

# Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 13, 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

+++ We sincerely thank all the good souls for securing orders, coming to make the Pirohi and distributing them. We continue to offer intercessory prayers for all who love the beauty of the House of God as we commend them to good health for Many & Blessed Years!



+++ Every Monday, we have prayerful devotions before the Myrrh bearing icon at 6:00 PM. Everyone is invited to be present in praise. The Birthgiver invites us to manifest our faith in response to her first shown love. Invite your friends and neighbors to join us.

+++ Pirohi Schedule for the next few months November 1 and December 7. The Bake Sales will take place on November 22 and December 20. Order sheets are available in the kitchen. Preparations will take place Thursday morning at 7:00 AM. We ask all to solicit orders to assure success.

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Anna, Ryan, 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, \$364.00; Candles, \$41.00; Holyday, \$18.00, for a total of \$423.00, 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, Marilyn Korba 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 \$1708.00 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 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.

+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

LORD



TEACH  
US

### God Is Intimate

*What is the price of five sparrows? A couple of pennies? Not much more than that. Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And he knows the number of hairs on your head! Never fear, you are far more valuable to him than a whole flock of sparrows* Luke 12: 6, 7.

*He will sit and judge like a refiner of silver, watching closely as the dross is burned away. He will purify our lives refining them like gold or silver* Malachi 3: 3.

*But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him* 1 Corinthians 6: 17.

*For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the Church, because we are members of his body* Ephesians 5: 29, 30.

*The glory that you gave me, I have given them, so that they may be one as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me* John 17: 22, 23.

*The Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thought* 1 Chronicles 28: 9.

*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes* Revelation 21: 4.

*If God so clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you? Your heavenly Father knows what you have need of. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given you* Matthew 6: 32, 33.



## How To Form A Christian Conscience

In order to have a good conscience the believer must genuinely seek the truth and make judgments in accordance with that same truth.

### Why Is Conscience Important?

In life we face many situations that require judgments of conscience. We must honestly and uprightly give expression to the faith of Christ we profess to practice. Should we attend the attempted wedding of a relative who is getting married outside the Church? Should we give support to someone who is violating the law of God? Can we discontinue medical treatment for a dying mother or father? Are we obliged to report a fellow worker who is stealing money from the company?

Faced with such questions, we are often advised to follow our conscience. In our nation, as citizens we often hear we should vote our conscience. But what is conscience and how can we be certain that it is guiding us to do what is right in the sight of our Creator God?

Too many people think of conscience as simply their values or opinions about what is right or wrong, something subjective and personal that no one else can correct or judge. Believers in Christ, however, recognize it is not their own values or interpretations or understandings that are vital and important. It is the standard our Creator God establishes for us to pursue and attain.

The purpose of our earthly life is encapsulated in the challenge of our heavenly Father: "...You shall be holy, because I, the Lord your God am holy" Leviticus 11: 45; "The way we can be sure we are in union with him is for the man who claims to abide in him to conduct himself just as he did" 1 John 2: 5, 6; "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" John 14: 15.

If we are not in Christ, we have a heart that is capable of causing us to commit any sin in the devil's catalogue.

## **Is Our Conscience Always Right?**

The Church has always taught that we must always follow our conscience faithfully in order to come to God and be united with him. In the final analysis, our Creator God will judge us according to our conscience. Conscience, we must recognize is not infallible; it can easily make erroneous judgments about acts to be performed or already committed. Simply put, because we are imperfect, our conscience can also be imperfect.

The main sources for erroneous judgments are:

Ignorance

Sin

Bad example

Lack of Conversion

Enslavement to Passions

Sense of Moral Autonomy

Rejection of the Authority of the Church and her Teaching.

Pilate's question, "What is truth?" reflects the distressing perplexity of a man who often no longer knows who he is, why he is created, from where he comes and where he is destined to go. Hence, not infrequently we witness the fearful plunging of the human person into situations of gradual self-destruction.

## **What If a Person Does Not Know Better?**

Even when conscience makes a mistake because of ignorance, it still retains its dignity. Our heavenly Father might excuse certain people from mistakes of conscience if their ignorance is so deeply rooted that it cannot be overcome by their own efforts. However, our Creator God – who knows all things – will



be severe towards those who fall into error because of willful neglect of truth or through laziness, and allow their conscience to become gradually blind as a result of habitual sin. In short, our Creator God will judge us according to our conscience, but He will determine whether we have taken the steps to properly form our consciences, or how serious we are about being actual disciples of Christ.

### **So How Do We Form Our Conscience Properly?**

The Church always teaches that the education of a well-formed conscience is a lifelong task. But we should take some basic suggestions to acquire an upright and truthful conscience.

Resolve to do what is right. This sounds very simple, but it is not. Because of our fallen nature and the effects of separation from Christ, we are often dominated by self-interest. We must make up our minds that we wish to do what is right and pleasing to our heavenly Father and not what is most satisfying to ourselves; it is only when we wish to do what is right that we can truly learn what is right.

Trust in our heavenly Father, his commandments and his Church. In difficult times of conscience, we may be tempted to claim that we can decide for ourselves what is right and wrong and that we know better than the revelation of God to us in Scripture, or the experience of the life of the Church. This, though, is simply arrogance, not wisdom. Obeying God's way of life that Jesus taught us is paramount: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" John 14: 15. Jesus left us his Body and Bride as "...the pillar and bulwark of truth" 1 Timothy 3: 15, and He tells us that by listening to those who teach in his name, we listen to him. "He who hears you, hears me. He who rejects you, rejects me. And he who rejects me, rejects him who sent me" Luke 10: 16.

In forming a Christian conscience, faithful believers must give careful attention to the sacred and certain teaching of the Church. The Church of Jesus Christ on earth is by the will of God, the Teacher of truth.

The Commandments of God, the teaching of the Church, the precepts of the Body of Christ are not meant to be onerous punishments, but are given us for our ultimate welfare and happiness and fulfillment. The God who speaks to us in the depths of our conscience is the same God who speaks to us through



Genuine believers know that conscience is much more than opinion; it is associated with the most important decisions we can make regarding sin and right action. It is so important that the Body and Bride of Christ instructs us to make an examination of conscience each day of our lives, particularly when we avail ourselves of the grace of the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation. Such an examination requires us to be honest with ourselves before our Creator God. And of course, we always make an examination of conscience in reference to God's revelation of truth to us in the Word of God, particularly the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount.

"The way we can be sure of our knowledge of him is to keep his commandments" 1 John 2: 3.

When we look into our conscience before confessing our sins in the presence of our spiritual father, our parish priest, we are passing judgment on acts or omissions that have already taken place. Conscience, though, also involves judgments about what to do, or not to do ahead of time. When we turn to our conscience, we are drawing upon an interior resource that enables us to clearly hear God's voice and apply his law to a given situation. In other words, always in the forefront of our thinking mind should be the question, "What would Jesus do?" A well-informed conscience will guide us to do good for the right reason and avoid evil at the appropriate moment.

"A man's conscience is the Lord's searchlight exposing his hidden motives" 1 Corinthians 4: 4; "If your eye is pure, there will be sunshine in your soul. But if your eye is clouded with evil thoughts and desires you are in deep darkness" Matthew 6: 22. St. Paul expresses it best: "I do not understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I cannot. I do what I don't want to do, what I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience proves that I agree with these laws that I am breaking....It is sin inside me that was stronger than I am that makes me do these things" Romans 7: 15 - 17.

Conscience can be described as that part of our soul that expresses remorse which our first parents felt for breaking God's commandments. It is a sense of self-approval or of self-reproach that follows doing any deed in which morality is involved. Thus it might well be said our Lord came among us to also make sensitive our soul to proper values, to the values of our Creator God.



the revealed Word of God and in the liturgical and theological teachings of the Church. We must make certain we are listening to God and not ourselves.

Study the sources of Moral Law. If ignorance is one major source of an erroneous conscience, moral education is an absolute necessity. We grow in our knowledge of moral law by prayerful study of Sacred Scripture, the documents and teachings of the Fathers of the Church and the lives of the saints. We should also give careful attention to the teaching of the patriarchs and our diocesan bishops as well as parish priests, particularly about current moral issues as respect for human life, the sacredness of marriage and our obligations to the less fortunate.

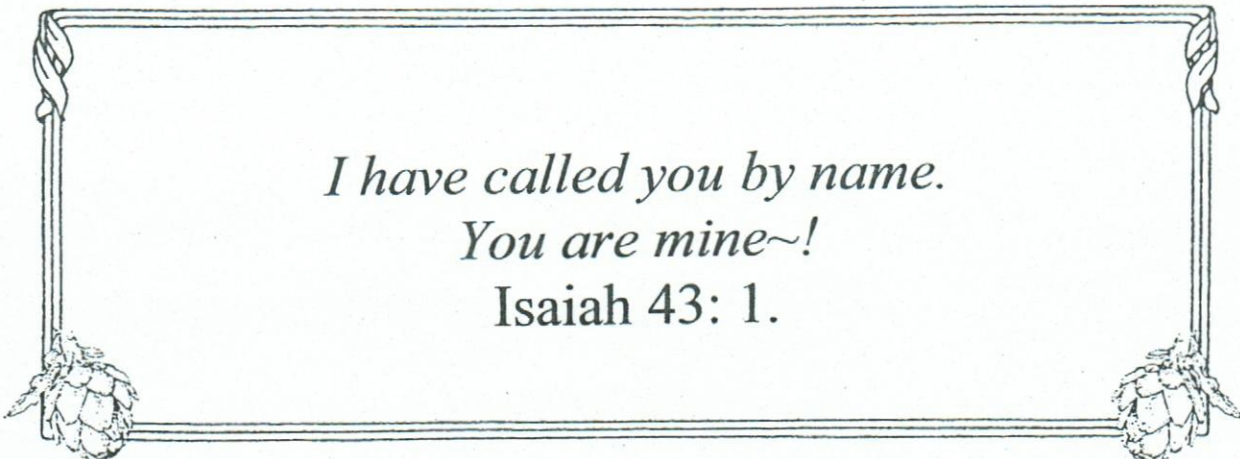
Seek the advice of good and prudent people. This is particularly important when facing practical judgments of conscience. We must be careful to seek the advice of friends, priests or religious who are faithful, prudent and well-informed. The Church always invites us to take our concerns in prayer to the Lord in a special way. The Church is aware there are situations which make moral judgments less assured and the decision difficult. At times, more than one decision can be morally justified, but we may never do evil in the hope that some good may result from it. The Church teaches that certain acts are intrinsically evil and can never be justified, regardless of intentions or circumstances. A true conscience can never condone acts such as direct abortion, euthanasia, homicide or immoral sexual activity. We must avoid the advice and influence of people who might justify such intrinsically evil actions, which at times can even be members of our own families.

Pray and ask for the grace of ongoing conversion. The Church has always invited us to form our conscience by a continuous conversion to what is true and good. St. Paul teaches it is only by the renewal of our minds that we can "...prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" Romans 12: 2. Moral and spiritual conversion must be rooted in prayer and the sacramental Mysteries and is not achieved by self-willing it. The Eucharist must play a part in our right living. The more we pray with humility before God, the better we will be able to hear him speak in the depth of our heart.

Thus, a well formed conscience is only truly sensitive to the voice of God and rooted in his revelation to us in the life of his Body, the Church. It formulates its judgment in accordance with reason, the divine law and the sacred and certain teachings of the vehicle of salvation. If we sincerely desire to live in a

manner holy and pleasing to God, we must ask for the help of the Holy Spirit, who remains in us and leads us to all truth, "I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, since it neither sees him nor recognizes him, but you can recognize him because he remains with you..." John 14: 16, 17.

The conscience formed by the Spirit of Truth will be upright and reliable.



*I have called you by name.*

*You are mine~!*

Isaiah 43: 1.



**We are blessed to be**

**Orthodox!**



# Did You Know That ...

- ...great opportunities often disguise themselves in small tasks?
- ...real servants do not try to use God for their purposes; they let Him use them for His purposes?
- ...the closer you get to Jesus, the less you need to promote yourself?
- ...if God only used perfect people nothing would get done?
- ...your most effective ministry of service will come out of your deepest hurts?
- ...God's power is in your weakness?
- ...Jesus calls us not only to come to Him, but to go for Him?
- ...the great commission is given to every baptized follower of Jesus?
- ...it is easy to get distracted because satan would rather have you do anything than focus on sharing your faith?
- ...while it is wise to learn from experience, it is wiser still to learn from the experience of others?
- ...God give us different passion so that everything He wants done in this world will get done?
- ...people may refuse our love or reject our message but they are defenseless against our prayers?
- ...you cannot take it with you, but you can send it ahead by investing it in people who are going there?
- ...a great commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission will make you a great Christian?
- ...you owe it to future generations to preserve the testimony of how God helped you fulfill His purposes on earth?
- ...when God is at the center of your life, you worship; when He is not, you worry?

## THE BELOVED DISCIPLE



All the Apostles had their special talents and abilities that caused our Lord to select them to be His intimate followers and faithful companions. Although it is not our place to judge or evaluate their contributions to the establishment of the early Church, there can be no argument over the special role played by ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

John was born in Bethesda in the region of Galilee. He and his brother James, the sons of Zebedee, were hard working fishermen until the day Christ called them from the shores to become "fishers of men." The youngest of the 12 Apostles, John seems to have often found favor with the Lord. He, along with Peter and James, were the only witnesses to His Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor. These three disciples also accompanied their Master when He brought the daughter of Jairus back to life, and were selected to be with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane during Christ's hour of greatest inner agony prior to His arrest. It was John who refused to desert Jesus when He was crucified, and as John sadly stood beneath the shadow of the Cross, he was entrusted with the task of caring for Jesus' blessed Mother for the remainder of her earthly life.

John carried the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Asia Minor. It is said that he was personally responsible for converting some 400,000 pagans to Christianity. Despite his great success as a missionary, John is best remembered for his writing ability. The gospel that bears his name has long been lauded for its deep theological style. 3 Epistles in the New Testament are attributed to his pen, as is the prophetic work known as the Book of Revelation, written on the island of Patmos.

Unlike the other Apostles, who suffered martyrdom, John was blessed with longevity of years, living to the ripe old age of 105. After ordering his disciples to dig a grave for him in the form of a cross, the saintly Evangelist breathed his last breath, bringing to an end the Apostolic era.