

MARTYR MARINA

We honor her undying devotion to our Lord



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 12, 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

+++ The annual blessing of vehicles of travel will take place on Sunday, July 26 following the Divine Liturgy which is celebrated for the safety of operators of vehicles of travel. Invite your friends, relatives and neighbors to bring their vehicles to our church that Sunday and join us in prayer and blessing.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week-end: Tithe Offering, \$524.00; Candles, \$18.00; Food Coupons, \$400.00; Christian Fellowship, \$1.00; Book Sale, \$50.00; Holyday, \$43.00; Camp Nazareth Raffle, \$20.00; Rental, \$600.00, for a total of \$1656.00. 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 41 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, Debra Szmaida, +Paul Szmaida, Mary Jaakobss 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 \$1500.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$100,415.00. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ Please 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 \$4750.00 on this project to date!

+++ 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!

JESUS OF NAZARETH

In order for us to understand who Jesus of Nazareth is, we have to see Jesus in light of communion with the Eternal Father, which is the true center of his person; without it we cannot understand him at all and it is from this perspective center that He makes himself present to us still today.

A thoughtful and prayerful reading of Scripture presents Jesus of the Gospels as the real historical Jesus.

Our conviction is that in order to understand the figure of Jesus Christ, it is necessary for us to begin with his union with Eternal Father. In our prayerful pursuit, we are led to reflection and we thereby search and find "...the face of the Lord." "Hear O

Lord, the sound of my call; have pity on me, and answer me. Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks; your presence, O Lord, I seek. Hide not your face from me, do not in anger repel your servant. You are my helper; cast me not off; forsake me not; cast me not off; for sake me not, O God my Saviour. Though my father and mother forsake me, yet will the Lord receive me" Psalms 27: 7 – 10.

The kernel of faith is encapsulated in the Sermon on the Mount. With this great discourse, Matthew the evangelist put together a picture of Jesus as the New Moses in precisely the profound sense that we see earlier in connection with the promise of a new prophet given believers in the Book of Deuteronomy.

The opening verse is far more than a casual introduction. "Seeing the crowds, he went up to the mountain and when he sat down his disciples

came to him. "...and he opened his mouth and taught them" Matthew 5: 1, 2. Jesus sits down – the expression of the ordinary authority of a teacher. He takes his seat on the *cathedra* (bishop's throne) of the mountain. Later on He will speak of the rabbis who sit on the throne, the chair of Moses and so have authority to teach. "The scribes and the Pharisees have succeeded Moses as teachers; therefore, do everything and observe everything they tell you. But do not follow their example; their words are bold, but their deeds are few" Matthew 23: 1 – 4.

**Behind the
Sermon on the Mount
stands the figure of
Christ, the man who is
God, but who,
precisely because he is
God, empties himself,
all the way to death
on the Cross**



For that reason, their teaching must be listened to and accepted, even though their lives contradict it, even though they themselves are not authority, but receive authority from God to teach. Jesus takes his seat on this *cathedra* as the teacher of Israel and as the teacher of people everywhere. For – as we see, when we consider the text itself – St. Matthew uses the word *disciple* here not in order to restrict or limit the intended audience of the Sermon on the Mount, but to enlarge it. Everyone who hears and accepts the word can thereby become a devoted *disciple*.

What counts is the hearing and the living, the following of the teaching, not lineage. Discipleship is possible for everyone; it is a calling universal for all. Hearing, then, is the basis on which a more inclusive Israel is built, a renewed Israel, which does not exclude or revoke the old one, but steps beyond it into the domain of universal embrace.

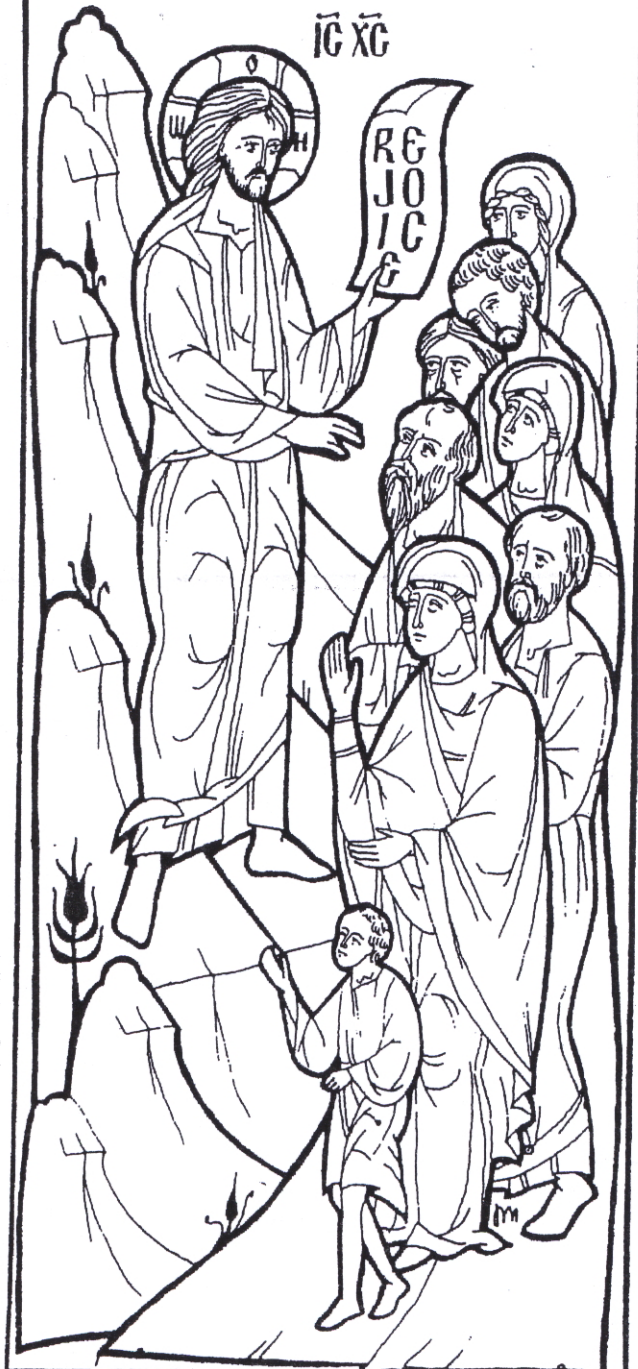
Jesus sits on the *cathedra* of Moses. But He does so not after the manner of teachers who are trained for the task in school; He sits as the one greater than Moses, who broadens the covenant to include all nations. This also explains the significance of the mountain. The Evangelist does not tell us which of the hills of Galilee it was. But the very fact that it is the scene of Jesus' teaching makes it simply "the

mountain," the new Sinai. The "mountain" is the place where Jesus prays —where He is face-to-face with the Eternal Father. And that is exactly why it is also the site of his teaching, since his teaching shines forth from this most intimate exchange with the Eternal Father. The "mountain" then, is by the very nature of the case established as the new and definitive Sinai.

And how different this "mountain" is from that imposing rock mass in the desert! Tradition identifies a hill north of Lake Genesareth as the true Mount of Beatitudes. Anyone who has been there and gazed with the eyes of his soul on the wide prospect of the vibrant waters of the lake, the sky and the poured out sun, the trees and protracted meadows, the flowers bursting with vibrant color and the sound of birdsong can never forget the wonderful atmosphere of peace and beauty in creation which abounds and is encountered there, in a land unfortunately so lacking peace today.

Wherever the Mount of Beatitudes actually was, something of this peace and beauty characterized it. Elias the Prophet was granted a transformed version of the Sinai experience: He experienced God passing by, not in the storm or in the fire or in the earthquake, but in the small still breeze "...a tiny whispering sound" 1

•CHRIST TEACHING:•



Kings 19: 12. That transformation is completed here. Gods' power is now revealed in his mildness, his greatness and in his simplicity and closeness. And yet his power and greatness are no less profound. What formerly found expression in storm, fire and earthquake now takes on the form of the Cross, of the suffering God, who calls us to step into this mysterious fire, the fire of crucified love. "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you..." Matthew 5: 11. The violence of the revelation of Sinai so frightened the people that they said to Moses: "You speak to us and we will hear, but let not God speak to us, lest we die" Exodus 20: 19.

Now God speaks intimately as one to another. Now He descends into the depth of their human suffering. Yet that very act prompts and will continually prompt his hearers, the hearers who nonetheless think of themselves as disciples, to say: "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it? John 6: 60. This new good news of the Lord is no sugarplum. The scandal of the Cross is harder for many to bear than the thunder of Sinai had been for the Israelites. In fact, the Israelites were quite right when they said they would die if God should speak with them. Without a "dying," without the demise of what is simply our own, there is no communion with God and certainly no redemption.

The Sermon on the Mount is the new *Torah* brought by Jesus. Moses could deliver his *Torah* only by entering into the divine darkness on the mountain. Jesus' *Torah* likewise presupposes his entering into communion with the Eternal Father, the inward ascents of his life which are then prolonged in his descents into communion of life and suffering with man.

The Evangelist Luke gives us a shorter version of the Sermon on the Mount with different emphases. St. Luke writes

**The Sermon on the
Mount is addressed
to the entire world,
the entire present
and future, and yet it
demands discipleship
and can be understood
and lived out only
by following Jesus
and accompanying
him on his journey**



for Gentile Christians and so his concern is not so much to portray Jesus as the new Moses whose words constitute the definitive *Torah*. Hence even the outward framework of the sermon is differently presented. In St. Luke's account, the Sermon on the Mount immediately follows the calling of the Twelve Apostles which he represents as the fruit of a night spent watching in prayer.

The angelic physician presents the calling of the Twelve on the mountain, the place of Jesus' prayer. After this event, which is of such fundamental importance for Jesus' path, the Lord comes down from the mountain with the Twelve, whom He has just chosen and whom Luke has just introduced by name, and He stands on the plain. For Luke, this standing is an expression of Jesus' sovereignty and plenitude of authority and the plain is an expression of the broad scope of his intended audience. This evangelist goes on to underscore this breadth when He tells us that apart from the Twelve with whom Jesus had come down the mountain, a great host of his disciples, as well as a crowd of people from Judea, Jerusalem, and the coastal regions of Tyre and Sidon, had flocked to listen to him and be healed by him "...people who came to hear him and be healed of their diseases" Luke 6: 18.

The universal significance of the Sermon on the Mount is evident in this scene and is further qualified when St. Luke like St. Matthew, goes on to say that "...he lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said..." Luke 6: 20. Both elements are true: the Sermon on the Mount is addressed to the entire world, the entire present and future, and yet it demands discipleship explicitly and can only be understood and lived out by following Jesus and accompanying him on his journey.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a social program per se, to be sure. But it is only when the great inspiration it gives vitally influences our thoughts and our action, only when faith generates the strength of regeneration and responsibility for our neighbor and for the whole of society, only then can a social justice grow as well.

And the Church as whole must never forget that she has to remain recognizably the community of God's poor. Just as the Old Testament opened itself through God's poor to renewal in the New Covenant, so too any renewal of the Church can be set in motion only through those who keep alive in themselves the same resolute humility, the same goodness that is always ready to give of itself and serve.

We see that the Sermon on the Mount is a hidden Christology, profound insights into the teaching and nature of Christ. Behind the Sermon on the Mount stands the figure of Christ, the man who is God, but who precisely because He is God, descends, and empties himself all the way to death on the Cross. The saints, from Paul, to the present time have lived out this option and have thereby shown us the correct image for man and his contentment as created in the image of God. In a word, the true morality of Christianity is love. And love does admittedly run counter to self-seeking; it is an exodus out of oneself, and yet this is precisely the way in which man comes to his true self.

It is only on the way of love, whose paths are described in the Sermon on the Mount that the richness of life and the greatness of man's calling are opened up for realization here on earth and in eternity.



The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely because of me. Be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in heaven.

Matthew 5: 2 – 12; Luke 6: 20 – 26.

His Love Never Fails

He loved them to the end John 13: 1.

A New England girl had just become engaged when the Civil War broke out and her fiancé was called into the army. Their wedding, therefore, had to be postponed. The young soldier managed to get through most of the conflict without injury, but at the Battle of the Wilderness he was severely wounded. His bride-to-be, not knowing of his condition, read and reread his letters, counting the days when he would return.

Then the letters stopped coming. Finally, she received one, but it was written in strange handwriting. It read, "There has been another terrible battle. It is very difficult for me to tell you this, but I have lost both my arms. I cannot write myself, so a friend is writing this letter for me. While you are as dear to me as ever, I feel I should release you from the obligation of our engagement." The letter was never answered.

Instead, the idealistic young woman took the next train and went directly to where her beloved was being cared for. On arrival, she found a sympathetic captain who gave her directions to her soldier's cot. Tearfully, she searched among the vast number of injured and wounded for her loved one. The moment she saw the young man, she threw her embracing arms around his neck and kissed him. "I will never give you up!" she cried out tearfully and sincerely as well as seriously. "These hands of mine will help you; I will take care of you!"

Such praiseworthy enduring human devotion is but a faint reflection of the abiding love of the Saviour for all who have placed their trust in Christ our Saviour. No matter how disabling the circumstances or how distressing the trial, He will never forsake us. So, take heart, dear souls, His love never fails!

Neither life nor death can ever
from the Lord his children sever,
for his love and deep compassion
comforts them in tribulation.

Our heavenly Father never allows a heavy burden to weigh us down without offering his mighty arm to lift us up.

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.

“MARRIED” TO THE LORD

The story of the Martyr Marina is an amazing tale of a young woman’s complete devotion to Christ. She was born in Antioch to pagan parents during the reign of the Emperor Claudius II. Tragically, her mother died giving birth to her, and her father Edesios entrusted her to the care of another woman, who secretly was a Christian. She raised Marina to follow Christ, and when she reached the age of 12, Marina boldly announced to her father that she, too, had embraced the teachings of the Church. Edesios, a pagan priest, immediately disowned her, freeing Marina to practice her new-found faith openly, even though she realized that she would be placing herself in harm’s way during this time of persecution by the Roman authorities.

As time went by, Marina developed into a beautiful woman. She caught the eye of Olymbrius, the imperial governor, who began courting her. When he asked for her hand in marriage, Marina politely turned him down, explaining that she had pledged her life to Jesus Christ and would serve only Him. The enraged governor first attempted to force her to disavow her Christian beliefs and offer sacrifices to the pagan Roman idols. When she refused by saying “I will never give them the honor that belongs to my Creator alone,” Olymbrius had Marina subjected to a series of cruel tortures, which included being whipped brutally and burned repeatedly all over her body. She was cast into prison, where she was miraculously healed of all the wounds that had been inflicted upon her. Finally, Marina suffered martyrdom by means of beheading in 289 A.D.