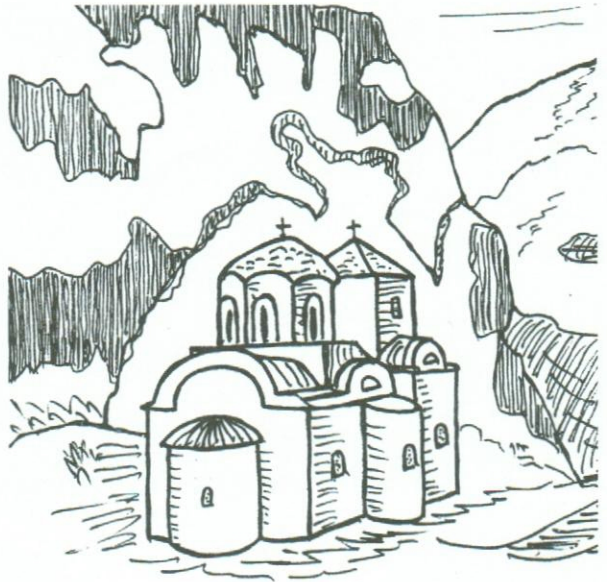




ST. ATHANASIOS THE ATHONITE

is the founder of the Great Lavra.
It is the first of many monasteries
built on the spiritual beacon we call

MOUNT ATHOS



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 8, 2012

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

+++ We are again in need of sponsors for the Bulletin each month as well as for our parish Web Site. Please review the listings in the kitchen and sign up!

+++ 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 is the feast of St. Vladimir, equal to the apostles. Our celebration will conclude with festal anointing.

+++ Father is still attempting to secure a carpenter contractor for the bathroom work. We have the electrician and plumbing people, but seemingly too many think the carpentry work is too little at this time of the year. Father will continue trying.

+++ The annual blessing of vehicles of travel will take place on Sunday, July 22 following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Please be with us on that day.

+++ 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, \$232.00; Candles, \$21.00; Holy Day, \$42.00, for a total of \$295.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offer 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, Eleni Pallas, Anna Zacharyczuk, Debra Szmaida, Paul Szmaida. Marilyn Korba, 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 **\$1657.00** from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ Please be certain to see a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5450.00 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.**

+++ **We remember only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."**

+++ **Please pray the Lord our God grant us an enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory.**

+++ **We need a volunteer to be in charge of arranging trips to the Lancaster Co., Pa. Theater for our parishioners. Please see Father immediately.**

+++ **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!**

LORD



TEACH
US

In Times Of Financial Stress

My God will in turn supply your needs fully in a way worthy of his magnificent riches in Christ Jesus. All glory to our God and Father for unending ages. Amen Philippians 4: 19, 20.

Stop worrying, then, over questions like "What are we to eat, or what are we to drink, or what are we to wear?" Unbelievers are always running after these things. Your heavenly Father knows all that you need. Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness and all these things will be given you besides Matthew 6: 31 - 33.

When you respond to the voice of the Lord, your God, all these blessings will come upon you and overwhelm you; "May you be blessed in the city and blessed in the country! Blessed be the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil and the offspring of your livestock, the issue of your herds and the young of your flocks! Blessed be your grain bin and your kneading bowl! May you be blessed in your coming in and blessed in your going out! The Lord will beat down before you the enemies that rise up against you; though they come out against you from but one direction, they will flee before you in seven. The Lord will affirm his blessing upon you, on your barns and on all your undertakings, blessing you in the land that the Lord your God gives you" Deuteronomy 28: 2 - 8.

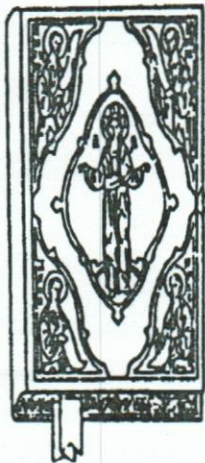
Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and try me in this, says the Lord of hosts: Shall I not open for you the floodgates of heaven, to pour down blessing upon you without measure? For your sake I will forbid the locust to destroy your crops; and the vine of the field will not be barren, says the Lord of hosts. Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land, says the Lord of hosts Malachi 3: 10 - 12.

Let me say this much: He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully. Everyone must give according to what he has inwardly decided, not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver. God can multiply his favors among you so that you may always have enough of everything and even a surplus for good works 2 Corinthians 9: 6 - 8.

SCRIPTURE

TRIVIA

QUIZ



1. How many court officials were in Solomon's court?
2. Which brother was older, Moses or Aaron?
3. What was David doing before the Lord that filled his wife, Michal, with contempt for him?
4. What were Ishbi-be-nob and Saph?
5. As Ezekiel baked bread over a fire, what was he told to use as fuel?
6. Where did Moses spend forty days and forty nights?
7. What is the first book named after a woman in the Bible?
8. Why was Daniel thrown into the lion's den?
9. Who had Jacob's first four children?
10. Who did God tell to lie on his life side for 390 days?
11. What miracle happened to the son of the widow with whom Elias was staying?
12. Just before dying where did Abraham send the sons of his concubines?

ANSWERS TO TRIVIA QUIZ

1. Twelve, one for each tribe. (1 Kings 4: 7)
2. Aaron. (Exodus 7: 7)
3. Leaping and dancing. (2 Samuel 6: 16)
4. Giants. (2 Samuel 21: 6, 18)
5. Human dung. (Ezekiel 4: 12)
6. Mount Sinai. (Exodus 24: 15 - 18)
7. Ruth.
8. He prayed to God three times a day, contrary to the King's decree. (Daniel 6: 11 - 13)
9. Leah. (Genesis 29: 31 - 35)
10. Ezekiel. (Ezekiel 4: 4, 5)
11. He died and was resurrected to life. (1 Kings 17: 17 - 22)
12. Off into the East. (Genesis 25: 6)

Living For Eternity

St. Augustine, the well-known western Father of the Church once remarked to friends that it is truly sad we human being seem compelled to love things that cannot last. We love our purely human loves as though we are never to be separated. We fight for success as though it guarantees eternal joy. Truly, it is to love in vain when we love earthly things as though they will last forever. How much better to live for eternal values even now in this world of passing things destined to depart!

We should set our spiritual eyes on eternal values for the salvation of our souls. How much effort we rightly expend in tending to the physical body as compared to care we lavish on the soul. Are you at least as concerned for the eternal destiny of your soul as you are for the passing body? How many specialists and physicians do individuals consult and accept needed care from for the illness of the flesh while not even blinking an eye about the sickness and malaise so many suffer in their souls. The body is only passing and temporary but the soul is immortal. We are advised to listen carefully to St. Paul's advice: "Set your heart on what pertains to higher realms...on things above" Colossians 3: 1, 3. Others are not going to notice the value of a faith commitment to Christ if we who have been given this gift of faith in our baptism, do not live it.

We Act And Work Together In Christ

Because we belong to the Body of Christ, which is our holy Church, we labor together with Him for the good of souls. We are not working alone, but His Holy Spirit in us guides and inspires us so that we are confident of success. We gather together not only to learn and discuss, not only to grow and be enlarged with grace, not only to worship and glorify, but to labor together for His honor and good Name. In all, our Lord guides us and leads us by the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is He Who always initiates, does the labor through us and completes the task in which we cooperate. Let us eagerly lend ourselves to Him so that the work of salvation begun in our midst by the Saviour may find its completion in our ready cooperation. In all that we do as a parish faith community, Christ should be evident as the Doer and the Doing, as the Initiator and the Completion. Let our cooperative and submissive efforts to His will make it so!



MAY THE BLESSING
OF ALMIGHTY GOD
FATHER, SON & HOLY SPIRIT
DESCEND UPON YOU AND
REMAIN WITH YOU FOREVER

Paying ATTENTION

Be on guard lest your spirits become bloated with indulgence and drunkenness and worldly cares...So be on watch. Pray constantly

Luke 21: 34, 36.

The regular practice of meditation and spiritual introspection summons us to open our hearts to the light and life of Jesus Christ by the very simple expedient of paying attention; that is, giving our direct thought to their valuable presence within us. We do pay attention to our own true nature and by becoming fully and totally conscious of the union of our nature with that of our Lord by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we become fully ourselves.

By becoming fully ourselves, we enter into the fullness of life Jesus has brought us. We come to appreciate in the reverent silence and importance of our prayer, that we are infinitely holy as temples of God's own Spirit, sustained and continually nurtured by worthy reception of the sacramental Mystery of the Eucharist.

We therefore learn to remember always be aware of who we are and that our vocation is to look upon and contemplate the Godhead itself and thus be ourselves divinized in conformance with our human nature and destiny.

In all that we do and say and think, we look forward to the fruition of our expectancy. On that day of encounter in eternity we shall see our God as He is and we shall become like him because we cooperated with his grace as devoted servants.

The great masters of prayer down the centuries of Christian tradition have all understood prayer in this way, as a discovery of self that takes us far beyond our narrow self-consciousness that we not only become eager for identification with the eternal God, but that we are associated with him in eternal salvation.

Paying attention then to each word, each hymn, each liturgical gesture as we worship at the Divine Liturgy and other devotional services of the Church leads us to fulfillment of the promises of our Lord. Daily life is enriched and fulfilled; our conscience is not disturbed and our objectives and goals strengthened. We become focused on our importance in the sight of our God. The more we recognize the purpose of our creation, the more we appreciate how much has been done by a loving God and Father to assure our salvation.

SHIPS THAT DO NOT COME IN

There's no use waiting for your ship to come in if you haven't sent one out!

The more ventures you have on the high seas of life, the more certain are you of getting return cargoes of success. And, as in the case of Signore Antonio in the "Merchant of Venice", your ships may all come riding home just when you feared that all were lost.

To sit idly on the shore of time, however, waiting for a ship that is not marked with your name and deeds, that does not bear upon her stern the port's name whence she sailed, is a performance more pitiable than ridiculous.

Send out, send out! A thousand ships if you have them, one at least if you cannot command any more; then while waiting for the return voyage busy yourself in building new argosies of still greater bulk and swifter sail, so that by the time the first ship returns, treasure-laden, your heart is already set on the ventures staked in the others.

In this way will you learn to achieve; you will learn that what is gained is nothing; but that what you seek to gain is all!

HUMILITY

It's no great thing to be humble when you are brought low; but to be humble when you are praised is a great and rare achievement.

GOOD actions give strength to ourselves and to inspire action in others.

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

The joyful message of the Resurrection was heard by the faithful women from the angel. And being freed from the ancestral curse, they boasted to the apostles: "Dead and despoiled is death, Christ our God is risen giving great mercy to the world" Troparion, Resurrection Tone Four.

O my Saviour and Redeemer, being God, You raised from the grave men who were in chains and destroyed the gates of the Abyss; being the Lord, You arose on the third day Kontakion, Resurrection Tone Four.

How great are your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have made them all Prokimenon, Resurrection Tone Four.

O Saviour, You have absolved the penalty of disobedience, committed through the tree of Eden, by willingly being nailed to the tree of the Cross. As Almighty God, You descended into the Abyss and broke asunder the bonds of death. We, therefore, venerate Your Resurrection from the dead, and joyfully cry out to You: Almighty Lord, glory to You! Vesper Hymn, Tone Four.

O Lord, Your Nativity from the Father is timeless and eternal; Your Incarnation from the Virgin is beyond the understanding of all, and beyond the expression of our words. Your descent into the Abyss and victory over death caused satan and his angels to tremble with fear. Your Resurrection on the third day brought to mankind incorruption and great mercy Vesper Hymn, Tone Four.

I have sinned against You, O Lover of mankind. May I ask forgiveness, and even more than forgiveness? Do not grant me this because of Your nature as man, but because You are more than man and higher than nature. O Saviour, beyond the laws of nature and beyond my understanding You became man. You love mankind more than the mind can grasp. Have mercy on me who have turned to You! Vesper Hymn, Tone Four.

You are glorified in the memory of Your saints, O Christ God. Through their intercession, send upon us great mercy Vesper Hymn, Tone Four.



We Praise You, O God

(Hymn, Te Deum)

Nicetas, Bishop of Remesiana

You are God: we praise you;
You are the Lord: we acclaim You;
You are the eternal Father:
All creation worships you.

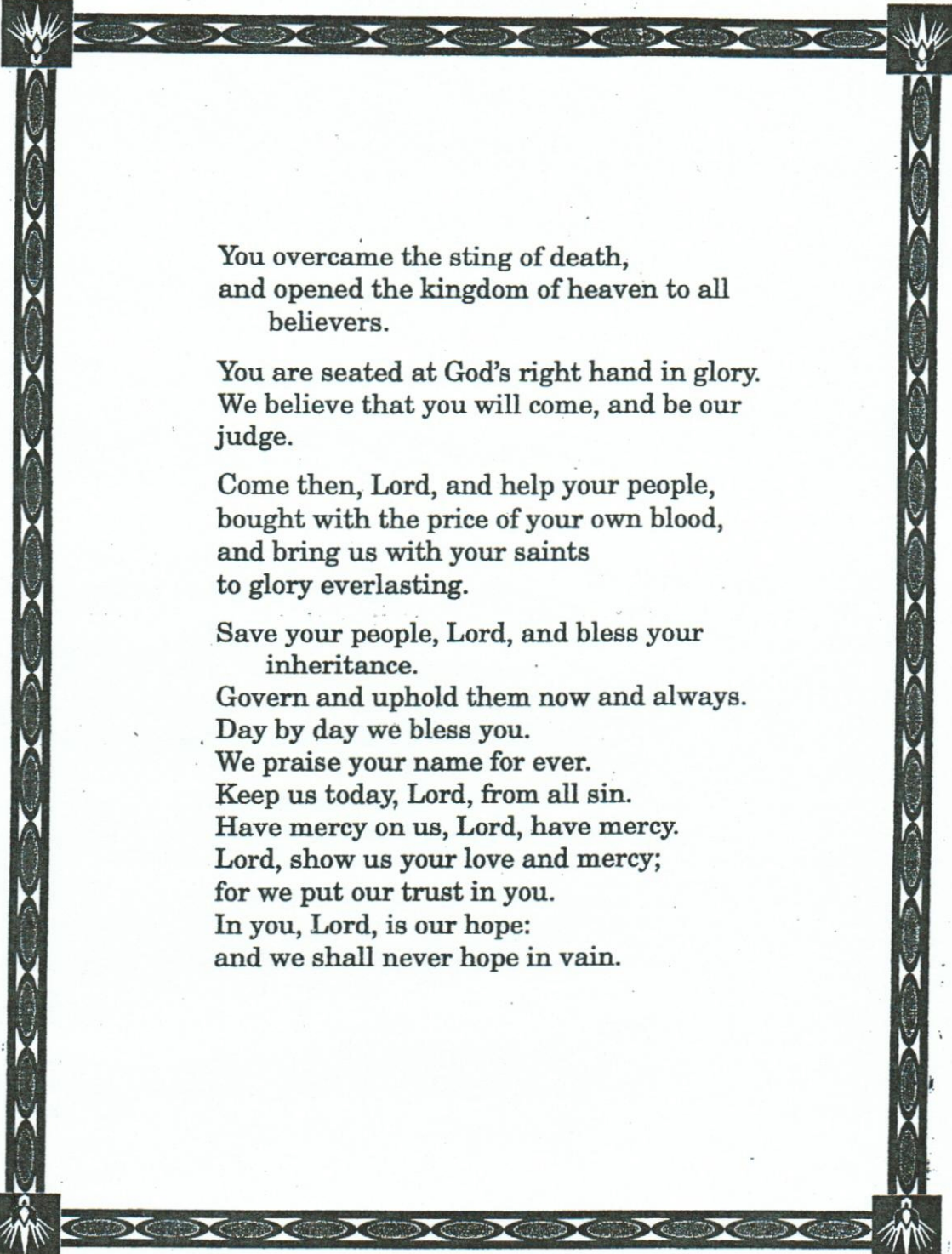
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
Cherubim and Seraphim sing in endless praise:
 holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.

The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.

Throughout the world the holy Church acclaim
you:

 Father, of majesty unbounded,
 your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
 and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

You, Christ, are the king of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.
When you became a man to set us free
you did not spurn the Virgin's womb.



You overcame the sting of death,
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all
believers.

You are seated at God's right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come, and be our
judge.

Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints
to glory everlasting.

Save your people, Lord, and bless your
inheritance.

Govern and uphold them now and always.
Day by day we bless you.

We praise your name for ever.

Keep us today, Lord, from all sin.

Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.

Lord, show us your love and mercy;
for we put our trust in you.

In you, Lord, is our hope:
and we shall never hope in vain.

Evening Prayers

Lord, God, Holy Spirit, I thank you for being with me and guiding my life today, for the happiness and fulfillment your will has brought into my life and for all the toil and hardships I have had to accept. Guide me to advance in holiness through a devout acceptance of all I have experienced. Forgive me for the times when I have forgotten you amid the cares of life. Forgive me as well if I have not accepted any suffering in the same spirit as Christ my Lord. Help me to rest in peace this night that I may awaken truly refreshed in body and soul, willing to invest a new day in your service. Guard me this night, I ask, as the Good Shepherd guards his flock. Grant that, in your mercy and love, when I close my eyes on this world for the last time, I may awaken in the joy of your presence to a new and everlasting day. Amen.

“Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace; you have fulfilled your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation which you prepared in the sight of all people; a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people, Israel” Luke 2: 29 – 32.

Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, as darkness surrounds me, heal me and all the earth of our failings this day. Absolve us of our sluggish delays in bringing about an age of peace and justice, of our blindness to the sufferings and plight of our brothers and sisters. May I be found worthy of forgiveness of the times I missed the mark today. May your Holy Name be glorified by the good and upright thoughts and actions I have been graced to accomplish in imitation of your example. May your pardon be the tent of peace I enter as I slip into blissful and restful sleep. Amen.

Loving and Eternal Father, so many times I feel afraid, as if just around each corner lurks a new danger, some new threat to my security. I am afraid of not having enough funds, afraid of becoming ill, afraid of other people's opinion of me. I am fearful my children will do poorly or become involved with bad company. I am fearful my parents will need to depend on me. In countless ways I feel fear and anxiety. Loving God, grant me a bit more courage tomorrow than I had today. Help me smile a little more often, no matter how dark the future appears. Grant me the courage to trust you more that I may see the brightness of your sustaining light and depend on you more. Amen.

PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

It is widely known that in times of great crisis, men and women alike often have the ability to perform nearly impossible, superhuman feats of strength. The saint who graces the cover of today's Bulletin falls into this category.

ST. AVERKIOS was Bishop of Hierapolis in the region of Phrygia in the late second century. Hierapolis was a predominantly pagan city, and Averkios very quietly went about his business of tending to the spiritual needs of his small flock. In the year 186 A.D., however, this unassuming saint was driven to a point of righteous indignation that gave him the strength of 10 men!

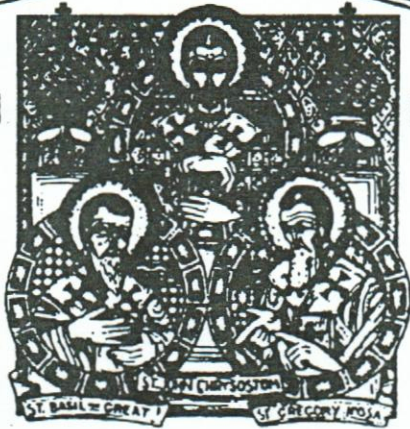
A pagan festival was going on in Hierapolis that was rowdier and more immoral than the ones that regularly occurred there. Averkios was so incensed by this that he went to their temple by night, smashing the idols it contained and pushing over the temple's support columns, causing it to collapse! The infuriated pagans sought out the Bishop at his cathedral, looking to put him to death by hanging. Just as the mob was about to seize him, several young men, who were possessed by demons, fell at the feet of Averkios, pleading for his help. Through the prayers of this man of God, they were healed immediately. The pagan attackers were so moved by what they witnessed that 500 of them were baptized that very night!

The fame of Averkios spread throughout the Roman Empire. Many healing are attributed to him. Even the Emperor Marcus Aurelius turned to him when his court physicians and pagan priests could not cure his young daughter of an unknown disease. Averkios was summoned to the Emperor's palace in Rome, where his prayers to the Lord brought about the healing of the ailing girl.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.



Wisdom Of
The



Byzantine
Fathers

A movement of the soul contrary to nature in the sense of disobedience to reason; that is what the passions are St. Clement Of Alexandria.

He cannot have the ordination of the Church who does not hold the unity of the Church St. Cyprian of Carthage.

For the priest has authority only for one things, to receive. But he has no authority to give holy orders. Therefore, he does not ordain a man to orders, but by the laying on of hands at ordination of a priest, he only blesses while the bishop imparts the gift of the Holy Spirit. St. Hippolytus.

...the disciples of the Lord enlightened by the Holy Spirit and working wonders in His power and grace, took them captive in the net of miracles and drew them out of the depths of ignorance to the light and knowledge of God St. John Damascene.

VESPER VERSES ACCORDING TO THE EIGHT TONES

TONE 4

1. We bow in worship to your life-giving cross,
O Christ our God;
We glorify your resurrection on the third day.
By it you renewed our fallen nature, Almighty
Lord.
You gave us the assurance of heaven;
You are gracious and the Lover of mankind.
2. Freely accepting crucifixion on the tree of the
cross,
You destroyed the penalty of the tree of sin.
You descended into the Abyss, Almighty
Lord.
Being God, You broke the bonds of death.
Therefore, we bow in worship to your resur-
rection;
In joy we cry out to You
“ Almighty Lord : glory be to You! ”
3. O Lord, You shattered the gate of the Abyss;
By your death you destroyed the power of
death.
You freed the human race from corruption;
You gave life and great mercy to the world.
4. Come, all you nations and people,
Let us praise the Savior's resurrection!
It has freed us from the bonds of the Abyss.
We have received life and incorruption :
Let us cry out :

“ O Lord crucified, buried, and now risen :
Save us by your resurrection,
For you alone love mankind. ”

5. Angels and men glorify your resurrection,
O Savior :

By it you have enlightened all the earth.
You redeemed us from slavery to our enemy.
Let us cry out in song :
O Savior, you are the mighty Giver of Life.
Save us by your resurrection,
For you alone love mankind.

6. You shattered the gates of the Abyss,
You broke it's bonds, O Christ our God!
You raised our fallen human race.
We cry to you in song :
O Lord risen from the dead : glory be to You!

7. O Lord, your birth from the Father is eternal
and before all ages;
Your incarnation from the Virgin is beyond
explanation :

No language can tell it properly.
Your descent into the Abyss is fearful
Both to Satan and to his angels.
You conquered death; You arose on the third
day;
You gave great mercy and life to the world.

8. Glory be to the Father ✝, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
forever. Amen.

Because of you, O Mother of God,
David the prophet became an ancestor of God.
Praising Him who worked wonders in you,
He foretold you in joyous song :
The Queen stood at your right hand.
You are revealed as the mother of Life.

Without a father, God chose to become
incarnate of you.

He renewed in man his image corrupted by sin.

Finding the lost sheep on the mountain, He
put it on his shoulder;

He carried it to the Father and to his will;

He numbered it among the heavenly powers.

He has saved the whole world :

He is the Christ of great and rich mercy.

At the Apostichon

1. O Lord lifted upon the Cross,
You wiped away our ancestral curse.
In the Abyss, You freed those bound for ages;
You granted incorruption to the human race.
Because of this we sing our praise to You
Glorifying your saving and life-giving resur-
rection.
2. Raised upon the cross, O Mighty Lord,
You shook the whole earth.
Buried in your tomb, You raised the dead;
You granted life and incorruption to the world.
Because of this, we sing our praise to You,
Glorifying your saving and life-giving resur-
rection.
3. Evil people delivered You to Pilate, O Christ
our God.
He condemned You to crucifixion.
They proved themselves ungrateful to their
Benefactor.
You freely accepted suffering and death.
Being God you rose by your own power on
the third day.
You gave us eternal life and great mercy.
4. In tears, the faithful women came to your tomb:
They were seeking You.

Not finding You, sighing and lamenting, they
cried out :

“ O Savior and King of all, how were you
stolen?

Where does your life-giving Body lie now? ”

An angel appeared and said to them :

“ Do not cry but go proclaim the news :

The Lord is risen giving us joy :

He alone loves mankind. ”

5. Glory be to the Father ✚, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
forever. Amen.

O Virgin most pure,

Listen to the supplication of your servants;

Protect us from our enemy;

Deliver us from sorrow.

You are our safe and secure haven;

We have you as our advocate.

Let those who call upon you never be put to
shame.

Quickly answer those who call to you :

Hail Virgin, help of all,

Our joy, our protection, and salvation of our
souls!

THE GREAT LAVRA OF MT. ATHOS

For centuries, on the rugged coast of Greece, Mt. Athos, has been affectionately referred to as the "Holy Mountain." According to sacred tradition, the Blessed Virgin Mary, accompanied by St. John the Evangelist, was sailing from Joppa to Cyprus when their ship was blown off course, ending up on the shore of Athos. The Theotokos was so overwhelmed by its beauty that she asked her Son to make this her personal "garden," thus giving birth to the edict that no women would ever be allowed on the Holy Mountain.

The earliest of the monasteries on Mt. Athos is referred to as the "Great Lavra." It was founded in 963 AD by St. Athanasios the Athonite, with the financial support of the Emperor Nicephoros. Its establishment marked the change from individual ascetic life to organized monasticism. The other

monasteries founded later on the Holy Mountain patterned their prayer life and work ethic after that which was practiced in the Great Lavra, where some 80 monks originally resided. Today the Great Lavra is considered one of the richest on the Holy Mountain. It houses many spiritual treasures, including relics of several saints, rare and priceless icons as well as ancient liturgical vestments and appointments. Numbered among these are the crown and sakkos of the Emperor Nicephoros.

Today, there are still 20 functioning monasteries and associated sketes on Mt. Athos. After reaching a low point of only 1,100 elderly monks in 1971, Mt. Athos has undergone a great spiritual renewal in the last 40 years. The monastic population there now numbers over 2,000 men — many of whom are college educated.