



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 29, 2010

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

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

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Today is the feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist. Although ordinarily a day of strict fast, since it is Sunday, please forego meat on this day. Festal anointing will conclude our celebration. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we respond, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ We have received donations to our parish amounting to ~~\$435.00~~ in blessed memory of +Mary Gorbich, beloved mother of our good parishioner, Bob Gorbich. To those who expressed their condolences in heartfelt generosity to the cause of the Lord, we acknowledge and sincerely thank offerings from:

Robert Gorbich, Barbara Bowker, Betty Samaris, Eleanor Korba, Paul & Helen Pallas, Father and Pani Lucas, Anna & Bill Zacharyczuk, Helen Litwinetz, Nina Harrison and daughters and Joseph & Kyra Choti Family. We express our gratitude to these devoted souls and pledge our continued prayers for their good health and repose of the soul of +Mary. Anyone wishing to make a similar offering may see Father.

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

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week-end: Tithe Offering, \$457.00; Candles, \$33.00; Food Coupons, \$320.00; Holyday, \$1.00; Refund, \$37.00; Bulletin, \$25.00; Christian Fellowship, \$3.00, for a total of \$876.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 41 adults and 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: Subdeacon Daniel J. & Marilyn Korba Family, Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Louis Pasquino, +Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, George Idromenos, Kent Pasquino, Kyle Pasquino, and Pani Buletza.

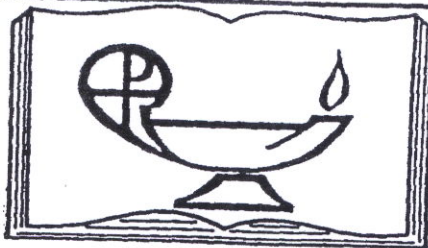
+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1576.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$104,815.00. 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.

+++ We thank the good souls who made a success of the bus trip yesterday to the Icon Exhibit in New York City. Anyone wishing to see the commemorative booklet printed for this occasion and obtained for our parish library, can see Father.

+++ *The first **Pirohi Sale** of the new season will be on this Friday and Saturday, September 3 and 4. Worker's schedule is available in kitchen. Please*

LORD



TEACH
US

Attributes Of God

Great is the Lord and highly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable. Generation after generation praises your works and proclaims your might. They speak of the splendor of your glorious majesty and tell of your wondrous works. They discourse of the power of your terrible deeds and declare your greatness. They publish the fame of your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your justice. The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. The Lord is good to all and compassionate towards all of his works Psalms 145: 3 – 9.

...through all generations your years endure, of old you established the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They shall perish, but you remain though all of them grow old like a garment. Like clothing you change them, and they are changed, but you are the same, and your years have no end Psalms 102: 26 - 28.

Do you know how the clouds are banked, the wondrous work of him who is perfect in knowledge Job 37: 16?

Jesus looked at them and said, "For man it is impossible, but for God all things are possible" Matthew 19: 26.

For I will sing the Lord's renown. Oh, proclaim the greatness of our God! The Rock, how faultless are his deeds, how right all his ways! A faithful God, without deceit, how just and upright he is! Deuteronomy 32: 3, 4.

God is our refuge and our strength; an ever-present help in distress Psalms 46: 2.

Let the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer Psalms 19: 15.

Fourteenth Sunday

“Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Luke 5: 4. The disciples were weary of trying because their previous efforts only produced failure. They did not want to fail again. Momentarily, at least, they may have forgotten a truth, later enunciated by St. Paul, **“Let us not grow weary of doing good; if we do not relax our efforts, in due time we shall reap our harvest” Galatians 6: 9.**

The story is told of a priest who was much frustrated because the seed of a dream he had inside never bore fruit. From one discouragement to another, he seemed to plod, but every time he turned around, it seemed that our heavenly Father was giving him a reminder in the verse we just cited from the Galatian epistle. It came to him on greeting cards, it was on his prayer calendar. It seemed every time he turned around, he was confronted with the challenge of that message, but it did not sink in. He did not associate it with continued prayerful effort and patience with the grace of Christ. He was just like Peter in the gospel narrative, but not as demonstrative or immediately submissive to the Lord's will. That priest got tired of waiting and became angry with God. He thought, **“I do not want to hear the scriptural citation one more time. I am already weary of it all and I don't want to reap something later on; I want to reap it now!”**

Finally, after calming down, one day in his prayer life he had the good sense to ask, **“Alright, Father, what are you telling me?”** In the depth of his heart he heard our God speaking to him, **“Just keep on keeping on and you'll get there.”**

The truth is nobody can promise you that you will arrive at your destination in a week, or a year or after one trip around the mountain. The Israelites wandered in the desert around the mountain called Mount Seir for forty years making what was actually an eleven day journey. It was their faithlessness that kept them out of the Promised Land. They lost faith so many times, God would not allow them to achieve their goal. They did not have the identity needed; they did not have the credentials necessary; they did not keep alive the vibrant faith possessed when leaving the tyranny of Egypt. They were happy to be spiritually dead, so they all had to physically die first, so that a new

generation, raised and reared with a heart and soul full of faith would become what was necessary to enjoy an abundant life.

We all go through difficult trials or what might be called tests, or it may be ten or twenty if we are lucky, if we recognize our God has chosen to groom us for lofty tasks in fulfilling his will. You may have to put up with an obnoxious person or deal with three low lives. But you do not have to go through it on your own ability which is why so many fail. Our God is eager to also impart his strengthening grace to help us through the rough spots of life. His grace is His ability and strength to help us do what we cannot do without him, and it is freely imparted to all of us who truly belong to him .

If you are ever going to develop the potential God has put in you, you must make up your mind that you are not going to quit, regardless of the circumstances, no matter what, until you see manifested or made plain what God has placed in you. Otherwise, you die inside, in time are buried and you never know what God wanted with your life! Have you ever been convinced that your life will never change? Remember the dirty devil will tell you that over and over again because he wants you to quit, to give up and believe that you are always going to be in some mess. But don't be trapped by misbeliefs that stem from his lies. Imagine the hundreds of thousands of Israelites who were beguiled by the evil one and never saw paradise! There is one kind of person he can never defeat, the one who is not a quitter!

St. Paul teaches us, "You know that while all the runners in the stadium take part in the race, the award goes to one man. In that case, run so as to win. Athletes deny themselves all sorts of things. They do this to win a crown of leaves that withers, but we a crown that is imperishable" 1 Corinthians 9: 24, 25.

The question then remains for us, "How are we running the race? Because we ought to be running to win. The devil does not want us to win because he knows if you win, you will become a world changer. Your life will change, it will be elevated, which will cause many other lives to change for the better. If you develop your potential, you are not only going to have a positive effect on your own life, but that of someone else as well. That person will then go on and develop their potential and effect other lives and so on and so on.

St. Paul is telling us two things about running the race that makes us feel uncomfortable. First, he says that those who run to win conduct themselves temperately. That means they do not allow themselves to do everything they want to do, only what they should do, what they need to do. Second, he says that they restrict themselves in all things. That means they live a balanced life. There is no area of their life in which they are out of control.

To some of us, leading a balanced life may mean something as simple as going to bed at a decent hour so that we will not be tired the next day. It may mean cleaning our house even when we don't feel like it. It could mean undergoing our daily exercise regime even though the so-called spirit is not moving us in that direction. It may also mean that we continue to pray earnestly, trusting in God regardless of the dryness of soul we experience. Unfortunately, today we have in the life of the Church so many people who attempt to cast out devils who have never taken authority over a sink full of dirty dishes or who graciously accept overgrown lawns and untrimmed shrubbery on their property! How can a lazy man motivate someone to labor zealously for salvation when he is an abysmal failure in his own life?

If we wish to be masters of our own spiritual life, we have to get our own spiritual house in order before we can go and set the house of others or their lives on the road to perfection. We cannot give to others what we ourselves do not possess. We have to leave the shallow, murky waters which seem safe to us, and venture out into the deep, knowing the Lord will fulfill our needs and desires for salvation as He did for Peter in today's gospel narrative. We have to respond to the challenge of God for our lives. What kind of success or blessing can continued walking in mud bring to our lives?

There are many ways to prepare for spiritual leadership in our lives, in our homes, over our families, for the benefit of other souls. It involves making changes in our own daily living. With God's help and our own hard work and determination, we can break old habits that are hurting and hindering. New ways of approaching things are vital and healthy and will help make progress toward developing our potential and reaching our spiritual as well as worldly goals. Potential is a priceless treasure, just like gold. All of us have gold hidden within, but we have to work to dig it out, to find it, to manifest it and permit it to benefit us and others.

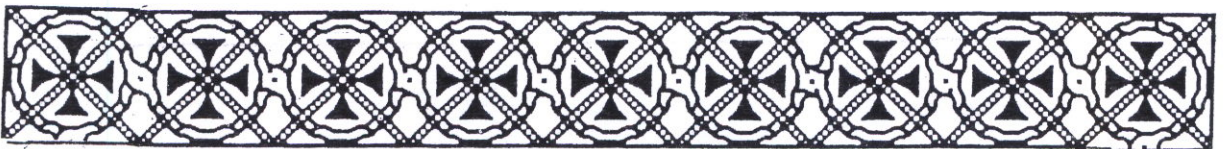
Receiving Communion

What poor person, even though he were at the point of starvation, would dare go to dine at a king's table unless he were invited? Such a thing is unthinkable. Yet the distance which separates us from our heavenly Father is far greater; how then do we dare approach our God in Communion? In truth, it is necessary that Jesus Christ, in his infinite mercy, should veil our eyes before we can do in regard to him what we would not do in regard to any great person on earth: we humbly and gratefully respond to his invitation and prepare ourselves for his divine banquet. We are not worthy but He embraces us and gently invites us forward to the heavenly banquet.

The true reason, then, for receiving Communion is the hunger one experiences for him. As this hunger becomes more acute because we even fast from all other nourishment to feel its urgency, we are impelled to sustain ourselves on his Body and Blood even more frequently. If we do not grow spiritually, if we are not becoming spiritually stronger, we are not eating enough, we are not imbibing sufficiently of the heavenly manna, or else we eat without appetite.

Arouse yourself soul, recognize your need at any rate, even if you cannot feel the hunger of love! For there is one hunger for the Eucharist which we can always experience, one desire we can always have. That is the desire of the sick person who awaits his physician, of one who burning with fever, begs for a drink of water. So each one of us, poor children of Adam, grievously wounded, appears before the Lord and says, "Lord, all I have is my misery and suffering; come and help me! Do not be revolted by the poverty of my pallet. I desire to receive you because I need your strength. Have pity on my misery!"

Such is the prayer of all who desire to live the spiritual life of Christ. Such is the sentiment of all who desire to receive Communion worthily. We who are poor and suffering; let our desire consequently be more forceful, even vehement. The Lord is happy to heal us when we show him our wounds! To us who come in need, the Lord is revolted at nothing.



Pilgrimage

Perhaps the earliest experience of Christian pilgrimage occurred on the road to Emmaus. St. Luke the angelic doctor simply writes, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scripture to us" Luke 24: 32?

Orthodox believers are eager to participate in pilgrimage each year. However, the opportunity for such prayerful and spiritual experience is not as readily available as it was to our forebears in our European homelands because we do not yet have as strongly established a Church as exists with monastic houses dotting the countryside abroad.

Any pilgrimage undertaken carries with it the underlying hope that one will encounter the sacred. Every human heart knowingly or unknowingly is animated by the hope to encounter and meet the risen and triumphant Lord along the way. At the core of the Emmaus story is the stranger, the chance encounter, the unexpected and overwhelmingly significant. To be pilgrim, to be on the road to Emmaus, calls us to welcome others, to share the meaningful stories of our lives and to listen attentively to those troubled and burdened.

We are all strangers and pilgrims on this earth seeking the Kingdom of God. As pilgrims we are not tourists; we are seekers of the eternal "city founded, designed and built by God" Hebrews 11: 10.

No matter how short the distance and familiar the route we travel on a given day, we can do it as a pilgrim and no matter how long the journey, or how sacred the destination, it is possible to be nothing more than a tourist. So we must think seriously about how we approach our travel for worship to church on Sundays and holydays as well. Whether the journey is within our own back yard or takes us to the other side of the world, the potential is there for the greatest of adventures: journey not only toward Christ, but with him!

In prayer life, we ought ask for a pilgrimage site in this country which will draw countless souls into its embrace so that spiritual lives are enriched and uplifted, that our God in Trinity is glorified and that Orthodoxy is exalted as the spiritual haven of the world. Then we ought support it with our presence of time and earthly treasure for the enrichment of souls.



*"The day will come when after
harnessing space, the winds, the
tides, and gravitation, we shall
harness for God the energies of love.
And on that day, for the second
time in the history of the world,
we shall have discovered fire."*



Did You Know That ...

...with God all things are possible?

...God made everything beautiful?

...the Lord watches between friends when they are away from each other?

...we should always give thanks to God for volunteers?

...a faithful friend is a sturdy shelter?

...our Creator calls us to make a difference in this world?

...if we start by doing what is necessary, we then do what is possible and suddenly we do the impossible?

...we can overcome difficulties by bending them gently over time?

...things may take time, but they will be well?

...success can be measured by obstacles overcome?

...the world is round so that holiness may encircle it?

...friends are God's way of taking care of us because they have a way of being there at the right time?

...we all take different paths in life, but no matter where we go, we take a little bit of each other everywhere with us?

...to have a friend takes time and loyalty?

...to always be aware of what God wants us to be and live that dignity of grace and glory is our purpose in life?

...at times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another believer?

...there are no accidents in our life; everything has a meaningful purpose?

"I AM NOT WORTHY TO UNDO THE STRAP OF HIS SANDAL"

St. John the Baptist played a vital role in the story of salvation for the human race. The son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, John lived his adult life as a recluse in the Judean wilderness. It had been foretold by the Archangel Gabriel that "... he would be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God." (Luke 1:15-16) It is no wonder then that many who heard him preach and came to the Jordan River to be baptized by him thought that he might be the long-awaited Messiah.

John, however, never lost sight of what his calling was. He had no "illusions of grandeur", for he fully understood that he was to be the "Forerunner of Christ" - the one who would prepare the world for the coming of the Savior. He was the "voice of one crying in the wilderness." Yes, John made it perfectly clear to all those who listened to his words: "There comes One after me who is mightier than I. I am not worthy to undo the strap of His sandal." (Mark 1:7) After baptizing Jesus - something that he thought himself unworthy to do - John was content to fade into the background and allow our Lord to begin His redemptive work.

As Christ embarked upon His Divine Mission, John continued to preach the message of repentance to all who would listen. Never afraid to speak the truth, John was arrested and cast into prison for criticizing King Herod for his adulterous relationship with his brother's wife Herodias. This eventually would lead to his execution by means of beheading.

St. John the Baptist is held in high esteem by our Holy Orthodox Church. The words of Christ Himself attest to the stature of this remarkable saint: "Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist." (Matthew 11:11)

Icon written in Greece by Miltiadis Afentoullis

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