Each Day We Have New Work To Do

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD **FREEHOLD, NJ 07728**

Elevernth Sunday after Pentecost **August 23, 2009**

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor;
Father John Cmur; Deacon Kenneth E. Ellis and
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 Saturday is the feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, a day of strict fast. Please observe the prescriptions of the fast as an offering to our Creator in prayerful supplication for success in our building program. In anticipation, the vesperal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Friday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise. Confessions are heard prior to all services.**

+++ The first *Pirohi Sale* of the upcoming season will be held on Saturday, September 5. Preparations will take place on Thursday, September 3 at 7:00 AM. Pleas plan on coming and assisting in making this fund-raising event a success. We invite all to secure orders from friends and neighbors.

+++ Marriage Anniversary Celebrants are remembered and honored today.

+++ 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, [redacted]; Candles, [redacted]; Food Coupons, [redacted]; Christian Fellowship, [redacted] Holyday, [redacted] for a total of [redacted]. We express our prayer 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, Robert Gorbich, Robin Pasquino 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 [redacted] 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 *$100, 415. 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.

+++ 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 [redacted] on this project to date!

LORD TEACH US

GOD CREATED ANIMALS

So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind **Genesis 1: 21.**

At the end of forty days Noah opened the hatch he made in the ark, and he sent out a raven, to see if the waters had lessened on the earth...Then he sent out a dove, to see if the waters had lessened on the earth. But the dove could not find a place to land and perch, and it returned to him in the ark, for there was water all over the earth. Putting out his hand, he caught the dove and drew it back to him inside the ark **Genesis 8: 6 - 9.**

Open to me, my beloved, my sister, my dove, my perfect one **Song of Songs 5: 2.**

Ah, you are beautiful, my beloved, yes, your eyes are doves! **Song of Songs 1: 15.**

Suddenly the sky opened up and he saw the Spirit of God descend like a dove and hover over him **Matthew 3: 15.**

Of the various creatures that live in the water, you may eat the following: whatever in the seas or in river waters has both fins and scales you may eat. But of the various creatures that crawl or swim in the water, whether in the sea or in the rivers, all those that lack either fins or scales are loathsome to you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their dead bodies you shall loathe...Of the birds these shall you loathe and as loathsome they shall not be eaten: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, the kite, the various species of crows, the ostrich...the gull and various species of hawks, the owl, the various species of herons and the bat **Leviticus 11: 9 – 19.**

Turn On The Lights

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on hill cannot be hidden
Matthew 5: 14.

The former Seminary Dean from St. Petersburg, Russia was visiting the United States recently. When asked what he missed most about being head of the Seminary, without question he said it was the students, the seminarians preparing in priestly formation. He said, "I love their passion for the Lord and the way they demonstrate it to the world around them. Secular employers often told me of the students' exemplary work ethic. Even the police superintendent once said, "When the seminarians return to study, it is like somebody turned on the lights around the St. Alexander Nevsky Monastery-Seminary."

This is exactly what Jesus had in mind when he said, "You are the light of the world" Matthew 5: 14. It is a powerful word picture of the impact of startling contrast. There should be a recognizable difference between the integrity of Christian believers and the prevailing darkness of our world.

It is not at all about making speeches of rarefied words for Jesus; it is about people observing us. Even though they may not want to hear about Christ, you can be sure they are watching to see if He makes a difference in our lives. When Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works..." Matthew 5: 16, He was saying that before we can even speak, before we utter a word, we have to show up and be noticed for our Christ-like lifestyle. Our capacity to shine for Christ is measured by our good works, which reveal his compelling reality in our lives. If we are not witnesses for Christ, we drive away into further obscurity his enlightening message and because of us it may be lost for those who are looking. And someone is always looking!

Jewelry Box and the Jewel

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us
2 Corinthians 4: 7.

There is a compelling application of a sad episode in the life of Isaac Watts, the famous English hymn writer who fell in love with a beautiful young woman. She admired his poetry, his superior mind and his indomitable spirit, but for all her admiration she could not overcome her actual revulsion at his appearance.

In truth, Isaac was short and slight, afflicted with mere slits of gray eyes, a hook nose and large cheekbones. When he proposed to the young woman, she all too hurtfully replied, "Mr. Watts, if only I could say that I admire the jewelry box as much as I admire the jewel it contains."

We can draw a disturbing analogy between the "jewel" of the gospel message and the "jewelry box" of the Church. How many people have used the excuse in rejecting the good news because of its often sincere but overly zealous witnesses! Are we unknowingly repulsive and unloving to those whom we encounter in life? How can we be "...a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness" Romans 2: 19, if the impelling beauty of Jesus Christ cannot be seen in us? Have we erected such an impenetrable wall around us that prevents others from seeing Christ, received in baptism, and sustained in Eucharistic life within us, from being the guiding light of our own life?

By every means possible, let us proclaim the gospel. But let us pray the Holy Spirit will make us personally winsome, attractive and compelling, freed from sin so we can attract others to him. May the beauty of Jesus Christ be seen in each of us, with all his wonderful passion and purity, that our nature is refined and sustained.

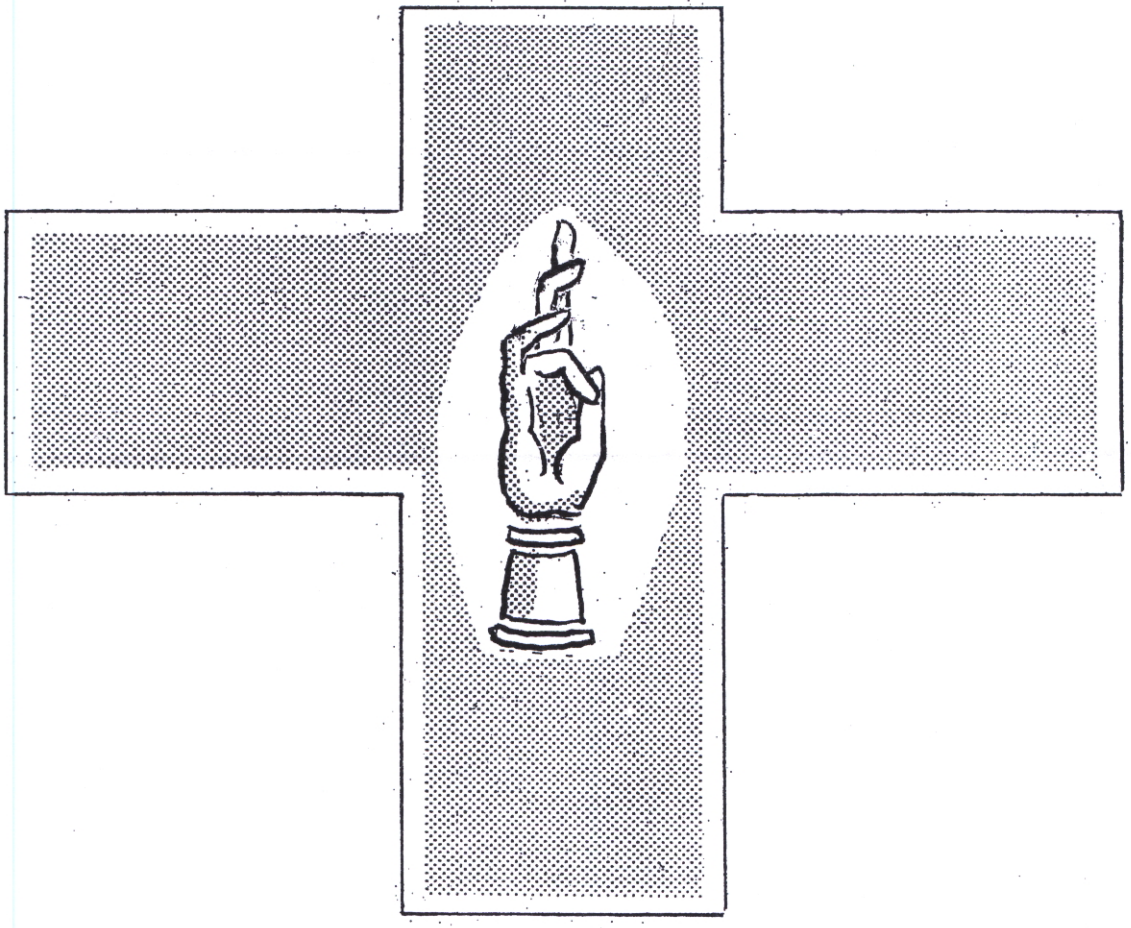
Sign of the Cross rich in symbolism

A majority of the faithful probably know the meaning of the sign of the Cross, that it is a profession and confession in physical sign of faith of Christ's Incarnation, salutary death on the Cross and glorious and triumphant Resurrection. In the Eastern Church there is an extraordinary devotion to the sign of the Cross manifested by the frequency of its repetition by both clergy and faithful during the Divine Liturgy.

But as we pay attention carefully during our liturgical celebration we notice the priestly celebrant turns about at least eight times and imparts a blessing to the assembled faithful. Many, many times, at least 40, he makes the sign of the Cross while praying and facing the altar table. Each time the priest literally throws a blessing at them, they actually catch the cross-blessing and trace it upon their being, grateful for heaven's grace as they proceed in worship. It is an encouragement to remain devoted in attention and prayer.

Interesting and symbolic is the arrangement of the priest's fingers and thumb. The priest configures his fingers in such a way that the faithful are reminded he is but a vehicle through whom God blesses us. The forefinger is held straight as an indication of the first Greek letter I, indicating Jesus while the thumb and ring finger create an X for Christ. The longest finger and the smallest are bent somewhat to indicate C in Greek, once again. Thus people are blessed by the priest in the name of Jesus Christ, IC XC.

Even in the most minute and smallest details of our celebration, we are drawn to Christ and thus reminded it is in his love we have salvation. Look carefully as you pray, observe as you praise our God, as we join in celebration all the ways significant meaning is added for our better understanding to the glory we offer our Creator God! We then learn how fully our God infuses his abundant grace into our lives even in the seemingly insignificant ways He always chooses to communicate his love to us.



Have courage for
the great sorrows of life, and patience for the small ones. And when you have laboriously accomplished your daily task, go to sleep in peace. God is awake.

God's will for your life may not always be pleasant. Will you follow him anyway?

What difficulty is God asking you to pass through right now?

Did You Know That ...

...people are always watching you to see signs of God's love?

...even when we become indifferent, God's passionate love for us never wavers?

...whether we live or die, we belong to God?

...the true identity of man is found in his relationship with God?

...interruptions and detours can be God calling us in another direction?

...God's revelation to us in Scripture has the power to form us and transform us?

...the talents we have received are to be used in not only serving God, but others as well?

...though our loved ones move beyond our reach, they are still in God's tender care?

...our hands become God's hands when we care for a wounded world?

...we are a treasure in the sight of our heavenly Father?

...when we affirm others with our concerned love, we help them grow into the people God dreams them to be?

...because God can easily do what we cannot, all we have to do is ask?

...when we recognize our need, we open up ourselves to God's complete sufficiency?

...those who forgive receive as great a blessing as those who are forgiven?

...every believer is God's assistant in the work of healing?

...Christ is the clearest example of what our God is like?

...God not only gives us life, but the power to live it fully?

...a pure heart is like a garden with fertile soil?

...in every circumstance of life, we can turn to God in prayer knowing He hears us?

A MASTER OF "DIVINE DISRUPTION"

There is little doubt that an alarm clock is our least favorite modern convenience. Its piercing sound disturbs us as it noisily arouses us from our sound and restful sleep. We must all admit, however, that an alarm clock serves a necessary and useful purpose. In reality, it is our daily "*call to duty,*" reminding us of the work that must be done and the opportunities that await us. Without it, think of what we would miss!

Christ is described - and has described Himself - in a multitude of ways. He is the "*Light.*" He is the "*Way.*" He is the "*True Vine.*" He is the "*Alpha and Omega.*" Yes, Jesus is many things. With no disrespect intended, however, we may also add that He is the "*Divine Alarm Clock!*" Our Lord is constantly giving us "*wake up calls.*" His words challenge us to strive for perfection in an imperfect world. His teachings disturb us and cause us to feel uncomfortable, for we see that we may be falling short of what is expected of His followers.

Often, we find ourselves feeling like the Gerasenes after our Lord caused their herd of swine to leap off the cliff and perish: we wish Jesus would simply leave us alone to live our own lives in our own way. But He truly loves us - that's why He is constantly disturbing us. Christ will never give up on us, even when we've given up on ourselves. Good things will happen to us when we respond positively to the ringing of an alarm clock. Better things will happen to us if we allow the "*Divine Alarm Clock*" to rouse us from spiritual slumber, so that we can labor tirelessly for the greater glory of God!

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin . . . . . Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey . . . . . Litho in U.S.A.