

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of Man Born Blind

May 29, 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-fourth to twenty-sixth chapters of the Book of Genesis.

+++ The last Pirohi Sale for this season will be Saturday, June 11 and Bake Sale on Friday, June 17.

+++ 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.

+++ This Thursday is the solemn feast of the Ascension of our Lord, the close of the Resurrection celebration. In anticipation, the vespereal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Wednesday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise.

+++ Next Sunday, the special offering for flowers to decorate the church for the coming feast of Pentecost, will be taken. Please offer generously.

+++ 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, \$308.00; Candles, \$14.00; Food Coupons, \$60.00; Bulletin, \$25.00; holyday, \$5.00; Resurrection, \$5.00; Christian Fellowship, \$1.00, for a total of \$635.00. 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, 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 \$5300.00 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.**

LORD



TEACH
US

Comfort From Heaven

And this is the will of him who sent me that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him, may have everlasting life and I will raise him up on the last day John 6: 40.

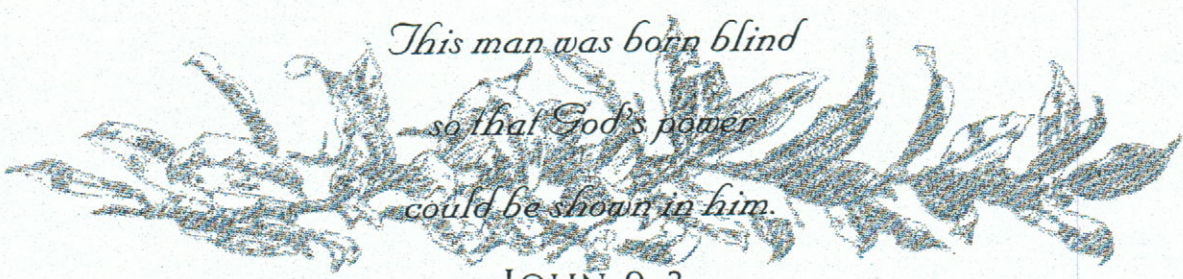
I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I give is my flesh which I give for the life of the world John 6: 51.

Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believes in me, though he is dead, yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die John 11: 25, 26.

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may also be. And where I go, you know and you also know the way John 14: 1 – 4.

For none of us lives to himself and no man dies to himself. For whether we live, we live to the Lord; and whether we die, we die to the Lord; whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For to this end Christ both died and rose, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living Romans 14: 7 – 9.

But Christ is now risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that sleep. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made to live 1 Corinthians 15: 20, 22.



*This man was born blind
so that God's power
could be shown in him.*

JOHN 9:3

Jesus and his disciples were walking down the road when they saw a blind man. The disciples said, "Jesus, who sinned?" Jesus said, "No one sinned." Then Jesus healed the man. And he answered once and for all that our pain is not a result of our sin. God is not so small that he would zap us when we make a mistake. In fact, this passage teaches just the opposite: Our Savior is not asleep; our Savior is alive and interested in our pain.

Jesus Ascends Into Heaven

They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here staring at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven. And someday, just as you saw him go, he will return!"

Acts of the Apostles 1: 11.

When our God visited the earth, the modes of his arrival and departure were completely unexpected. He came as a baby – hidden, humble, and absolutely surprising in commonness. He came like everyone because He had something for everyone. When He left, Jesus did so in plain sight. He did not simply vanish; He ascended. He was gone but not in such a way that his imminent return has not even a daily possibility; just as He promised.

The Ascension of Jesus was not nearly so much an end as a new beginning. When He disappeared into the clouds, the anticipation began as it does for us here and now. Our heavenly Father intended it to be an active, adventuresome, meaningful anticipation. We are directed to watch and wait, busily. When we focus too much on watching, we do not carry out his commands. When we lean too much on the waiting, we begin to lose sight of his promise to return.

Everyone has an opinion and everyone has to choose a side. We cannot be neutral on an issue like this. To whom do we belong? Apathy? Not this time. It is one side or the other. All have to choose. And of course the disciples did. For every cunning Caiaphas there was a daring Nicodemus. For every cynical Herod, there is a questioning Pilate. For every pot-mouth thief there was a truth-seeking one. For every turncoat Judas, there is a faithful and beloved John. There was something about the Cross that made every witness either step forward toward it or away from it. It simultaneously repelled and compelled. And the same thing is true about the Resurrection and subsequent events. Today, two thousand years later, the same is true. It is a watershed. It is the Continental Divide. It is the Battle of Normandy. And we must stand on one side or the other. A choice is demanded. We can do what we want with the cross. We can make decisions about Resurrection victory. We can examine the history and study their theology. We can reflect on its prophecies. But one thing we cannot do is walk away from their reality and how we are drawn into their orbit. We cannot be neutral. No fence-sitting is permitted. The Cross and its absurd splendor do not allow that. The empty tomb and its echo of victory do not permit that kind of empty response. That is a luxury our generous and grandiose God does not permit. On whose side are you?

By his Ascension our Lord returns to his rightful place and keeps the door open for humanity to follow. On the Mount of Ascension, the Transfiguration is completed. If Jesus had gone to heaven from the Mount of Transfiguration, He would have gone alone; He would have been nothing more than a glorious figure. He does not turn his back on the glory but comes down from the mount to identify himself with fallen humanity.

The Ascension is the consummation of the Transfiguration. Our Lord now goes back to his primal glory, but He does not go back simply as the Son of God, this time He enters his rightful place also as the Son of Man. He has us with him!

There is now freedom of access for anyone straight to the very throne of God by the Ascension of the Son of Man. As Son of Man Jesus deliberately accepts limited omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience in himself. Now they are his in absolute full power. With the Ascension, the Son of Man has all power at the throne of the Father. He is King of kings, Lord of lords until now and forever.

A cloud receives him. It is the same glory cloud that filled the tabernacle and the temple, the one which led Moses and the Chosen People. In his high-priestly prayer He prayed, "I have given you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. Now Father, glorify me at your side, a glory I had with you before the world began" John 17: 4, 5. When He was born on this earth in the flesh, He was wrapped in swaddling clothes, as He returns to the Father He is wrapped in the glory clouds of heaven.

It is the glorified Christ who goes to heaven. This same Jesus, the glorified Jesus, will return to the same place. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall stand in the midst between the east and the west and there shall be a very great valley and half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south" Zechariah 14: 4. He departed from us at that place and He will return to us at that very same place.

Those first disciples stood there for awhile staring up at the sky. Apparently, they were immobilized by yet another surprising turn of events. A heavenly messenger had to remind them that there was great work to be done before Jesus would once again come in the same way He had left. We are now in the in between time when we watch, work and wait. Jesus has prepared a place and He will return. Will we be ready? Now we think about the serious implication of his farewell words, "When the Son of Man returns, will he find any faith on earth" Luke 18: 8?

Abundant Life!

I come that they may have life and have it abundantly
John 10: 10.

The singular great work of our heavenly Father for us is that He give us his divine Son. In him we have all. Hence, the one great work of our heart and soul must be to receive the Jesus who has been given us, to consider him and use him as ours, as Saviour, Redeemer, brother in faith response to the first shown love of the Father made manifest by the Holy Spirit.

We must begin each day, every day anew with thought we have Jesus to inspire, to fulfill and to provide the example which we pursue in the challenges we face unremittingly. In all weakness or darkness or danger, in the case of every desire or need, let our first thought always be that we have Jesus to make everything good and right for us, his grace to sustain us simply because our God has gifted us with him!

Whether our need be forgiveness or consolation, or confirmation, whether we have fallen or been tempted to trip and fall, we have the sublime gift of Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who will make everything right for us in correction and penitence. If we have strayed, He will lead us back to the walk path of salvation. If we are headed for a detour of danger, he will divert us and redirect us. Whether you know not what the will of the Father is in one or another matter, or know that you have not the courage or strength to do his will, let this always be your first thought and safe conclusion that the Father has gifted us with Jesus Christ to care and to intercede for us.

Thus for the safety of our soul, for the advancement of our daily living, for the purpose of salvation, assume this gift of God as vital and necessary, as personally appropriated by heavenly inspiration, reckon this gift of God each moment of the day as belonging to you in Baptism and Chrismation.

Take him, assume him, appropriate him and hold him fast in the love of your entire heart and soul!

His Kingdom Will Come

He shall judge between many peoples and impose terms on strong and distant nations; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not rise the sword against another nor shall they train for war again

Micah 4: 3.

In the time of our Lord, the people of Israel were still looking forward to this restoration. Before the crucifixion, his disciples were reasonably confident that Jesus would go about fulfilling Micah's prophecy by ridding Israel of the cursed and dreaded Roman occupation and bringing them the long sought-after peace and prosperity, so heartfully cherished.

But their hopes were miserably dashed when He died. However, after his resurrection from the dead, the disciples quickly resorted to their early anticipated hopes and asked Jesus, "Lord, are you going to free Israel now and restore our kingdom" Acts of the Apostles 1: 6? Jesus makes it clear to them in response that this kingdom is not that kind of kingdom, that the popularly and generally held view does not reflect the mind and purpose of God. Instead, He indicates that Micah's prophecy would be fulfilled when the eternal kingdom, populated by the redeemed, is finally established and fulfilled.

This is the kingdom for which pious Christians pray repeatedly, "Your kingdom come, your will be done" Matthew 6: 10 and about which Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" John 18: 36.

The problems of the sinful world, which include wars, will cease one day when the eternal kingdom of Christ arrives because man's heart will have been cleansed of any and all corruption and evil inclination. Until then, the words of St Paul speak loudly "Do your part to live in peace with everybody, as much as possible" Romans 12: 18. We may not be able to stop wars now, but by the grace of Christ we can obey this command and as much as possible, live in peace with others.



HEARING You as You passed by, the blind man cried out : " Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me "; and You, by calling out to him, opened his eyes. Likewise, in your mercy, open the eyes of my soul, that I may cry out to You :

O Jesus, Creator of the heavenly spirits!
O Jesus, Deliverer of the poor!
O Jesus, Savior from evil spirits!
O Jesus, Artist of all creation!
O Jesus, Comforter of my soul!
O Jesus, Enlightenment of my mind!
O Jesus, Joy of my heart!
O Jesus, Health of my body!
O Jesus, my Savior, save me!
O Jesus, my Light, enlighten me!
O Jesus, deliver me from all torments!
O Jesus, save me, unworthy though I be!
O Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

Through the shedding of your divine blood, we were freed from the just curse of old. In like manner, free us now from the torments of our evil passions, and from prodigal rebellion and sinful despair with which the serpent defiled us, so that we may sing to You : Alleluia.

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE!

All you people, clap your hands; shout to God with cries of gladness. Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Saviour, save us! First Antiphon, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

God ascends His throne amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sound of trumpets. Entrance hymn, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and You delighted the disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through this blessing, they were assured that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world. Troparion, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

When You fulfilled the plan of salvation for us and united all things on earth to those in heaven, O Christ our God, You ascended in glory, never leaving us, but remaining ever present. For You proclaim to those who love You: "I am with you, and no one else has power over you." Kontakion, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and let Your glory be over all the earth. Prokimenon, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

O my soul, extol the Lord Who in glory ascended bodily into heaven. O you who are the Mother of God in manner beyond understanding and beyond words, who gave birth in time to the Lord Whom time cannot contain; we the faithful magnify you with one accord. Hymn instead of 'It is truly Proper,' Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

God ascended His throne amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sound of trumpets. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Communion Hymn, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.

When You came to the Mount of Olives, O Christ, completing the favorable plan of Your Father, the angels in heaven were moved with wonder, and the demons trembled beneath the earth. The apostles were filled with both fear and joy when You were speaking with them. A cloud was prepared before You as an awaiting throne; heaven opened its gates, shining with beauty; and the earth uncovered its deep abyss to show the fall of Adam and his rising up to You again. As an unseen power raised You from the earth, You gave Your blessing in a loud voice; the cloud carried You away, and heaven opened to receive You. Such is the great work that is beyond words, O Lord, that You accomplished for the salvation of our souls. Vesper Hymn, Ascension of our Lord.

Miracles of Jesus

Healing	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Man with leprosy	8:2-4	1:40-42	5:12-13	
Roman centurion's servant	8:5-13		7:1-10	
Peter's mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:30-31	4:38-39	
Two men from Gadara	8:28-34	5:1-15	8:27-35	
Paralyzed man	9:2-7	2:3-12	5:18-25	
Woman with bleeding	9:20-22	5:25-29	8:43-48	
Two blind men	9:27-31			
Man mute and possessed	9:32-33			
Man with a shriveled hand	12:10-13	3:1-5	6:6-10	
Man blind, mute and possessed	12:22		11:14	
Canaanite woman's daughter	15:21-28	7:24-30		
Boy with a demon	17:14-18	9:17-29	9:38-43	
Two blind men (one named)	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
Deaf mute		7:31-37		
Man possessed, synagogue		1:23-26	4:33-35	
Blind man at Bethsaida		8:22-26		
Crippled woman			13:11-13	
Man with dropsy			14:1-4	
Ten men with leprosy			17:11-19	
The high priest's servant			22:50-51	
Official's son at Capernaum				4:46-54
Sick man, pool of Bethesda				5:1-9
Man born blind				9:1-7
Command over the forces of nature				
Calming the storm	8:23-27	4:37-41	8:22-25	
Walking on the water	14:25	6:48-51		6:19-21
5,000 people fed	14:15-21	6:35-44	9:12-17	6:5-13
4,000 people fed	15:32-38	8:1-9		
Coin in the fish's mouth	17:24-27			
Fig tree withered	21:18-22	11:12-14, 20-25		
Catch of fish			5:4-11	
Water turned into wine				2:1-11
Another catch of fish				21:1-11
Bringing the dead back to life				
Jairus's daughter	9:18-19, 23-25	5:22-24, 38-42	8:41-42, 49-56	
Widow's son at Nain			7:11-15	
Lazarus				11:1-44

James Doesn't Belong To Our Church

Someone asked the parish priest of a suburban parish if a certain man called James belonged to the parish. "No, James does not belong to our parish," the priest sadly replied. But for some reason, his name is on the rolls." The inquirer, a little confused by the answer, asked the difference between belonging to the church and having one's name on the parish register.

He verbalized, "Is it wishful thinking on James' part?"

"It is like this," the sympathetic but dismayed parish priest explained, "James' time does not belong to the Church, neither do his talents, his energy, or his earthly treasure. In this life, he appears to be solo-flying."

"What sort of membership does James have in the Church?" asked the other man.

"It is a bit difficult to explain," the priest said. "Since he seldom comes to church, he has no feeling or compelling reason for belonging to the church family. The Church has never become a spiritual home to him; it is not his oasis in the world. It would be stretching a point to say that James belongs to the Church, a really gross exaggeration." "He apparently has the deluded insight that social membership applies equally to the Church as it does to purely secular organizations," shared the inquirer.

He then continued, "To be perfectly honest, I guess there isn't an ounce of James that truly belongs to the Church. He is on his own, now, and apparently will be in eternity unless he grows up and repents!"

Addendum Notation: In our parish, we do not believe in subterfuge or accept delusion. Those who are registered are expected to live up to their Christian responsibilities if they wish to enjoy their Christian privileges. Our parish *does NOT* have social memberships for sale.

I cried unto the LORD with my voice,
and he heard me out of his holy hill.

PSALM 3:4

Ten Things My Church Provides For Me

**Man's endowed gifts of talent, treasure and time
can best be invested through the Church of Jesus Christ**

1. **Christian Worship** through which I learn to practice the presence of God.
2. **Christian preaching** with its spiritual instruction and its challenge to holy living.
3. **Christian ordinances** in the sacramental Mysteries which are continual reminders and opportunities for the possibility of abundant new life through surrender to our heavenly Father and daily communion with him.
4. **Christian instruction** through which I learn to think high thoughts and discover spiritual truths.
5. **Christian fellowship** which will strengthen the best that is in me and encourage me with good example.
6. **Christian evangelistic** opportunities through which I can share my faith response and conviction and make my life count for God by giving good example.
7. **Christian training** opportunities through which I can find myself as created in God's image and grow in Christian life.
8. **Christian service** opportunities through which I can make my life practically more useful to God and my fellow man.
9. **Christian missions** through which I can make my influence, however meager, felt for the good of souls throughout the world.
10. **Christian stewardship** opportunities through which I can invest my earthly treasure for eternal rewards and express my gratitude for God's precious grace in my life.

Did You Know That ...

- ...there are two ways to spread light: be the candle or the mirror that reflects it?
- ...minds are like parachutes; they only function when open?
- ...only the mediocre are always at their best?
- ...life is like an escalator; you can move forward or backward, but you cannot remain still?
- ...challenge is a dragon with a gift in its jaws; tame the dragon and the gift is yours?
- ...reading the Scripture is not work, but sheer delight?
- ...we should make the most of what God sends to us and the least of all that is unworthy in our lives?
- ...if we do foolish things, let us do them with enthusiasm?
- ...we should not want to get to the end of our life and find that we have lived just the length of it without having experienced the width and depth as well?
- ...to be energetic in faith, act energetic?
- ...you have to be careful about being too careful?
- ...if we live and love in the present moment, the spiritual energy of that moment will spread beyond all boundaries?
- ...spiritual success is a ladder that cannot be climbed with your hands in your pockets?
- ...believers live and act as though it were impossible to fail in achieving spiritual success in life?
- ...living with gusto means keeping the image of Christ before our eyes each day?
- ...children are not a burden, but a inspiration?
- ...just living is not enough; one must have sunshine and the freedom of Christ as well?

"SEEING IS BELIEVING"

We have all heard the old adage: "Seeing is believing." Its message is obvious: it is difficult to disprove what your own eyes have proven to be true. Yet in today's Gospel lesson, the Pharisees and Scribes appear to be suffering from a form of "selective blindness," for they refuse to believe something that should have been very apparent: that Jesus Christ possessed powers that could only have come from God.

Our Lord encounters a man who has been blind from birth. This poor individual symbolizes all of humanity - needing illumination from the Light of the world. Rejecting the commonly held belief that a person's illness or disability is a direct result of sinfulness, Christ heals the blind man, proclaiming that misfortune is often a venue for doing God's work. It should have been a heart-warming story, with great rejoicing taking place throughout the community. Instead, the man who was healed of his infirmity was forced to "stand trial" and repeatedly explain how he suddenly could see. The Jewish authorities tried their best to discredit this great miracle by discrediting Jesus. "He works on the Sabbath! How could He be from God?" They went so far as to doubt the man's blindness! The man's own parents did their best to keep out of this confrontation, fearing the wrath of their son's accusers. When the Pharisees and Scribes could not break the former blind man, they angrily cast him out of the temple.

But the story does have a happy ending. Jesus finds the man and reveals to him that He is the Son of God. Indeed, "seeing is believing!"

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