



February 26, 2012
Forgiveness Sunday

Dear Ones in Christ,

It has been some time since we have written and many great things have happened – which I will share with you in a moment. But first, as we enter in on the Great Fast, I would like to ask your forgiveness and offer you my best wishes for a spiritually profitable journey to Pascha.

As you know, our little Mission has received many blessings this past year – the most notable being the acquisition of a beautiful, 4300 square-foot parish center on a 15-acre parcel strategically located to serve the local membership as well as our extended community which visits and vacations in Delmarva. We are both mindful of and thankful for your generosity which, coupled with divine providence, has made a dream into a reality.

After closing on the property, we immediately served a molieben of Thanksgiving, glorifying the Lord and asking His continued blessings upon you, our benefactors. Then we launched two more matching donations, which, with your generous help, raised some \$30,511 for the renovations required by Worcester County before we can move our church to the new property. We thank you for strong support!

Soon afterwards, we received and graciously accepted a generous offer of a \$30,000 zero interest loan from an anonymous lender in New Jersey. Through your donations and this loan, the funds available for these necessary renovations went from \$0 to \$60,000 in just a few months!

The parish council, in seeking to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to the Mission, has had the good fortune of being able to set up a renovation committee composed of business professionals and experts in the construction industry from the Mission's membership to oversee the renovation process. This committee has prepared the budget (included in this mailing) taking extreme care to conserve our limited funds, while still "doing things right", as befits the Lord's House. You will see from the budget that we still need to raise approximately \$20,000 before we can move to the new parish center, yet, despite this shortfall we are confident that the Lord will provide as He has thus far.

As we make our forty day journey to Holy Week and Pascha together, the Church asks us to recall the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness on their journey into the Promised Land. There are many lessons to ponder from this historic journey, as we find both that which we should avoid and that which we should emulate. These lessons are especially relevant for us this year

during Great Lent as we are a community “on the move”, not only to the Heavenly Kingdom as we are each Fast but also to the land on this earth which the Lord has prepared for us and His ministry.

We can’t help but see the pitfalls to avoid. We know very well of the Israelite’s unwillingness to trust in the Lord and follow His ways; how they returned to Egypt in their hearts, fashioning a new god for themselves in the golden calf. Instead of pressing on to the Promised Land, they turned back to that which should have been left behind, their old home and ways; much like Lot’s wife, who was turned to a pillar of salt. They lacked vision, trust and follow-through.

Yet, in time, God’s patience won them over, and they started to head in the right direction. They destroyed the golden calf, and instead fashioned the Ark of the Covenant. They built the Tent of Meeting, where God would visit His people. To do this, they offered the best of what they had taken from Egypt as the materials needed to fashion the tabernacle, altar, vestments and furnishings. The Scriptures also mention by name those who had offered their talents, working in gold, silver and copper, cutting stones to be set, and carving wood. The Prophet Moses writes of these inspired people that “God had filled them with a divine spirit; with wisdom, understanding and knowledge... thus they did everything as the Lord asked of them.”

Brothers and sisters, we are privileged to be on a special journey this Great Lent; a unique opportunity is before us! Let us look ahead, confidently trusting in the Lord’s leadership. Let us use our material resources and talents to prepare a place on earth where God’s presence will dwell. And most importantly, let us be people who follow-through, entering into what the Lord has already prepared for us, both here on this earth and also in His Heavenly Kingdom!

With appreciation for your help and love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. John Parcells". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

P.S.

We have added a Renovations page to our website so that you can track our progress. On this page you can see our site plan, elevation drawings, and floor plan. Currently, there are also over 100 photos. Please check them out!

Should you wish to make a donation to help us reach our goal of moving into the new parish center this Pascha, please earmark your check for the “Building Fund” and mail it to:

Christ the Savior Orthodox Church
10315 Carey Road
Berlin, MD 21811

Thank you, and may God bless you!