



THE VIRGIN MARY  
WITH HER RIGHTEOUS PARENTS  
JOACHIM AND ANNA

# Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 20, 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

+++ This Saturday is the simple feast of St. Demetrius the great martyr. In anticipation, the vespereal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Friday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise.

+++ 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 2 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 note a scheduling change in next month's Pirohi Sale. It will be on Saturday instead of Friday as previously announced.

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Anna, Ryan, Richaard 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: Tithing Offering, \$354.00; Candles, \$12.00; Food Coupons, \$520.00; Kitchen, \$1372.00, for a total of \$2258.00. 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!



## God Is Immutable

*In the past you put the earth on its base and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will come to an end, but you will still go on; they all will become old like a coat, and like a robe they will be changed. But you are the unchanging One, and your years will have no end* Psalms 102: 25 – 27.

*Every worthwhile gift, every genuine benefit comes from above, descending from the Father of heavenly lights, who cannot change and who is never shadowed over* James 1: 17.

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever* Hebrews 13: 8.

*To the king of ages, the immortal, the invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen* 1 Timothy 1: 17.

*Claiming to be wise, they became fools and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being, or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles* Romans 1: 22, 23.

*I charge you to keep God's command without blame or reproach until our Lord Jesus Christ shall appear. This appearance God will bring to pass at his chosen time. He is the blessed and only ruler, the King of kings, and Lord of lords who alone is immortal and who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no human being has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and everlasting rule! Amen* 1 Timothy 6: 14- 16.

*Under the Old Covenant there were many priests because they were prevented by death from remaining in office, but Jesus, because he remains forever, has a priesthood which does not pass away* Hebrews 7: 23, 24.

## The Canaanite Woman

It matters, of course, who is included in the community that has arguments about what is and is not defiling. The question of who is to be included in the people whom Jesus by his preaching and teaching, is calling into existence is resolved by his leaving the controversy with the Pharisees and scribes to go to the district of Tyre and Sidon. It is like going to enemy territory. These are not Israelite cities, so it is not surprising that He encounters a Canaanite woman who identifies him as the Son of David, begging him to exorcise the demon that is tormenting her daughter. Jesus, however, unlike his encounter with the centurion (Matthew 8: 5 – 13), remains strangely silent. The disciples beg him to send her away because she continues to shout at them. To many, it seems the Lord is harsh as Jesus tells her that He was "...sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Jesus told the disciples to go only to the cities of Israel, but this is the first time He actually says, He is sent to the lost sheep of Israel. And yet, we have seen from the beginning that those who are not Israelites have been cured and instructed by him. Outsiders recognize, unlike many of the people of Israel, that He can do what no other person can do. And here He is recognized by a Canaanite. That Canaanites still exist, given Israel's war against them, is remarkable. This time, however, Israel's Joshua does not kill or slaughter, but heals the Canaanite child.

Just as remarkable is that this Canaanite is a woman, a woman capable of recognizing that this is the son of David. She refuses to be deterred by his silence and continues to beg him for help. Jesus answers in an even seemingly more derisive fashion, using the Israelite derogatory name for Gentiles, to tell her that food intended for children should not be given to dogs. Talk about being politically incorrect! Yet this woman, this extraordinary woman, observes that even dogs are allowed to eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. This is no fool the Lord is speaking with and He knows, which is why He draws an expression of profound faith from her.

Jesus, exactly as He commended the faith of the centurion, praises this woman's great faith and persistent devotion. There is certainly nothing little about her badgering of Jesus. Faith, it seems, is exemplified by our willingness to ask and implore and ask and ask again, over and over without let up. If we believe in the uprightness of our cause, we should never abandon it. Accordingly, Jesus who healed the centurion's servant, declares that for which she asks will be done, and her daughter is instantly healed. This woman, this unknown Canaanite woman, not only becomes for us who are Chosen People, even for those who are to become communicants of the Church of Christ, the forerunners of faith, but her reply to Jesus teaches us how to speak. It is not accidental that we are taught to pray before we receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

We do not presume to come to the altar table, dear Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in God's manifold great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table, dear God, but you are the same Lord whose sublime and innate property is to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink of his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him and most importantly, He in us.

The Canaanite woman recognized what she needed. She beheld the One who could provide it. Precisely, perhaps because she was a mother, she would not be dismissed and redirected on another path in her time of need. Not only was her daughter ill, grievously ill, but she experienced a unique pain of her own in witnessing her child in such distress. Having responded to it in the grave handicap in a whole variety of ways, none of which were successful in producing change in her daughter, she concentrates on the redemption of her difficulty. Psychological pain can be just as intense for some as that experienced in the dentist's chair. Pain that is intense and brief is different from the gnawing, never-ending pain of some cancer patients. Pain that is understood and known to be short term – like a headache – is handled differently than pain that is long-lasting and undiagnosed.

We do not know precisely what illness befell her daughter or what agony she suffered and some people feel little pain even after major illness, while others feel real pain even when there is no organic disease. Some deny their pain and pretend that it doesn't exist; others almost enjoy suffering. While these differences may in part have biological causes, many individual differences in pain tolerance result from a person's attitude about pain, cultural and family backgrounds, past experiences with pain, personal values, and religious beliefs. Some think admitting pain is a sign of weakness while the opposite might be the thinking of those who wish to endure great and profound pain because they think it identifies them as particularly strong.

It is not easy to be sick, especially when ordinary routines are disrupted, when we do not understand what is wrong with our bodies, or when we do not know when or if we will get better.

It was from this background of sickness shortcoming that the Canaanite woman emerges and foreshadows of her teeming- -with-misery life and opens a barrage of faith explosions on the Lord. She obviously has heard about him; knows of his ability to cure the incurable, to do the unthinkable. Now that she has finally encountered him, will she simply give up because his disciples insist she is a royal pain and should be dismissed?

Notice carefully how our God uses this so-called non-believer, this enemy of the Chosen People, this woman who never attended, as far as we know, the synagogue or temple of God. But perhaps we should notice first all those around Jesus, those of his own blood and bone, of his own faith and background who literally dismissed him like a leper eager and intent on spreading the AIDS of his time on innocent folks. Those who identified themselves as believers were not believers at all, simply playing charades with God's revelation to man. Instead of being Church, they played church.

So what becomes galling to all the observers, particularly the disciples, is that this woman of historically opposed values to the Jews, has the audacity, the colossal nerve to approach the Son of God. She obviously knows a lot more than those who should know no more, but they can't live it or express it. The little that she knows and believes, becomes an astounding reason for the cure of her daughter. This Canaanite woman with her very narrow and small package of faith does great things with it. The Jews who have the entire fullness of revelation from God, are abysmal failures in that regard, Protestants today who surround us in our community have a very limited understanding of Christ and His Body the Church, but look what they have done with it. Orthodox believers, like us, however, who have everything we need to save our souls, who enjoy richness and fullness of faith, do not use it for that it is intended. How many have rightly observed, "the right faith was given to the wrong people!" Is that true of us?

Because she would not let up, because Christ saw in her heart the fullness of necessary faith intent, He was constrained to grant her wish. How could He refuse her? How could He dismiss such richness of belief? In seeming to dismiss her, He caused her faith to grow, to be enlarged, to be strengthened, to emerge triumphant, finally over all the prolonged agony in her life. Being faithful to Christ, regardless what happens in our lives produces for us the very same reality. If we endure to the end, we shall be saved!



## Pet Sins

*Sin, when full grown, brings death*

James 1: 15.

For some eight years, Sally had been the family pet in a suburban home. She was but a foot long when they bought her and introduced her to the household. They were so glad to make her a part of their family. But Sally grew and grew until eventually she reached a length of some eleven feet and weighed 80 pounds.

And then, one day Sally, the Burmese python turned on fifteen year-old Derek, strangling the unsuspecting teenager until he died of suffocation. Police noted in their report that the snake was "quite aggressive, hissing and reacting" when they arrived to investigate the young man's unexpected and surprising death.

Sin is exactly like that snake. When sin first enters our lives, we think of it as harmless, almost cute, even appealing. Yet it does not stay small. Sin has a way of growing and expanding. Of course we always think we can handle it, but then it begins to handle us. Very effectively. And it always leads to death; sometimes physical death, but most often at least emotional and spiritual death. At other times it leads to the death of a relationship.

And if sin is not confessed and forsaken and repented of, it will bring colossal damage to the soul in spiritual death. That is why St. James warns us that "...sin, when it is fully-grown, brings death." His purpose in saying that is not to spoil our fun, but to preserve our highest joy, that we might return to innocence.

If you like to play with a pet sin in your life, our heavenly Father urges you to beware. It is unquestionably a life-and-death matter. Toying with sin invites disaster.

Just one little sin, what harm can it do?

Give it free rein and soon there are two.

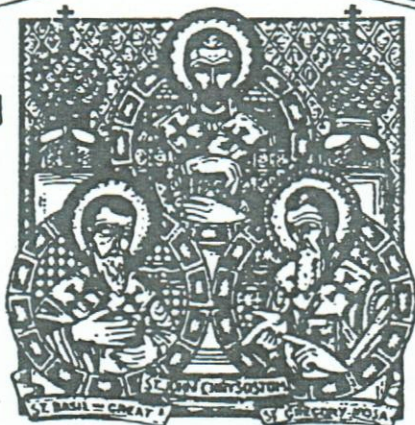
Then sinful deeds and habits ensue;

so guard well your thoughts or they'll destroy you!





Wisdom Of  
The



Byzantine  
Fathers

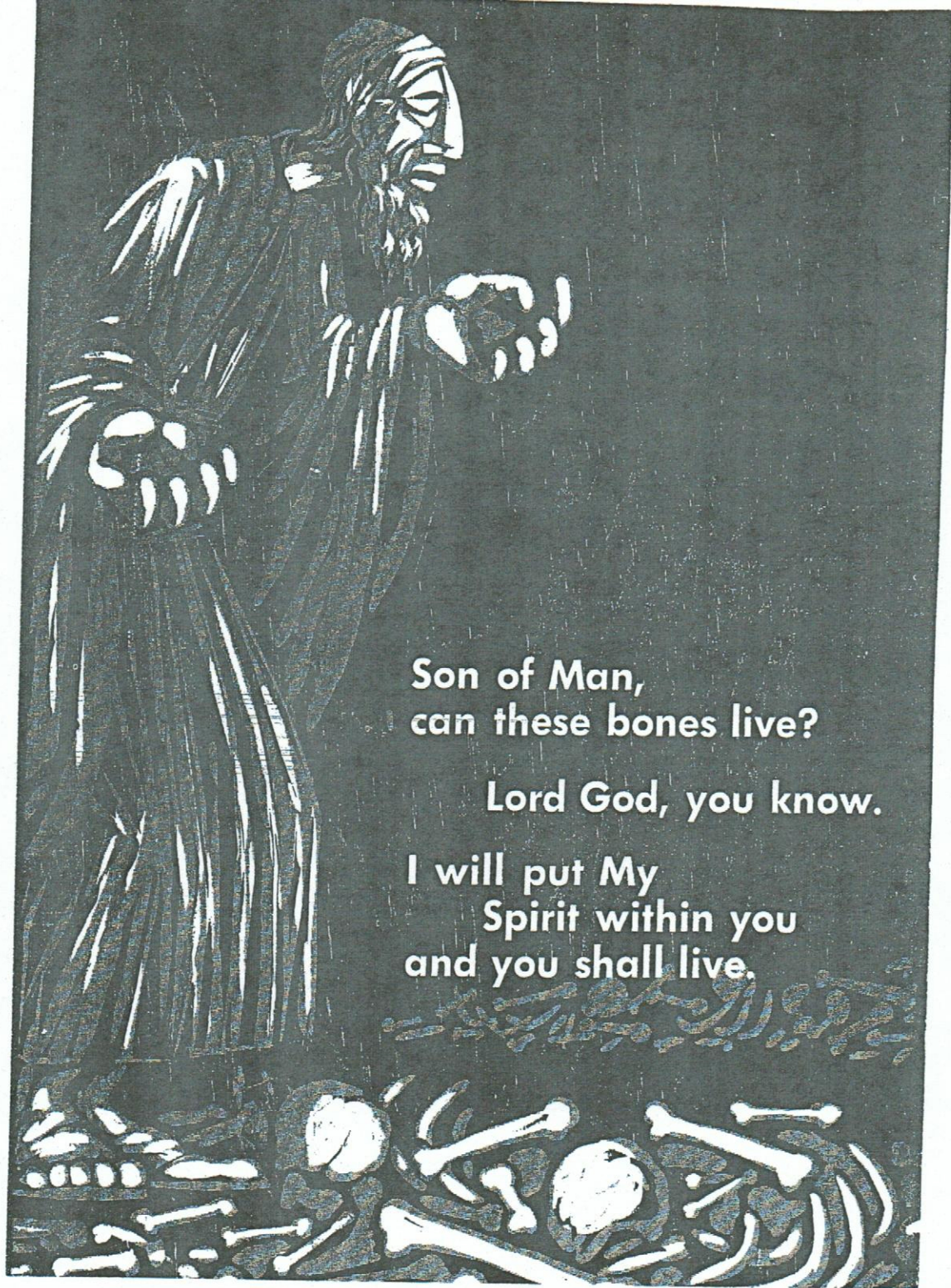
I seek those tears shed, not for display, but in repentance  
St. John Chrysostom.

One stone does not make an entire tower anymore than  
obeying one commandment lifts the soul to the required  
height of perfection St. Gregory Nyssa.

The perfect person's every action is a testimony to Christ  
Jesus and abstinence from every sin is a denial of self,  
leading to Christ Origen.

Even if a prize was not offered to those who fight for true  
faith, truth alone would persuade her lovers to welcome any  
danger for her St. Theodoret.

Feed us, your children, as sheep. Master, fill us with  
righteousness from your own pasture. Instructor, give us  
food on your holy mountain, the Church, which towers in the  
air, is above the clouds and touches heaven. Their shepherd  
shall be as near to them as clothes to their skin. He wants to  
save my flesh by enveloping it in the robe of immortality St.  
Clement of Alexandria.



Son of Man,  
can these bones live?

Lord God, you know.

I will put My  
Spirit within you  
and you shall live.

# Did You Know That ...

...prayer should be our first resource, not our last resort?

...a statement is either true or false?

...truth can only be found, not created?

...the teachings of the Church give us the right instrument to face the problems of our day?

...the world waxes indignant when sin and grace are called properly by their names?

...the saints are people of imagination and grace, not functionaries of an apparatus?

...the expression of our blessed faith is found in our liturgical practice?

...The Divine Liturgy cannot be reduced to a parish tea party, but manifests the presence of the Eternal God in the Eucharist?

...if we make the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation simply an analysis session, we leave no room for personal sin?

...Sacramentally and paradoxically, the Mystery of Reconciliation is to be understood as a serious encounter between two persons aware of being in the presence of the shattering Mystery of Christ's forgiveness that arrives through the word and gestures of a sinful man?

...in speech, Christians are those who do not say things lightly?

...the link between marriage and parenting goes back to the dawn of human history?

...the state rejects any limitation on its authority because it does not consider the revelation of God superseding its jurisdiction?

...apparently only from the perspective of comic relief do supreme court judges think that the link between marriage and procreation is merely a fancy of a passing phase of late Christendom?

## A PROMISE FULFILLED . . . . .

**B**y virtue of her being chosen by God to give birth to His Only-Begotten Son, Mary is held in the highest esteem by our Church. We reverently refer to her as the "Theotokos", or simply the "Mother of God."

It should be noted, however, that her own birth was, in itself, a miraculous one. Holy Tradition tells us of the saintly Joachim and Anna, who lived lives of service to the Lord. They were firm in their commitment to His teachings, obeying His every commandment. Still, Joachim and Anna were puzzled and saddened by their inability to have children, which was something of an embarrassment in the Hebrew society of their time. Their sorrow reached a climax when Joachim's offering to God in the temple in Jerusalem was refused by the high priest, who claimed that their childlessness was the result of God's anger with their sinful ways.

Legend has it that Joachim retired to a desert place, where he prayed and fasted for 40 days and nights. Anna, too, back in their home in Nazareth, raised her voice in constant supplication to God. Finally the prayers of Joachim and Anna were answered! An angel appeared to Anna, announcing that she would soon conceive a child, whom they would name Mary. Joachim, far away in his wilderness retreat, received the same message from God, and hurriedly returned to his wife in Nazareth.

God kept His promise to Joachim and Anna. Soon they had the child for whom they had prayed! They, in turn, made a solemn vow to the Lord, promising that they would see that their daughter would serve Him all the days of her life, praising His all-holy Name.

*Icon by Austin Kachek - Manville, NJ*