



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

August 2, 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 healing feast of St. Pantelemon the Great Martyr and Wonderworker. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we respond, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ This Thursday is the most solemn feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord. It is one of the twelve major feasts of the Church Year. In anticipation, the vesperal Divine Liturgy is celebrated Wednesday evening at 7: 30 PM. Please bring fruit and grapes in a basket to be blessed at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

+++ The Dormition Fast began yesterday and continues until the feast day celebration on Saturday, August 15. Please observe the prescriptions of the fast by offering up in devoted sacrifice eating of meat products during this time, particularly for the success of our building program.

+++ The annual Bible Camp is being held this week at the home of Joseph & Kyra Choti. Since Father will be occupied with this endeavor, the ordinary Akathist services we have during this fast period will not be celebrated .

+++ 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, [REDACTED]; Candles, [REDACTED], Food Coupons, [REDACTED]; Christian Fellowship, [REDACTED], Holyday, [REDACTED], for a total of [REDACTED]. 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 Szmajda, +Paul Szmajda, Anna Zacharyczuk, Robin Pasquino 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 \$[REDACTED] 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 \$[REDACTED]. 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 [REDACTED] on this project to date!

OLD ERROR

NEW NAME

Jehovah's Witnesses

It is appropriate for us to be aware of history and have a cursory understanding of the teachings of this sect whose members attempt to visit the homes of faithful believers from time to time with the hope they may gain converts from among Orthodox Christians who are not aware of their own tradition nor that of this deluded group. This sect was established in the early 1870's in Pittsburgh, PA, by a man named Charles Taze Russell, although it did not receive its current name until the leadership of a Judge Rutherford led them to this revelation in 1931. Prior to this it was known as the Watchtower and Tract Society. Russell was upset, as were many of his contemporaries in the Congregational Church with the continuing proliferation of new religious bodies in the Protestant fold. He found the Catholic doctrine of hell appallingly offensive and was naively fascinated by attempts to predict the second coming of Christ, despite the testimony of our Lord Himself Who said

"Of that hour and day no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" Matthew 24:36.

He predicted the second coming as taking place in 1874 and when this did not come to pass, he offered another date, 1914, when the prognosis failed again. Current Jehovah's Witnesses interpret the 1914 date as the time of the "spiritual second coming," that Christ is now putting His house in order. Russell denied the existence of a human soul apart from the body. Those who are the elect of Jehovah would be, through resurrection, permitted to exist again; those who were not, would simply be in a state of non-existence. Russell appears to have been one of those individuals who for the sake of being novel and shocking, put forward his own interpretations of the Scripture and generally accepted Christian theology. Unfortunately, he could not even read the New Testament Greek alphabet when asked to do so under oath in a civil suit in Pittsburgh, and this is most obviously reflected in the "scholarship" of the group and its doctrine even today. We cannot truly dignify the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses as doctrinal since they are such a reprehensible mishmash of convoluted logic and common sense, the results of an emotionally distraught mind.

They pride themselves in having discovered a renewed relationship with God that is given to only a few; 144,000, to be exact, but theirs is simply an old error with a new label. They have merely revived the heresy of the priest Arius of the fourth century which attempted to teach that the second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, did not exist equally with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit prior to assuming our humanity in the Incarnation. In denying Christ's divinity, along with the Holy Trinity, they cannot be considered Christian.

The first Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 325 AD condemned Arius, all he advanced, and all who followed him. For a while, a major portion of the Church was engulfed with the heresy. After perusing Arian beliefs, we can readily understand why Tradition tells us our own St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, a council Father, was so exasperated with Arius that he actually physically struck him. When the other fathers of the Council expelled St. Nicholas from their midst for such rash and apparently unseemly behavior, Christ Himself appeared to all the remaining 317 bishops gathered at the Council that very night, and offered the gospel book to St. Nicholas. By this gesture, The council fathers understood St. Nicholas' behavior as righteous indignation against the blasphemies of Arius and his present day followers, the Jehovah's Witnesses. So, they invited him back to participate in the sessions of the council.

The teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses are put forth in their translation of the Scripture, the New Testament portion which is known as the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*. The alleged translators, in their forward, express the desire to "avoid the snare of religious traditionalism." In reality this "translation" is filled with mistranslating and even deliberate alterations of biblical text to reflect and advance the peculiar beliefs of the cult.

For a case in point, we can look at the very name of "Jehovah," which of course, the Witnesses find particularly important. This terminology first appears in the early 17th century "King James" translation of the Scripture in the third chapter of Exodus. However, in more modern translations of the Bible, such as the "Revised Standard Version", the name "Jehovah" as being the proper name of God is not found anywhere. The reason is very simple. The name "Jehovah" never occurs in the Hebrew original of the Scripture! We

have to remember that the Hebrew language did not originally record vowels, but only consonants of words; it was up to the knowledgeable reader to supply the needed vowels as he read the text. Anyone familiar with liturgical Greek and our Old Slavonic language as well, would understand the problem and its meaning.

Our God identified Himself to Moses as

"I am Who am" Exodus 3: 1 - 14.

Throughout the entire Old Testament, these words that made up the name of God were sacred and terrifying to pious Jews; so much so that they could not be spoken in daily life at all. In writing, the Hebrews recorded the name of God given to Moses with four consonants which may be transposed into English as YHWH; the meaning of which is understood as "I am Who am." In Greek this is called the *Tetragramaton*, or four consonants.

In time, the name or designation of God given here and in other places in the Hebrew Bible came to be regarded too sacred to pronounce, enunciate, verbalize or mention. Already by the third century BC, the Jews of Alexandria, in preparing a Greek translation of the Old Testament, substituted the Greek word "Kyrios" or "Lord" every time they encountered the Divine Name. In Hebrew it is "Adonai".

Years later, when our Lord applied God's first name to Himself,

"Before Abraham was made, I am" John 8: 58,

His hearers were struck as with appalling blasphemy; and when they took up stones to cast at Him, they were not merely preparing to give effect to the law about blasphemy, they were expressing a kind of primitive horror. A mere man claiming and uttering the unspeakable and terrifying name of God: it was something to make their blood run cold.

The words, "I am Who am," are curious words, almost empty at first glance. But what they actually mean is total reality, total being and this is what may very well frighten many people. God is describing Himself as existing by His own power. We exist, but because of the power of God. Humanity cannot

bear too much reality and truth; we all prefer comforting delusion and so even Russell went to enormous lengths to achieve it and keep it safely available for his chosen followers.

By the time of Christ's appearance in our midst, the Divine Name was only pronounced by the High Priest once a year, on the Day of Atonement during the prescribed ritual within the Holy of Holies. The Divine Name was no longer pronounced or verbalized, having been substituted with "Lord," it was still however written in the Bible and prayerbooks and in fact is still found in them today among the Jews. The New World translators make much over the discovery of the ancient Greek manuscripts with the Hebrew Tetragramaton (the four letters of YHWH of the Name of God) written in place of "Lord." For us who know the language, the history and the purpose, this means absolutely nothing. The Jews to this day still write the Divine Name, but never pronounce it. They simply substitute "the Lord" or "the Name" when reading out loud or praying. In fact, the actual pronunciation of it has all but been lost; but Yahweh is generally accepted among conventional biblical scholars, Catholic, Orthodox, even Protestant.

Where did the name "Jehovah" come from? In the sixth or eighth centuries AD, a group of Jewish scholars known as the Massoretes, seeking to preserve the correct pronunciation of the Hebrew Language of the Old Testament began to indicate the vowels of the words with a series of dots and dashes under and over letters, a system known to Hebrew scholars as "pointing." When they came upon the Divine Name, instead of the letters of the Divine Name, they inserted the vowels for "Adonai - Lord" indicating that this was to be read there. When Western Christians began to discover the Hebrew Bible in the Middle Ages, they came across the consonants "YHWH" and the vowels for "Adonai - Lord" to be read, and in ignorance pronounced and verbalized the Divine Name, which was translated into "Jehovah" in English. The name "Jehovah" is an artificial and created name, totally erroneous and has no Scriptural basis whatsoever. It was born and created in ignorance and is being perpetuated in willful sin today.

The Jehovah's Witnesses take this simple ignorance and transform it into outright deception in their "translation" of the New Testament. Anyone with even a cursory interest in Scripture knows that the New Testament was written in Greek with the possible exception of St. Matthew's gospel, and even

here there are some who make a strong case for a Greek original. This factual truth has not stopped the Jehovah's Witnesses from translating "Kyrios - Lord" as "Jehovah," even through the Divine Name does not occur in the New Testament!

The footnotes on the bottom of the pages of their Scripture in question, cite a series of Hebrew translations as their authority for doing this. In 1385 AD, a Jew made a translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew to be used in debates with Christians. Other Hebrew translations were made for the purpose of evangelizing the Jews. If God the Father was indicated, the translators did use the Divine Name with vowels "Adonai - Lord" as something familiar to Jews from their prayerbooks and the actual Old Testament. In reading this, Jews still verbalized "Lord" as they always did. The point is that while this translation into Hebrew of the New Testament is interesting from a linguistic point of view, it is completely worthless from a scholarly and spiritual perspective, as worthless as any present day modern English translation would be for making textual corrections which deviate from the original meaning and purpose.

The New World "translation" is full of such deception and at times, pitiful perspectives, that it exhausts the mind of anyone actually seeking the truth. They translate "cross" into "torture stake" and "the Word was God" into the "word was a god," simply to reflect the view that Christ is not God, that there is no Trinity, that the Holy Spirit is not a person, but simply a "divine force."

There is no question for the most part that Jehovah's Witnesses are well-intentioned people and are deeply impressed with the "scholarship" of their leaders in coming to radically new views on Scripture and revelation just a hundred or so years ago.

This movement attracts people at alarming rates because it makes them feel they are a part of a most important cause: that of Jehovah. It has a very strict code of discipline and is very demanding of its members. The best thing we as Orthodox Christians can remember is "Love the heretic, but hate the heresy." We should not be abusive, but render ourselves capable of showing them the truth of our Orthodox faith by knowing and living the faith ourselves with seriousness and devotion and making ourselves familiar with the Scriptures and their Orthodox understanding and interpretation.

The most difficult thing for us in approaching the Jehovah's Witnesses is what they consider to be the Bible is in fact a pitiable collection of nonsense. They have over and over again demonstrated their lack of respect for the revealed Word of God by so abysmally translating and interpreting it and thereby actually rejecting its message. Consequently, Russell and Judge Rutherford, his successor, invented a system - the figment of their imaginary minds - and then proceeded to rewrite the Bible to substantiate their claims, claiming all other translations were radically wrong. Their sacred writings have little similarity to our generally accepted Scripture. When they speak of the bible, they insist on using their "translation" which in reality is the figment of their imagination. They insist the traditional Scriptures are totally incorrect!

More pathetic followers of delusion we have not been able to discover in the two thousand year history of Christianity which is apparently why they should excite some sympathy and prayer within us that their assumed sincerity lead them to discover the truth and return to the Church of Christ.

Arius, the originator and chief proponent of this abominable third century Trinitarian heresy, was born in present day Libya and studied under Lucian of Antioch. He was ordained a priest in Alexandria around 312 AD. Some years later his orthodoxy came under suspicion. He was condemned by a synod of 100 bishops in 320 AD and subsequently left Alexandria and found powerful allies in Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea. While in Nicomedia, he wrote his principal work, the *Thalia - Banquet* partly in prose and partly in verse so that it would have more universal appeal for common people. Only fragments of the work are extant. The Emperor Constantine summoned the Council of Nicea, the first Ecumenical Council in the year 325 AD. Some three hundred eighteen bishops gathered from around the world, primarily from the eastern portion of Orthodox Church, although a few were from the West in the Roman Patriarchate where the Church was beginning to expand its numbers. They formulated the first part of the Creed we sing in our Liturgy today in order to destroy the errors of Arius. Rehabilitated by a profession of faith judged to be Orthodox, he died suddenly in Jerusalem the day before he was to be formally reconciled with the Church once again.

His error was that he attempted in a rationalistic way to explain the Holy Trinity which is a spiritual mystery. His basic teachings are:

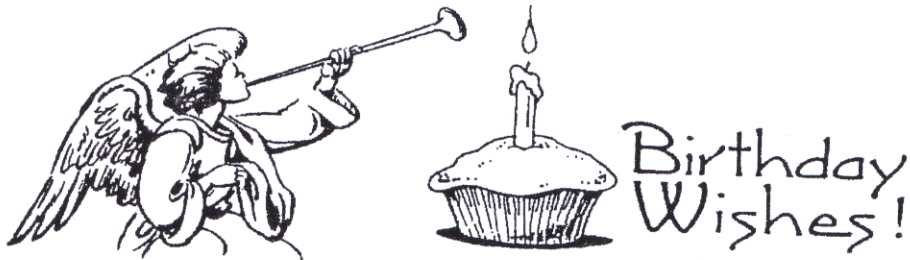
- 1) God is unique, uncreated and unbegotten.
- 2) The Son of God, the Logos, cannot therefore be true God. Though the first of God's creatures, he is still a created being, produced like the rest of us, out of nothing. There was "therefore a time when the Word was not."
- 3) Since the Word does not proceed from the Father, he is son only by adoption.
- 4) Though inferior to God, the Logos was the instrument of creation who later became the Incarnate Word (Christ) and is to be worshipped as Ruler and Redeemer and one exalted above every other creature.

The Arians in time began to fight among themselves and developed many different sects and splinter groups. The heresy waxed and waned largely due to political circumstances and the religious convictions of various emperors, particularly in the West. At such times, true bishops and priests were forced into exile and Arian bishops and priests took their place.

The defenders of the doctrine enunciated and advanced at Nicea in 325 AD were eventually able to emerge victorious so that in 381 AD, the second Ecumenical Council of the Church was called to finally dispose of the Arian plague. The second and final portion of the Creed was completed and inserted in its rightful place in the Divine liturgy. Those obdurate Arian bishops and priests as well as anyone sympathetic to them were finally deprived of their office and churches. The same council condemned the semi-Arians who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

Though checked in the empire formally, Arianism was to remain a formidable force until the end of the sixth century. In its isolated areas, it was finally brought under subjection to the teaching authority of the Church. Of course, it raised its ugly head once again some one hundred years ago because so many were broadminded enough to accept sin and error in their spiritual lives.

We can avoid such error in the future if we seriously live our faith commitment to Christ and others see our devotion in the life of Christ's Body.

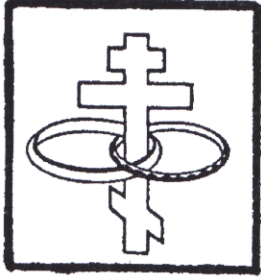


We are pleased to greet those of our faithful communicants who celebrate their birthday this month. Our Lord has offered these souls yet another year of blessed life. The most obvious way He blesses us and participates in our life is by sharing His divine life with us in the Eucharist at the celebration 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 May.

August 1 Ann Sabo
August 3 Maria Pashos
August 4 Sean Henry
August 9 Kent Pasquino
August 16 Maria Idromenos
August 29 Robert Henry
August 30 Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba

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 August. 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:

August 14 Subdeacon Daniel J. & Marilyn J. Korba

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

“ . . . BUT WE WERE EYEWITNESSES TO HIS MAJESTY ”

In the 2nd Letter of Peter, the Apostle speaks out emphatically concerning his belief that Christ was truly God. He offers the strongest of evidence of this: “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His Majesty.” (2 Peter 1:16) This brief statement is a reference to the remarkable event that occurred on Mount Tabor: **THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD.**

It is interesting to note the preponderance of the sacred number “3” that is interwoven throughout this mysterious, supernatural story. Three Apostles - Peter, James and John - were privileged to catch a glimpse of Christ in His glorious, transfigured form. The story is found in three of the Gospels; inexplicably, John, who was present at the Transfiguration, fails to mention it in his own Gospel narrative. There are three key “heavenly figures” in this story: Moses, Elias and the Voice of God. Their appearance emphasizes the great truth that our Savior was the fulfillment of the Law (Moses) and all of the writings of the Prophets (Elias), which meets with the Father’s approval as He exclaims: “This is My Beloved Son. Listen to Him!” (Mark 9:7)

It should be pointed out that the Old Testament clearly teaches that three witnesses are needed to attest to any fact. (Deut. 19:15) Through the presence of Peter, James and John, as well as the appearance of Moses, Elias and God the Father, the letter of the law, indeed, was satisfied.