

Hieromartyr
PHOCUS

Intercede
with Christ
our God
that our
souls be
saved.



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 25, 2011

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 feast of the Protection of the Birthgiver of God. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we reply, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ The monthly Pirohi Sale took place yesterday. We sincerely thank the good souls who labored to make it a success.

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

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week: Tithe Offering, ~~\$118.00~~; Candles, ~~\$19.00~~; Holyday, ~~\$92.00~~; Food Coupons, ~~\$600.00~~; Christian Fellowship, ~~\$4.00~~, for a total of ~~\$1192.00~~. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered 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, Pani Lucas, Robert Gorbich, Anna Zacharyczuk, Debra Szmaida, Paul Szmaida, 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 ~~\$153.00~~ from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals ~~\$109,000.00~~. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ 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 ~~\$650.00~~ 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.**

+++ We remember only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."

+++ **The next Pirohi Sale is this Saturday, November 4. Please secure orders and offer helping hands.**

+++ 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

Persecution of the Righteous

How you hate honest judges! How you despise people who tell the truth Amos 5: 10!

We are wicked, but they far more! Will you, who cannot allow sin in any form stand idly by while they swallow us up? Should you be silent while the wicked destroy those who are better than they Habacuc 1: 13?

Happy are those who are persecuted because they are good, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. When you are reviled and persecuted and lied about because you are my followers...wonderful! Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a tremendous reward awaits you in heaven. And remember the ancient prophets were persecuted too. But I say: Love your enemies; pray for those who persecute you Matthew 5: 10 – 12; Luke 6: 26, 27.

I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware! For you will be arrested and tried and whipped in the synagogues. Yes and you will stand trial before governors and kings for my sake. This will give you the opportunity to tell them about me, yes, to witness to the world. Brother shall betray brother to death and fathers shall betray their own children. And children shall rise against their parents and cause their deaths. Everyone shall hate you because you belong to me. But all of you who endure to the end shall be saved. When you are persecuted in one city, flee to the next! I will return before you have reached them all! Do not be afraid of those who can kill only your bodies, but cannot touch your souls! Fear only God who can destroy both soul and body in hell Matthew 10 16 - 23.

I will send you prophets and wise men and inspired writers and you will kill some by crucifixion and rip open the backs of others with whips in your synagogues and hound them from city to city, so that you will become guilty of all the blood of murdered godly men from righteous Abel to Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, slain by you in the temple between the altar and the sanctuary Matthew 23: 34, 35.

16th Sunday

The talents are distributed, accountability is expected and the man receiving the least gift, the man from whom very little is expected in return does not disappoint the master. He does in fact return nothing of what has been given him.

One of the most important things to our heavenly Father is the heart of the so-called believer. It is what God's revelation to us calls the hidden person of the heart. When we look at one another what we see is not necessarily the way things actually are. We can talk and act like everything is great, but inside we may be hurting and everything in our life may be wretched and miserable.

Our God is far more concerned about our heart than He is about our performance because if our heart is right, our performance will eventually catch up with that. But if we go around doing the right things with a wrong heart, what we do will not mean anything to God. We can't be doing a wrong thing for a right reason.

What goes on inside of us? What kind of heart do we have? What are we really like inside? What is our thinking and thought life like? What kind of attitude do we have? What goes on behind closed doors? If we want to be a faithful believer in Jesus Christ, we have to look deeper into those things that no body knows about but God and us.

At our baptism our God emphasizes our inner life. And as we grow up it is difficult to catch on to that importance because we are all appearance oriented; outer appearance, that is. We are preoccupied with our physical appearance; do we have the right combination of clothes, the right colors, are we groomed and coifed? Do we have the right kind of cologne and all that other nonsense which is necessary but purely secondary, even tertiary in importance. How many after considering how extremely serious all this outer stuff is, never even think about the condition of their soul. Never consider the inclination of our hearts. We make such serious efforts to keep up outer appearances, forgetting entirely there is another whole part of us that cannot be seen, but is a part of us that our Creator sees and is very much in contact with. While the world is busy trying to conquer "outer" space, we should be far more pre-occupied with conquering "inner" space. When we talk about maturity, humility and obedience to God's will, no one wishes to listen. It is not something they are pre-occupied with. But if we want to be blessed, we have to be obedient. We all want results, but we don't want to do what is required to get those results. Because of that, many people just go round and round the same mountains all their life, never getting anywhere, like the poor fool in today's gospel narrative.

St. Peter uses the example of jewelry, make up and clothes but that's really not the issue. What he is telling us is that we are not to be so concerned about how others see us but with what we really are deep down inside, which our God can see. We need to learn how to live deeper than being concerned only with superficial outward appearance. So St. Peter teaches us, "Let not yours be the merely external adorning with elaborate interweaving and knotting of the hair, the strings of jewelry, or changes of clothes. But let it be the inward adorning and beauty of the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible and unfading charm of a gentle and peaceful spirit, which is not anxious or wrought up but is very precious in the sight of God" 1 Peter 3: 3, 4.

The loser in today's gospel narrative was very much aware of other people's opinions to his own detriment; he didn't do the right thing nor the expedient thing in the sight of his master. In St. Luke's gospel (chapter 5), St. Peter and his men had been fishing all night and had caught nothing so they brought their boats in and were cleaning their nets and putting them away for the night. Jesus comes walking along the banks of the shore and when He saw them, He said, "Put out into the deep and lower your nets for the catch" Luke 5: 4.

A lot of people in the Church today are fishing and catching nothing, so to speak, because they are not launching out into the deep. As a result they are not satisfied with their life because they are not living deeply enough. They have instead a superficial lightheaded existence. They are doing nothing of value for the Lord and feel worthless. God shows us He is not interested in fancy titles, outward nonsense or how many invitations we receive to spend our time with fools so that the days pass by quicker and we really live and have a variety of experiences. Christians are not called to be popular or famous; they are called to do hard work for the kingdom, to be servants, to sacrifice. Serving the cause of Christ is spelled **HARD WORK**.

Yes, there are wonderful benefits that go with the office of servant. But all of our works are going to have to pass through the fire as did the neglect of the servant today because it is not what we do so much as why we do it, or do not do what is expected of us.

When we leave this earth and pass before the Lord's eyes of scrutiny and glistening fire, every work will be judged in its purity, whether or not our motive for doing it or omitting it was right or not. Therefore, we must let the Holy Spirit examine our heart and show us a wrong attitude. This the man in the gospel narrative didn't do. He simply assumed what he did was acceptable to God because he did it. He didn't invest the Lord's time, the Lord's requirements and so didn't do anything. He did his thing, not the will of the Lord. This like the story of the priest who said too few people came to church on holydays so he stopped celebrating them and took credit for creative resolution of the problem. Pretty logical, one might say, except the decision is not that of the priest. He felt sorry for the people because they were too busy and seemed to have pretty reasonable excuses. He didn't want them feeling bad

that the celebration took place, but they were not there. It never occurred to him that God is to be glorified whether people like it or not, whether they agree with it or not. He and his wife could have praised and blessed God by themselves and prayed the people repent of their obtuse and obdurate heart and begin once again making time for worship. In response to the law of the Church and God's command, holydays are to be celebrated, even if absence by the people means their doom.

If we refuse to let God deal with our flawed thinking, we open a door for the enemy satan to get into our lives through our flaws. God desires to prevent him from having any part of us and the devil needs our cooperation or he will not succeed. When Jesus teaches us (John 14: 30) that satan has no part in him, Christ means that He is giving him no opening or excuse to enter through any crack in our moral lives. Jesus obeys the Father promptly and entirely.

A good example is found in the epistles (Ephesians 4: 26, 27). We are instructed not to let the sun go down on our anger because if we do, the anger gives the devil an opportunity to be successful. Those living by emotions will stay angry until they feel like getting over it; those who live by the promised word of God will refuse to stay angry only because our God told them not to do so. It is not difficult to observe why some people have victory in their lives while others enjoy nothing. The loser today decides his sins and judgment are best and ignores those of God. You heard what his reward was. Even the little he had was taken away from him because he didn't deserve it. Our God wishes us to be gentle and peaceful, not wrought up or anxious about nonsense. That means He wants us to concentrate on what is necessary and serious. He wants us thus to be peaceful and walking in peace, to concentrate on what is necessary for salvation. To do what the world does is to lose Christ and his grace in our living. But if we have a heart after that of God and ask him to put his heart and spirit within us, we will also hate what should be hated and love and espouse what is vital and necessary for life. We will become the person who makes right decisions.

We will become what the Book of Acts (13: 22) says about David; we will become a man after God's own heart. We all know David made a lot of dumb mistakes and committed some very serious sins. But he had the good sense, to repent, to apologize and be right with God again. He paid the price for his sins, but he still had a heart after God. The man in today's gospel narrative never understood what it is to aspire after the values of God because he liked his own interpretations too much. We do not to be perfect to be of service, but we cannot give anything to somebody else which we do not have. How can we teach others about victory in the life of a believer if we have no victory because we always accept defeat? The man today cannot go out and witness to triumph because he didn't achieve any himself. How can we show our peaceful heart to others if we do not have any peace within us? Our circumstances are not always going to be peaceful, but we can learn to be peaceful while we go through them.

Learn the lesson of faith so that we can be an example of faith. That is the earth-shattering message we hear today. Now let us go live it!

MAKING SENSE OUT OF BIOETHICS

Spinning stem cell fairy tales

Discussions about the morality of stem cell research often focus on the differences between adult stem cells and stem cells derived from embryos. The adult variety, such as those derived from bone marrow or umbilical cords, are already providing an impressive army of treatments and cures for sick people, while the embryonic kind are not. Adult stem cells can be obtained without crossing any moral boundaries, whereas embryonic stem cells cannot, because they are secured by destroying young human beings who are still in their embryonic stages of growth and development.

In spite of great progress in identifying ever more powerful adult stem cell sources, scientists still clamor for embryos. Even in the face of impressive new technologies for making "embryonic-like" stem cells without using embryos, the chorus of voices pushing for the sacrifice of embryos seems only to grow louder. Indeed, one of the most common questions the Church encounters when speaking of stem cells is why scientists and politicians are so intent on pursuing the destruction of human embryos when so many other non-embryonic sources of stem cells are available that are already helping countless patients with serious diseases. What is behind this incessant drumbeat to go after the human embryo?

One can sense a certain "logic of killing" that hovers in the wings of these discussions. If tiny human embryos were to be safeguarded and protected by law, this would constitute a threat, if not a formal assault, to legalized abortion-on-demand, which routinely allows us end the lives of older, almost-born human beings more than 3000 times every day in the United States by surgical means and many more each day through chemical means. This desire to sanction current immoral practices is certainly one reason continuing pressure to allow the destruction of humane embryos for research.

The Church of Jesus Christ has consistently spoken of resisting those forms of research that provide for the planned suppression of human beings who already exist, even if they have not yet been born. Research in such cases, irrespective of efficacious

therapeutic results, is not truly at the service of humanity. In our society, however, the hype surrounding the harvesting of human embryos as a way to cure nearly every disease has taken on the form of a popular mythology. Hollywood types afflicted with a variety of health problems promote killing almost born babies to secure cells which they hope can be used for research in finding them a cure. *The Washington Post* recently summarized it this way: "To start with, people need a fairy tale" said Ronald D. G. McKay, a stem cell researcher at the National Institute of Neurological Disorder and Stroke. "Maybe that's unfair, but they need a story line that is relatively simple to understand. Human embryonic stem cells have the capacity to morph into virtually any kind of tissue, leading many scientists to believe they could serve as 'universal patch' for injured organs."

This idea, though still speculative is straight forward and easy to sell, especially to desperate patients and patient advocacy groups. Some scientists are happy to perpetuate the myth, too, believing that this kind of 'master cell' from the earliest stages of human life could help unlock some of the most primordial and tantalizing biological powers mankind has ever seen - almost God-like powers, leading to the "Tree of Life" itself. As some researchers ambitiously seek to wrench control of those life-powers into their own hands, it should perhaps come as no surprise when they yield to the seductive siren call of our day. "One life can sometimes be taken for the benefit of another," and "Good ends can sometimes justify evil means."

In a way, then, embryonic stem cells have become a great modern secular obsessive fairy-tale, even a kind of surrogate for our yearning for immortality. People are being told that Alzheimer's can be addressed; Parkinson's can be overcome, diabetes can be defeated; and MS can be conquered. Who knows? Perhaps we could extend our longevity, defeat aging, and live as if we were always young. Perhaps we could even defeat death itself through these powerful cells! Vanquishing death and achieving immortality through science shows the reality-bending power of these myths and fairytales should not be underestimated.

In the final analysis, the "planned suppression of human beings" cannot be allowed to continue to creep into the practice of modern science and medicine. Our yearning for various goods and blessings like healing and new medical therapies, must always be empowered by our duty to pursue responsible and completely ethical science. Only by insisting on the use of upright means to achieve good ends can we steer clear of the Nazi-like drive to subjugate and destroy others in our quest for desirable outcomes. Only then can science be a force for authentic healing and truly stand at the service of humanity.



A house
is made of boards
and beams

A home is made of
love and dreams.

HOME
is
where
your
story
begins.

Did You Know That ...

...there is no better way to start the day than to lay your cares at his feet?

...the power of a strong relationship sustains us and give us strength; it is that power in knowing if my friend is still there, no matter what, we have a Father who still loves us?

...prayer is the divine relationship that allows us to stand before God and express the deepest concerns of our heart?

...prayer is the recognition that if God had not engaged himself in our problems, we would still be lost in blackness?

...the beauty of prayer is that anyone can pray?

...stubborn faith and willingness are all that is necessary to pray?

...those who know the Lord trust him because he will not leave those who come to him?

...there is a difference between faith and presumption; there is a difference between believing God is almighty and demanding that He become our divine servant?

...in our bootstrap society, where you are taught to tough it out, one thing that seems to escape us is being before God, aware we are helpless and allowing him to assist us?

...the Christian is the one who seeks to discern the voice of God amidst the many voices that come our way?

...one of the greatest challenges we have in life is to learn to hear the voice of truth?

...we should look only to Jesus, the one who began our faith and who makes it perfect?

...it is far more important to listen to the voice of Christ than that of man?

...those who listen to and follow Christ will be received into heaven by the pierced hands of the one who knows the freedom of giving up what you cannot own in order to receive what no one can take from you - eternal life?

THE HIEROMARTYR PHOCUS

Perhaps the most difficult time to be a Christian was the period immediately after our Lord's Resurrection. As the Apostles went about "teaching all nations," the opposition to the Gospel of our Master was intense and often violent. Followers of our Lord had to be prepared to face persecution from the Jews, who refused to recognize Christ as the Messiah, and the Romans, who perceived Christianity as a threat to their own religious beliefs and practices. Despite all of this opposition, the Faith grew, largely through the efforts of many fearless individuals who were determined to see the Church established in the manner set down by Jesus.

One such individual was the Hieromartyr Phocus. Phocus lived in the town of Sinope on the shore of the Black Sea. From his youth, he lived a virtuous Christian life and eventually became bishop of his hometown. It is said that Phocus worked tirelessly to bring the message of Christ to the pagans living in that region. His powerful words and righteous example won many converts. Unfortunately, there were those who opposed his holy work, and it was not long before Phocus was arrested and brought before Africanus, the local governor. Having had a vision that he was to suffer for Christ, Phocus was unafraid when threatened with severe torture and punishment from the ruler. After being severely beaten, Phocus was thrown into a bath of boiling water, thus giving up his life for the Savior he served. His death around the year 100 AD occurred during the reign of the Emperor Trajan. In modern times, the Hieromartyr Phocus is especially venerated as a defender against fires, and a helper of the drowning.