



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

September 7, 2008

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

+++ Monday is the solemn feast of the Nativity of the Birthgiver of God. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise. This is one of the twelve major feasts of the Church at which all should be gathered in worship. The celebration will be concluded with prayers for the sick and anointing with the oil of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker.

+++ Today we have festal anointing on the occasion of this past week's celebration of the Indiction, the beginning of the new liturgical year. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we respond, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ A number of people have inquired about Scripture Classes in the fall. There is a signup sheet in the kitchen. Please advise us if you will participate on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM. We will have copies of the new translation of the Orthodox Bible available for our faithful. This is an important apostolate and opportunity for adults to learn more about our precious Orthodox faith. The Bible is the text of our faith and we should be aware of what it teaches and contains. Orthodoxy gave the Bible to the world, so others should not outshine us. We urge all to seriously think about this, pray about it and commit to learning together by the grace of the Holy Spirit. These classes are open to non-parishioners as well. Bring along a friend!

+++ 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, \$1,100; Candles, \$100; Food Coupons, \$100; Holyday, \$100; Pennies From Heaven, \$100; Refund, \$100; Christian Fellowship, \$100; Building fund, \$100; Kitchen, \$100, for a total of \$1,800. 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 38 adults and 14 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: Debra Szmaida, Pani Lucas, Father Lucas, Paul Szmaida, Robert Gorbich, Kent & Robin Pasquino, Maria Garcia, and Pani Buletza.

+++ The first PIROHI SALE of the season was held yesterday. We sincerely thank all who assisted to make it a success. Our continuing prayer is that the Lord continues to bless our beloved faithful with good health for Many & Blessed Years.

+++ 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 \$1,000 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ Our religious education program will commence on Sunday, September 28. The Jesus School Classes will be held following the Divine Liturgy each Sunday.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$1,000. 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 \$4400.00 on this project to date!

+++ Please see **Marilyn Korba** to sign up for the **Alaskan Cruise** next **August, 2009** as well as for starting a new **Ten Week Club**.

+++ On **Sunday, September 21**, we will have our **Parish Picnic** in the **Picnic grove** of the property. Please sign up in the kitchen for the food donation you will make so we can make it a success and enjoyable as well. Please make every effort to be present and participating on that day.

+++ We are appreciative of the kind thoughtfulness of the **Putch Family** in sponsoring our **Web Site** this month of **September**. Our prayer is that the **Lord** will continue to bless them with good health for **Many & Blessed Years!**

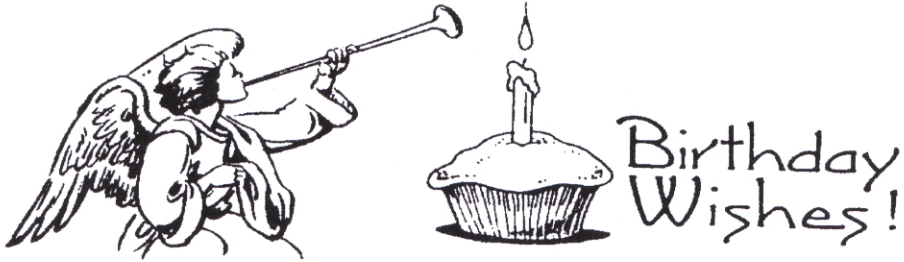
+++ We express our sincere condolences and sympathies to our good parishioners, **Bill & Helen Karpiak** and the recent death of her brother, **+Michael**. We pray the merciful **Lord** continues to console them and loved ones in their loss and that He grants a blessed repose to the soul of **+Michael** and creates for him **Eternal Memory!**

+++ We sincerely acknowledge the kind generosity of **Deacon Kenneth Ellis and Family** for sponsoring the bulletin this month of **September**. We pray the gracious **Lord** continues to bless them with good health for **Many & Blessed Years!**

+++ Accompanied by a parish bank draft amounting to ~~\$7000.00~~, application was made for **Site Plan** approval to the **Planning Board** of the **Township of Freehold** recently. An additional check for **\$540.00** was also sent to the **Zoning Board**. This past week we dispatched a check for **\$1350.00** to the **Freehold Township District Soil Conservation Board** which plans a visit to our property. A **\$300.00** check was sent to the **State of N, J.** for recording our agreement not to build anything else on the property but the church and parish center. The **County Planning Board** advises it has no jurisdiction since we are not on a county road. A new well will have to be dug for the building program. Prayers are needed as in the past. We were advised we will be invited to the next meeting of the **Township Planning Board**.

+++ **The Thanksgiving Bake Sale** will take place on **Friday and Saturday, November 14 and 15** while that for the **Nativity of our Lord** will be held **Thursday and Friday, December 12 and 13**. **Cookies** will be available at the **Nativity Bake Sale**.

+++ 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!



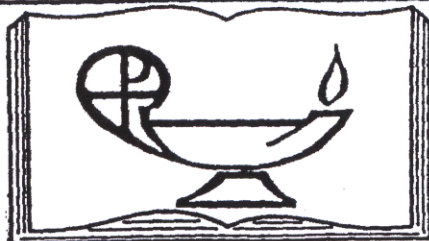
We are pleased to greet those of our faithful communicants who celebrate their birthday this month. Our Lord has offered these souls yet another year of blessed life. The most obvious way He blesses us and participates in our life is by sharing His divine life with us in the Eucharist at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Thus we can gather together and offer thanks to Him for yet another year of life blessed by His most gracious hands. Today, we prayerfully remember in the Divine Liturgy the following souls who celebrate their birthday during the month of September.

September 19 Father Deacon Kenneth Ellis

With a prayerful heart and grateful soul, our parish faith community asks the Lord to continue to bless these birthday celebrants with good spiritual and physical health for the coming year. We invite all to add their intercessory prayers so that with one voice and one heart we may also participate in the grace and joy of their celebration. As we wish them a happy and blessed celebration of their birthday, our ardent prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless them for

Many and Blessed Years!

LORD



TEACH
US

GOD'S PROMISES

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God and faith in me. In my Father's house there are many mansions; otherwise how could I have told you that I was going to prepare a place for you? I am indeed going to prepare a place for you, and then I shall come back to take you with me, that where I am, you may also be. You know the way that leads to where I go John 14: 1 – 3.

Show us O Lord your kindness and grant us your salvation Psalms 85: 8.

Peace is my farewell to you, my peace is my gift to you, I do not give it to you as the world gives peace John 14: 27.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will bring your mortal bodies to life also, through his Spirit dwelling in you Romans 8: 11.

There are different gifts but the same Spirit, there are different ministries but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one the Spirit gives wisdom in discourse, to another the power to express knowledge. Through the Spirit one receives faith; by the same Spirit another is given the gift of healing, and still another, miraculous powers. Prophecy is given to one; to another power to distinguish one spirit from another. One receives the gift of tongues, another that of interpreting the tongues. But it is one and the same Spirit who produces all these gifts, distributing them to each as he wills 1 Corinthians 12: 4 – 11.

In him who is the source of my strength I have strength for everything Philippians 4: 13.

Thinking Like A Servant

My servant Caleb thinks differently and follows me completely Numbers 14: 24.

Think of yourselves the way Christ thought of himself Philippians 2: 5.

Serving starts in our mind, in the depth of our soul.

To be a servant requires a mental shift, a change in our attitudes, a realignment of our soul and its values. God is always interested in *why* we do something more than in what we do. Attitudes count more than achievements. King Amaziah lost God's favor because *he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not with a true heart* 2 Chronicles 25: 2. He did the right thing for the wrong reasons. Real servants serve the Lord God with a mindset of specific attitudes.

Servants think more about others than about themselves. Servants focus on others, not on themselves. This is true humility: not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less. They are self-forgetful. St. Paul teaches, *Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand This is what it means to ...lose your life* Philippians 2: 4 forgetting ourselves in service to others. When we stop focusing on our own needs, we become aware of the needs around us.

Jesus emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant Philippians 2: 7. When was the last time you emptied yourself for the benefit of someone else? You cannot be a servant if you are full of yourself. It is only when we forget ourselves that we do the things that deserve to be remembered.

Unfortunately, a lot of our service is often self-serving. We serve to get others to like us, to be admired, or to achieve our own goals. This is manipulation not service. The whole time we are really thinking about ourselves and how noble and wonderful we are. Some people try to use service as a bargaining tool with God. "I will do this for you God, if you will do something for me." Real servants do not try to use God for their purposes. This is God-abuse. They instead should permit God to use them for *his* purpose.

The quality of self-forgetfulness, like faithfulness, is extremely rare. One of all the people St. Paul knew, Timothy was the only example of true and genuine service he could point to. *I have*

no one quite like him for genuine interest in whatever concerns you Philippians 2: 20. Thinking like a servant is quite difficult because it challenges the basic problem of our lives: we are by nature selfish. We think too much about ourselves. That is why humility is a daily struggle, a lesson we must learn over and over again. The opportunity to be a servant confronts us dozens of times each day in which we face choices to decide between meeting our needs or the needs of others. Self-denial is the core of servanthood. Do we join in the worship of God each time we have the opportunity in our parish? Do we deny our own freedom to ally it with the love of God? Do we invest ourselves and our time and effort in the values and purposes of God? When we absent ourselves it is because we choose our own selfishness as more important than the glory of our God!

We can measure our servant's heart by how we respond when others treat us as servants. How do we react when we are taken for granted, bossed around, or treated as an inferior? God's revelation to us teaches, *If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life* Matthew 5: 41.

Servants think like stewards, not owners. Servants remember that God owns it all, everything. Not even the unwanted dandruff on your shoulders is yours; it is God's! A steward is a servant entrusted to manage an estate, the belongings of another. Joseph was this kind of servant as a prisoner in Egypt. Potiphar entrusted Joseph with his home. Then the jailer entrusted Joseph with his jail's inmates. Eventually, Pharaoh entrusted the entire nation to him. Servanthood and stewardship go together. God expects us to be trustworthy in both. ***Men should regard us as servants of Christ and administrators of the mysteries of God. The one thing required of such servants is that they be faithful to their master*** 1 Corinthians 4: 1, 2.

To become a real servant we have to settle the issue of money in our lives. Jesus said, ***No servant can serve two masters...You cannot serve both God and money*** Luke 16: 13. It is impossible to do both. He did not say, *You should not*, emphatically it is *You cannot*. Living to serve and living for money are two mutually exclusive goals. Which one do we choose? If we are servants of the Lord, we cannot moonlight for ourselves. *All* our time and effort belongs to God. He insists on an exclusive allegiance, not part time secondary, even tertiary fidelity.

Money has the greatest potential to replace God in life. More people are sidetracked from serving God to materialism than by anything else. They say, "After I achieve my financial goals, I will serve God." This is an absurdly foolish decision because when they have served their financial goals, there is nothing left with which to serve God. When Christ is our Master, money only serves us, but if money is our master, we become its slave. Wealth is certainly not a sin, but a blessing, but failing to use it for God's glory is the worst of sins. Wealth can be a door opener to paradise if its value is understood and invested in God's glory. Servants of God are

always more concerned about serving, about ministry, than money. Do you notice the glee in the voice of the person who is only money oriented? And the gloom they express in providing service for God? Yes, they will do things for others, even their own flesh and blood, perhaps, but only insofar as it is a reflection of their own great goodness and generosity!

Scripture is very clear. Our God can use your money to determine your faithfulness as a servant. That is why Jesus talked more about money than He ever did about heaven or hell. He said, *If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?* Luke 16: 11? How we manage and spend our money affects how much God is able to bless our life!

There are two kinds of people: Kingdom builders and Wealth builders. Both are gifted at making a business enterprise grow, making deals or sales, and making a profit. Wealth builders continue to amass wealth for themselves no matter how much they make, but Kingdom builders change the rules of the game. They still try to make as much money as they can, but they do it in order to give it away for God's glory. They use the wealth to fund God's church and its mission in the world.

Servants think about their work, not what others are doing. Servants of God do not compare, criticize or compete with other servants. They are too busy doing the work God has given them to achieve. Comparison between God's servants is illogical for many reasons. We are all on the same team; our goal is make God look good, to ourselves; we have been given different assignments; and we are all uniquely gifted for a particular purpose. St. Paul reminds us *We will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original* Galatians 5: 26.

Between servants, there is no place for petty jealousy. When we are busy serving, we do not have time to be critical. Any time spent criticizing others is time and effort that could be invested serving. When Martha complained to Jesus that Mary was not helping with the work, she lost her servant's heart. Real servants do not complain of unfairness, do not have pity parties, and do not resent those not serving. They trust God and keep serving. Because God will attend to the unfaithful servant on his own terms.

It is not our job to evaluate the Master's other servants. Our Lord taught us, *Who are you to criticize someone else's servants? The Lord will determine whether his servant has been successful or a failure* Romans 14: 4. It is also not our job to defend ourselves against criticism. Let our Master handle it because we follow the example of Moses, who showed true

humility in the face of opposition as did Nehemiah whose response to critics was only *"My work is too important to stop now and ...visit with you"* Nehemiah 6: 3.

If we serve like Jesus, we can expect to be criticized. The world, even much of the Church, does not understand what God values. One of the most beautiful acts of love shown to Jesus was criticized by the disciples. Mary took the most valuable thing she owned, expensive perfume and poured it over Jesus. Her lavish service was called a *waste* by the disciples, but Jesus called it *significant* Matthew 26: 10. Our service to Christ is never wasted regardless of what the limited minds of others say.

Servants base their identity in Christ. Those who belong to the world cannot understand this because they remember they are loved and accepted by grace, servants of the Lord do not have to prove their worth. They are valuable. They willingly accept jobs that insecure people would consider "beneath" them. One of the most profound examples of serving from a secure self-image is Jesus' washing the feet of his disciples. Washing feet was the equivalent of being a shoeshine boy; a job devoid of any status. But Jesus knew who He is, so the task does not threaten his self-image. Scripture says, *Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power and that he had come from God...so he got up from the meal and took off his outer clothing and wrapped a towel around his waist* John 13: 3, 4.

If we are to be servants, we must settle our identity in Christ. Only secure people can serve. Insecure people are always worrying about how they appear to others. They fear exposure of their weaknesses and hide beneath layers of protective pride and pretensions. The more insecure we are, the more we will want people to serve us, and the more we will need their approval.

In order to be of service to others we have to die to them; that is, we have to give up measuring our meaning and value with the yardstick of others...thus we become free to be fully compassionate. When we base our worth and identity on our relationship with Christ, we are freed from the expectations of others, and that allows us to really serve best.

Servants do not need to cover their walls with plaques and awards and recognitions to validate their labors of love. They do not insist on being addressed by titles and they do not wrap themselves in robes of superiority. Servants find status symbols unnecessary and they do not measure their worth by their achievements. Paul reminds us, *You may brag about yourselves but the only approval that counts is the Lord's approval* 2 Corinthians 10: 18.

If anyone had the chance of a lifetime to flaunt his connections and name-drop, I was St. James, the half-brother of Jesus. He had the credentials of growing up with Jesus as his brother. Yet, in

introducing his letter, he simply refers to himself as *...a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ* James 1: 1. The closer we get to Christ, the less we need to promote ourselves.

Servants find serving a glorious opportunity, not an obligation. Such souls enjoy serving people, meeting need, and providing service. *They serve the Lord with gladness* Psalms 100: 2. Why do they serve with gladness? Because they love the Lord; they are grateful for his grace; they know serving is the highest use of life; and they know God has promised a reward. Our Lord tells us, *The Father will honor and reward and anyone who serves me* John 12: 26. Paul does not let us forget, *He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other Christians* Hebrews 6: 10.

Imagine what would happen if only ten percent of all believers in the world got serious about their role as real servants! Imagine what would happen if only ten percent of all priests, religious and deacons would take seriously their vocation! Imagine all the good that could be done! It does not matter what age we have attained, we can be one of those devoted few. Our God will gladly use our talents if we begin to act and think like servants. The only really happy and fulfilled people are those who have learned how to serve.



*When have you, like the poor widow,
given sacrificially to God?*



*Does God have your best,
your all—or is there something
that you're withholding?*

Did You Know That ...

...if we do not look to Christ today, we may be lost forever?

...the good life is found in the richness of God?

...love is at the heart of obedience?

...we should live so that others will be impelled to want to know Jesus too?

...we have nothing to boast of except that we are dearly loved by God?

...when the sunshine of God's love meets the showers of our sorrow, the rainbow of promise appears?

...whatever does not begin with God ends in failure?

...God never makes a promise He does not keep?

...in the twinkling of an eye, we shall all be changed?

...Christ taught us to believe in salvation received and heaven gained?

...worry is a burden God never intended us to bear?

...no one who follows Christ will ever stray from God?

...true love has no strings attached?

...we should be what God intends us to be and not pretend to be what we are not?

...our dearest friend is but a shadow compared to Jesus?

...no one is too old to witness for Christ?

...we ought not despair because of evil since God will have the last word?

...the love of God transforms prodigal sons into precious saints?

SAINT SIMEON THE STYLITE

We all know about publicity seekers, who climb trees, towers and even skyscrapers to draw attention to a particular cause. But have you ever heard of a man living on top of a pillar 60 feet high and 5 feet wide for 37 years – and doing so to ESCAPE attention? This man is a famous saint of the Orthodox Church: St. Simeon the Stylite.

Simeon was born in Syria near the end of the 4th century. He became a monk at the age of 18, and settled in a remote region some 16 miles from the city of Aleppo near a road leading to Antioch. After spending a number of years in a monastery, Simeon began practicing a form of asceticism unheard of until then. In the year 422 A.D. at the age of 32, he started to build a stone column. The pillar started out being a mere 3 feet off the ground, but

gradually, reached the unbelievable height of 60 feet! Night and day, in all types of weather, Simeon remained on his perch, spending his time in prayer. Simeon could only stand or sit – he could never lie down on top of his precarious “home.” It is said that one Lent, he spent the first 20 days standing; the second 20 seated in meditation. While Simeon ascended his pillar to be alone with the Lord, he understandably drew a tremendous amount of attention. He literally attracted thousands of visitors, who first came to see him out of curiosity, but later to hear his timely words and fervent prayers. St. Simeon fell asleep in the Lord in 459 A.D. Resisting the pleas of many of his followers – including his own mother – to descend from his self-imposed “prison,” he kept his vow to never come down until his death.