

News from St. Nick's
Sunday, March 28, 2021
Second Sunday of Great Lent

Apostolic Reading: Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

(Jesus Heals the Paralytic in Capernaum)

St. Gregory Palamas

Tone 1 • Matins Gospel 9

- ➔ **For COVID Guidelines, [click here](#)**
- ➔ **For Live Streaming Link, [click here](#)**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREAT LENT has begun. Tomorrow marks the start of the third week of Lent.

THE PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY will be celebrated this Wednesday evening at 6:00 pm, and each of the remaining Wednesdays of Great Lent, as usual. Please plan on attending these services. Set aside your Wednesday evenings and use this as one way to spiritually prepare for Pascha. Each of these services will be live-streamed. [Click here.](#)

NEXT SUNDAY IS THE VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS. Donations are welcomed toward the flowers that will adorn the Cross. Please see [Tim Rucho.](#)

BAKING ORDERS FOR EASTER need to be in by Sunday, April 11th. Clearly things are different, and we're hoping to bake limited amounts of only: baklava, kouroubia, koulourakia, and Easter Bread. Check the [order form](#) for prices. For questions or to place an order contact Betty Anderson: [e-mail](#) or telephone: (508) 353-9449.

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO HELP? Consider volunteering to be a **GREETER** for this period of Great Lent and Holy Week. [Margarite Landry](#) is working on a rotating schedule for the Sundays and Wednesdays of Lent, and each evening of Holy Week. **Duties are simple:** Greet people as they come in. Make sure everyone has a mask. Help them to sit at the appropriate distance. It's a wonderful way to help people feel welcomed and comfortable. If you're interested, [please e-mail her.](#)

VESPERS AND CONFESSION will be held each Saturday evening at 5:00 pm during Great Lent. Fr. Nick will be available for confession each week after Vespers, and before Vespers by appointment ([e-mail Fr. Nick](#)).

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center, **NEXT Saturday, April 3rd from 9 am - noon.** About 4 people are needed. Likewise, donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. Help is also needed during the week for shopping and stocking the Pantry. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please e-mail Nicole Apostola at nicole.apostola@gmail.com.

EXPLORING YOUR FAITH is an educational program of our Romanian Orthodox Metropolia. As part of this program **each Thursday at 7:00 pm during Great Lent** a prominent Romanian spiritual father is a featured speaker. These talks are in Romanian, and are available through Zoom. [Click here](#) to access the full schedule and the log-on link.

LENTEN RESOURCES

*We are **beginning the journey toward Pascha, the Lord's Resurrection. To help along the way, we'll be posting each week some resources and reflections aimed at assisting and informing.***

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT. Since 1368 this Sunday has been dedicated to the memory of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica (1296–1359). This commemoration forms a continuation of the feast celebrated on the previous Sunday: St. Gregory's victory over Barlaam, Akindynos and the other heretics of his time is seen as a renewed Triumph of Orthodoxy. In the earlier period there was on this day a commemoration of the Great Martyr Polycarp of Smyrna (+ c. 155), whose feast was transferred from the fixed calendar (23 February). This commemoration, like that of St. Theodore, underlined the connection between Lenten asceticism and the martyr's vocation. The second Sunday also takes up the theme of the Prodigal Son as a model of repentance, with the first of the two Canons at Mattins being devoted to this parable.

ABOUT ST. GREGORY PALAMAS. This divine Father, who was from Asia Minor, was from childhood reared in the royal court of Constantinople, where he was instructed in both religious and secular wisdom. Later, while still a youth, he left the imperial court and struggled in asceticism on Mount Athos, and in the Skete at Beroea. He spent some time in Thessalonica being treated for an illness that came from his harsh manner of life. He was present in Constantinople at the Council that was convened in 1341 against Barlaam of Calabria, and at the Council of 1347 against Acindynus, who was of like mind with Barlaam; Barlaam and Acindynus claimed that the grace of God is created. At both these Councils, the Saint contended courageously for the true dogmas of the Church of Christ, teaching in particular that divine grace is not created, but is the uncreated energies of God which are poured forth throughout creation: otherwise it would be impossible, if grace were created, for man to have genuine communion with the uncreated God. In 1347 he was appointed Metropolitan of Thessalonica. He tended his flock in an apostolic manner for some twelve years, and wrote many books and treatises on the most exalted doctrines of our Faith; and having lived for a total of sixty-three years, he reposed in the Lord in 1359.

FASTING RULES. One question that often comes up is: *What are the Fasting rules?* [We've linked here](#) one of the better explanations of the rules around fasting. It is taken from the *Lenten Triodion*, translated and edited by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware and Mother Mary. If you've never

been exposed to the whole discipline of the Fast, reading the rules can seem very daunting. You should seek advice from your spiritual father; no one should try this without guidance.

The Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

O Lord and master of my life!
Dispel from me the spirit of discouragement and slothfulness,
of ambition and vain talk!

Instead, give me
the spirit of prudence and humility,
of patience and charity.

Yes, my king and Lord,
let me look at my own sins and refrain from judging others:
For you are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

COVID-19 UPDATE – Holy Trinity continues to be Covid-free at this time.

VISITORS. Holy Trinity families and friends are now able to visit in our designated areas, in resident rooms and outdoors. Per the guidance, visitation may vary based on individual status. Please schedule your visit in advance with the Activities Department by calling (508) 852-1000.

NEW ADMISSIONS – Holy Trinity is now accepting new admissions. To inquire about admissions, for either long-term or short-term rehab, please contact Sheryl DiLorenzo at sdilorenzo@htnr.net or call (508) 852-1000.

JOB OPENINGS – Holy Trinity is looking to add to its excellent staff. There are openings for nurses and CNAs for all shifts, including sign on bonuses and great benefits. [Click here](#) for a full listing with detailed job descriptions. If you have questions, please contact the Human Resources Generalist, [Kimberly Hescocock](#). Recent grads and people familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

REHABILITATION — Rehabilitation at Holy Trinity means that our team of professionals will work with your loved one to provide the encouragement and confidence needed to participate in gaining and restoring the physical strength required to return home. With our in-house gym and equipment, the onsite team will work hand in hand with them to develop obtainable goals and a safe plan of care for discharge home.

ACTIVITIES — Our Activities department has started to increase group activities and socialization. Entertainers are scheduled based on guidance, and we appreciate having some

normalcy back in our lives. This week, residents welcomed the arrival of Spring with Easter arts and crafts.

DIVINE LITURGY celebrations have resumed, just as we begin our Lenten journey to Pascha.

Orthodox Links

[Romanian Orthodox Metropolia](#) of the Americas
[Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America](#) (Assembly of Bishops)
[International Orthodox Christian Charities](#) (IOCC)
[Orthodox Christian Mission Center](#) (OCMC)
[Orthodox Christian Radio Network](#) (OCN)
[Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches of Central Mass.](#) (CEOC)

A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

O compassionate Lord: At night we sleep comfortably, in spite of the mediocrity of our lives. So now, finding ourselves alive, once more, and able to greet the beauty of another morning, we are disturbed at the lethargy in which we live. We beseech you, therefore: Give us determination to succeed in repentance. During these lenten days, change our ravenous appetites to control everyone and everything into a praiseworthy desire for self-control, so that, learning the wisdom of this self-restraint, we may enjoy the freedom of all your sons and daughters.

By the grace and mercy and love for us of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Lord Who Sees Into Our Hearts

This is the second Sunday of Great Lent, when we remember the great Archbishop of Thessalonika, St. Gregory Palamas. During Lent, the Gospel readings are taken from St. Mark, and this week we hear the account of the healing of a paralytic man in Capernaum (Mark 2:1-12). Capernaum was the largest city in the region of Galilee. It was not far from Nazareth, where Jesus lived as an adult. This account begins with his return to Capernaum after having begun his ministry touring the cities and towns of Galilee.

St. Mark records that after he had been baptized in the Jordan by John, and then tempted in the desert by the devil, Jesus started preaching of the coming “kingdom” (Mark 1:15). Shortly after, He called his first disciples (v. 1:16-20) and then proceeded to: heal a man with an unclean spirit (v. 1:21-28), lift the fever of Peter’s mother-in-law (v. 1:29-32), and cure many other sick and demon-possessed people (v. 1:32-34). He went on a “preaching tour” in the surrounding cities and towns, and during this time healed a leper (v. 1:40-45). When he returned to Capernaum

the word had spread of the miracles and wonders. He is now famous. People flocked to see and hear him. St. Mark records that when they heard that he was home, “so many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door” (v. 2:2). Jesus “was speaking the word to them” and everyone wanted to listen.

While Jesus was speaking, four men came to the house where he was carrying a paralyzed man on a stretcher, and because they could not enter through the doorway, they tore up part of the roof and lowered the paralytic down through the hole. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (v. 5). Because of the faith of these four men as well as that of the paralytic, Jesus healed the man, but he does it in such a way as to truly display his power as the Son of God.

The scribes who were sitting and listening to Jesus immediately understood the importance of what he was saying. They said to themselves — that is, they questioned in their hearts — “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (v. 7) Jesus turns to them and said, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk’?” (v. 8-9)

Jesus just revealed an even greater miracle. He showed his true power. He knew their thoughts. He could read their hearts. The prophets said that God alone had the power to know the human heart. For example, Solomon says of God, “only you know the human heart” (2 Chronicles 6:30); calling on God, David says, “you who test the minds and hearts” (Psalm 7:9); Jeremiah says, “The heart is devious above all else ... who can understand it? I the Lord test the mind and search the heart” (Jeremiah 17:9-10); and the Lord speaking to Samuel says, “the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

And so, after telling the scribes what they were thinking, in their hearts, Jesus then turned to the paralyzed man and said, “Stand up, take your mat and go to your home” (v. 11).

As you read this Gospel lesson you might be confused by verse 10. Just before the Lord told the paralytic man to take up his bed, St. Mark writes, “but that you may know that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.” While at first glance it seems that Jesus is addressing this to the scribes, but when we study the verse in depth we see that the grammar and the context do not support this understanding. This verse was clearly meant for us, the readers. St. Mark wants us to understand that Jesus, even as the Son of Man, does not lose his authority as God to forgive sins. In other words, we should not let the wonder of the miracle distract us from the true importance of this event and who Jesus is.

Moreover, we should remind ourselves of Jesus’ willingness not only to forgive our sins, but to bear them as well. This is the central focus of our Paschal preparation. Even while we marvel at his ability to heal the sick, we should also prepare our hearts to ask for his forgiveness, for this is indeed the greater miracle..

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

Dates To Remember

Sat, March 27 Vespers/Confession, 5 pm
Wed, March 31 PreSanctified Liturgy, 6 pm
Sat, April 3 Food Pantry, 9:00 am-noon
Vespers/Confession, 5 pm
Sun, April 4 Western Easter
Fri, April 16 Mustard Seed Meal
Sun, April 25 Palm Sunday
Sunday, May 2 Great and Holy Pascha

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