



*The Healing Hand
of Our Lord*

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of the Man born Blind

May 24, 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

+++ This Thursday is the most solemn feast of the Ascension of our Lord. In anticipation, the holyday vesperal Divine Liturgy will be celebrated Wednesday evening at 7: 30 PM. This is one of the twelve major holy days of the Church. 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.

+++ Next Sunday, the special offering for flowers to beautify our parish church for the coming feast of Pentecost will be taken. Please give generously that the birthday of the Church be solemnly celebrated.

+++ 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.

+++ The Pirohi Sale for June will be on June 6. Please begin to secure orders from friends and neighbors. This is the last sale until September.

+++ 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, \$██████; Kitchen, \$██████; Camp; Nazareth Raffle, \$██████; Utilities, \$██████; Diocesan Dues, \$██████ for a total of \$██████.00. 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: Debra Szmaida, Mary Jaakobs, Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Kent Pasquino, Anna Zacharyczuk, Pani Buletza and +Paul 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 \$██████ 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.

+++ The offering for the Resurrection of our Lord received to date amounts to \$██████. We thank those who take seriously their conscientious support of the parish and its temporal needs and ask the Lord's blessings on them in rich abundance. We look forward to receiving generous donations from those who were away or did not yet turn in their Victory Offering.

+++ 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 \$ [REDACTED] on this project to date!

+++ We invite all to pray for and offer a lighted candle for the living and departed veterans of our parish and nation. God bless you devoted souls!

+++ 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.

+++ We thank all who supported the Camp Nazareth Family Day Raffle. God bless you devoted souls!

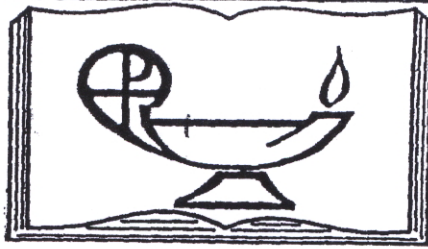
+++ Today we will honor at the Divine Liturgy the birthday celebrants for this month. At the conclusion of the Liturgy, as is our parish tradition in gratitude for their sacrifice in the cause of our freedom, we will celebrate a Memorial Service for the repose of the souls of our nation's veterans.

+++ 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!

A PRAYER FOR THOSE LOST IN BATTLE

Give eternal rest to them, O Lord,
whose souls have taken flight
And lead them to a better world
where there is peace and light.
Grant them eternal freedom
from conflict, war, and care,
And fulfill for them Thy prophecy,
"There shall be no night there."

LORD



TEACH
US

Eternal Life

*And what profit is there in gaining the whole world when it means forfeiting one's soul?
Luke 9: 25.*

*Will be repaid many times over now, as well as receiving eternal life in the world to come
Luke 18: 30.*

*And they never die again; in these respects they are like angels and are sons of God, for
they are raised up in new life from the dead Luke 20: 36.*

*But as to your real question – whether or not there is a resurrection – why, even the
writings of Moses himself prove this. For when he describes how God appeared to him in
the burning bush, he speaks of God as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the
God of Jacob.” To say that that the Lord is some person's God means that person is alive,
not dead! So from God's point of view, all men are living Luke 20: 37, 38.*

*And as Moses in the wilderness lifted up the bronze image of a serpent on a pole, even so I
must be lifted up on a pole so that anyone who believes in me will have eternal life. For
God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that anyone who believes in him
shall not perish but have eternal life. And all who trust him – God's Son – to save them
have eternal life; those who do not believe and obey him shall never see heaven, but the
wrath of God remains upon them John 3: 14 - 16, 36.*

*But the water I give them he said becomes a perpetual spring within them watering them
forever with eternal life John 4: 14.*

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.

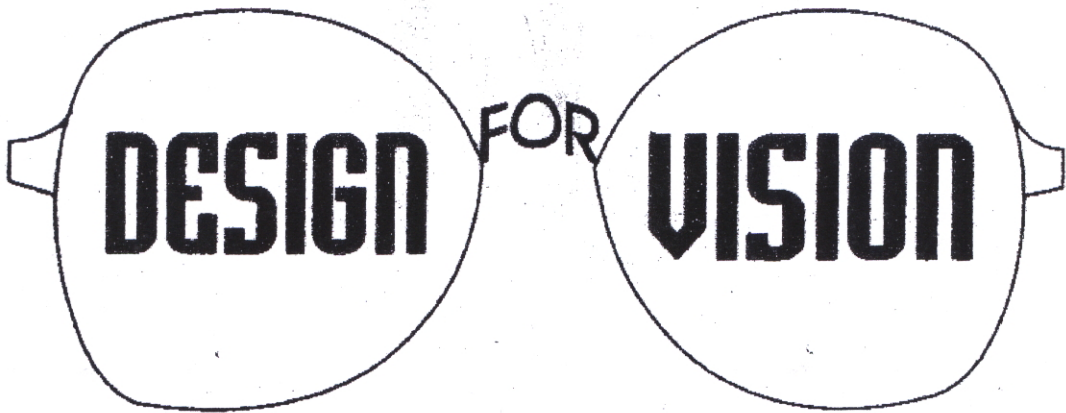
When You fulfilled the plan of salvation for us and united all things on earth to those in heaven, O Christ our God, You ascended in glory, never leaving us, but remaining ever present. For You proclaim to those who love You: "I am with you, and no one else has power over you." Kontakion, Feast of the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



The fascination of language is the variety of meaning found in each word. An entirely different nuance is created even by emphasis and pronunciation. The richness of a word is noted in its different meanings. Contrasting values are imputed to words depending on their usage.

From a purely spiritual dimension, to *see* signifies and conveys a number of values and concepts. (1) To behold or perceive with the eyes, as *When you notice the donkey of one who hates you lying prostrate under its burden, by no means desert him; help him rather, to raise it up* Exodus 23: 5. (2) To observe with approbation, as *God saw how good the light was* Genesis 1: 4. (3) To look upon with consideration and observation, as *When the king came in to meet the guests, however, he caught sight of a man not properly dressed for a wedding feast* Matthew 22: 11. (4) To visit, as *Never again as long as he lived, did Samuel see Saul* 1 Samuel 15: 35; *I do not want to see you just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits* 1 Corinthians 16: 7. (5) To suffer or bear with, as *Now, since we partake of the salt of the palace, we ought not simply to look on while the king is being dishonored* Ezra 4: 14. (6) To hear, as *When the people witnessed the thunder and lightening, the trumpet blast and the mountain smoking, they all feared and trembled* Exodus 20: 18; *I turned around to see whose voice it was that spoke to me* Revelation 1: 12. (7) To feel, as *Make us glad, for the days when you afflicted us, for the years when we saw evil* Psalms 90: 15. (8) To taste of, as *It was revealed to him that he would not experience death until he had seen the Anointed of the Lord* Luke 2: 26; *I solemnly assure you if a man is true to my word, he shall never see death* John 8: 51. (9) To know or learn,

as *Go, then, see if all is well with your brothers and the flocks and bring back word* Genesis 37: 14. (10) To have an abundance of knowledge so as not to stand in need of instruction from others, as *If you were blind there would be no sin in that. But we see, you say and your sin remains* John 9: 41. (11) To perceive and understand experimentally as *The Israelite foremen knew they were in a sorry plight, having been told not to reduce the daily amount of bricks* Exodus 5: 19; *...but I see in my body's members another law at war with the law of my mind; this makes me the prisoner of the law of sin in my members* Romans 7: 23. (12) To beware, or take care, as *I fell at is feet to worship him, but he said to me, No get up, don't you see, I am merely a fellow servant with you and your brothers who give witness to Jesus. Worship God alone* Revelation 19: 10; 22: 9. (13) To know by divine revelation, as *This is what Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem* Isaiah 2: 1; *An oracle concerning Babylon; a vision of Isaiah, son of Amoz* Isaiah 13: 1. (14) To believe in and rely upon, as *By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's wrath, for he persevered as if he were looking on the invisible God* Hebrews 11: 27. (15) To have the perfect and immediate fruition of the glorious presence of God in heaven, as *Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God* Matthew 5: 8; *And from my flesh I shall see God, my innermost being is consumed with longing* Job 19: 26.

Thus seeing, or to see, it is not only said of the sense of vision, by which we perceive external objects, but also, of inward perception, of the knowledge of spiritual things and even of that supernatural sight of hidden things, of prophecy, of visions, of sights of hidden things, of ecstasies. Formerly those gifted by God were called seers who afterwards were called prophets. *Again the servant answered Saul, I have a quarter of a shekel. If I give it to the man of God, he will tell us our way* 1 Samuel 9: 8, 9; *The vision of Obadiah* Obadiah 1: 1.

This very same language or word is utilized to convey or see the goodness of the Lord. *I believe I shall see the bounty of the Lord in the land of the living* Psalms 27: 13. It also means to enjoy the mercy or blessing which God has promised. Job says, *Remember that my life is like the wind, my eyes shall no more see happiness...For soon I shall lie down in the dust and should you seek me I shall then be gone* Job 7: 7, 21.

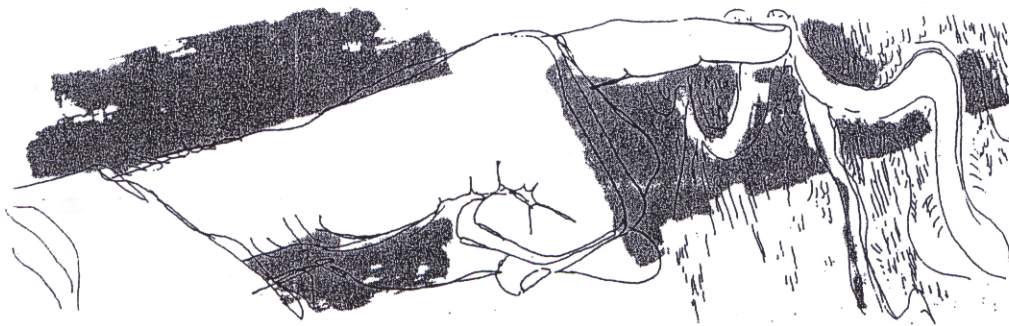
The pure in heart shall see God Matthew 5: 8. They shall understand the mysteries of salvation; they shall perceive the loving kindness of our heavenly Father towards them in this earthly life and at length shall perfectly enjoy him in heaven.

It is said the elders *saw the God of Israel* Exodus 24: 10 They did not see an resemblance of the divine nature, did not see God as He actually is because He is a pure spirit and is actually denied man. *You saw no form at all on the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire* Deuteronomy 4: 15, What they saw was some glorious appearance or token of God's special presence; or rather the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, who then showed himself to them in human shape, as a testimony of his future incarnation.

It conveys the idea of being familiar with and seeing the face of the King. *The king also rewarded Mordecai to serve at court, and rewarded him for his actions* Esther A: 16. It imparts the idea of being able to approach him, or to have familiar conversation with him. The kings of Persia, under the influence of maintaining that respect and majesty that was due them, seldom permitted their subjects to see them, and hardly ever showed themselves in public; so that none but their most intimate friends, or their familiar domestics had the privilege or advantage of looking upon or beholding their countenance.

Myriad and profoundly different and sublimely mystical are the meanings imputed in God's revelation to us in Scripture to just one single, simple three-lettered word. No wonder our blessed Church counsels us seriously to submit and allow ourselves to enjoy the varied meanings and messages of Scripture explained and guarded by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The heart of these people has grown sluggish; they have scarcely used their ears to listen; their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their minds and repent; and I shall have to heal them Acts of the Apostles 28: 27.



Going Up?

He who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life
John 5: 24.

A few years ago, a TV advertisement for life insurance showed a businessman walking across a busy street. He quickly leaped for the curb as a speeding car veered toward him. Somewhat ruffled, he said, "That was close! I didn't think I was going to make it." Suddenly two men in white suits joined him on the busy street and one of them said, "You didn't!"

As the three men began walking together, the businessman remarked that at least he had peace of mind because his family was covered by a generous insurance policy. But the real punch line came at the end of the ad. While the man and his two escorts were riding an escalator up into the clouds, he said with relief, "I'm sure glad we're going up!"

That last line was meant to provide some comic relief, but for the thinking person it raises the serious issue of heaven and hell. Our Lord does not intend to startle us, but issues the sobering truth: "Those who have done right shall rise to live; evildoers shall rise to be damned" John, 5: 29. Obviously, then, not all who die can look forward to "going up." He teaches us that some would experience the resurrection of life and others, the resurrection of condemnation. Jesus Christ is the only one who can offer eternal life to all who trust and live in him. The best insurance policy to have is not the one which provides much financial coverage, but the one which guarantees life after death.

We hear so much at funerals of simple naive talk and without basis, wishful thinking of the departed being with God that we forget it takes more than dying to place us in the presence of our God; it takes genuine living the gospel message. Before we canonize ourselves and others as saints, let us pay more attention to the quality of our lifestyle. Have we seriously considered and lived the offer of salvation given us in Christ? If so, we put our trust in the Lord by the way we live up to his standards not our own deceit. Then we will be able to say with confidence, "I am sure glad I am going up! Why we are here is important, but where we are going is far more important!"

Let us not presume on God's loving mercy while pursuing our own agenda which may contradict his conditions for salvation.



“All communicants
of our parish
are always
Number One”



Our Religious Education Program

Our Jesus School is:

**The friend of childhood.
The inspiration of youth.
The strength of middle age.
The comfort of declining years.**

The Jesus School has:

**God's day for its time.
God's house for its place.
God's book for its text.**

Our Jesus School provides:

**Affirmation for parents and children.
A good example to the parish.
Assurance of Christ's teaching.**

Our Jesus School deserves:

**The full support,
The prayerful interest,
The loyal cooperation,
of each communicant in our parish.**

Ascension of Christ

This feast is the mystery of the manifest return to the Father of the risen and triumphant Christ, of his enthronement as Messiah and Lord and as reason for the Descent of the Holy Spirit on forthcoming days. Thus it is a moment in the historical unfolding of the one redemptive paschal mystery; it is in the realm of this mystery that Christ redeems mankind and becomes the source of life to all. In a sense this continuing Passover to the Father is perfected in the exaltation of and “glory” of his death and Resurrection, but the Passover mystery involves so many elements that their manifestation and revelation had to occur successively.

The Resurrection reveals Christ as Conqueror of death and Creator of life. The ensuing and continuing events complement this astounding mystery by showing the end of Christ’s visible mission on earth and his return in glorified humanity to the Father and his enthronement as Lord at the right of the Father. It is then that the Holy Spirit is able to come among us on Pentecost, through whom man finds union with this victorious mystery and from which He is eventually come to judge the living and the dead.

It is prefigured by the penetration of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies. (Hebrews 1: 4; 4: 14; 6: 19, 20. Thus Christ completes his earthly work of teaching and establishing and firmly planting his Body the Church after an additional forty day sojourn of conclusive teaching among his disciples

Consequently, Christ manifests his victory over death and glorious completion of his earthly mission. Ascending to the Father is a reality, for the God Man but it is a sign of his actual return to the Father rather than an indication of where the Father is to be found. The cloud that receives him is not just a natural phenomenon; in accord with Scriptural usage, it is itself a manifestation of that divine glory into which Christ is now wholly received as, at the Transfiguration, it was a prelude of uncreated glory. In this feast mankind makes its return to the Father in and through Christ, just as our heavenly Father has raised us with him, so that He has “...made us sit with him in heavenly places” Ephesians 2: 6.

Heading Homeward

While he was blessing them, he left them and was carried up into heaven.

After worshipping him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy

Luke 24: 51, 52.

Put yourself on that hillside. See the Lord being carried up in glory. Feel your heart beating hard, not sure what to do next. What are you seeing and what are you thinking? St. Luke's gospel pen, filled by the ink of the Holy Spirit for twenty four glorious chapters, appropriately runs dry on a precious scene. A small band of motley men, whose lives had been turned every which way but loose by Jesus of Nazareth, strained for that last earthly glimpse of him.

Thirty three years earlier the tiny feet of God toddled their first visible prints on earth, a young mother's footprints chasing close behind. The walk grew rough, the path strewn with stones and thorns. Now God Incarnate stepped off this planet with feet scarred and bruised. As the Eternal Father predicted at the fall, the ancient serpent struck Christ's heel, but on the day He ascended, all things were under the feet of Christ, subjected to them. Jesus Christ walked the way of humanity so that humanity could walk the way of God. How beautiful the feet that brought good news from heaven!

Not one of the disciples was sorry He had come their way, entered their life. Their losses were incalculable. Most of their friends. Much of their family. The security of their jobs. Physical safety. And now, a leader they could see. Yet they left the Mount of Olives with great joy, continually praising God, for their ordinary lives had been interrupted by eternal glory.

The suffering of this world simply could not compare to the glory He revealed to them. It sustained and swelled them long after the visible became invisible. We are the spiritual descendants of Peter, James, John and all the others who offered their lives, not for what they thought or what they hoped, but for what they actually knew, Whom they knew. Our blessed faith is based on spiritual and eternal truth.

Jesus, the One and Only, that is his title forever. He is the One and Only long before He breathed a soul into humanity, and He will continue to the One and Only long after the last soul is judged. He is changeless. And yet we are all destined for change to become exactly like him. So determined is our God to transform us, we cannot draw near him and remain the same. May our entire life on this planet in His body, the Church, be characterized by one simple word...*JESUS CHRIST!*

The Teacher's Psalm

The Lord is my helper; I shall not fear in guiding my pupils.

He leads me to the heart of the truth and prepares the mind of the pupils to receive it.

He gives me a vision of the importance and immortality of their lives.

He leads me to see the sacredness of teaching His message.

Yes, though I become discouraged and despair at times, yet shall I lift up my head, for his promises cannot fail me.

His word will not return to him void, and my faith undimmed shall burn through all the coming years.

You walk before me that the planted seed shall grow.

You stand at my side on Sunday and speak through my lips so that the pupils may feel the nearness of God.

You shall cause each broken effort to gather growth stalks through unnumbered years. My joy is full as I know every effort in your name shall last forever.

Surely your love and watchful care shall be with me every day of my life and some day I shall live with those who turn many to righteousness forever and ever.

I look up to the hills,
but where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.
He will not let you be defeated.
He who guards you never sleeps.

Lost In The “Woulds”

Some church members are hopelessly lost in the “woulds”

I would go to Sunday catechism lessons today, but I enjoy too much my little extra sleep on Sunday mornings.

I would gladly take my children to worship on Sundays and holydays, but Sunday is my only day to golf.

I would even teach a class on Sunday mornings but my job just doesn't leave time for that much involvement in church.

I would give witness to others about an honorable Christian life, but I never seem to say the right words.

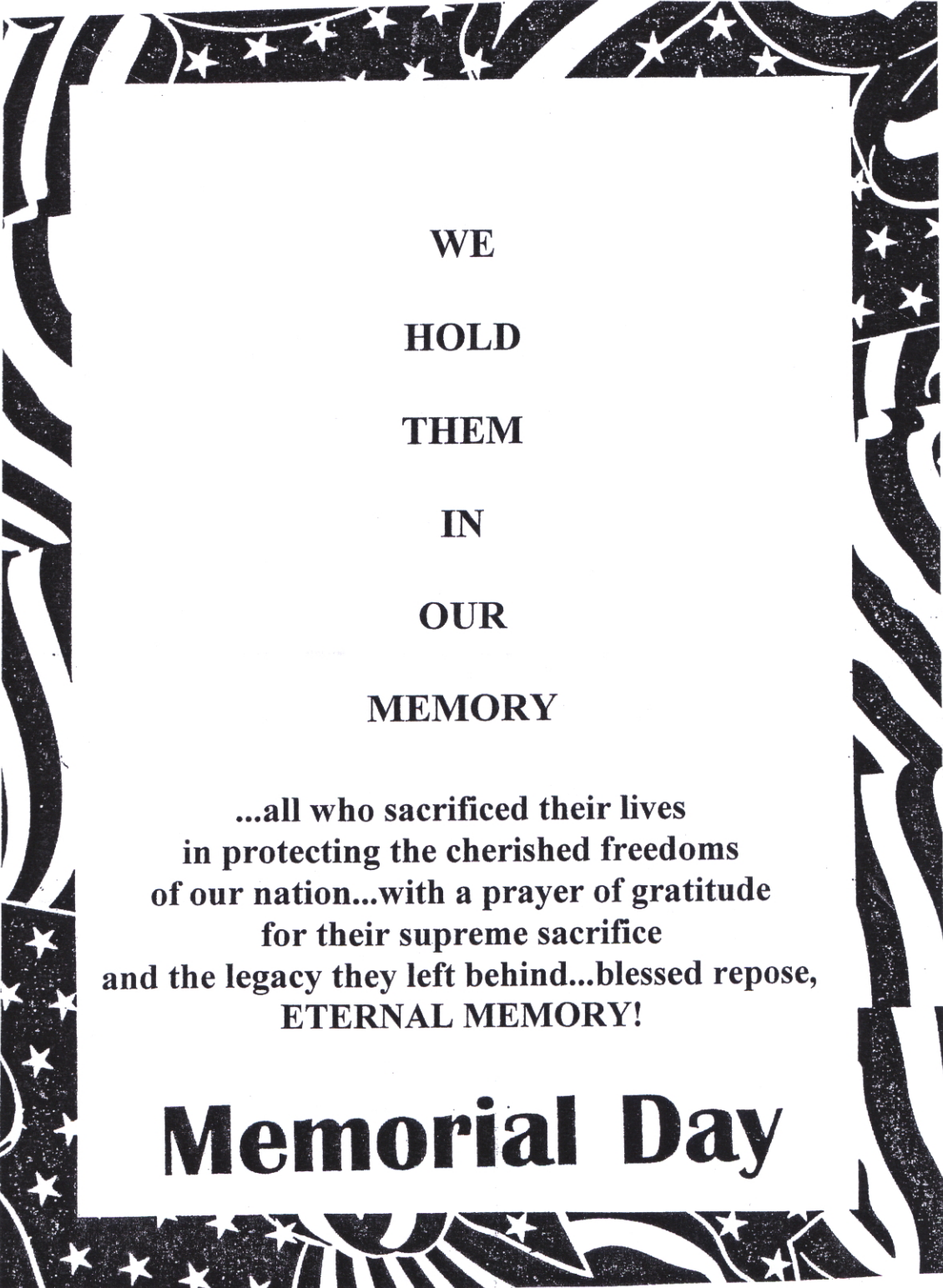
I would give more to the church because both of us work, but there is just not much left after paying the bills.

The only way to find your way out of the “woulds” is to set your eyes on and place your heart in Christ. He will show you the way and path that leads from your deluded dilemma.

I Believe In The Church

I believe ever more profoundly in the Church every hour that I live. A man can make his Christian witness go further through the Church than through any independent temporal movement. He can make his money, his testimony, his lifestyle, and all his work go further and benefit more because he is a communicant of the Church. He can do more constructive work, through the Church than any other way in the world. This is my deepest conviction. I have watched all kinds of self-starting movements try to advance the cause of man and my conviction steadily deepens that a Christian is doing the wisest thing possible when he links his life inseparably with the Church of Christ. Not only because there is no other realistic way, but also because the resources of the Church can be harnessed to advance the cause of mankind and its enlightenment and salvation better in the Church than in any other movement. If any desire success on every level in life, the Church will lead them to this goal. Aside from the salvation of souls, the Church does the most and the best work to lead man toward fulfilling and completing himself as made in the image of God. – George Nicholoandreou.

Only a fool would remain outside the doors of the Church of Jesus Christ!



**WE
HOLD
THEM
IN
OUR
MEMORY**

**...all who sacrificed their lives
in protecting the cherished freedoms
of our nation...with a prayer of gratitude
for their supreme sacrifice
and the legacy they left behind...blessed repose,
ETERNAL MEMORY!**

Memorial Day



He is the POW who went away one person and came back another - or didn't come back AT ALL.

He is the Quantico drill instructor who has never seen combat - but has saved countless lives by turning slouchy, no-account rednecks and gang members into Marines, and teaching them to watch each other's backs.

He is the parade riding Legionnaire who pins on his ribbons and medals with a prosthetic hand.

He is the career quartermaster who watches the ribbons and medals pass him by.

He is the three anonymous heroes in The Tomb Of The Unknowns, whose presence at the Arlington National Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of all the anonymous heroes whose valor dies unrecognized with them on the battlefield or in the ocean's sunless deep.

He is the old guy bagging groceries at the supermarket - palsied now and aggravatingly slow - who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and who wishes all day long that his wife were still alive to hold him when the nightmares come.

He is an ordinary and yet an extraordinary human being - a person who offered some of his life's most vital years in the service of his country, and who sacrificed his ambitions so others would not have to sacrifice theirs.

He is a soldier and a savior and a sword against the darkness, and he is nothing more than the finest, greatest testimony on behalf of the finest, greatest nation ever known.

So remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say Thank You. That's all most people need, and in most cases it will mean more than any medals they could have been awarded or were awarded. Two little words that mean a lot - "THANK YOU."

It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.

It is the soldier, who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protestor to burn the flag.



HISTORY OF TAPS

The music for *Taps*, played in honor of departed soldiers in recognition of their exalted service to the nation was adapted by Union General Daniel Butterfield for his brigade – Third Brigade, First Division, Fifth Army Corps, Army of the Potomac – in July 1862.

Taps is sounded during each of the 2,500 military wreath ceremonies conducted at the Tomb of the Unknowns every year, including those held on Memorial Day. It is also played nightly at ten military installations at non-deployed locations to indicate that it is “lights out.” Rarely are the words written for the music ever sung.

Words

While there are no official words accompanying the moving music, and the original version was purely instrumental, there have been several later lyrics added. The most common form is below:

Fading light dims the sight
and a star gems the sky, gleaming bright.
From afar drawing nigh,
falls the night.

Day is done, gone the sun
from the hills, from the lake, from the sky.
All is well, safely rest;
God is nigh.

Then goodnight, peaceful night;
til the light of the dawn shines bright.
God is near, do not fear,
Friend, goodnight.

BLINDNESS: SYMBOLISM OR REALITY?

To lose one's sight would truly be a terrible tragedy; to never have had the opportunity to visually experience all of the magnificent aspects of God's creation would be a sorrow that would be almost unbearable. We are introduced to such a person in today's Gospel lesson, and through him, we are taught that, sadly, a far greater "blindness" exists in the world.

One day as Jesus was walking the streets of Jerusalem, He encountered a man who was born blind. After placing clay on his eyes, our Lord instructs him to "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." He obeys and to the amazement of all, the man is now able to see! Not everyone, however, rejoices at this miracle. The Pharisees put the poor man through an inquisition, practically accusing him of faking his blindness! They refuse to believe that Christ was "from God," pompously pointing out that He did not properly keep the Sabbath, which made Him a "great sinner" as far as they were concerned. Their hardened hearts blinded them from recognizing the reality that Christ was the Messiah.

The Church Fathers teach us that the blind man is symbolic of all humanity, for we all need the illumination that Christ, the Light of the world, brings. In the early Church when catechumen were frequently baptized on Holy Saturday, this Gospel lesson was read as a reminder that this Sacrament is one that "opens the eyes of our soul" to the glory of God. It should be noted that in addition to opening the man's eyes, Jesus opens his heart as well. As the Gospel lesson ends, the man worships Christ and calls him "Lord". Indeed, his "sight" is now complete, for he is able to "see" the divinity of Jesus!

Icon written in Greece by Miltiadis Afentoullis