





# Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost

November 13, 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 solemn feast of the Archangels, Michael and Gabriel. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we reply, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ Today, we remember in prayer at a Memorial Service all those veterans and defenders of our nation who sacrificed their lives in defense of our way of life. We pray the merciful and gracious Lord comfort all who

suffered loss of a loved one in our nation's wars. We pray the merciful Lord create for their souls blessed repose and grant for them Eternal Memory!

+++ 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.

+++ The THAKNSGIVING BAKE SALE will be held this Friday and Saturday, November 18, 19. Please secure orders and plan on lending you helping hands to assure its success.

+++The St. Nicholas Day Luncheon will be held on Sunday, December 4 after the Divine Liturgy. We will have a visit from St. Nicholas and the Food Donation Sheet will be available next Sunday for sign ups.

+++The offering for flowers to beautify our parish church on the feast of the Nativity of our Lord will be taken on Sunday, December 4. Please be generous with your sacrificial offering.

+++ 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, \$12,500; Candles, \$1,200; Kitchen, \$2,500; Fellowship, \$1,100; Food Coupons, \$2,500; Holyday, \$2,500; Pennies From Heaven, \$2,500; Special Gift, \$250.00 for a total of \$25,000. 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, Mary Jaakobs, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleni Pallas, 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 \$1,000 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 \$115,000.00. 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 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 \$1,000 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.



LORD



TEACH  
US

### God Nurtures Us

*He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young* Isaiah 40: 11.

*For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to him* 2 Chronicles 16: 9.

*For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they are scattered on a day of clouds and darkness...I will bring them into their own land...I will tend them in a good pasture...There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture...I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak... I will shepherd the flock with justice* Ezekiel 34: 11 – 16.

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself* Philippians 2: 3.

*The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power; in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress* Job 37: 23.

*For the Father will comfort Sion, He will comfort all her waste places. He will make her wilderness like Eden and her desert like the gardens of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody* Isaiah 51: 3.



## The War On Error

### *The Business of Confronting Heresy*

If we take the time to read, even just peruse the Church Fathers, we are struck by what so many contemporary, superficial, light-minded people would call their rudeness. It is hard to go far into the writings of the early bishops and leaders of the Church without finding them bluntly identifying their opponents as heretics, perverts, madmen, liars and tools of the devil.

These days, however, with political correctness far more in vogue than the truth of the Ten Commandments, polite Christian society will have none of that. It is the sort of thing one expects only of the unwashed fundamentalist. Truth, be told, among many professing Christians, defamation, even though done frequently by the Lord and the apostolic writers, simply isn't regarded as Christian conduct. This may be one consequence of Orthodox people living in the midst of a super majority of alien western so-called believers whose Christian premise is suspect, but should never be recognized, addressed or considered.

What sort of person, after all, would call apparently well-intentioned and perfectly respectable people, often very important, in their own eyes at least, very religious people by alien standards, snakes or hypocrites, or compare them to dirty tableware, white-washed tombs or ravenous wolves?

This improvement on the Lord's behavior is typified by a commenter on a blogsite which deplores the accusation of heresy or the recognition or admission that man can err. We are all Christian brothers here, he notes and this sort of thing, especially between Christians, is contemptible. He regards the name calling as *prima facie* immoral, and as a practical matter, counter-productive because it serves to cut off the constructive dialogue by which errors can be corrected and the body of peace maintained. It is the bond of peace that is paramount but the correction of error need not be addressed which has become the contemporary slogan and byline of so-called American cultural religion today.

There is the necessity to give the commentator his due. No reasonable person, especially if he has any age in wisdom, needs to be informed – although constant reminding is good – on the



dangers of the tongue, and thus also, obviously, its imaging apparatus, laid out so graphically in the epistle of St. James, nor is the importance of patience, kindness and other virtues which so often move one to guard one's speech ever to be minimized. Accusing people of being heretics or liars or plainly stupid or of saying things that befit only the insane or demonic is simply not Christian behavior in the judgment of so many clueless and valueless self-described believers today. The reason being they wish to remain polite, urbane, likeable and appear to have values. Never should passion for truth identify the follower of Christ, nor zeal for orthodoxy in belief and faith response.

Unless, that is, it is actually true and time to say it has arrived. This is particularly important for those who have teaching and pastoral responsibilities. Identifying heresy and falsehood and those who teach it is a duty which, if shirked, will subject the souls under one's influence to the tender mercy of the wolves and one's own soul to the judgment reserved for the shepherd who did not protect his flock from satan's wiles. How many pastors and teachers who have being called upon to decide whether to break with their peers by speaking the truth about doctrine, the tradition of the Church, or conduct, or with God, and how many appear to break with God rather than displease their fellow congregants?

One must be very sure the accusation is right and fits the turn of events. This means work: education to competence on what one is talking about. One must be certain according to good method what the apparent error is that is actually said or practiced, avoiding hearsay evidence and that given by unexamined witnesses, along with a consulting of others of good judgment on the matter. Accusations should not be made lightly as we will surely be judged for bearing false witness if we are careless or inaccurate. Sometimes it is more confusion than error that is to be found, in which case it is the confusion that must be named and corrected. Many times, "heresy hunters" more interested in the approval of their party than truth, fall down on all these points.

If an accusation is made, it must be made clearly, forcefully, and memorably, so that it is understood by the one who is trying to protect from false doctrine: "This is untrue; it is heresy, avoid the people who teach it."

This must be done judiciously and in the line of duty. If we have any quarrel with certain Fathers, it is not that they identified false teaching for what it was, but that they sometimes did it so frequently that it may have become most difficult to hear. And that in itself served a noble purpose. There is besides a certain pathological temperament that enjoys bringing down and denouncing error and subjecting those who commit it to terror and humiliation that hardens them against truth. The heresy-hunting inquisition is not a divine office, whereas



pastor and teacher certainly are. To the former mentality, exposing error is not a painful task cast in one's path by the duties of office, but a form of pleasure like a dungeon's pleasure of which no doubt many would be proud.

Every priest and bishop knows the temptations that make for heresy and apostasy, having been exposed to them on a daily basis in parish work. Education for the pastorate and teaching the gospel of Christ introduces us to encounters with apostates even in our parishes. Few begin as intentional heresies; it is something one becomes by a decision to avoid truth and reality in the life of the Body of Christ, for some advantage gained, or perceived to be gained. It often proceeds from there to a kind of false and projected sense of innocence when the damned begin to believe in their own fantasy which in reality is distortion of truth or lies.

The devil is skilled to the good man's senses of pity, good will, and mercy and his desire, despite differing methods, for the same good end, to stop the campaign of self-sacrificial good against him. How often we learn the pious terrorist, his terror exposed among the people upon whom he has pressed it, claim sanctuary by calling those who after years of battle and challenge finally have him at sword-point as cruel, thus preserving his following among the indiscriminately tender-hearted.

We must add here as his apostles, a giant many of the more powerful weapons in his arsenal, to maintain collegiality, invoking fear of rejection among those with whom one desires to be identified, which coincidentally entails rejection of communion with God. How many priests have witnessed triumphal entry into what are thought to be progressive elements in the life of the Church inevitably means loss of soul. And who can find salvation only after terrible internal struggle in leaving colleagues in the comfort of their left field oasis?

In our day, one must weight the advantage for oneself and others, of speaking what he believes the truth, against the disadvantage of being relegated to the category of the peevish and rude, unworthy of being heard by reason of self-identified un-Christian manner of speaking and expression.

Actually, the decision to speak out is not difficult as long as one is concentrating on doing the right thing of upholding the truth of the message of Christ. In spite of what today is considered cultural sensitivity, it is always best to speak the truth making sure one does it in the right way and after the right time and letting the chips-including God's judgment on one's own actions and words-for naming and thus identifying heresy, lies and unbelief and confusing them with actual matters of all truths of faith, fall where they may.



Jesus observes that Israel wanders like lost sheep without a shepherd, so He sends the Twelve to be shepherds to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." In the very next breath, He says that they go out as "sheep; in the midst of wolves." So which are they? Sheep or shepherds?

They are both. They are shepherds because He gives them grace and power to be shepherds alongside the Chief Shepherd. At the same time, they are to live among the sheep rather than the wolves. They are to stand with the oppressed rather than be the oppressors. Oppressors are those who would advance their own gospel in no-so-blatant contradistinction to that of Christ.

Too often, the seductions of power have been too much for some in the Church and they have taken their stand with the wolves. Many have lent their imprimatur, going along to get along just like many Protestants greeted Hitler as the Messiah, along with those Orthodox who welcomed and accepted Lenin as the new messiah and communism as the new way of life, or as what is currently happening in America in its naivete. Tyrants have altogether too easy a time finding pious idiots and power-mongering priests which prevents servants of God from advancing the cause of the Saviour rather than that of the values of here and now.

Of course, they always advance the most pious reasons. If we hang out with thugs, perhaps we can moderate their thugishness. We can only change the system if we change it from within. The poor need friends in power. We have to protect the interests of the Church and not continue to lose people. Someone with better insights in the future will be able to stem the tide which has changed from a dripping faucet to the spigots now being wide open.

Jesus has none of this. The fact that libertine theologians say it does not make it right. When the Church enters society polarized between the wolves and sheep it is blindingly obvious where she belongs.

The Church is called to overcome the wolves just as Jesus did, by suffering alongside the sheep, by being sheep and the shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. Should the devoted priest care what labels are hung on him?

Priests, religious and bishops must recognize as vital that they in all circumstances must remain loyal to God above all else and only then can they serve the honest needs of their followers. We cannot sacrifice the command of God to accommodate the frail, superficial fleeting values of man.

*Forever faithful* is the resonating and reverberating message that emerges from the soul of the pious Christian pilgrim in this challenging world.



## STEWARDSHIP

**Our work and civic responsibilities are rooted in human dignity and the common good**

The moral ground covered by the Seventh Commandment – “You shall not steal” – includes the right to private property, respect for creation, the Church and its social doctrine, the dignity of human work, justice and solidarity among nations as composed of citizens created in the image of God, participation in political life and love for the poor.

Closely related is the Tenth Commandment which enjoins us from coveting the possessions and attainments of others. Taken together, these two commandments instruct us to be just and generous stewards of God’s blessings, to utilize what He has given us in assisting others. They also help us to see what it means to love our neighbor and to work with others in creating a just and well-ordered society based on the precepts of God’s revelation to us.

Our Creator god has given us a sense and a right to own what we have justly acquired, especially those possessions for which we have worked and labored and paid. But we also sense that the right to private property is not boundless. We readily recall the rich man in the gospel narrative who had no regard for Lazarus, a poor man who lacked basic necessities. (Luke 16: 19 – 31). In asserting the right to private ownership, the Church also asks us to be temperate in using the goods of the world. Indeed, the right to own private property is an expression of human dignity. The purpose of this right is to meet the basic necessities of life, including one’s own legitimate needs, the needs of those for whom one is responsible, such as family members and the needs of others to whom we are bound in conscience.

Respecting what belongs to others brings into play several virtues, notably justice and charity allied with temperance and solidarity. Our dealings with others should be marked by a readiness to keep our word and to honor the terms of legitimate contracts we have entered. Abiding by the Seventh Commandment requires that we make amends for injustices we have committed and return what we have stolen. It also demands that we have genuine concern for the needs of others and a desire to use this world’s goods in a careful, prudent way, out of respect for creation itself and out of concern for the needs of others.

There are many ways we can take what does not belong to us, such as paying unjust wages, undertaking risky or dishonest investments that put others at a disadvantage, participating in tax evasion or fraudulent business practices, performing shoddy labor, damaging public or private property and creating waste. Only a moment’s reflection tells us that such dishonest practices harm not only



individuals, but also the common good of society. We only have to think of the role that greed and fear plays in bringing about the dastardly global recessions we suffer from time to time.

The Church has consistently spoken to social and economic problems to defend human dignity and to guide citizens and their leaders in constructing a just society; one that already prefigures the perfection of our eternal citizenship in heaven for all eternity. Accordingly, the Church teaches that economic and financial systems must be conducted ethically and be at the service of the human person, not the other way around. The unbridled quest for profit in the marketplace and the untrammelled exercise of power by totalitarian governments both offend human dignity.

It is the duty of the state to oversee social and economic programs in such a way that they respect the right and duty of human beings to secure honest employment, open to all without unjust discrimination. As such the state should foster economic growth and provide conditions under which workers are justly compensated for their labor. We are called to be diligent and competent in our daily work, by which we cooperate with the grace of God, the Creator of all things. Labor is a very important way of providing for our families and contributing to the common good of society. It is also a vital path toward achieving holiness.

Respect for human labor requires the cooperation of both management and labor for legitimately seeking business opportunities and profit, managers must also compensate workers fairly and provide for decent working conditions. For their part, workers are to be conscientious and diligent in carrying out their tasks, assuming a fair burden of their responsibilities without attempting to get others unfairly to do their work for them. To the extent possible, labor disputes should be resolved by good faith negotiations on the part of management and those who represent workers. When such negotiations break down, a nonviolent strike that aims at just compensation and work conditions cannot be ruled out; such action, however, must not endanger the common good, including the health or safety of others.

These days, no economy or financial system stands alone or is isolated; we are linked in a global economy. Consequently, every nation, particularly those who are well off and powerful, is obliged to work for economic justice and decent standards of living throughout the world. For this to come about, however, citizens must actively engage in civic affairs as witnesses to authentic Gospel values.

To be stewards of God's gifts after the mind and heart of Christ, we must embrace the Beatitudes. This means imitating Christ's own spirit of detachment from the goods of the world, together with charity for the poor and needy. Indeed, the great desire of our lives must be not for material gain but rather to live in the presence of our God and his values. The principles of Christ help us to be those good and loving stewards of God's freely offered gifts so that, at the end of our lives, we may hear the Master echo for our benefit: "Well done, good and faithful servant" Matthew 25: 23.



# Did You Know That ...

...in free countries, every man is entitled to express his opinion, and every other man is entitled to ignore them?

...the properly dressed man is he whose clothing you never notice?

...ethics is about what is right, not who is right?

...too many people confuse management and planning with destiny?

...life is something that happens to you while you make other plans?

...the most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother?

...one fundamental defect of fathers is that they want their children to be a credit to them?

...the man who fear suffering is already suffering from what he fears?

...some things have to be seen to be believed?

...if you do not want to be forgotten as soon as you die, either write things worth reading or do things worth writing about?

...the family you come from is not as important as the one you are going to have?

...happy families are all alike, but every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way?

...we make our own fortunes and we call it fate?

...what we might consider is how we are good rather than how good we are?

...experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you?

...all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing?

...the lunatic's visions of horror are all drawn from the material of daily life?



## A SLAVE BECOMES AN APOSTLE

**O**n the cover of today's Church Bulletin, we see the image of a man who experienced a tremendous SPIRITUAL and SOCIAL transformation. ONESIMUS was the personal slave of a distinguished citizen of Colossae named Philemon in the days of the early Church. After stealing from his master's treasury, it is said that Onesimus fled to Rome. It was in this ancient capital of the Empire that his life would be changed forever!

While in Rome, Onesimus first heard about Jesus Christ through the preaching of the Apostle Paul, who was imprisoned there. Soon he was baptized into Christianity and became a companion of the famous "Apostle to the Gentiles."

Knowing of Onesimus' background, Paul was faced with a moral dilemma. He himself preached that "... in Christ, there is neither slave nor free man." (Gal. 3:28) According to Roman law, however, Onesimus still belonged to Philemon! Scriptures tell us that St. Paul sent Onesimus back to Colossae with a special letter to Philemon, which would later become a part of the canonical books of the New Testament. In his epistle, Paul urges Philemon to receive Onesimus with forgiveness as a brother in the Lord. "Perhaps he departed for awhile for this purpose," Paul writes, "that you might receive Him forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave - A beloved brother." Deeply moved by Paul's words, Philemon gave freedom to his former slave.

According to Church tradition, Onesimus later became Bishop of Ephesus. He suffered martyrdom in Rome, like his mentor St. Paul, in 109 A.D.

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