



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 9, 2011

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

+++ 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 express our sincere condolences and sympathy to our good parishioners, George and Debra Szmaida on the recent death of Debra's dear Aunt Anna. We pray the merciful Lord comforts George and Debra and loved ones in their loss and that He grants to the soul of +Anna a blessed repose and creates for her Eternal Memory!

+++ 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, \$465.00; Candles, \$10.00; Holyday, \$20.00; Kitchen, \$129.00; Food Coupons, \$500.00; Bulletin, \$10.00, for a total of \$1134.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered 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, Robert Gorbich, Anna Zacharyczuk, Debra Szmaida, Paul Szmaida, 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 \$163.00 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 \$109,000. 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 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 \$200.00 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."

+++ **The next Pirohi Sale is Saturday, November 4. Please secure orders and offer helping hands.**

+++ 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

God Is Our Joy

Honor and majesty are before him, strength and joy are in his place 1 Chronicles 16: 27.

Let the heavens rejoice; let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!" Let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them! Then the trees of the forest will sing, they will sing for joy before the Lord 1 Chronicles 16: 31.

Come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms Psalms 95: 1, 2.

The joy of the Lord is your strength Nehemiah 8: 10.

Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full John 16: 24.

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit Romans 14: 17.

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you 1 Thessalonians 5: 16 – 18.

And all shall sing in their festive dance, "my home is within you" Psalms 87: 7.

Running From God

I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin...Help me, O Lord
Psalms 38: 18, 22.

A neighbor's dog had fleas. For a while they just thought about what drove the dog crazy. When the neighbors realized what his problem was, they bathed him with flea shampoo, dusted him with flea powder and fumigated his bedding with flea spray.

Then, just when they thought they eliminated the problem, the fleas showed up again. Where were they coming from?

Apparently, recently, the dog had come of age and was determined to follow instinct and run after new loves whenever he could find a crack in the fence gate. The neighbors scolded and threatened him, but he was deaf to their admonitions. The dog was bound to run when ever he could and he always brought back flea problems for himself and the neighbor family.

In a much more serious sense, David faced the discomfort of problems that resulted from his waywardness. When he felt the hand of his Master pressing down on him, he knew the reason. "O Lord, in your anguish punish me not, in your wrath chastise me not; for your arrows have sunk deep into me and your hand has come down on me" Psalms 38: 2, 3. Our heavenly Father was using painful consequences to rid David of his foolishness.

When we run away from our God and bring trouble on ourselves, we can get help. As David did, we need to recognize the corrective hand of our Creator and make a new start. Better yet, we can avoid his chastening if we go to the Lord in repentance and seek the healing and forgiving grace of the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation before He increases and makes heavier his correction.

If we are flea-bitten in sin, we soon learn, running from God always brings trouble. Running from God is futile.

Running to God brings forgiveness.

Down But Not Done

Though he fall he is not cast down for the Lord upholds him with his hand
Psalms 37: 24.

It happened during the 1988 Winter Olympics at Calgary. The skater was nervous as he began his long prepared for program before some 20,000 people and a TV audience of millions. Then, in his first jump, something went wrong. He later recalls, "A flash afterwards my hand touched the ice; the blade does not hold. I started slipping and then came to realize I am falling. All I can hear as I collapse to the ice is the empathetic groan of what seems like a million voices."

The skater was faced with a split second choice: He could focus on the mistake and give up, or he could keep on skating and do his best. Almost simultaneously God's word came to him: "...though he fall he is not cast down." He continued his routine and decided to skate "...to work at it with you whole being...for the Lord rather than for men" Colossians 3: 23. At the end of the program the crowd burst into enthusiastic applause for his courage and determination.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we may be knocked off our feet by a powerful blow of whatever enemy, perhaps even our own inadequacy and ineptitude. A loved one may be stricken ill or separated from us in death, or we may lose a good job or may be overlooked for a promotion. We may be dismayed by falling into sin. It is one thing to fall, but is quite another to give up and remain down. If we get up again, reaffirm our faith in Christ and keep on serving him, we will not be utterly cast down. Success in the spiritual life consists in getting up just one more time than we have fallen down.

Success is failure turned inside out,
showing the silver tint in clouds of doubt.
So stick to the fight when you are hardest hit,
it is when things seem worst that you must not quit!

Healing Sermon

He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification
Romans 4: 25.

The glorious and triumphant Resurrection of our Lord gives us blessed assurance about our own salvation and destiny. The clouds of fear about our life-long strivings are erased and dissipated when Christ emptied his own tomb. Jesus is indeed "...raised to life for our justification." Our salvation does not depend upon our achievement, but on the achievement of Christ. All we have to do is cooperate with the grace He won by leaving behind empty grave clothes in the burial cave. If we make our own the grace He secured, our destiny is assured.

Thus there is a terrific healing power in the victory of Christ over death. Whatever we merit for ourselves in this life, we can be assured that Christ's resurrection overpowers all. We do have a glorious future to behold. What our Lord accomplished for us is complete and is the greatest attraction of Christianity to those who do not yet know the purpose of life here on earth. Regardless of our limitations, regardless of our pains and anxieties, regardless of all that we inflict on ourselves, the resurrection of Christ overcomes them all. It heals all of life's frustrations and limitations. None but us Orthodox have such confident assurance of God's acceptance. Despite the confidence with which so many outside the salutary embrace of the Church give witness to in their limited understanding of God's revelation to us in Scripture, they have no such comparable confidence.

Muslims faithfully perform their prescribed rituals, hoping that Allah/God will have mercy on them. Buddhists and Hindus tread a long path to liberation hopelessly in a long and dreary claim that spans countless

numbers of lives, with no assurance at all of when they will be able to offset all the bad karma they have gathered along the way.

What good news it can be to such pilgrims, weary toiling for their salvation, when they hear the startling words of St. Paul: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" Romans 8: 1, 2.

"And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still under condemnation for your sins" 1 Corinthians 15: 17. Why is it so important to believe in the triumphant resurrection? "If Christ is not risen, then our faith is in vain." And if Christ is not risen, our loved ones who have already died are lost. If Christ Jesus is not raised from the dead, we are of all people most pitiable. But if we believe the witness of our heavenly Father and that of the Holy Spirit and their heavenly messengers, that Christ is in fact risen, "He is for us the first fruits of those who believe." The picture St. Paul offers is of the first fruits of a harvest, the promise of what is yet to come. He is the first fruits of God's harvest of souls and we are in the rest of the harvest, what is yet to come.

St. Paul insists the hope of the resurrection is the reason he is willing to go through immense, intense suffering and pain for Christ. The resurrection is the reason we willingly undergo, suffering and anxiety in our own lives because of the final victorious Resurrection. What would be the point, he asks if Christ were not truly alive? By far the biggest problem in life is death, but for the Christian the stone is rolled away from the tomb of death. The tomb is empty. Death for the believer is the gate way to life. Christ has gone before to tell us there is a new world ahead of us and we can face the grave with utmost confidence in that promise. The poignant message of the angels sitting on the stone is "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" Christ is risen so we are risen! To him be glory, honor and adoration for this unspeakable gift forever. Amen.

In God's Likeness

In our contemporary world, there is an accented tendency to believe we are self-created, with the precise ability to determine our own truth, reality, meaning and destiny. What we want and what we desire doing are considered objective truth and aspiration. Nonetheless the awesome gift of creation dictates everyone is born as a child and receives his or her very existence as a gift from heaven. In his love, our heavenly Father calls us into being, from nothing, and sustains us at each moment. Moreover, we are created in the very image of God and from the very beginning, bear also his likeness which it is our vocation to regain in the life of the Body and Bride of Christ, our Church. From the beginning, we became aware we possess a particular nature and purpose. "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them'" Genesis 1: 26, 27.

Being created in the image of God is critical since no human being, male or female, created in the image and likeness of God can in any way attain fulfillment apart from their very nature. In reflecting on the mystery of God as an eternal Trinitarian communion of love, we learn the central mystery of Christianity is that the inner life of God consists not of a unidimensional will, but of receptivity and radical self-donation or self-offering. In a word, "God is love" 1 John 4: 16 and love is to be shared.

In this understanding, we can come to profound understanding of the human person with regard to personal identity. In and through the body man receives himself as a gift and is called to make a gift of himself to God and fellow man. In our love for others, we are to present ourselves, fully and totally in service after the example of our Lord. When faced with various challenges in our lives, we are not to redefine, deconstruct or abandon ourselves, but build upon the positives in our nature to overcome what might otherwise separate us from the grace of Christ.

Rather, along with St. Paul the Apostle, we "...kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named" and seek the grace necessary to love as our heavenly Father loves.

Having been equipped with heavenly help in grace, we are to use the strength of the Holy Spirit to become all that God's destiny requires of us. We come to understand the mystery of the Father's love for us and the corresponding mystery of our own existence through Jesus Christ. As we celebrate the various feasts of the Church, from one to the next, we are enriched and

recall the triumph of Christ over sin and death and the redemption He won for us. In assuming our humanity, in dying and rising again, Jesus definitively demonstrates the value of our creation and calls us to new and everlasting life. He makes plain for us our participation in the triumph of each holyday. Victory is inherently ours because we have the grace of creation in his image, striving after his likeness.

We are called upon and continually reminded by our physical created form and our spiritual soul that we must ultimately always turn to him, "...the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation" Colossians 1: 15, to understand fully the meaning of our created body, the authentic meaning of love.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

WHEN IN SORROW, CALL JOHN 14
WHEN MEN FAIL YOU, CALL PSALM 27
IF YOU WANT TO BE FRUITFUL, CALL JOHN 15
WHEN YOU HAVE SINNED, CALL PSALM 51
WHEN YOU WORRY, CALL MATTHEW 6:19-34
WHEN YOU ARE IN DANGER, CALL PSALM 91
WHEN GOD SEEMS FAR AWAY, CALL PSALM 139
WHEN YOUR FAITH NEEDS STIRRING, CALL HEBREWS 11
WHEN YOU ARE LONELY AND FEARFUL, CALL PSALM 23
WHEN YOU GROW BITTER AND CRITICAL, CALL I CORINTHIANS 13
FOR PAUL'S SECRET TO HAPPINESS, CALL COLOSSIANS 3:12-17
FOR AN IDEA OF CHRISTIANITY, CALL 2 CORINTHIANS 5:5-19
WHEN YOU FEEL DOWN AND OUT, CALL ROMANS 8:1-30
WHEN YOU LEAVE HOME FOR LABOR OR TRAVEL, CALL PSALM 121
WHEN YOUR PRAYERS GROW NARROW OR SELFISH, CALL PSALM 67
FOR A GREAT INVENTION/OPPORTUNITY, CALL ISAIAH 55
WHEN YOU WANT COURAGE FOR A TASK, CALL JOSHUA 1
HOW TO GET ALONG WITH FELLOW MEN, CALL ROMANS 12
WHEN YOU THINK OF INVESTMENTS/RETURNS, CALL MARK 10
IF YOU ARE DEPRESSED, CALL PASLM 27
IF YOUR POCKBOOK IS EMPTY, CALL PSALM 37

Did You Know That ...

...when conflict is handled correctly, we grow closer to each other?

...humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less?

...the fellowship of the Church is far more important than any individual?

...God expects us to make the first move?

...in resolving conflict, how you say it is as important as what you say?

...reconciliation focuses on the relationship while resolution focuses on the problem?

...nothing on earth is more valuable to God than His body, the Church?

...we must passionately love the Church of Christ in spite of the imperfections of many of its communicants?

...God's ultimate goal for your life on earth is not comfort, but character development?

...your character is essentially the sum of your habits?

...God is more interested in what you are than in what you do?

...we become whatever we are committed to?

...the way you think determines the way you feel and the way you feel influences the way you act?

...the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to make us like the Son of God?

...the truth will set you free, but first it may make your miserable?

...your most profound and intimate experiences of worship will likely be in your darkest days?

...everything that happens to you has spiritual significance?

...what happens outwardly in life is not as important as what happens inside you?

REACHING GREAT HEIGHTS

Throughout the course of Church History, there have been many men and women who have done their best to live Christ-like lives. Then there have been some who took things a step beyond what God expects of all of us. One such person was SIMEON THE STYLITE. Simeon was born of peasant parents in Syria in the late 4th century. At an early age, Simeon made the decision to give his life totally to the Lord. He became a monk at 18, immersing himself in unceasing prayer and severe fasting, sometimes lasting 40 days.

Always looking to further perfect his ascetic life, Simeon - at the age of 30 - constructed a 60 foot pillar in the Syrian desert outside of Antioch and made this perch his home. Here he kept a solemn vigil, sometimes standing for days in prayer. Needless to say, Simeon attracted a great deal of attention. People from all walks of life would make a pilgrimage to his pillar, beseeching this remarkable man to help them with their troubles. Many miracles were attributed to the intercession of St. Simeon. There were those who would continually urge him to come down, arguing that he could reach more people as a priest - or even as a bishop. Simeon could not be persuaded to descend from his pillar, maintaining that he had made a vow to the Lord to stay aloft for the rest of his earthly life.

Simeon was to remain on his pillar for some forty years, staying there until his death in 459 AD. His remains were taken to Antioch and placed in a church there that was built in his memory. In life, Simeon the Stylite deprived himself of comfort and pleasure, but in death, he found true joy and happiness in the kingdom of heaven!