

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Thirty Third Sunday after Pentecost

February 1, 2009

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor;
Father John Cmur; Deacon Kenneth E. Ellis and
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 Three Holy Hierarchs. The greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we respond, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ **Monday is the feast of the Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 7: 30 PM. Please join us in prayer and praise.**

+++ 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 weekly Scripture Study meets on Sundays following the Divine Liturgy while children attend their own classes. Everyone now has an opportunity to participate in adult religious education at which Scripture is discussed and explained along with other interests.**

+++ 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-end: Tithe Offering, ~~████████~~ Candles, ~~████████~~ Food Coupons, ~~████████~~ Christian Fellowship, ~~██████~~; Parish Dues, ~~████████~~ Holy Day, ~~██████~~ Energy, ~~██████~~ Kitchen, ~~████████~~ Diocesan Dues, ~~██████~~, for a total of ~~██████~~0. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 39 adults and 15 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, Pani Buletza, Paul Szmaida, and Debra Szmaida.**

+++ 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 ~~████████~~0 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 ~~████████~~. 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 check the Sign-Up-Sheet for the weekly Christian Fellowship for the coming weeks. Simple foods without need for preparation are the best. Marilyn Korba coordinates this vital apostolate. Please assist her in making it a success by bringing your donation early so that all are present at the worship of our God.

+++ 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 ~~████████~~ on this project to date!

+++ **As soon as possible, please see Marilyn Korba to sign up for the Alaskan Cruise next August, 2009. We are in need of your support.**

+++ 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!



CONSECRATED LIFE



The barometer of the quality of spiritual life in the Church of Jesus Christ is revealed in the vitality of consecrated life.

Our venerable Mother Euphrosyna lived in the fifth century. She followed the way of Christian monasticism for approximately forty years after which she fell asleep in the Lord and entered heavenly glory. She described monasticism as “a longing for God that knows no limits...the beginning of the age to come, of the kingdom of heaven still here on earth.” She further noted for our benefit, if we would but learn from it, that “...at times this impulse of monastic fervor has been stronger, at times weaker, and the Holy Fathers speak of monasticism as a barometer of spiritual life in the Church.”

In other words, if the spiritual life of believers is of the quality it ought be, vocations to the monastic life for both men and women will abound. If the Church is successful in promoting a quality of life over all that is conducive to salvation, many souls will be ignited with the fire of enduring and enriched faith and enter

monasteries to continue with their devotion in life that sacred impulse which will enliven all souls to be serious about salvation in Christ.

It is interesting to speak of fervor in Christian life in terms of "barometric pressure." Such thinking, however, reminds us of rises and falls in Christian commitment over the centuries and how the "white martyrdom" or unbloody witness of those in consecrated life, those who have entered monastic or religious life, has had a profound influence on the entire Body of Christ, even restoring it to its pristine beauty.

The vocation to consecrated life can take on various forms in the world today. Originating from a desire to know God more intimately by way of journeying to the desert in community, religious life today can be active, communal, or more traditionally monastic. Regardless of the particulars of consecrated living, monastics, while entirely counter cultural, remain the heart and soul of the Church. They help us to elevate all of society by

their prayerful example of self-emptying for the sake of the Lord, that everyone is so impressed, they are impelled to practice it to one degree or another in their own lives.

Monasticism in the life of the Body of Christ means preserving the creation of man without interference from worldly intrusion with the values of our Lord so that Christ is triumphant in all living souls. Monasticism places believers in a crucial passion for the goal of believers returning to their authentic spirituality, theology, and discipleship, living a Christ-like life.

In the past, monasticism was not seen merely as a separate condition, proper to a precise category of Christian believers, but rather as a reference point for all baptized, according to the gifts offered to each by the Lord; it was presented as a symbolic synthesis of Christianity; Christianity distilled for the faithful, zealous and vibrant soul.

When God's call is total, as it is in monastic life, then the person can reach the highest point that sensitivity, culture, and spirituality are able to validly express. This is even more true for Orthodoxy, for which monasticism is an essential experience. The Church of Jesus Christ cannot and does not truly exist without a vibrant monastic community within it, giving continuing expression to the operation of the Holy Spirit in souls called to witness to the totality of Christian life.

The monastery is the prophetic place where creation becomes praise of God and the precept of concretely lived charity becomes the ideal of human existence, constantly being exemplified and challenging for believers to pursue.

Standing before the abyss of the precept of divine mercy, the monastic can only proclaim the awareness of his own radical poverty, which immediately becomes a plea for help and a cry for rejoicing on account of an even more generous salvation, since from the abyss of personal wretchedness salvation is unthinkable. This is why the plea for forgiveness and the glorification of God form a substantial part of liturgical prayer.

In our time and place, there is a radical need for flourishing once more monasteries which in time become attractive points to believing souls in need of spiritual maturity. Thus, believers in general must provide the kind of environment in their homes, having its basis in parish spiritual life, to share with all those who feel called to work for its revitalization.

Our prayer for those in consecrated life and for those who are being called to such life is heightened when our blessed Church celebrates the memory of its communicants in the person of bishops, prophets and monastics and relives their victories over evil.

In the month of January, we celebrate the memory of our Holy Father, Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. He established communal monastic living and taught his monks meditation on God's revelation to us in Scripture, manual work in obedience, and fraternal love. He established a monastic life in what is called a "rule" or "typikon." His sister, our Venerable Mother, Macrina, was learned in Scripture and led a solitary life. She was and remains a shining example for those who forsake the vanity of the world. Both St. Basil and St. Macrina lived in the fourth century. The tradition they implemented in the life of the Body of Christ is synonymous with it. Without monasticism, there can be no vibrant Christianity and it monasticism is then a sign of the devotion and full expression of faith among believers, that such an exalted atmosphere of holiness and spirituality thrives that exclusive devotion is then found among practicing communicants. The more devoted and serious believers are about Christ, the sacramental Mysteries and living the life of Christ, the more dynamic will monasticism become. The success of monasticism in a particular local church then nurtures the spiritual life in its proportional dimension and understanding. Both depend upon and fulfill each other. Neither survives in value or nurture without the other.

Early in the month of February, we celebrate the feast of the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple, his encounter with the Prophet Simeon and Prophetess Anna. The

righteous and devout elder Simeon and the widow Anna were made worthy to greet, to hail and encounter the forty day old Jesus as Messiah and Saviour of the world. At the time of this great feast each year, believers are called to a greater incisive awareness of and appreciation for modern-day mystics and prophets, those who follow consecrated monastic/religious life in the Church.

At the end of March we celebrate the memory of our Venerable Father, John Climacus, author of "the Ladder of Perfection." At age of sixteen, he entered a monastery on Mount Sinai. He fell asleep in the Lord in the year 649. As monasticism is a reference point for all baptized, we are reminded that his writings should impact all Christian faithful. His "Ladder" is tradition refreshing reading and studying during the Great Fast.

This entire time of year, in the protected shelter of winter months, is a reminder and affords us time enough for all who are serious about salvation that monasticism must be nurtured, must be successful and influence Christian living with its truth and values.

All those in consecrated life are committed to the realization of the kingdom of God on earth. They are faithful to the radically gentle approach of the gospel and its imperative for salvation. Often they are active in the world and thus courageously intertwined in contemporary reality and

need. Their influence with increased numbers must be more pervasive in the life of the Body of Christ lest we perish for lack of spiritual breath.

The vocation of traditional communal monasticism stresses the virtue of constant prayer, obedience and hard work for the salvation of souls. The daily life of the monastic, man or woman, includes the regular cycle of church services, private prayer, and labor in obedience for the common good of the community and surrounding believers. All members of the community commit themselves, by infused grace from God to live out charity as virgins.

All legitimate expressions of religious life require the charism of charity, simplicity, and humility. These express the basic evangelical counsels for perfection, poverty, chastity and obedience.

During this preparatory time for the Great Fast, believers ought by example and thus, prayer come to an increased understanding of monastic life and its implications as well as vital importance in the life of the Church. Pray constantly then, for those in consecrated life and in consideration of those who may be called to this necessary spiritual richness in the world today.

True appreciation for consecrated monastic life comes by knowing the life. The best way to know about such life is getting to know a monk a nun, a brother or sister. A

**pilgrimage or prayer visit to a monastery
can be a spiritually enlightening experience
and enriching to the soul.**

**Prayer to the Birthgiver of Life
for those in Consecrated life.**

**Most glorious and ever-Virgin Mary,
Birthgiver of God, the Word was made flesh
in your womb. Help us to be open to the
Word of God, so that, having welcomed
him, received him, mediated upon him and
lived in him, He may grow and mature in
our hearts and souls. Help us to live, like
you, in the spirit of the Beatitudes and to
dedicate ourselves with unceasing charity
to evangelizing all those who seek your Son
and our God, the only Lord Jesus Christ.
Intercede in behalf of those whom your Son
has called to share his salutary gospel as
modern day prophets. Be a constant source
of strength and protection as well as
inspiration to our monastics, all those who
practice a religious life. Grant that they may
serve every person in purity, and that,
having heard and kept the Word of God,
they may persevere to the end and be living
witnesses to the eternal kingdom. Amen.**



Three Hierarchs

“Men do not light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket. They set it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house” Matthew 5: 15. Those whom we remember and honor today received the precious gift of faith and did with the exalted gift precisely what our God intended for them to do. They provided an example to those around them, in the community, in their families, for fellow believers and, finally, for all who were entrusted to their care by the wisdom of our holy Mother, the Church. Their hearts were hungry and they found true sustenance at the table of the Lord. So overwhelmed were they, they shared that heavenly and divine nourishment with every one who came in contact with them. Thus, today, they continue to be the shining luminaries of faith our blessed Church enjoys recalling and thinking about, and meditating on the values which sustained them, and bringing their success to our attention, so that when we become at times discouraged, we can think about St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen and know they intercede by their prayers for our own feeble intentions before the throne of our God.

They illustrated the compelling truth of Christ’s gospel by their own lives. They literally fully and totally believed Christ. They lived the example of Christ to illustrate profound and important truths.

Just as Jesus told a story about a man who prepared a great supper and invited a number of his friends to come and eat with him, so did each of these Fathers of our blessed Church. In the parable Christ told, so many who were invited instead of coming, offered many excuses, but these three men simply accepted the invitation in the spirit it was offered and enjoyed the company of God. The reason for having a supper is to satisfy hunger, to respond to the elementary need of man to sustain himself, even enjoy the specially prepared foods. There is a hunger in our physical bodies which has the power to drive us beyond all reason. Under the power of unsatisfied hunger, man can change from a rational being, into a heartless beast. Scripture tells us of the siege of Samara by Beh-hadad. Two mothers become so crazed with hunger that they make a compact to kill and eat first the baby of one mother and then that of the other (2 Kings 6: 27 – 29).

However we very well know that man’s hunger can and does go beyond the animal level. We, who are the choice creation of God, are the only ones who take great effort in cooking and preparing our nourishment with great taste and artistic creativeness. We want our food not only to be satisfying, but tasty and attractive to the eye. Just as shelter that keeps out the rain

and protects against cold is enough for a dog or a cow, but man is not satisfied with just shelter. He wants pictures on his walls and rugs on his floors and comfortable furniture in which to rest and relax. Just the fulfillment of basic needy desires is not sufficient or enough for man because he has a noble soul, a spirit which impels him upward and beyond the ordinary daily demands of simply existing.

Because we are created in God's image, we hunger for beauty, for the fulfillment of our love desires, for a feeling of importance and security. Far more important than our basic animal appetite, is the deep hunger of the heart for beauty, for never-ending life and for the security of heaven which we experience in the depth of our soul. David experienced it when he confessed, "As the deer pants after the water of the brook, so my soul is eager for you, O God" Psalms 42: 1. Created in his image, we hunger for God. Being hungry means not only eating when we are in need of nourishment, but it also means eating with those we love, whose company we enjoy, who enrich us by their presence and spirit.

Having food in the eternal kingdom, such as the Blessed Eucharist of Christ's Body and Blood is not only necessary for our flesh and soul and its sustenance, but also because we enjoy the company of those with whom we share it. If we love the Lord, we also love those who love him and those whom He in turn loves, our fellow believers. It means laughter, joy fellowship, fulfillment with those who think like us, act like us, believe like us, live like us and love like us. It means keeping company with them for our fulfillment. It means satisfying not only the body and its legitimate needs, but also the heart, completing the needs of the soul. Jesus wants us to know that coming to God, that abiding with Him, that living like him is like coming to a fulfilling, celebratory and well-prepared supper.

The Three Hierarchs grasped this implication. They recognized its truth. They wanted to live it and enjoy it as well. Thus they accepted the invitation, they responded to it and they were fulfilled and completed in it.

This is the simple message the Church of Jesus Christ wants us to learn today. As we celebrate and honor the heavenly blessing and grace which was accepted by these three great men, we also recognize it is offered us as well. We make a commitment to receive the same blessings with joy ourselves so that our life, too, will be a blessing for those around us here and now and a glorification of our heavenly Father for all eternity.

Pillars Of Faith

Pillars are generally understood to be strong and necessary elements which in the building and construction process, uphold great pressure and weight. Not only do they provide an esthetic value to buildings, but serve the practical purpose of contributing to their stability well. Not only do they draw attention to the creative mind of their inspired designer and creator, they also testify to the uplifted quality of soul their beholders receive from their almost silent witness. We read about them in Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 17: 13 – 22) as they signify genuine upright faith response to God's first shown love and how they uphold the weight and witness of the heavens which are considered our eternal destiny. Not only are they appealing in sight, but add to the enduring vulnerable strength of a building, in which the faith of people was completely watered down, and they were thus broken and carried off to Babylon. (2 Kings 25: 13).

We are even dismayed to read about how Lot's wife was turned into a Pillar of salt because of her lack of faith and eagerness to remain connected to and associated with the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Thus pillars were monuments erected to commemorate events of salvation in scriptural times: Jacob's vision of angels (Genesis 28: 18), Moses entering the covenant with Jahweh and Israel (Exodus 24: 4), and Joshua, passing over the Jordan into the Promised Land (Joshua 4: 1 – 9).

Pillars have been understood in the life of the Body of Christ to be those who have in spite of egregious offenses against them personally and individually they were so richly endowed with grace to remain faithful to Christ, there was no moment when they doubted. The more they were attacked, the more they were vilified and demeaned, the more they were faithful and became because of heavenly grace multiplied in them, stalwarts in the army of Christ.

The example of their lives stands out so dramatically in contrast with the values of the world, that serious and sincere souls cannot but notice the intensity of their faith. Wee must take notice. Thus we have souls inspired to imitate their values because, like a bell, the message they deliver and resonate is that of Christ the Saviour.

Pillars also became monuments of idolatry to be destroyed (Deuteronomy 12: 3). So the Three Hierarchs not only remind us of the values of Christ we are to avidly and zealously pursue, but also those of the contrasted world which we are to avoid, overcome and renounce.

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

O teachers of the universe, equal to the apostles: pray to the Lord of all to grant peace to the world and abundant mercy to our souls. Troparion, Feast of the Three Hierarchs.

O Lord, you have received your priestly and divinely inspired preachers, the crown of Your teachers, into the enjoyment of Your goodness and repose. You accepted their labors and death above any other sacrifice, for only You can glorify Your saints. Kontakion, Feast of the Three Hierarchs.

Through all the world their voice resounds; their message reaches the bounds of the earth. Prokimenon, Feast of the Three Hierarchs.

Tell us, Simeon, Who is it that you bear in your arms and bring into the temple so joyfully? To Whom do you say: "Now dismiss Your servant, O Lord, because my eyes have seen my Saviour?" Behold the Child born of the Virgin! Behold the Word, God of God! O Lord Who for our sake were incarnate and saved mankind, to You we bow in worship! Vesper hymn, Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple.

The Lord Who comes forth from the Father in all eternity, and from a Virgin's womb in time is carried to the temple by His Mother all-pure. The Lawmaker of Mount Sinai, submitting to the law, is presented to the elderly and holy Simeon, to whom it has been revealed that he would see Christ the Lord. Simeon received Him in his arms, he leaped for joy and said: "This is God, One in eternity with the Father, the Saviour of our souls!" Vesper hymn, Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple.

Hail, Mother of God, Virgin, full of grace. From you has shone forth the Sun of Justice, Christ our God, shining upon those who are in darkness. Rejoice also, you Elder, Simeon, for you received in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who has granted us Resurrection. Troparion, Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple.

My soul extols the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour. Prokimenon, Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple.



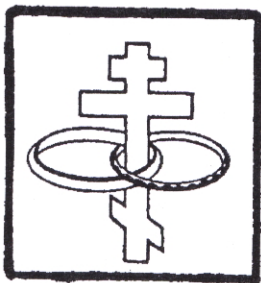
Birthday
Wishes!

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 can gather together and offer thanks to Him 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 the month of February.

February 6 William M. Karpiak
February 7 Robin Pasquino
February 14 Sarah A. Harrison
February 14 Tatyana L. Harrison
February 15 Paul Pallas
February 21 Joan Henry
February 24 George Idromenos
February 27 Marilyn J. Korba
February 28 Joseph F. Choti

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 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 is that the Lord 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 February. 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:

February 10 Mary & Ralph Jaakobs
February 13 Nikitas & Angeliki Tsokris

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!

CYRUS AND JOHN: "BROTHERS IN SPIRIT"

Deepicted on today's Church Bulletin are the Holy Unmercenaries and Wonderworkers Cyrus and John. These two 3rd century physicians are remembered together by the Church as being "brothers in the spirit." Cyrus, who lived in Alexandria, became well known for healing the sick not only with medicine but with prayer as well. During the persecution of the Emperor Diocletian, he fled to Arabia, where he met John, an officer in the Roman army. John was a physician as well, and they soon formed a strong spiritual bond. The two men took monastic vows and continued to practice medicine without seeking any payment. They decided that their services would be of greater value in Alexandria, so they returned to the prominent ancient city that had become a center of paganism.

In a neighboring village, a woman named Anastasia, along with her three daughters, was being persecuted for her faith in Christ. Cyrus and John took it upon themselves to defend Anastasia and her children. Their plea for mercy was ignored, and the healers were ordered to convince this Christian family to deny the Lord, or suffer the consequences. Instead, Cyrus and John implored them to remain steadfast in their beliefs and to ask God to give them strength to endure whatever would come their way. Despite being subjected to cruel torture, Anastasia's family refused to turn their backs on their Master. They, along with Cyrus and John, were finally executed by the Romans around 311 A.D.