





# Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 21, 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

+++ Today, we have festal anointing on the occasion of this past week's most solemn feast of the Dormition of the Birthgiver of God. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" and the response is: "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ The first Pirohi Sale of the season will be on Saturday, September 3. Please secure orders from friends to make it a success and plan on participating with helping hands.

+++ 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 acknowledge the talent and kindness of Kyra Choti who baked cookies at the request of her neighbor as a result of which they donated \$96.00 to our church. God bless you devoted and concerned souls!

+++ 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, \$442.00; Candles, \$27.00; Holyday, \$79.00; Kitchen, \$210.00; Food Coupons, \$240.00; Christian Fellowship, \$1.00, for a total of \$999.00. 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, Subdeacon Daniel & Marilyn Korba, Robert Gorbich, 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!

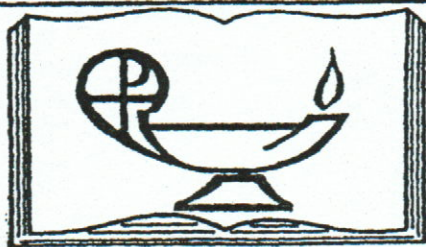
+++ The **Clothing Drive** is a permanent on-going project in our parish. Please bring any type of clothing and fabrics along with stuffed animals and shoes for the benefit of our parish. The bags can be left in the vestibule or on the front porch of the rectory. Please invite your friends and neighbors to assist us in disposing of unwanted clothing, shoes and fabrics.

+++ We remember 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!



LORD



TEACH  
US

## Anger

*. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves; leave that to God's wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; by doing this you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good Romans 12: 19 – 21.*

*Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy Proverbs 27: 4?*

*But now we must put off all these things: anger, wrath, malice blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth Colossians 3: 8.*

*...a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness... Nehemiah 9: 17.*

*For his anger endures but a moment; in his favor is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning Psalms 30: 5.*

*Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for a man's anger does not fulfill God's justice James 1: 19, 20.*

*In your spirit, do not be hasty to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools Ecclesiastes 7: 9.*

*He who is quick to anger deals foolishly Proverbs 14: 17.*

*He who is slow to anger is better than the strong and mighty and he who rules his spirit than he who conquers a city Proverbs 16: 32.*



## Tenth Sunday

A man approaches the Lord today and seeks pity for his gravely ill and demented son. Initially he brought the child to the disciples, but they were not successful in curing him. The Lord is distressed because of their lack of faith. He orders the boy brought to him and immediately fulfills the father's request by restoring him to health.

The father approaches the Lord confidently. He knows Christ can do what is necessary for the child. This scenario raises some questions in our minds. How can we be similarly confident in a crisis?

God's revelation to us teaches there are three kinds of storms in life: storms that we bring on ourselves like Samson and his self-induced troubles; storms that our heavenly Father causes like the one that Jesus stilled on Lake Galilee, and storms other people bring about as when St. Paul and Silas were thrown into prison. When we are innocent parties in a crisis, the last kind of storm is especially hard to take.

So how do we deal with these crises? How do we stay calm and maintain our confidence and courage, regardless what happens?

Our heavenly Father put the apostle Paul, as a prisoner, on board a ship headed from the Holy Land to Rome. Actually Paul had a great desire to go to Rome and preach but he had not planned on this being the means of getting there. After the ship ventured through the Mediterranean Sea and docked at the island of Crete, God told Paul to advise the crew not to leave the harbor because there was going to be a great storm. But the sailors were impatient to get to a better harbor, so they ignored what God told them through St. Paul (Acts of the Apostles 27: 9 – 12).

Impatience often gets us into trouble. When we allow ourselves to become impatient, we find ourselves faced with a storm. Some are impatient to get married; impatient to get a new job, impatient to move to the other side of the tracks to a better location in town. They do not take time out to check things out and they sail right off into the waiting storms of life.

Paul told the sailors, "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives as well" (Verse 10). But they sailed into the storm anyway. Why? Because they were following perverse human nature. There are common sense reasons why people get themselves into a mess. And these reasons hold true, whether things happened two thousand years ago in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, or today, because human nature does not change.



The centurion who had charge over Paul ignored his plea and instead followed the advice given by both the captain and the owner of the ship. They left the harbor. This points up the first reason we get ourselves into trouble; we listen to the wrong experts.

The world is full of people with crazy ideas, and it seems as if every week someone is proposing a new therapy or a new cult. But the fact is that experts are so very often wrong. Some people go around asking experts what they think until they find a person who agrees with their imaginary mind's contrivance, just to substantiate their own biases and misconceptions. When we start asking experts, we are going to get ourselves into trouble, or a storm. The father approached the expertise of the disciples who apparently didn't have what it takes. He met with no success. The only true reliable expert is our God.

Because the harbor where they docked was unsuitable in winter, the majority of the crew decided the ship should sail on. They hoped to reach Phoenix and its safe harbor on the other side of Crete (Verse 12). The second reason we get ourselves into trouble is that we take a vote. The fact is the majority can be wrong. The so-called Latin truism "Vox populi est Vox Dei" does not ring true most of the time. Do you remember what happened when Moses started to lead the children of Israel toward the Promised Land? The majority wanted to return to Egypt, but they were wrong. We can get ourselves into a real mess by following prevailing opinion, the most popular ideas. If we listen to God, we will go in the right direction.

The story continues: "When a gentle south wind began to blow, the ship's crew thought they obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete" (Verse 13). It proved to be a bad decision. Why else do we get ourselves into trouble? Because we rely on circumstances! Notice we are taught there was a gentle south wind. What could be better for a nice, gentle, Mediterranean cruise? The sailors thought they had gotten their wish because the circumstances looked so favorable. But it is foolish and unwise to ignore what God says, even if the circumstances seem to contradict it. Things may look good right now, to our limited perception and judgment, but we may be sailing right into a storm.

We have all heard people who say, "Well, this decision must be okay because I feel so good about it." A popular song from the seventies, for those of you who are old enough to remember, says, "It can't be wrong when it feels so right." The fact is feelings are often a lie. If our God tells us "Wait in the harbor," we better wait in the harbor because the devil can arrange any undesirable circumstance if we put out to sea. How many people think they obtain just what they wanted when in reality they are sailing straight into a storm at sea? They find themselves caught in "winds of hurricane force, called the noreaster" (Verse 14). The ship, like so many people became caught in a storm and could not head into the wind for it to sail.



In a crisis, what not to do is drift. When caught in a crisis in life, we typically react in three ways: the same three ways the sailors did. Their reactions were typical of people under pressure. Because the sailors could not head into the wind, "we give way to it and are driven further along" (Verse 15). Later, they "lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along" (Verse 17). The first thing that storms tend to do is cause us to drift. We let go of our goals. We forget where we are headed. We forget our values and we enjoy the drifting.

Because we are not equipped with compasses and the stars are completely obscured by the storm, the sailors were in total darkness. When we are in a dark situation in which we cannot see the stars and don't have a compass, what do we do? We drift through life. The waves beat us back and forth, and we are led wherever they take us. Our problems batter us back and forth. These strong currents in life can make us feel like asking, "What's the use? Why fight it?" And we just go with the flow.

Things did not get any better on the apostle Paul's voyage to Rome. "We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands (Verses 18, 19). When a crisis emerges for us, first we begin to drift, and then we start discarding things from our lives. With the sailors it was the cargo, then the ship's tackle, eventually their food (Verse 38) and finally, themselves (Verse 43, 44)! They all jumped overboard and started swimming over to shore.

Often when we find ourselves in a crisis of life, we are tempted to throw out the very things that are most important to us, the values that we have hung on to all our lives. We have a tendency to throw things out, because we are under pressure and want to get rid of it all. We become impulsive, We give up our dreams and aspirations. We run out on relationships. We throw away values we learned as children.

The third thing the sailors did was give up hope. "When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved" (Verse 20). In extreme crises we eventually get to the point of despair and give up all hope. The last thing we throw out when we have a problem is hope and when we throw that away, we have had it!

The sailors spend fourteen days in total darkness in little ship in the middle of the big Mediterranean Sea. They were bashed back and forth by the storm until they threw everything away and gave up all hope. Perhaps we feel that way from time to time. Are you undergoing a problem lately that has been battering you back and forth? Have you come to the point where you have thrown things out, and now you have come to despair? Have you gotten rid of your faith response and given up hope? Remember the sailors; they gave up hope because they



forgot our God is in control. They forgot that God has a plan. They forgot that God can inject hope into an absolutely absurd and hopeless situation. Look at the father in today's gospel narrative for your inspiration.

The amazing part of this story is St. Paul's reaction. It is a 180 degree turnaround from the way the sailors responded to the crisis. The sailors were in despair; they said the situation was hopeless. They were discouraged and depressed and tossed everything overboard to try to keep afloat.

But Paul provides a different model for us to emulate. He was calm and confident. He had courage in the crisis. Absolutely nothing fazed him. Even though the disciples could not respond to the father's need, the father still had hope in Christ.

The sailors' reactions were the responses we tend to have in a crisis. One test of our Orthodox faith is how we handle crises. Is it easier to live like a Christian when things are going great, when prayers are being answered, when we enjoy good health, when our income is increasing? It is easy to be a believer at times like that.

The test of our faith is when the problems come and we are tempted to despair, to drift, and to throw away faith commitment. Character is revealed in a crisis, not made in a crisis. Character is made in the day-by-day mundane, trivial things of life, the routine of living. Character is developed there, but is revealed when we get into a shipwreck, into a situation that threatens to swallow us up.

What should we do when things look as if they are falling part and the ship is going to crash and disintegrate? What should we do when we are battered by big problems? Look what the sailors did: "Fearing they would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight" (Verse 29). The safest thing to do when we get into a storm is to drop our anchors. Just stand still. Situations quickly change and the sands of time shift. But the Scripture teaches us that those who put their trust in God are immovable just like Mount Sion (Psalms 125: 1). What we need in a crisis is put down some anchors and get some stability, or return to stability.

Why was St. Paul confident? Because he was encouraged by three tremendous truths, three foundational beliefs of Christian life, that serve as anchors for the soul. The three truths can anchor us on the rock of stability, so that when the winds of crisis blow us back and forth, we will have confidence. These are truths that life can be built on, that will stabilize us in a storm.



The very first anchor in a crisis is the presence of God. In the midst of the storm St. Paul said, "Last night an angel of God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul'" Acts of the Apostles 27: 23, 24. From this we learn that storms can never hide us from God. We may not see him, but He sees us. We may think God millions of miles away, but He is with us and is watching over us. God sent a personal representative, an angel, to Paul, "I am with you." I see you in the stormy Mediterranean Sea in the little insignificant ship." Our heavenly Father has made promises to us:

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" Hebrews 13:5; "Surely I am with you always" Matthew 28: 20; "I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever" John 14: 16.

Over and over is repeated in God's message to us that wherever we are, God is right there with us. We can never go through anything by ourselves because God is always with us. No matter what situation we are going through right now, our God is with us. He is the anchor whom we can fully trust.

The second anchor in a crisis is found in St. Paul's circumstances where Paul quotes God's angel, "Do not be afraid, Paul, You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of who sail with you" Acts of the Apostles 27: 24. God told Paul, "I have a plan for your life. You are on board this ship because I have a purpose for your being on this ship. I have a purpose for your life that is greater than the temporary storm you are in." The second anchor is God's purpose.

Every Christian ought to have a sense of destiny. No person is born by accident, regardless of the circumstances of one's birth. We are not here on earth just to take up space; God has a specific purpose and plan for our life. Storms are simply temporary schools, setbacks toward fulfilling that purpose from which we must learn. Absolutely nothing can change God's ultimate purpose for our life unless we choose to disobey him. If we choose to reject his plan, He will allow us to do that, but we are taught no outside person can change God's plan for our life. God leaves that up to us. We alone can either accept or reject it. No matter what happens on the outside, however, external forces cannot alter God's purposes for our life as long as you say, "Lord, God, I want to do your will."

God's purpose is greater than any situation we ever experience. Our God has a plan beyond the problems we face daily. The point is this: It is dangerous to focus only on our problems more than on our purpose for living. If we do that, we will start drifting and discarding. We will start despairing if we keep our eyes on the problem rather than on God's purpose for our life. Once



we lose our goal, we will lose sight of the very meaning for which we were created and we will become purposeless.

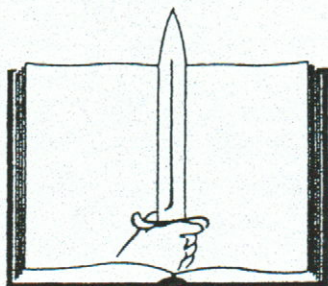
The third anchor that gives us confidence in a crisis is found in the word of St. Paul: "Keep up your courage, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me" (Verse 25). The third anchor is God's promise. God keeps his promises without fail. Storms cannot hide our faces from God because He is with us. Storms cannot change the purpose of God because it is ultimate. Storms cannot destroy the child of God because God's promise is sure.

Some of us are going through devastating crises. Our problems seem to be overwhelming and we think we are going under for the last time. God says to us: "You may lose cargo, you may lose the tackle of your ship; you may even lose the ship, you may get soaking wet, but you are going to make it through because of the promise of God. As the old saying goes, "God said, it, I believe it, and that settles it!" So what do we do? Relax. Be confident in our crisis as was the bewildered father in today's gospel narrative.

What should we do while we are waiting for the crisis to end? The same thing the sailors did, "Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors for the stern and prayed for daylight" Acts of the Apostles 27: 29. Anchor yourself in the trust of God and pray for daylight.

What was the result aboard the ship? Morning came! When daylight came, the sailors did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach where they decided to run the ship aground. All the 276 people aboard jumped over board and got safely to land (Verses 39 - 44).

In the storms of life, our heavenly Father says, "I am with you." Let his truth stabilize our life and give confidence in every crisis faced. Storms cannot hide God from us or us from God. We may go through some difficult times, but God has a purpose for our life. There is a reason for it all and we are going to make it safely to land if we persevere to the very end!





# Did You Know That ...

- ...you should count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies for the hardest victory is the victory over self?
- ...courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear?
- ...everyman is the architect of his own character?
- ...people, places and things were never meant to give us life; God alone is the author of a fulfilling life?
- ...the greatest act of faith is when man realizes he is not God?
- ...a true friend never gets in your way unless you happen to be going down?
- ...character is not made in crisis, it is only evidenced and exhibited?
- ...wisdom is the quality that keeps you from getting into situations where you need it?
- ...God has a history of using the insignificant to accomplish the impossible?
- ...it is not how many hours you put in, but what you put into the hours?
- ...the trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism?
- ...for peace of mind, resign as general manager of the universe?
- ...an atheist is a man who has no invisible means of support?
- ...a half truth is usually less than half of that?
- ...it is more important to pay less attention to what a man says and more to what he does?
- ...some people reach the top of the ladder of success only to find it is leaning against the wrong wall?
- ...if you were given a nickname descriptive of your character, would you be proud of it?



## "FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET . . ."

**P**erhaps some of you remember the old "Adventures of Superman" TV program. The show heralded the "Man of Steel" as being "faster than a speeding bullet." As rapid as that may be, there is something that travels even faster: A LIE! Mark Twain once said that *"A LIE CAN TRAVEL HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD WHILE THE TRUTH IS PUTTING ON ITS SHOES."* If this famous American author were somehow brought back to life to witness the pace of today's world of modern technology, he just might say that a lie can travel *entirely* around the world before the truth even *finds* its shoes!

Lies and gossip can ruin a person's career and life in a twinkling of an eye. Sadly, while our justice system promises that we are "innocent until proven guilty" the "court of public opinion" puts an entirely opposite "spin" on that right that we are all guaranteed. Even the rich and powerful have been felled by a remark taken out of context that has been launched out into cyberspace through the internet almost as quickly as it has been uttered.

With this in mind, it is imperative that we choose our words carefully and that our actions are always above reproach. In other words, follow the teachings of Christ and His Church! In John 8:31-32, our Lord tells us: "If you abide in My words, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." True followers of Christ are, indeed "followers of truth." We must live our lives fully understanding that we are not immune to slanderous attacks against us. Yet if we abide in the words of our Lord, we can never really be harmed by false words of others - no matter how fast they may travel!