



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of St. Thomas

May 1, 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

+++ The Scripture Study Class will meet this Tuesday at 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Please come and join us by investing time in learning our precious faith so we can better enjoy and live it! The public is invited to participate with us, so invite a friend or neighbor. In preparation for the next class, please read the twenty-second to twenty-fourth chapters of the Book of Genesis.

+++ Today we have festal anointing on the occasion of this past week's Resurrection feasts.

+++ We thank all devoted souls who kept the traditional vigil at the Sepulcher on Great and Holy Friday as well as Holy Saturday. God bless you devoted souls!

+++ Next Sunday is Mothers' Day. We will honor our mothers with prayers and the distribution of blessed flowers and a gracious reception after the Divine Liturgy.

+++ We acknowledge with deep gratitude the generous and kind offerings received in the amount of \$315.00 from Bill & Anna Zacharyczuk, Pani Lucas, Rosalie Choti, Joseph Choti family, Eleanor Korba, Betty Samaris, Anonymous and Eleni Pappas in blessed memory of our beloved departed parishioner, +Paul Peter Pallas. We pray the merciful Lord comforts Eleni Pappas and loved ones in their loss and provides a blessed repose for the soul of +Paul Peter and creates for him Eternal Memory as we thank the generosity of these devoted souls. Any others who would like to join this exclusive list, please see Father as soon as possible.

+++ We have received recently \$65.00 as gifts to the church from an Anonymous Soul, Sarah Harrison and Tatyana Harrison in blessed memory of our beloved +Metropolitan Nicholas. We thank the gracious souls who made the offering and continue to pray the merciful Lord provide blessed repose to the soul of +Metropolitan Nicholas and create for him 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.

+++ 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, 493.00; Candles, \$105.00; Food Coupons, \$320.00; Kitchen, \$447.00; Self-Denial, \$43.00; Holyday, \$227.00; Candy Sale, \$357.00; Resurrection, \$1454.00; Special Gift, \$1200.00, for a total of \$4846.00. 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, Louis Pasquino, +Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, George Idromenos, Kent Pasquino, Kyle Pasquino, Bob Gorbich, Marina Topsis, Anna Zacharyczuk 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 \$1617.00 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 \$107,815.00. 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 \$5250.00 on this project to date!

+++ We express our sincerest appreciation to the good souls who prepared for, secured orders and delivered them, to make the Pirohi Sale this past week a success. We invoke upon all participants who love the beauty of God's House the choicest blessings of heaven for the grace of continued good health for Many & Blessed Years, Christ Is Risen!

+++ **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."

+++ Those who have from time to time taken food home from the church in either plastic kitchen containers or on the aluminum trays, please return them as we note a number of the containers are missing and four trays are no longer around.

+++ 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!

Christ Is Risen!

Indeed He Is Risen!

God Knows Best

Our Father knows what's best for us,
So why should we complain—
We always want the sunshine,
But He knows there must be rain—
We love the sound of laughter
And the merriment of cheer,
But our hearts would lose their tenderness
If we never shed a tear . . .
Our Father tests us often
With suffering and with sorrow,
He tests us, not to punish us,
But to help us meet TOMORROW . . .
For growing trees are strengthened
When they withstand the storm,
And the sharp cut of the chisel
Gives the marble grace and form . . .
God never hurts us needlessly,
And He never wastes our pain,
For every loss He sends to us
Is followed by rich gain . . .
And when we count the blessings
That God has so freely sent,
We will find no cause for murmuring
And no time to lament . . .
For Our Father loves His children,
And to Him all things are plain,
So He never sends us PLEASURE
When the SOUL'S DEEP NEED IS PAIN . . .
So whenever we are troubled,
And when everything goes wrong,
It is just God working in us
To make OUR SPIRIT STRONG.



Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God
commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a
faithful Creator.

1 Peter 4:19



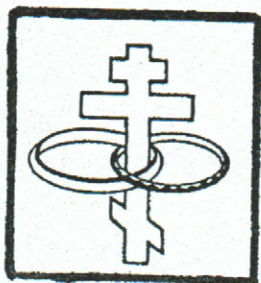
Birthday
Wishes!

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

May 3 Betty Samaris
May 9 Rachel M. Korba

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

Many and Blessed Years!



WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

The Byzantine Fathers of the Church were wont to emphasize how ancient and how venerable marriage is in the sight of our God because it was established yet in paradise before the fall of Adam and Eve and brought to blessed perfection by Christ in Cana of Galilee. Its grace survived the sin of our first parents and it remains a sign of the presence of the Holy Trinity in our midst. It is a living symbol of the deep and abiding love between Christ and His Bride, our blessed Church. It is characterized in the liturgical life of the Church as a happy martyrdom. And it is precisely for this reason the sacramental Mystery of Marriage is such a joyous event. On the third Sunday of this month, we honor those of our good parishioners who observe their marriage anniversaries this month of May. They are specially remembered in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and subsequently receive an individual and personal blessing of the Lord at its conclusion. Celebrating this month are:

April 26 Stephen & Mary Demyan

May 22 Frank & Maria Pashos

May 24 Charles & Marion Peles

May 24 Robin & Louis Pasquino

We gratefully give thanks to the Blessed Trinity for having guided and strengthened the marriages of these believers, and their cooperation with sacramental grace to remain faithful to one another over the years. Like all who are faithful to Christ, they recognize the presence and necessity of the Holy Spirit not only in the marriage, but in subsequent family life as well. As we praise our God for their witness in our midst, let us also join them with our prayers and thanksgiving before the throne of the Lord. May they continue to praise His Holy Name by their love and devotion to one another for

Many and Blessed Years



Resurrection

This marked the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after having been raised from the dead...John 21: 14.

The real light which gives light to every man, was coming into the world John 1: 9.

His disciples came during the night and stole him while we were asleep...Matthew 28: 13.

They are filled with too much new wine Acts of the Apostles 1: 13.

With power the Apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great respect was paid to them all Acts of the Apostles 4: 33.

...it was done in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead Acts of the Apostles 4: 10.

The God of our fathers has raised up Jesus whom you put to death, hanging him on a tree. He whom God exalted at his right hand as ruler and saviour is to bring repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins Acts of the Apostles 5: 30, 31.

Then a member of the Sanhedrin stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law highly regarded by all the people...and then he said to all the assembly... "Let them alone. If their purpose or activity is human in its origins, it will destroy itself. If on the other hand, it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy them without fighting God himself" Acts of the Apostles 5: 34, 35, 38, 39.

The fact is that whether you eat or drink - whatever you do - you should do all for the glory of God. Give no offense ...to the church of God 1 Corinthians 10: 31, 32.

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

Though the grave had been sealed, from the grave You arose, O Christ our God, our Life, and though the door had been locked, You appeared among the disciples, O Resurrection of all, thus You restored for us an upright spirit according to Your great mercy. Troparion, Sunday of St. Thomas.

Thomas placed his own restless hand into Your life-giving side, O Christ God, and since You entered although the doors were locked, he cried out to You with the other apostles: "You are my Lord and my God!" Kontakion, Sunday of St. Thomas.

Great is our Lord and mighty in power; to His wisdom there is no end. Prokimenon, Sunday of St. Thomas.

When the doors were closed and the disciples were gathered together, You suddenly appeared in their midst, O Jesus our Almighty God. You granted them peace and filled them the Holy Spirit; You commanded them to wait and not depart from Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high. Therefore, we cry out to You, O Lord: Glory to You, our Light, our Resurrection, and our Peace. Vesper Hymn, Sunday of St. Thomas.

Even though the doors were closed, You came to Your disciples, O Christ, and Thomas, called the Twin, was not with them. Therefore, he did not believe what they told him. You did not deem him unworthy for his lack of faith, but in Your goodness, You confirmed his faith by showing him Your pure side and the wounds in Your hands and feet. He touched them, and when he saw You, he confessed You to be neither an abstract God nor merely human: and he cried out: My Lord and my God, glory to You! Vesper Hymn, Sunday of St. Thomas.

On the eighth day the Saviour came to the doubting disciples. He granted them peace and said to Thomas: O Apostle, come and touch My hands which were pierced by nails. How wonderful is this doubt of Thomas! It brought the hearts of believers to the knowledge of God. Therefore, he cried out with fear: My Lord and my God, glory to You! Vesper Hymn, Sunday of St. Thomas.



The Bishop's Crosier

The episcopal crosier by ecclesiastical usage, had undoubtedly a purely practical purpose. Before centuries rolled by, it was formally adopted in liturgical usage. In the mean time, it gathered about it a rich and varied symbolism. Job's question of the Creator comes immediately to the forefront of our minds: "How do you help him who is without power, how do you save the arm that has no strength?" Job 26 :2.

Since its historically recorded use in the seventh century, the pastoral staff is presented to the bishop during the ceremony of consecration that as a good shepherd, he may sustain spiritual life and utilize it as a means to keep his flock in close unity to himself. The presentation of the crosier designates the delegation of the pastoral office, while the new bishop, with bent head along with St. Paul buries his amazement in "...the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God" Romans 11: 33.

Just prior to the invocation of the Holy Spirit by the episcopal consecrators upon the bishop designate, he is handed the crosier with this meaningful prayer: "Accept the pastoral staff so that you may tend the flock of Christ entrusted to you, and be a staff and support for those who are obedient; use this staff to lead the disobedient and the wayward, the staff of compulsion, the staff of correction." The

bishop-elect then kneels before his consecrators, holding the crosier, to receive divine grace.

Numerous as well as instructive are the symbolic interpretations of the bishop's crosier. It is divided into three parts ordinarily, the pointed bottom, the staff, and the curved top serpents surmounted by the triumphant cross. With the curved upper portion, the bishop must draw sinners back to God. He draws their conscience to the safety of the flock of Christ. With the middle portion, he must rule the just and direct them in the ways of righteousness. With the pointed bottom, he pricks the careless and wayward sheep that rove about at will and drives them back to the sheepfold. Jeremiah's words find significance here: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore I have drawn you, taking pity on you" Jeremiah 31: 3.

The crosier is a reminder to the bishop to be solicitous for sinners. Great is the reward that St. James holds out to him "...who causes a sinner to be converted from the error of his way" James 5: 20. Various problems demand different solutions. Not all souls can be led to Christ alike. The wise shepherd adopts the most prudent and efficacious means for each. St. Paul makes the spiritually reckless choose their own remedy back to sanctity. "What will you..." he asks, "Shall I come to you with a rod? or in charity and in the spirit of meekness?" 1 Corinthians 4: 21. The method is hardly of significant importance so long as the

effect is achieved. The bishop as the shepherd is concerned for the sheep. Here the crosier reminds him of his course of action. The serpent heads that stem from its upper-most portion stand at eye level when held by the bishop. Each time he utilizes the crosier in exercising his episcopal office, the bishop's thoughts return to the teaching of Christ: "...be you therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves" Matthew 10: 16.

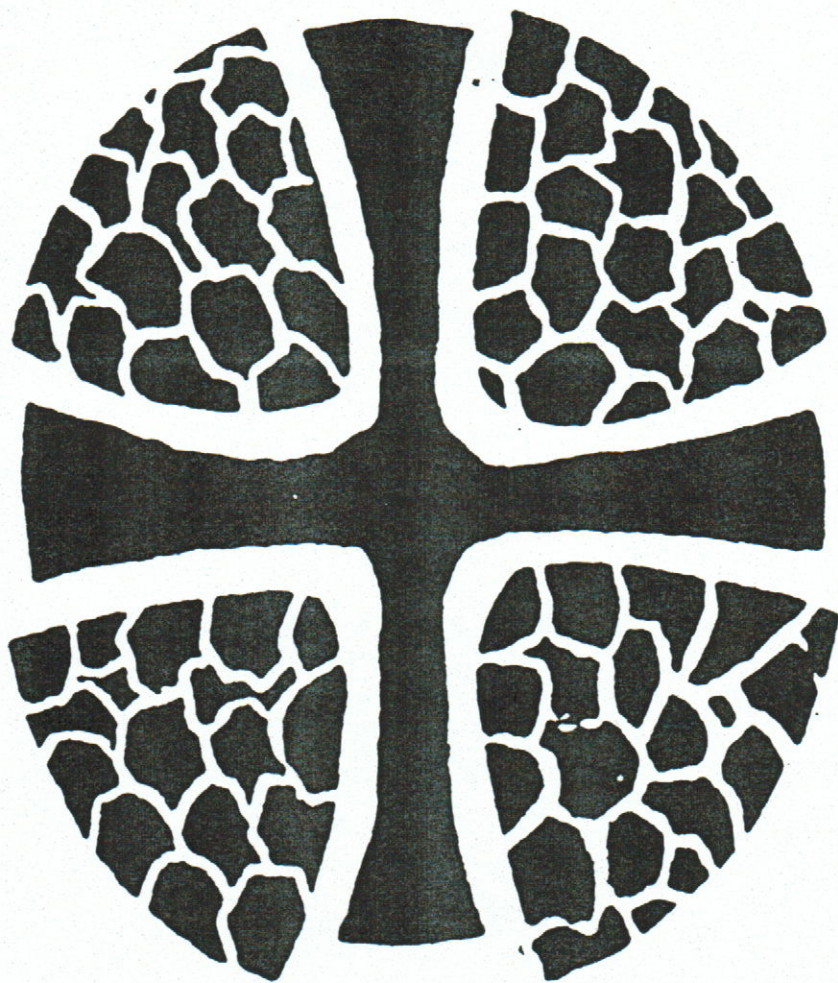
The love of God the Father drew Him to send His own Son to effect the adoption of His creatures. St. Paul makes this observation, "What son is there whom the father does not correct?" Hebrew 12: 7. Christ forever speaks of His concern and love for the wayward sinner. The bishop, therefore, must also offer divine forgiveness as when God Himself lifted the mighty load off the guilty conscience, saying, "I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions" Isaiah 43: 25. The Lord forgives and forgets. The bishop must be a witness to God's mercy as in times past the Holy Spirit witnessed to us saying, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more" Hebrew 10: 17.

But the bishop must first love the law he chooses to espouse and enforce. The good he can do will depend upon his gentle love for the Good Shepherd whom he is called to emulate. If that be assured, his work will follow the preordained course to "...feed my lambs, feed my sheep" John 21: 15, 17. His task is "...not to destroy, but to fulfill the law" Matthew 5: 17.

So, the crosier becomes a hand tool of tremendous value to the bishop and faithful. Pointing heavenward, it shows the destiny of man's soul. It points up the charity and clemency a bishop ought to possess towards all. David expresses it well: "You have been angry and have had mercy on us" Psalms 59: 3. The wise tempering of discipline with mercy and love can combine to bring about true conversion of souls. Again the Psalmist teaches us that to pass judgment on our fellow man is the most exacting of duties. Every judgment "...shall declare his justice, for God is Judge" Psalms 49: 6, and must be set to save and not to destroy or lose. Hence no feeling of anger can disturb the delicate balance of justice. Christ's attitude is that of the bishop. When His judgment was invoked on a public sinner, He so to speak wrote in the sand and spoke to the winds. Simply because He was sinless Himself, He knew the enormity of the wounds of sin better than anyone else, yet His charitable response was "Neither will I condemn you, go and sin no more" John 8: 11.

Episcopal authority can only be maintained in kindness although love can not be permitted to disintegrate into sentimentality or the law permitted to be discarded. St. Bonaventure aptly says, "Two things are necessary for a good ruler: zeal for justice and a keen sense of mercy" In consecrating a new bishop and presenting him with a crosier, the Church recalls the wisdom of the Old Covenant Law: "...mercy and truth preserve the king" Proverbs 20: 28.





IF GOD CALLS YOU IN THE
DEPTH OF YOUR BEING

‘Listen to His Voice.’

The Lord Gives Us Peace

On the day that Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His Disciples and said to them, "Peace be with you." He showed them His hands and His side and they knew that this was Jesus. At this sight the Disciples rejoiced.

Jesus spoke to His Disciples again. We can read His words by opening our New Testament to the Gospel according to St. John — 20: 21-23.

Our Church proclaims the forgiveness and peace of Christ in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Like the Apostles, we know the Lord's peace and forgiveness.

PRAYER

This is the Day of Resurrection,
Let us be enlightened by this Feast,
And let us embrace one another.
Let us call "brethren" even those that hate us;
And because of the Resurrection,
Let us forgive all things and let us sing:
Christ is risen from the dead,
By death He conquered Death,
And to those in the graves,
He granted life.

Matins of Resurrection

KONTAKION

Although You descended into the grave,
O Immortal One,
You destroyed the power of Death.
You arose again as a Victor, O Christ God,
You announced to the women bearing
ointment, "Rejoice!"
You gave peace to Your Apostles
And Resurrection to the fallen.

Fest of the Resurrection

Did You Know That ...

...if you prepare today for tomorrow, you can forget about yesterday?

...that light is stronger than darkness and right is stronger than wrong any day?

...our Lord has written the promise of the Resurrection not in books alone, but on every leaf that buds in spring time?

...it is better to do a kindness near home than walk a thousand miles to burn incense?

...spring unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soul?

...the reason birds fly and we do not is because birds have perfect faith, for to have perfect faith is to have wings?

...he climbs highest who helps another up?

...there are two things that go into the make-up of a friendship, the one is truth, the other is understanding?

...wisdom is knowing what to do next; skill is knowing how to do it, and virtue is doing it?

...a good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship; and he who plants kindness gathers love?

...if you love life, do not squander time because that is what life is made of?

...soft is the music that would charm forever; the flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly?

...true wisdom is to know what is best worth knowing and to do what is best worth doing?

...spring is a natural Resurrection, an experience of immortality?

...friendship improves happiness and abates our misery by doubling our joy and dividing our grief?

"MY LORD AND MY GOD!"

On the evening of the first Pascha, the Apostles were both in hiding and denial. Mary Magdalene had excitedly told them that she had, not only seen the Lord, but had spoken to Him as well! Still, we are told in the Gospel of St. John that they continued to cower behind closed doors.

This reading prescribed for St. Thomas Sunday - the 2nd Sunday of Pascha - provides much spiritual "food for thought" for all Orthodox Christians. We find Christ proclaiming to His trusted disciples: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (John 20:22-23) The Church has pointed to this as the foundation for the Sacrament of Holy Orders; in effect, Jesus was ordaining His Apostles with these words. Faith and doubt are essential components

to this Gospel, as we find the absent Thomas struggling with whether or not "seeing" is more important than "believing." In the end, our Lord gives us the answer: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet still believe." (John 20:29)

Yet perhaps the most significant message of this lesson can be found in Christ's manner of greeting His Apostles for the first time: "Peace be with you!" Long before He was born into this world, Jesus was described by the Prophet Isaiah as being the "Prince of Peace." To all those who believe in Him, Christ brings an inner tranquility. Those who are sincere followers of Jesus are characterized by a serenity that can only be brought about by the fruits of faith. Believing in Him takes away all anxiety from our hearts. Yes, when we are united with Christ, peace will always be with us!