
Psalms 147: 3, 5.

A God Who Died for me..."That Christ died for our sins according to the
Scriptures. Thanks be to God who gives us victory through our
Lord Jesus Christ"
1 Corinthians 15: 3, 57.

A God Who Conquered death for me..."That is why Christ died and rose
again that he might be Lord of both the living and the dead"
Romans 14: 9.

That's Who!

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

You came down from on high, O merciful Lord. You accepted the grave for three days to deliver us from our passions. O Lord, our Resurrection and our life, glory be to You! Troparion, Resurrection Tone Eight.

Rising from the dead, You raised the dead. You lifted up Adam. Eve rejoices in Your Resurrection. The world acclaims Your rising from the dead, O most merciful Lord Kontakion, Resurrection Tone Eight.

Make vows to the Lord Your God, and fulfill them. Prokimenon, Resurrection Tone Eight.

In the fullness of time and by His own free will, the Word born of God the Father before all ages, became incarnate of the Virgin. He endured crucifixion and death. By His Resurrection, He saved man, dead from the beginning Vesper Hymn, Tone Eight.

We glorify You, O Lord; You freely endured the Cross for us. We worship You, Almighty Saviour; do not turn us from Your presence; hear and save us because of Your Resurrection; You alone love mankind Vesper Hymn, Tone Eight.

Because of His love for mankind, the King of heaven appeared on earth. He became incarnate of a pure Virgin and lived among men,. He was seen in the body He received from her. He is the One and only Son, having two natures but not two persons. Therefore we profess Christ to be our true God, proclaiming Him to be really perfect God and perfect man. O Virgin Mother: intercede with Him that He may have mercy on our souls Vesper Hymn, Tone Eight.

O Lord of all, Creator of heaven and earth. Suffering on the Cross, You became a fountain of immortality. You endured burial and rose in glory. By Your powerful hand, You raised Adam with You. Glory to Your Resurrection on the third day. Through it, You gave us eternal life and the forgiveness of sins. You alone are the gracious Lord Vesper Hymn, Tone Eight.

VESPER VERSES ACCORDING TO THE EIGHT TONES

TONE 8

1. We offer to You an evening hymn and spiritual
worship, O Christ,
For by your resurrection,
You have deigned to have mercy on us.
2. Lord, O Lord,
Do not turn us away from your presence,
But because of your resurrection,
Deign to have mercy on us.
3. Rejoice O Holy Sion!
Mother of all the Churches, dwelling of God :
You were the first to receive the forgiveness of
sins
Through the resurrection.
4. In the fulness of time and by his own free
will,
The Word, born of God the Father before all
ages,
Became incarnate of the Virgin.
He endured crucifixion and death.
By, his resurrection,
He saved man dead from the beginning.
5. Let us glorify your resurrection, O Christ!
Through this, you delivered the race of Adam
From the suffering of the Abyss.
As God, you granted eternal life to the world
And great mercy.

6. Glory be to You, O Christ our Savior!
Only-begotten Son of God,
You were crucified on the cross.
You arose from the grave on the third day.
7. We glorify You, O Lord :
You freely endured the cross for us.
We worship You, Almighty Savior :
Do not turn us from your presence.
Hear and save us
Because of your resurrection :
You alone love mankind.
8. Glory be to the Father ✙, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
forever. Amen.

Because of his love for mankind,
The King of heaven appeared on earth.
He became incarnate of a pure Virgin and lived
among men.
He was seen in the body he received from her.
He is the One and only Son,
Having two natures but not two persons.
Therefore we profess Christ to be our true God,
Proclaiming Him to be really perfect God and
perfect man.
O Virgin Mother : intercede with Him
That He may have mercy on our souls.

At the Apostichon

1. You descended from heaven, O Christ!
You ascended the cross;

You accepted death, O Life Immortal!
To all in darkness, You are the true light;
To all the fallen, You are resurrection,
Enlightenment and Savior,
Glory be to you!

2. Let us glorify Christ risen from the dead.
He assumed a body and soul.
Separated in his passion,
His pure soul entered the Abyss, despoiling it.
Even in the tomb,
He remained untouched by corruption.
He is the Savior of our souls.
3. O Christ, we glorify your resurrection in
psalms and hymns.
You freed us from the suffering of the abyss.
As God, you granted us eternal life
And great mercy.
4. O Lord of all, Creator of heaven and earth :
Suffering on the cross, You became a fountain
of immortality;
You endured burial and rose in glory.
By your powerful hand, you raised Adam with
you.
Glory to your resurrection on the third day.
Through it, you gave us eternal life
And the forgiveness of sins.
You alone are the gracious Lord.

5. Glory be to the Father ✚, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
forever. Amen.

O unwedded Virgin,

You conceived God in the flesh.

O Mother of Almighty God,

Receive the prayers of your servants.

O Virgin ever pure, obtain the forgiveness of
our sins.

Hear our supplication and pray

For the salvation of our souls.

* * *

Because We Do Not Know Any Better

How churches and synagogues become mosques in history.

Muslims proposed a 13 story hundred million dollar mosque in the most prominent spot in America, the heart of downtown New York City next to the World Trade Center site. American governmental officials are withholding permission to Orthodox faithful to rebuild the only Christian church destroyed by the Muslim attack, but eagerly granted permission and encouragement to Muslims to build this offense to common dignity. Is this mosque going to become an example of America's understanding and tolerance or attribute to a great Muslim conquest and victory. Only those who know the past will understand. Perhaps our God is permitting our nation to be disciplined as He did the ancient Israelite community by the Babylonians!

In 630, Muhammad led 10,000 Muslim soldiers into Mecca and turned the most prominent pagan spot, the Ka'aba, into the Masjid al-Haram Mosque.

In 634, rightly guided Caliph Umar conquered Syria and turned the most prominent spot of Christians, the Church of Job, famous for being visited by Saint Silva in the fourth century, into the Mosque of Job.

In 637, Caliph Umar conquered Hebron and turned the second most important spot in Judaism, the Cave of the patriarchs, into the Ibrahimi Mosque. This was again repeated by Saladin in 1188.

In 638, Muslim generals Amr ibn al-As and Khalid ibn al-Walid conquered Gaza and turned the prominent fifth century Orthodox church into the Great Mosque of Gaza.

In 638, Caliph Umar conquered Jerusalem. In 691, Caliph Al-Malik ordered the Dome of the Rock built on the most prominent spot in Jerusalem, the Temple mount, followed by Caliph Al-Walid building the Al-Aqsa Mosque there in 705.

In 706, after Muslims took Damascus from the Byzantine Empire, Caliph Al-Walid turned the prominent Orthodox Church of St. John the Baptist into the Umayyad Mosque.

In 784, after the conquest of Spain, Emir Abd ar-Rahman turned the prominent Visigothic Roman Church of Saint Vincent into the Great Aljama Mosque of Cordoba.

After the conquest of Egypt, Caliphs al-Mamun (813-833) and al-Hakim (996-1021) turned prominent Coptic Orthodox churches and Jewish synagogues in Cairo into mosques.

In 831, Muslims conquered Palermo, Sicily and Asad ibn al-Furat turned the prominent Roman Church of the Assumption of St. Mary into the Great Mosque of Bal'harm.

From 1250 – 1517, Mamluk Muslims controlled the Golan Heights and used the ancient synagogue of Katzrin as a mosque.

In 1387, Turkish Muslims conquered Thessaloniki and turned the Orthodox Katholikon Monastery and Church of the Holy Wisdom which housed the relics of St. Gregory Palamas, into mosques as St. Simeon of Thessaloniki records for us. "The greatest number of the buildings of the churches fell to them, of which the first was the holy Church of the Saviour. These were trampled underfoot and infidels rejoiced in them. Most of the religious buildings in the city were despoiled, while altars were demolished and sacred objects profaned."

On May 29, 1453, Sultan Mehmet II conquered Constantinople and turned the foremost great Orthodox basilica of the Holy Wisdom into the Ayasofya Mosque. The largest church in Christendom for a thousand years, the four acres of its gold mosaics were covered with whitewash and Koran verses.

In 1458, Sultan Mehmet II conquered Athens and turned the most prominent and historic place, the Parthenon on Acropolis Hill, into a mosque. When Venetian General Francesco Morosini drove the Muslims out in 1687, a cannon ball hit the gunpowder stored in the mosque, blowing it up.

In the 15th century, Ottoman invaders turned the Orthodox monastery of St. Clement in Plaosnik, Balkans into the Imater Mosque.

In 1543, Hayreddin Barbaqrossa's 30,000 Muslim troops wintered in Toulon, France and turned the prominent Toulon Roman Cathedral into a mosque.

In 1570, under Sultan Selim II Khan, Muslims conquered Paphos, Cyprus and Gov. Mehmet Bey Ebubkir turned the prominent Orthodox church into the Great Mosque of Paphos.

In 1571, Muslims invaded Famagusta, Cyprus and turned St. Nicholas Cathedral, a rare Gothic Roman church into the Lala Mustafa Pasha Mosque, and St. Sophia Orthodox Cathedral in Nicosia, constructed in 1228, into the Selimiye Mosque.

In 1558 Sultan Murat II turned the Orthodox Church of St. John the Forerunner in Constantinople into the Hiram Ahmet Pasha Mosque.

In 1781, having conquered the old city of Acre, Ottoman Muslims turned the Roman Church built by Crusaders into the Jezzar Ahmet Pasha Mosque, where a hair from Muhammad's bear is preserved.

In 1923, Muslims expelled Greeks from Turkey and turned Orthodox churches into mosques

In World War II, Nazis allied with Bosnians turned the prominent Artist's Gallery Museum in Zagreb, Croatia, into a mosque.

In the 1950's Muslims expelled Jews from Arab lands and turned synagogues into mosques.

In 1959 Turkish Muslims conducted a huge massacre of Orthodox Greeks in Constantinople and took possession of many Orthodox churches, turning them into mosques.

Algerian Muslims warred against French colonial rule until the French took their leave in 1962, after which the Roman cathedral of St. Philippe was turned into the Ketchaoua Mosque. Violence caused 30,000 Jews to flee and the great Synagogue of Oran was turned into the Mosque Abdella Ben Salem.

In 1962, Turkish Muslim closed down the Patriarchal Seminary at Halki and dispersed its students.

In 1974, Turkish Muslims invaded northern Cyprus and prominent Orthodox churches were turned into mosques.

In 1981, Muslim immigrants to the Netherlands converted Amsterdam's historic Roman church of St. Ignatius into the Fatih Mosque and a synagogue in the Hague into the Aksa Mosque.

On September 11, 2001, Muslims attacked the most notable spot in America, the World Trade Center. In less than ten years, the number of mosques in New York City has skyrocketed to over 140! In light of Muslim history would a mosque at Ground Zero be a sign of a clueless America's tolerance or an obvious monument to the great Muslim victory over "the Great Satan?"



Never Give Up

They didn't think I could do it
And said I shouldn't try,
But I kept plodding onward
Thinking, "Somehow I'll get by."

I admit it hasn't been easy
And I let things drag a bit,
When I think I can't go on
I climb on my load and sit.

While sitting there I wonder
Why it would seem a sin
For me to keep on trying
And I start plodding on again.

I would give up this minute
If I thought Jesus didn't care.
But He blesses my every effort
And helps when I despair.

I'm not striving to win gold medals
Nor do I covet the victor's cup.
The only thing I ask of Him
Is the strength to not give up.

If you find your burden heavier
Than others seem to bear,
Just keep giving it all you've got
And renew your strength in prayer.

For Jesus is never far away
From those who call His name.
When we're almost ready to give up
We're encouraged to try again.

*My grace is sufficient for
you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.
(II Cor. 12:9)*

EXCERPTS FROM A DORMITION HOMILY . . .

St. Gregory Palamas, who served as Archbishop of Thessalonika in the mid 1300s and who is commemorated annually on the 2nd Sunday of the Great Fast, once wrote a moving homily dealing with the Dormition of the Mother of God. Here are some excerpts from this wonderful writing:

"If the 'death of a righteous man is honorable' and 'the just man is celebrated with songs of praise,' how much more ought we honor with great praises the memory of the holiest of the saints: Mary, the Mother of God. By her closeness to the God of all, she has ascended higher than the angels. The death of the Theotokos was life-bearing, for it translated her into a celestial and immortal life. Its commemoration therefore should be a joyful event for us, not a sad one. Now the Mother of God has her place of dwelling in heaven. She 'stands at the right of the Father, clothed in a vesture wrought with gold and arrayed in various colors' as the psalm concerning her had prophesied. She is more radiant than light, more adorned than any other in the whole world - visible and invisible. She stands at God's right hand - she truly is His Throne, for wherever the King sits, there is the Throne also set. She will never cease to intercede for us - truly no man will ever come to God unless illumined through her."

St. Gregory ends his homily with these fervent words of supplication to the Mother of God: *"O Lady, dispel the perils that menace us. Measure out your help and healing to the proportion of our passions. Provide us with enough grace for our souls and bodies that is necessary for our salvation. So that being saved and fortified by your grace, we may give glory to the Pre-Eternal Word Who was incarnate of you: unto ages of ages. Amen."*

Icon written in Greece by Miltiadis Afentoulis

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