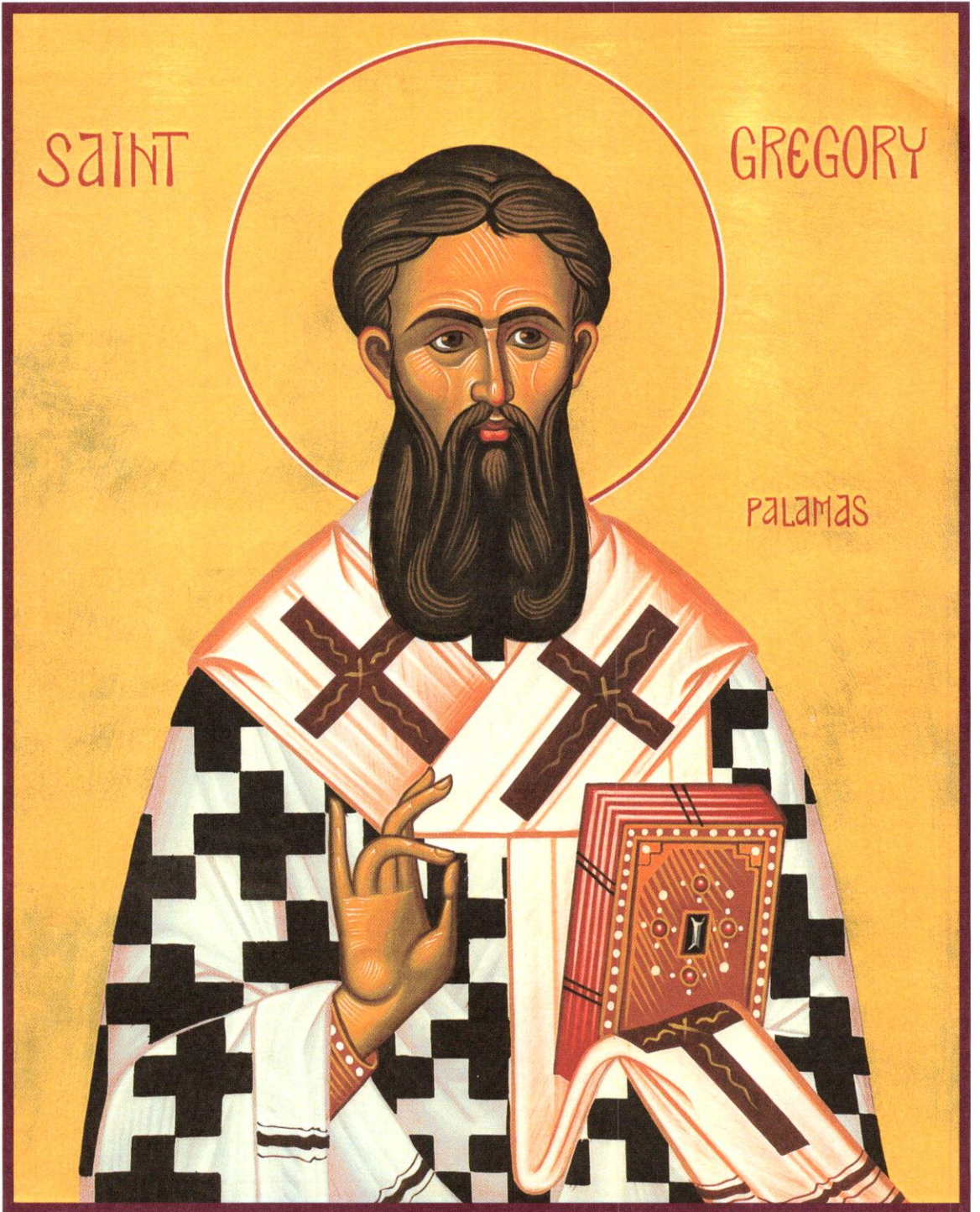


SAIN

GREGORY

PALAMAS



**Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church Bulletin
And Holy Transfiguration Chapel**
A Parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
870 Forest Street
Dover, Delaware 19904
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We would like to welcome all of our visitors and friends to Saint Nicholas Orthodox Parish. We would like to ask all of our new visitors to please sign our register so that we might be able to keep in contact with you about Parish celebrations and events. Through the intercession of Saint Nicholas we hope and pray that our community might continue to grow in numbers and in service to the Lord. Through your prayers and dedication of time, talents and donations, this can become a reality in all faith and in love.

In case of an emergency, please call Father Stephen day or night at the above telephone number.

March 31, 2024
Volume 17: Number 13
Celebrating our 17th Year of Serving the Lord
Schedule of Services and Activities

Sunday, March 31 – Second Sunday of the Fast – Tone 2
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Thursday, April 4
5:45 PM – Presanctified Liturgy – All Souls

Sunday, April 7 – Third Sunday of the Fast – The Holy Cross – Tone 3
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Thursday, April 11
6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy – All Souls

Sunday, April 14 – Fourth Sunday of the Fast – Tone 4
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Stephen

A N N U A L M E E T I N G

Thursday, April 18
6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy – All Souls

SCRIPTURAL READINGS

2nd Sunday of the Fast – Matins: Luke 24:36-53; Liturgy: Hebrews 1:10-2:3; Mark 2:1-12
To St. Gregory: Hebrews 7:26 - 8:2; John 10:9-16

Monday - Sixth Hour: Isaiah 8:13-9:7; Vespers: Genesis 6:9-22; Proverbs 8:1-21.

Tuesday - Sixth Hour: Isaiah 9:9-10:4; Vespers: Genesis 7:1-5; Proverbs 8:32-9:11.

Wednesday - Sixth Hour: Isaiah 10:12-20; Vespers: Genesis 7:6-9; Proverbs 9:12-18.

Thursday - Sixth Hour: Isaiah 11:10-12:2; Vespers: Genesis 7:11-8:3; Proverbs 10:1-22.

Friday - Sixth Hour: Isaiah 13:2-13; Vespers: Genesis 8:4-21; Proverbs 10:31-11:12.

Saturday - Hebrews 10:32-38; Mark 2:14-17; for the Departed: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17;
John 5:24-30 Great Vespers: . Genesis 28:10-17; Ezechiel 43:27-44:4; Exodus 3:1-8;

Third Sunday of the Fast - Feast of the Annunciation: Matins: Luke 1:39-46; 56. Feast:
Hebrews 2:11-18; Luke 1:24-38. Day: Matins: John 21:15-25; Liturgy: Hebrews 4:14-5:6;
Mark 8:34-9:1.

Second Sunday of the Great Fast



With the relief of modern medicines and the sophisticated techniques of surgery, we are finding it all the more difficult to realize and accept the fact that illness and disease in the world is a result of our sinful nature. If we don't think that there is a connection between sin and suffering, we can reflect on our own pattern of life and try to remember when was the last time we went to Confession and Communion before a scheduled hospital stay, or before we went out to face the tension of a job interview, or before we made an important decision in our life? We all desire as many graces as possible during final exams, but did we receive Confession and Communion before the semester started? Our Israelite ancestors clearly

explained it to us with the creation account in the Book of Genesis which is handed down to us. God created us with the free will to love Him and He created the world and the Universe for us to respect and enjoy. However, people soon began to turn away from God. They began to lose their cautious respectfulness of the world and their enjoyment of Creation was taken over by misery, despair and tiredness.

Sinning is the act of turning away from God and His ways; trying to do things on our own. When we sin or turn away from God, we turn away from our source of strength and life. We become weak and paralysis takes over; not only physically and mentally, but worse yet, spiritually. However, this sinful character of mankind is something which we all share in common and so it takes a group effort to bring ourselves and one another back to the Source of life. But we must remember that we each have to do our own fair share of the effort. And our fair share means using the full power which God has given us.

The men who carried the mat of their friend in the Gospel share the burden of his paralyzed life. They not only brought him to the building where Christ was present, but they also shared his faith and made every effort to bring him directly into the presence of Christ. Great things can be accomplished through faith and if we want to come closer to God and follow His ways bad enough, we can find ways to do so. Jesus saw that they had a sincere faith and desire to become well again and so the first thing he did was to get to the root of the problem and forgive his sins to heal that gap between the man and God. After his sins were forgiven and a new life was given to the paralytic. Christ told him to pick up his mat and go home; to return to his family and friends, show them what God had done for him, and live the new life which he had received.

Perhaps in our own lives we may have fallen into the bad habit of leaving the confessional feeling like we just left a car wash with our old car all cleaned and polished. This is wrong. Rather than leaving like an old car, cleaned and polished, we should leave as if we received a completely brand new car which has never been driven before.

Through the forgiveness of our sins we receive a completely brand new life. All past suffering and anguish should be forgotten and, through Communion, We receive the strength to face future burdens and Christian tests of courage and faith.

SERMON FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST



When Leonardo da Vinci was painting his masterpiece, "The Last Supper", he selected as the person to sit for the character of Jesus a young man, Pietri Bandinelli by name. Pietri was a gentle and kind person who was connected with the Milan cathedral as a chorister. Years passed before the great picture was near completion. There was only one character left to finish - Judas Iscariot. Leonardo noticed a young man in the streets of Rome who would be perfect as a model. His shoulders were far bent toward the ground and he had a cold, hardened, evil expression on his face. He would be perfect for the painting of Judas.

When in the studio, the model began to look around as if recalling incidents of years gone by. Finally, he turned and with a sad look in his eyes at the realization of the change that had taken place, he said, "Maestro, I was in this studio twenty-five years ago. It was I who sat as the model for Christ."

Today's Gospel shows how much our lives change over time. Last Sunday we heard that all of us are called to be disciples of Christ and that through our example, we can bring others to believe because of the faith that we exhibit. Today, the message changes. We are shown that all of us as sinners need forgiveness. We see this through the example of the paralytic who is brought to Jesus to be healed. When the Lord saw the faith in this man as well as the faith of his friends, He said, "My child, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:6). With these words, those around Jesus began to murmur, "Who does he think he is forgiving sins? Only God can forgive sins!"

Isn't it strange that when we are ill we run to the doctor for advice and medicine - even when it is the smallest of problems! But we use every excuse in the book so that we do not have to face our own sinfulness. As soon as the word "sin" is mentioned, we become uncomfortable. We don't want to seek help, we don't want to get advice, we don't want to seek a cure. We decide that we will wait for another time.

And yet, we never think of the consequences. It is harder to treat a neglected physical disease, even for the best doctor. It often remains incurable. Therefore, to preserve life, when our bodies become pained and weak we seek help.

One thing that we do not realize is that the sickness of the spirit is worse and more dangerous than not attending to a sickness of the body. Sin is not something which is always painful or makes us weak. On the contrary, sin can be pleasant. Before sin can be wiped out by repentance, it often blinds us so that we do not consider the peril, but actually makes us feel quite happy. Sin without repentance first turns into a habit; and habit turns into second nature. Then, even if a person wants to get rid of it, he doesn't have the strength. While a tree is young, a single man can uproot it without much effort, but when it has grown man-size, it can no longer be uprooted by a single man, sometimes not even by several.

But we should not despair - we need repentance. To repent means to be aware of the guilt in our hearts and to recognize that we have insulted our Heavenly Father by opposing His will and not living up to His commandments.

The power of the Holy Mystery of Confession is great and there is no sin too big for its healing power. The mercy of God is boundless to a repentant sinner. Only in repentance will we receive the forgiveness of sins. But when we return to God in repentance, we too will hear the voice of Jesus saying, "My child, your sins are forgiven." Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY - is expressed to Mariam Weeks, 3/31, Kate Henderson, 4/2 & Bruce Shamy, 4/4. May God grant them a very happy birthday and keep them for many, happy & blessed years!

REDNER FULL SALE SLIPS -- are still being collected. Please save the whole slip.

READER MINISTRY: **March 31** -- Subdeacon Kevin Minnich; **April 7** -- Christina Mentis; **April 14** - Margaret Perkins

ICON OF OUR LADY OF SITKA, ALASKA – is visiting ST. Herman Orthodox Church, 1855 Middletown Rd., Glen Mills, PA Sunday, March 31 @ 4PM

UOL LENTEN RETREAT – Basilian Spirituality Center 710 Fox Chase Road, Jenkintown, PA Saturday, April 6 – Retreat will focus on Confession – Speakers: His Eminence, Metropolitan Antony and Father Anthony Perkins. Early Bird Rate – Adults: \$40; (\$50 after March 27) \$30 for Adolescents (ages 13-18) (\$40 after March 27) Children \$20 (7 -12) \$30 after March 27) Registration includes breakfast, lunch and snacks. For more info: Oleh or Natalie at nsufler@aol.com.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL – Metropolitan Antony, Father Geroge Bazylevsky, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Constantine Christo, Father Vasyl Dovhan, Father Oleh Hucul, Father Mark Leisure, Father John Nakonachny, Father James Norton, Father Paul Pappas, Father John Perich, Father Volodymyr Wronskyj, Pani Matka Lilly Lemar, Matushka Laura Odell, Matushka Lisa Weremedic, Jamison, Wakako Alexander, Theresa Barnes, Paul Calistor, Rita Cook, Dmitra Cookson, Davis William Doty; Steve Forte, Thomas Holt, Norma Husnick, Walter Katolic, Judith Kocinski, Denise Kolosky, Kristina Koutsoudes, Olympia Koutsoudes, Frederick McCarthy, Bruce McGloan, Patricia McGloan, Stephen McNulty, Chritina Mentis, Connie Mentis, Olga Moniodes, Margaret Perkins, Barbara Perrigina, Michael Previte, Sandra Ramondi,Carolynn Ritter; Jim Saturno, David Scharba, Clay Seman, Gail Sherman, Lorraine Sherman, Gerald Sovinski, Diane Staples, Nicholas Taylor, Kathy Theodorakos, Merryl Trader, Ralph Vurgich, Cheryl Zabowski, Edward Zabowski, Markos Zerefos.

PASKA ORDER FORM – ORDER BY APRIL 21

_____ Small Round (\$8) _____ Large Round (\$12) _____ Butter Lamb (\$5)

Name _____

() With Raisins () Without Raisins

**Please give to Father Stephen this slip with payment
Paskas will be delivered for pickup Sunday, April 28**

“ENLIGHTEN MY DARKNESS, O LORD”

The Second Sunday of Lent is dedicated to the memory of a saint that may be described as a “*mysterious mystic*”: **St. Gregory Palamas**. Gregory was born in 1296 A.D. and received his secular education in Constantinople. His father was a prominent official in the Emperor’s court, but Gregory chose to devote his life to serving a Heavenly King rather than a temporal one. At the age of 20, he entered a monastery on Mt. Athos, and was ordained to the priesthood 10 years later.

Gregory Palamas became part of a controversial monastic movement called “*hesychasm*.” Hesychasm called for its followers to embrace a life of silence and contemplative prayer. It taught that through fasting, rigorous bodily discipline and repetition of the Jesus Prayer, man can know God in an intimate way. For years, the only words uttered by St. Gregory were: “*Enlighten my darkness, O Lord*,” as he sought to know His Creator with all of his being.

Although he would have been content to remain on Mt. Athos for the rest of his life, Gregory was appointed Archbishop of Thessalonica in 1347 A.D. His views on theological matters came under fierce attack by his enemies, even causing him to be imprisoned for heresy on several occasions. Gregory’s positions eventually became universally accepted by the entire Holy Orthodox Church, and today, Gregory Palamas is extolled as a “*Light of Orthodoxy, a teacher of the Church and an invincible champion of theologians*.”

Gregory Palamas fell asleep in the Lord in 1359 A.D. He was canonized a saint only 9 years after his death.

Icon by Austin Kachek - Manville, NJ

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.