

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 1, 2013

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

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Today we have festal anointing on the occasion of this past week's simple feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we reply, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ Pirohi Schedule for the next few months: September 14; October 12, November 1 and December 7. The Bake Sales will take place on November 22 and December 20. Order sheets are available in the kitchen.

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Anna, Ryan, Betty, Mary, Beth, Ann Helene, Delores, Claire Elizabeth, Debra and Michael.

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

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received last Sunday: Tithe Offering, \$503.00; Pennies From Heaven, \$1.00, Holyday, \$22.00; Candles, \$36.00; Food Coupons, \$560.00, for a total of \$1122.00, We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offer their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleanor Korba, Subdeacon Daniel & Marilyn Korba, Juliana Nederostek, Debra Szmaida, Maria Garcia and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a PENNIES FROM HEAVEN Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1695.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ Please be certain to see a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using Shop Rite Food Coupons available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite ALL to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5600.00 on this project to date!

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

+++ Please pray the Lord our God grants us an enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory.



God Is Jealous

I am the Lord, that is my name; I will not give my glory to another, or my praise to pictured images Isaiah 42: 8.

With part of it he makes a fire, and on the fire, he gets meat cooked and makes a full meal; he makes himself warm, and says Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire; and the rest of it he makes into a god, even his pictured image; he goes down on his face before it, giving worship to it, and making prayer to it, saying, be my saviour, for you are my god. they have no knowledge or wisdom, for he has put a veil over their eyes, so they may not see and on their hearts, so that they may not give attention. And no one takes note, no one has enough knowledge or wisdom to say, I have put part of it in the fire and made bread on it; I have had a meal of the flesh cooked with it; and am I now to make the rest of it into a false god? Am I to go down on my face before bit of wood? Isaiah 44: 16 – 19.

You shall worship no other god, for the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God Exodus 34: 14.

You must worship no other gods, but only the Lord; for he is a God who is passionate, about his relationship with you Exodus 34: 14.

The Lord is a holy and jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve other gods, he will turn against you and destroy you, even though he has been so good to you Joshua 24: 19, 20.

We must obey God rather than men! Acts of the Apostles 5: 29.

Our Noble Vocation

When our God created us and placed us in paradise, man, because he was innocent, was not made to die or become sick. What we call the preternatural gifts became our identifying mark. Neither illness nor death had authority over us in paradise. It is only after we disobeyed God's command that sickness and death entered the world.

We were bored with what we thought was the monotony of perfection so we embraced the dramatically changeable character of sickness, illness of all shades and sorts. In other words, we had a choice in the beginning and we chose illness and separation, fractured living, pain and a severe limitation on our lives in death.

Born free, we nevertheless chose captivity. Created healthy, we thought sickness was preferable. Made in the image of God, made whole and perfect, we determined broken living was better. Called to be a disciple of the Most High, we chose to follow after the devil. Invited to participate in the highest, we determined to live the lowest. And as man thinks, so he lives. What we thought we needed, we drifted towards and received, for as we think, we slowly but inevitably become. So separation and alienation has been our lot simply because we choose it, we decide it suits us better rather than fulfillment and completion with our Creator God.

We so many times repeatedly attempt bending God's law to suit our own needs, we actually break it and have to suffer the consequences. We are so involved in breaking God's ordinances we actually then come to think it is our vocation because it is our preoccupation. In all of His relations with us, our heavenly Father has repeatedly invited us to good health, to wholeness, to being His perfect disciples and followers. But we misuse our free will over and over again, falling repeatedly into the quagmire of violent sin and illness, to separation from Him, to choosing the low road of temporary worldly existence.

How often has our faith commitment become so diluted that like the ancient Israelites, we complain and even curse our God when things don't go our way after we decide to pursue a particular course of action, even though He warns us in advance how it will adversely affect us? Look carefully at the chosen people in the desert after leaving Egypt. They all wanted to escape because they were not only impoverished there, but made slaves of Pharaoh. Once they leave and experience some adverse conditions in the desert, they blame Moses for leading them astray and remind him it was better in Egypt with Pharaoh than in the desert with God. They did not have the unifying ability among themselves to leave so God gives them Moses, but they don't

like His choice. God gives them all they need, manna for food, even delectable pheasants because they complain and want diversity in their diet. He provides them with intimate leadership through hand-picked Moses guiding them in the pitfalls of desert dangerous living, even endowing him with heavenly authority so they cannot lose, but they always end up abject losers because of the choices they make.

He gives them ten commandments but they decide they are far more pleased with worshipping a huge hunk of gold shaped like a cow placed upon a stone in the wilderness. How sad then, is man's self-imposed condition, how desperate is he when nothing or no one can help him in all his needs!

Medical professionals can only go so far. Doctors and nurses can do their best to achieve some success, but it really is up to our God to provide the cure, the restoration to offer the wholeness man desperately needs. God calls us to Himself, He invites us to imitate His virtues and His values, even sending His only-begotten Son into the world to enrich us with personal exalted and elevated attention.

But because of our free will, we decide we know better than the God Who created us. Just as God sent Moses to lead us out of slavery in sin, so He continually sends us prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah to remind us of our frailty that we eagerly flee sinful living and literally run into the embracing awaiting arms of our God. Do not our bishops, priests and deacons serve the same purpose? Didn't the prophets warn the Old Testament people if they continued to rebel against God, if they determined to continue questioning His authority, they would find their wishes realized and they would live with their oppressors? Because they chose to become so spiritually impoverished, they could not comprehend the perfect advice, the perfect message from the perfect omnipotent God because their imperfection had reached such an astounding low level. They were no longer able to relate to the source of their life. It was only when they realized in the Persian and Babylonian captivities they chose for themselves that they were created for better, that they were destined for better, that they repented and asked God's forgiveness.

How eagerly He responds, how happily He provides what they need. Finally Christ comes and heals them, restores them to their original creation. Now that the Holy Spirit has gathered us together at this healing service, we witness personally to His goodness. Let us learn from our overview of salvation history. Let us be aroused in faith commitment ever more. Let us return to our roots spiritually and seek wholeness which we are destined to live and experience. Let us abandon the pursuit which leads us foolishly to separation and sickness. Let us approach with fullness of heart and soul the healing hand of God through the intercession of St. Nectarios.

Prayer Before
Writing An Icon

O Divine Lord of all that exists,
You have enlightened the
Apostle and Evangelist
Luke with your
Holy Spirit, thereby
enabling Him to represent your most
Holy Mother,
she who held You in her arms and said:
"The grace of Him Who has been
born of me
is spread throughout the world."

Enlighten and direct my soul, my heart
and my spirit.
Guide the hands of your
unworthy servant
so that I may worthily and
perfectly portray
in your icon, that of your Mother, and all
the saints the glory, joy and adornment
of your holy Church.

Forgive my sins and the sins of those
who will venerate this icon and who,
kneeling devoutly before it,
accord homage to those they represent.

Protect them from all evil and
instruct them
with good counsel.
This I ask through the
Intercession of your most Holy Mother,
the Apostle Luke, and all the saints.

Amen.



The dove of
peace still finds
the world
covered with the
waters of hate
and jealousy.

As the sufferings
of christ
abound in us +
so also through
christ.
Does our
comfort abound

For the Benefit of Pilgrims

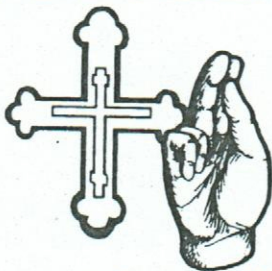
We provide ritual prayers for those who wish to avail themselves of the blessings and heavenly grace afforded souls on pilgrimage during this season when the diocese provides opportunities to pilgrims to grow in Christ.

Prayer On Arrival

O Mother of the Passion, although unworthy of your intercession, but with faith in our heavenly Father, we hasten to your holy icon to praise you and to seek your prayerful intercession.

As we come here to praise you; we hasten to honor you. We bow before your holy icon to venerate your cooperation with divine grace. Do not let us forget our unworthiness. We do not make excuse of our weakness. We have only one desire, to praise you as your faithful servants.

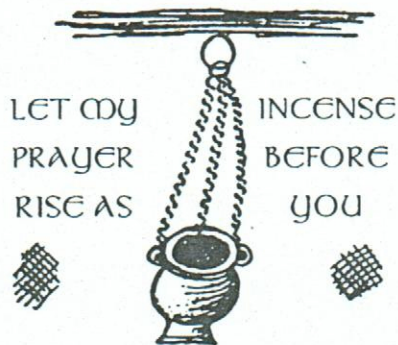
Pilgrim then goes forward to venerate the Holy Cross and be blessed with sanctified water.



Priest: Let us pray to the Lord. Response: Lord, have mercy.

O Lord, our God, You have brought these pilgrims to this holy place in safety; now may they leave in peace. We thank You for your presence and blessings during this time of pilgrimage, for letting the light of your face shine upon them. Strengthened in faith commitment and renewed in fidelity, your people now prepare to return to their homes. Accompany them on their journey, Lord, as You accompanied your servants on the road to Emmaus. Grant them a safe road and peace and health in the coming year. For You, O Lord, are the Giver of all good gifts, and we render glory to You, together with your eternal Father, and your all-holy and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Pilgrims come forward and venerate the Holy Cross and be blessed with holy water.



Prayer on Departure

I rejoiced because they said to me, we will up to the house of the Lord. And now we have set foot within your gates, O Jerusalem - Jerusalem, built as a city with compact unity...Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May those who love you prosper! May peace be within your walls, prosperity in your buildings. Because of my relatives and friends, I will say: 'Peace be within you!' Because of the House of the Lord, Our God, I will pray for your good. Excepted from Psalm 122.

Icons link humanity with the Divine

"How can we make an image of the invisible God? How can we represent that which has no quantity, no height, no limits? What form are we going to assign to that which is without form? What then do we do with this mystery? If you understand that the bodiless One became man for you, then it should be evident that you can make His human image. Since the invisible One became visible by taking on flesh, you can fashion the image of Him Whom you see...Therefore paint on wood and present for contemplation Him Who desired to become visible" St. John Damascene: "On Divine Images."

In our homes we honor those we love. We place their picture in a prominent place for all to see. We remember them and how much they are a part of our lives. Their pictures are constant reminders to us and to all who come into our homes. As our homes are the centers of our lives, they are a reflection of all we live for and believe in.

We do the very same with icons. Among Eastern Christians, it is

customary for every family to place icons in a prominent place in the home. To foster continuing respect and reverence for God's presence through the icon, we create an icon corner. This becomes the place of family prayer and devotion. We gather in the icon corner and so are in the presence of God. By praying together in this way, the family grows in faith and understanding of God's love in our lives.

The icon corner becomes an expression of our faith and a center for our prayer and devotion in our homes. In addition to the icons in this corner, people often add a copy of Scripture, a family prayer book and a burning candle which is a sign of reverence and respect and also brings the icon to life for us.

As we stand in silence before the icon, we grow in appreciation of its spiritual expression. Reading about icons is not enough, prayerful effort is required to sense inwardly the holiness of the icon. As the icon is a spiritual form of faith expression, it carries us beyond physical matter into the presence of

the person depicted. It raises our consciousness to a new level, to the life of the Kingdom of God, where we begin to understand according to the spirit and not according to the flesh. In this manner we are able to speak about the icon bringing us into the presence of God.

We venerate icons with the same fullness of honor shown the Book of Gospels and the Cross. We do not worship icons, rather as St. Basil the Great teaches us, the honor that we exhibit toward them passes to the person who is represented and ultimately to God through whose grace sanctity is achieved. They are the symbol of our relationship with God and the reverence we show to them is shown to God.

Icons which have deep roots in the spiritual tradition of the Eastern Church are painted or written according to strict structural rules that guide the iconographer. Because they are means of spiritual revelation; they offer us a glimpse into the Divine Mystery and serve as gentle, colorful guides toward an encounter with our Maker God.

Because it is an inspired spiritual form of expression, - one which attempts to portray the spiritual dimensions of the soul and the body it animates, and not the physiognomy alone - iconography

is quite different from standard art. Unlike statues and so-called realistic paintings, which attempt to achieve the mere likeness of the physical body alone, the icon represents the successful attempt to present the values of the soul spiritually manifested in the body. Its goal is to carry us into the engaging presence of the person or event depicted; It captivates and expresses enduring spiritual qualities. In this way it is an aid to prayer and meditation, a sign of our precious faith, and always within the realm of faith and teaching of the Body of Christ.

Of course we necessarily find icons in our churches that serve as the meeting place between God and man, where we experience God's presence because we are surrounded by the glorified luminaries whose sole pursuit in life was holiness and sanctification. The icon is a visible sign of God's relationship with humanity. Christ, the fullness of this relationship is the icon, "the image of the invisible God" Colossians 1: 15. It is He Who leads us to the Father. The icon screen placed between the sanctuary and the nave is an expression of this unity: God and the believer. The icons of Christ, that of the Birthgiver of God, and the all the saints remind us that we are created anew in the image of Christ. Icons invite us into the presence of God.

Did You Know That ...

...some are very serious about becoming superficial people?

...it is impossible to enjoy laziness unless there is a great deal of work to do?

...work can be much more fun than fun?

...there is more to life than having everything?

...the wages of sin are mostly unreported?

...every generation laughs at the old fashions but religiously follows the new?

...war is a series of catastrophes that results in victory?

...the best way to keep one's word is not to give it?

...even a fool can make a good suggestion?

...some get their exercise by acting as pallbearers for those who exercise?

...if you quit worrying about your health, it will go away?

...smoking is one of the leading causes of various statistics?

...to be on a seafood diet does not mean to see food and eat it?

...the trouble with life in the fast lane is that you get to the other end in an awful hurry?

...the brotherhood of man is not a mere poet's dream; it becomes reality under the Fatherhood of God?

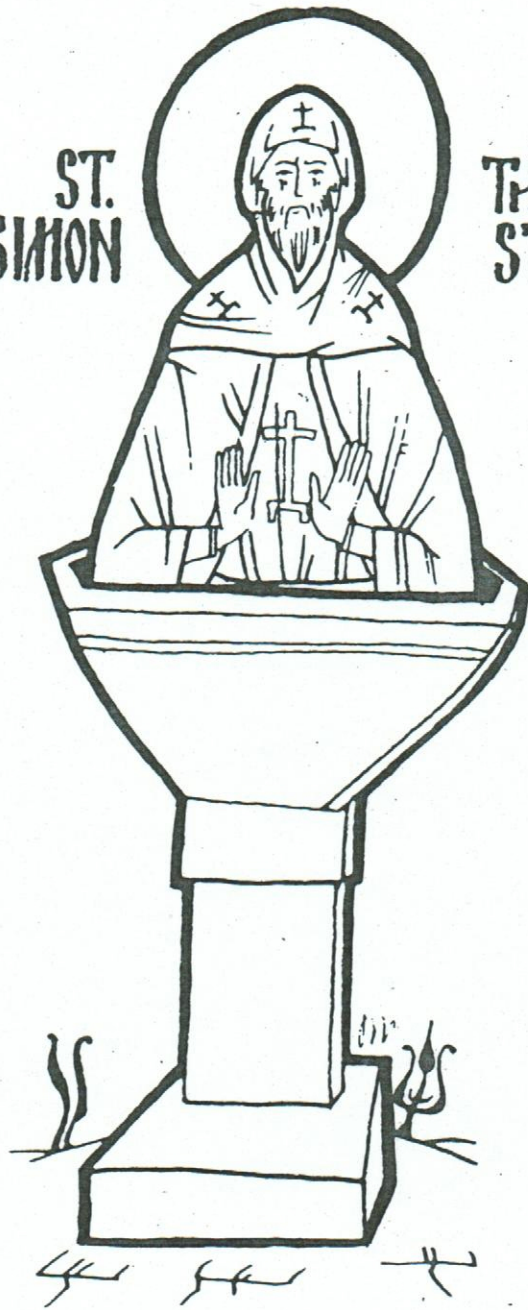
...our ignorance of history makes us libel our own times?

...the big cities of America are becoming Third World countries?

...when a book and a head collide and there is a hollow sound, is it always from the book?

ST.
SIMON

THE
STYLITE



Preoccupation with the world and its demands on our life is not quite as important as we so many times like to think. So, it is good that from time to time, we hear a voice crying out in the desert inviting us to renunciation and penitence as we do on the first day of the liturgical year. This call has never ceased being heard, even in our day. In honoring the saint on this day, our blessed Church is making a dramatic statement that it neither disowns nor abandons heroic virtue in the souls of those called by God to a glorious eternity.

Of course the world does not understand and never will; it either jeers or is indignant and so reveals itself to belong to that class of which our Lord addressed Himself when He said: "I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for what you have hidden from the learned and the clever you have revealed to the merest children" Matthew 11: 25.

So, at the outset of a New Year, of newly offered life, believers are reminded where their primary loyalty of soul ought to lie. They should be preoccupied with attaining heaven and spend the best portion of their spiritual energy in its pursuit. We are not necessarily called upon to participate in such dramatic and herculean efforts as St. Simeon Stylite, but our objective, our goal and our purpose must be identically the same.

"You became a pillar of endurance, and rivaled the forefathers, O Holy One, becoming like Job in your sufferings, like Joseph in your trials, like the bodiless angels though you lived in the flesh. O Simeon, our holy father, intercede with Christ God that he may save our souls" Kontakion of St. Simeon Stylite.



Ecclesiastical New Year

According to Orthodox Tradition, September 1 is the first day of the new Church Year. It is called the "beginning of the indiction" which word means "to impose" in Latin with the inference of directing someone to do something. It was first applied in imposing taxes in Egypt. The Roman Emperor Diocletian extended the system of taxing conquered people to the entire Roman Empire.

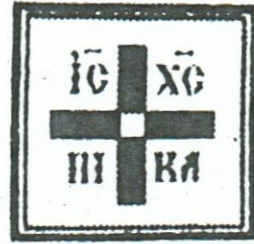
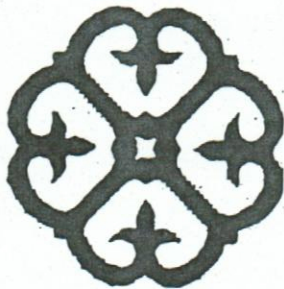
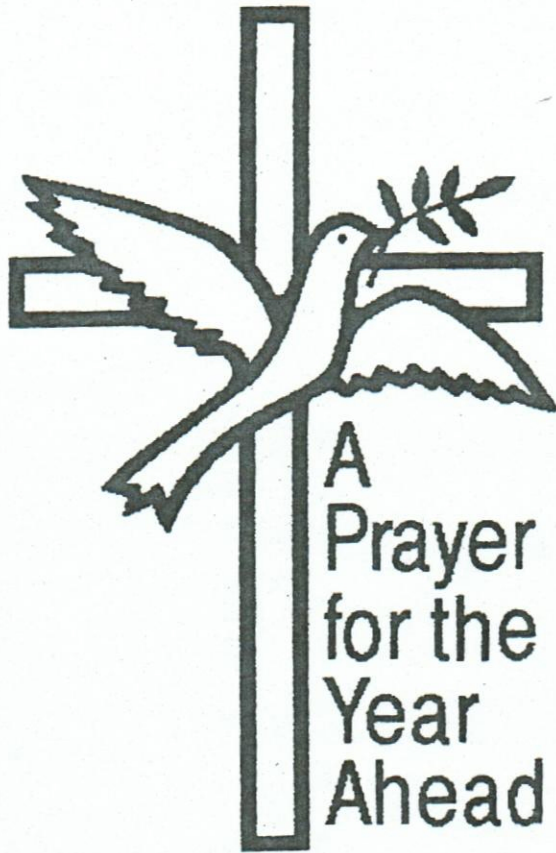
The first world-wide indiction, originated with Emperor Constantine the Great in 312 AD when he saw the miraculous vision of the Sign of the Cross in the skies. The Church assumed and picked this day to begin its calendar year for various reasons.

Prior to Julian calendar usage, the Romans began their year on September 1. Once the Julian calendar was composed and pursued, the year began in January and ended in December. Many years later, the Gregorian calendar took its place because the Julian calendar had fallen 13 days behind. Today the world employs the Gregorian computation calendar.

According to Tradition, it was on September 1 that Jesus first entered the Jewish Synagogue (Luke 4), to preach his introductory initial message to mankind. Jesus quoted from the 61st chapter of the book of Isaiah. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the meek; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive and the opening of prisons to them who are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the year of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn."

Tradition also tells us it was during the month of September that the Chosen People finally entered the Promised Land to begin a new life on earth.

It has always been accepted within the believing community that the month of September is the time to gather the harvest from the growth of summer months and prepare for the beginning of the winter months. At the start of a new year, hymnographers also prepared beautiful hymns to be sung during divine worship. These hymns were offered to Almighty God so that we might receive his blessings through the course of the coming year.



God grant us this year a wider view,
So we see others' faults through the eyes
of You;
Teach us to judge not with hasty tongue,
Neither the adult ... nor the young.
Give us patience and grace to endure
And a stronger faith so we feel secure;
And instead of remembering, help us forget
The irritations that caused us to fret.
Freely forgiving for some offense
And finding each day a rich recompense,
In offering a friendly, helping hand
And trying in all ways to understand,
That all of us whoever we are ...
Are trying to reach "an unreachable star."
For the great and small ... the good and bad,
The young and old ... the sad and glad,
Are asking today, "Is life worth living?"
And the answer is only in "loving" and
"giving."
For only "Love" can make man kind
And Kindness of Heart brings Peace of
Mind,
And by giving love we can start this year
To lift the clouds of hate and fear.

TESTING OUR CHARACTER, TO MAKE US STRONGER

I am sure we've all heard the phrase "WORST POSSIBLE SCENARIO." It is often used to describe circumstances and situations that are seemingly bleak. It may be used to describe one's health, or perhaps a catastrophic personal tragedy. For some, a huge financial loss may qualify. For others, the phrase may be used to explain feelings experienced when dealing with the death of a loved one. In any event, a "worst possible scenario" frequently leaves us with a feeling of hopelessness.

For Orthodox Christians, however, hopelessness is NEVER an option. With the grace of God, we firmly believe that even the most dreadful scenario can be changed and improved. The Scriptures bear witness to this truth. The Israelites in the Old Testament, after finally being freed from Egyptian slavery, wandered in the desert for 40 years, causing some to question why Moses had brought them into the wilderness to die. What could

have been worse than this? Yet Moses had great faith, and ultimately the Israelites found their home in the "promised land."

After enjoying a life of abundance and prosperity, Job suffered a series of "worst possible scenarios," losing his family, his land and his health. Because he refused to blame God for his tribulations, he was rewarded with more than he had before his life took that dramatic change for the worse.

Could there be a greater "worst possible scenario" than our Lord's Crucifixion? Our entire faith is based upon the darkness of Good Friday becoming the Light of the Resurrection on Pascha.

The solution is to embrace God. He will always provide us with the necessary strength to see us through any tribulation. If we place our trust in God, the possibility is great that our burdens will be lightened by the One Who truly knows our pain.