



St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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2ND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT: ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

March 31, 2024

TROPARION, KONTAKION & PROKEIMENON

Troparion – Tone 2

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead. And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out:// “O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”

Troparion – Tone 8

O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation, O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians, O wonderworking Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace,// always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

Kontakion – Tone 8

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, joyful trumpet of theology, together we sing thy praises, O God-inspired Gregory. Since thou now standest before the Original Mind, guide our minds to Him, O Father,// so that we may sing to thee: “Rejoice, preacher of grace!”

Kontakion – Tone 4

Now is the time for action! Judgment is at the doors! So let us rise and fast, offering alms with tears of compunction and crying: “Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea; but forgive us, O Master of all,// so that we may receive the in corruptible crowns!”

Prokeimenon – Tone 5

Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us / and preserve us from this generation forever.

V. Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly!

Prokeimenon – Tone 1

My mouth shall speak wisdom; / the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.

LITURGICAL COMMEMORATION

2nd Sunday of Great Lent: St. Gregory Palamas

This Sunday was originally dedicated to Saint Polycarp of Smyrna (February 23). After his glorification in 1368, a second commemoration of Saint Gregory Palamas (November 14) was appointed for the Second Sunday of Great Lent as a second “Triumph of Orthodoxy.”

Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, was born in the year 1296 in Constantinople. Saint Gregory’s father became a prominent dignitary at the court of Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328), but he soon died, and Andronicus himself took part in the raising and education of the fatherless boy. Endowed with fine abilities and great diligence, Gregory mastered all the subjects which then comprised the full course of medieval higher education. The emperor hoped that the youth would devote himself to government work. But Gregory, barely twenty years old, withdrew to Mount Athos in the year 1316 (other sources say 1318) and became a novice in the Vatopedi monastery under the guidance of the monastic Elder Saint Nikódēmos of Vatopedi (July 11). There he was tonsured and began on the path of

asceticism. A year later, the holy Evangelist John the Theologian appeared to him in a vision and promised him his spiritual protection. Gregory's mother and sisters also became monastics.

After the demise of the Elder Nikódēmos, Saint Gregory spent eight years of spiritual struggle under the guidance of the Elder Nikēphoros, and after the latter's death, Gregory transferred to the Lavra of Saint Athanasius (July 5). Here he served in the trapeza, and then became a church singer. But after three years, he resettled in the small skete of Glossia, striving for a greater degree of spiritual perfection. The head of this monastery began to teach the young man the method of unceasing prayer and mental activity, which had been cultivated by monastics, beginning with the great desert ascetics of the fourth century: Evagrius Pontikos and Saint Macarius of Egypt (January 19).

Later on, in the eleventh century Saint Simeon the New Theologian (March 12) provided detailed instruction in mental activity for those praying in an outward manner, and the ascetics of Athos put it into practice. The experienced use of mental prayer (or prayer of the heart), requiring solitude and quiet, is called "Hesychasm" (from the Greek "hesychia" meaning calm, silence), and those practicing it were called "hesychasts." During his stay at Glossia the future hierarch Gregory became fully imbued with the spirit of hesychasm and adopted it as an essential part of his life. In the year 1326, because of the threat of Turkish invasions, he and the brethren retreated to Thessalonica, where he was then ordained to the holy priesthood.

Saint Gregory combined his priestly duties with the life of a hermit. Five days of the week he spent in silence and prayer, and only on Saturday and Sunday did he come out to his people. He celebrated divine services and preached sermons. For those present in church, his teaching often evoked both tenderness and tears. Sometimes he visited theological gatherings of the city's educated youth, headed by the future patriarch, Isidore. After he returned from a visit to Constantinople, he found a place suitable for solitary life near Thessalonica the region of Bereia. Soon he gathered here a small community of solitary monks and guided it for five years.

In 1331 the saint withdrew to Mt. Athos and lived in solitude at the skete of Saint Savva, near the Lavra of Saint Athanasius. In 1333 he was appointed Igumen of the Esphigmenou monastery in the northern part of the Holy Mountain. In 1336 the saint returned to the skete of Saint Savva, where he devoted himself to theological works, continuing with this until the end of his life.

In the 1330's, events took place in the life of the Eastern Church which put Saint Gregory among the most significant universal apologists of Orthodoxy, and brought him great renown as a teacher of hesychasm. About the year 1330 the learned monk Barlaam had arrived in Constantinople from Calabria, in Italy. He was the author of treatises on logic and astronomy, a skilled and sharp-witted orator, and he received a university chair in the capital city and began to expound on the works of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite (October 3), whose "apophatic" ("negative", in contrast to "kataphatic" or "positive") theology was acclaimed in equal measure in both the Eastern and the Western Churches. Soon Barlaam journeyed to Mt. Athos, where he became acquainted with the spiritual life of the hesychasts. Saying that it was impossible to know the essence of God, he declared mental prayer a heretical error. Journeying from Mount Athos to Thessalonica, and from there to Constantinople, and later again to Thessalonica, Barlaam entered into disputes with the monks and attempted to demonstrate the created, material nature of the light of Tabor (i.e. at the Transfiguration). He ridiculed the teachings of the monks about the methods of prayer and about the uncreated light seen by the hesychasts.

Saint Gregory, at the request of the Athonite monks, replied with verbal admonitions at first. But seeing the futility of such efforts, he put his theological arguments in writing. Thus appeared the "Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts" (1338). Towards the year 1340 the Athonite ascetics, with the assistance of the saint, compiled a general response to the attacks of Barlaam, the so-called "Hagiorite Tome." At the Constantinople Council of 1341 in the church of Hagia Sophia Saint Gregory Palamas debated with Barlaam, focusing upon the nature of the light of Mount Tabor. On May 27, 1341 the Council accepted the position of Saint Gregory Palamas, that God, unapproachable in His Essence, reveals Himself through His energies, which are directed towards the world and are able to be perceived, like the light of Tabor, but which are neither material nor created. The teachings of Barlaam were condemned as heresy, and he himself was anathemized and fled to Calabria.

But the dispute between the Palamites and the Barlaamites was far from over. To these latter belonged Barlaam's disciple, the Bulgarian monk Akyndinos, and also Patriarch John XIV Kalekos (1341-1347); the emperor Andronicus III Paleologos (1328-1341) was also inclined toward their opinion. Akyndinos, whose name means "one who inflicts no harm," actually caused great harm by his heretical teaching. Akyndinos wrote a series of tracts in which he declared Saint Gregory and the Athonite monks guilty of causing church disorders. The saint, in turn, wrote a detailed refutation of

Akyndinos' errors. The patriarch supported Akyndinos and called Saint Gregory the cause of all disorders and disturbances in the Church (1344) and had him locked up in prison for four years. In 1347, when John the XIV was replaced on the patriarchal throne by Isidore (1347-1349), Saint Gregory Palamas was set free and was made Archbishop of Thessalonica.

In 1351 the Council of Blachernae solemnly upheld the Orthodoxy of his teachings. But the people of Thessalonica did not immediately accept Saint Gregory, and he was compelled to live in various places. On one of his travels to Constantinople the Byzantine ship fell into the hands of the Turks. Even in captivity, Saint Gregory preached to Christian prisoners and even to his Moslem captors. The Hagarenes were astonished by the wisdom of his words. Some of the Moslems were unable to endure this, so they beat him and would have killed him if they had not expected to obtain a large ransom for him. A year later, Saint Gregory was ransomed and returned to Thessalonica.

Saint Gregory performed many miracles in the three years before his death, healing those afflicted with illness. On the eve of his repose, Saint John Chrysostom appeared to him in a vision. With the words "To the heights! To the heights!" Saint Gregory Palamas fell asleep in the Lord on November 14, 1359. In 1368 he was canonized at a Constantinople Council under Patriarch Philotheus (1354-1355, 1364-1376), who compiled the Life and Services to the saint.

EPISTLE & GOSPEL READINGS

Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3

And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

Epistle: Hebrews 7:26-8:2

For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever. Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" – He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Gospel: John 10:9-16

I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches

the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK, CAREGIVERS, AND DECEASED

Dates are when the name was added to the bulletin; names will remain in four bulletins and then removed. To add the name again, please email Darice at daricekeyes@gmail.com.

For the Sick / Caregiver

Carmine (3/10)
 Marianne (3/10)
 Melody (3/17)
 Subdeacon Serge (3/17)
 Nancy (3/17)
 Michael (3/17)
 Charlotte (3/17)
 Vera (3/17)
 Ann (3/24)
 Lynne (3/24)
 Bill (3/24)
 Father Paul (3/24)
 Matushka Mary (3/24)

Alexandra (3/24)
 Constance (3/24)
 Nicholas (3/24)
 Maria (3/31)
 Diana (3/31)
 Robert (3/31)
 Paul (3/31)
 Julie (3/31)
 Kelly (3/31)
 Liam (3/31)
 Dorothy (3/31)
 Albert (3/31)

For the Deceased

Stavroula (3/24)
 Eva (3/24)
 Demian (3/24)
 Anna (3/24)
 John (3/24)
 Michael (3/24)
 Lenore (3/24)
 Awatif (3/31)

SERVICES

Service Schedule for the week of March 31

Sunday March 31 – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall

Wednesday April 3 – 5:30 PM Confession, 6:30 PM Pre-Sanctified Liturgy followed by Confession

Friday April 5 – 8:30 AM Confession, 9:30 AM Pre-Sanctified Liturgy followed by Confession

Saturday April 6 – **MEMORIAL SATURDAY** 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy; 5:00 PM Vespers followed by Confession

Sunday April 7 – **VENERATION OF THE CROSS** 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall.
 5:00 PM Mission Service followed by potluck supper in Daria Hall.

DONATIONS

Weekly Giving

March 24 – 56 adults, 13 youth, \$2,087

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The FOCA Colonial District will host a Religious Education Day on Saturday **April 6** starting 1:00 PM at St. Stephen's Cathedral in NE Phila. Guest speaker will be Dr. David Ford, Professor at St. Tikhon's Seminary. The lecture will be "Marriage as a Path to Holiness"; there is no charge to attend this lecture. All are invited.

Our parish will host a Lenten Mission Service on Sunday **April 7** at 5:00 PM, which will be followed by a potluck Lenten supper. A sign-up sheet for the supper is in the back of the church. We anticipate approx. 50 people will attend.

The Orthodox young adult group will be attending the Artisan Festival in Lambertville, NJ on Saturday **April 13**. Enjoy live music, specialty vendors, and delicious food with other young adults from the church! For more information on this and other upcoming events, contact Lauren Berck 217-588-8248 or Cole Johnson 609-472-2826.

Father Volodymyr has arranged for a Lenten lecture, which will be held during Coffee Hour on Sunday **April 21**. Mother Abbess Christophora from the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City, PA will be the guest speaker. All parishioners are encouraged to attend this special lecture.

Please remember to partake in the sacraments of Holy Confession and Holy Communion prior to Pascha. If you need to schedule a specific time for Confession, please contact Father Volodymyr.

The Ladies Assumption Altar Society will hold a bazaar/flea market in Daria Hall - open to the public and parish on Saturday **June 22** and only for our parish **June 23**. Please bring gently used items and clothing to be sold; electric items must work; no rust or damaged items please. The items may be placed in the coat room or on the left side only of the stage in Daria Hall. Large empty boxes, newspaper, bubble wrap, and tissue paper are also needed. The ladies are looking for volunteers to help price items and set up, and also to help on Saturday June 22 during the bazaar. We would really appreciate some male volunteers for security detail on Saturday. See Alla with any questions.

Catechumen/Adult Education Classes are under way. If you wish to convert to Orthodoxy, it is mandatory to participate in these educational classes, which will be held in the church basement every Saturday after Vespers. There will be 10 to 11 classes, and in order to finish classes before Pascha - so the Catechumens have an opportunity to be Baptized and/or Chrismated before Pascha - there may be two classes on a few Saturdays, or possibly a class one evening during the week. Scheduled dates other than Saturdays after Vespers will be announced during the classes. The classes are not only for those interested in converting to Orthodoxy, but anyone who wants to further their Orthodox education. Instructors will be Father Volodymyr, Herman Meyer, Alan Berck, John Cassar, and Trudy Ellmore.

The Ladies Altar Society is creating and publishing the first Parish Cookbook – with your help! We are interested in your favorite recipes, ethnic recipes, recipes from your grandparents, parents, children, relatives and friends, and Lenten recipes. They can include Appetizers, Main Meals, Side Dishes, Soup, Salad, Dessert, and Beverages. In addition to recipes, the Cookbook will include a Helpful Hints section. In order for the Cookbook to be a success, we will need many recipes! Each recipe should include your name, who you may have received the recipe from, and your phone number (phone number is only if we have questions and will not be published in the Cookbook). Please give your recipes to Alla Strauss, Melody Stavisky, or Nancy Mitsos. Thank you!

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

Maria Bagritsevich – April 1

Mihai Plesa – April 2

Sergius Stavisky – April 3

Valentina DiDonato – April 3

Andres Montiel – April 5

Have a blessed birthday and may God grant you many years!

COFFEE HOUR

Hosts are responsible for providing and setting up the refreshments in Daria Hall at 9:00 AM and after Holy Communion, cleaning up after Coffee Hour including washing, drying and putting away dishes, taking out the trash, and cleaning up the Coffee Room including turning off and cleaning the coffee and tea pots. Hosts will be informed in advance if cream cheese, butter, or milk is needed. **PLEASE NOTE: Your assigned Coffee Hour Support Person will provide guidance, however, the Support Person will leave Daria Hall at 9:55 AM to attend church services. If you have arrived late or are not finished, you will be provided the key to lock the Hall when you are leaving for church services.** If you have any questions, please contact Melody Stavisky or Alla Strauss.

SUGGESTED MENU:

Bagels / Breads

Donuts / Pastries

Desserts are available to use from the two freezers in Daria Hall

Fruit

Salads

Tortilla chips & Salsa

Hummus

Sugar-free dessert

Oreos (non-dairy)

NOTE: Hosts may provide a luncheon for a specific event or holiday (panikhida, birthday, anniversary, holiday) **with advance notice to reserve the specific date to host the event.** The hosts will be responsible for all food preparation for such a luncheon.

Mar. 31 **FAST** Christine Waite, Alla & Perry Strauss

Apr. 7 **FAST** Alan & Mimi Berck, Vera Pschenyczny

Apr. 14 **FAST** Corneliu & Florica Balasa, Viktoryia Baranava

Apr. 21 **FAST** Germain & Tahara Ortiz, Paul & Patty Denko
Apr. 28 **FAST** Alex & Brittani Brasowski, Anna & Leon Brasowski, Simeon Brasowski
May 5 **PASCHA – NO COFFEE HOUR**
May 12 Nina Schmidt, Alla & Perry Strauss
May 19 Carmen & Cezar Mateiescu, Valeria & Timothy Srock
May 26 Christina DiDonato, John Cassar
June 2 Alex & Rebeca Medina, Father Volodymyr & Matushka Oksana
June 9 Melody Stavisky, Cole Johnson
June 16 FOCA Club
June 23 Nina Laushell, Lynne Sheedy & Bill Hazelton
June 30 Ludwig & Paula Koerte, Nina Shafran
July 7 Madeleine Sekulich & Mark McDevitt, Ramazi Shubitidze
July 14 **ST. VLADIMIR DAY CELEBRATION**
July 21 Nicholas & Samantha Torrisi, Herman & Francine Meyer
July 28 Tamara Karkusova, Ekaterina & Stanislav Uritsky
Aug. 4 **FAST** Luwam Tesfa, Nebiat Tesfa
Aug. 11 **FAST** Nancy Mitsos, Darice Keyes
Aug. 18 Ladies Assumption Altar Society
Aug. 25 Alex Godun, Blake & Jessica Kilgore
Sept. 1 Tyler Burger, Awet Tesfa
Sept. 8 Olga & James Bates, Tanya & Walter Tribbey
Sept. 15 James & Monia Pitra, Anne Cheslock
Sept. 22 **ANNUAL PARISH PICNIC**
Sept. 29 Sami Bachir, Nour Ragab
Oct. 6 Virgiliu & Gabriela Plesa, Mihaela & Tiberiu Milosav
Oct. 13 Sophia Dumas, Melissa Braun
Oct. 20 Tony & Chris Villabon, Alan & Mimi Berck