

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, March 20, 2022

The Second Sunday of Great Lent St. Gregory Palamas

***Apostolic Reading: Hebrews 1:10-2:3
Gospel: Mark 2:1-12
(Jesus Heals the Paralytic in Capernaum)***

Tone 6 • Resurrection Gospel 6

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

[\(Click here for a PDF version of this week's news\)](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREAT LENT began on, March 7th. Tomorrow marks the start of the third week of Lent.

GREAT NEWS! We received notice this week from the USCIS (Immigration) that **Fr. Vasile Aileni's visa has been approved.** This means that in a few weeks he and his family can FINALLY move here and he can assume the position of the Parish Priest at St. Nicholas. As with everything these days, nothing happens quickly. While we have received this information electronically, we still are waiting for the actual documents, but, we're hoping to receive them in the next week or two. Then Fr. Vasile and family will be on their way, with God's help, before Palm Sunday. We should have more details soon, so stay tuned and we'll keep you up to date.

THE PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY THIS WEDNESDAY, March 23rd will be hosted by [St. Mary Albanian Orthodox Church](#) on Salisbury Street. Set aside your Wednesday evenings and use this as one way to spiritually prepare for Pascha. Each Liturgy will start at 6:00 pm. For the full PreSanctified Schedule, scroll down below.

NEXT SUNDAY IS THE VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS. If you'd like to donate toward the flowers, please speak with [Tim Rucho](#).

THIS FRIDAY, MARCH 25th, is the Feast of the **ANNUNCIATION.** We will celebrate the Feast with our sister parish of [St. Mary's Assumption](#) on Salisbury Street. Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:30am.

PITA BAKING SESSIONS are set for **Saturday, March 26th and Saturday, April 3rd.** If you'd like to help, please contact Betty Anderson by [e-mail](#) or phone: **508-353-9449.** Remember: ***There's a job for everyone!***

THE MOVIE MAN OF GOD on the [life of St. Nektarios](#) will be shown on **Monday, March 21st at 7:00pm**, at the Regal Cinema in Marlborough. We are buying a block of tickets. Please let [Fr. Nick](#) know if you would like to go and how many tickets you will need. **It's important that we have a count.** Before the showing that night, at 5:15pm, Fr. Greg will be holding a compline service at Sts. Anagyroi in Marlborough. The relics of St. Nektarios will be there for veneration. We've been given is a unique opportunity.

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

UKRAINIAN RELIEF. The **Saint Paraskeva Orthodox Charity** in partnership with our Metropolia is working with the Archdiocese of Suceava and Rădăuți to support Ukrainian war refugees in transit or intending to stay in Romania. This region of Romania is one of the major entry points for persons fleeing the invasion of Ukraine. Funds collected will assist the monasteries and parishes in the diocese that have set up more than 500 fully equipped shelters. If you would like to learn more about this effort and contribute, please [click here for the website of Saint Parascheva Charity](#) or go to their [Facebook page](#).

OUR ON-LINE GIVING SYSTEM HAS BEEN UPGRADED! Please check it out by [clicking here](#), or by using the [ON-LINE](#) link on our parish homepage. You may use this option to submit one-time or recurring payments.

LENTEN RESOURCES

We are journeyING toward Pascha, the Lord's Resurrection. To help along the way, each week we'll be posting 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.

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.

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.

PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY SCHEDULE

Wednesday, March 9, 2022
St. George

Wednesday, March 30, 2022
St. Spyridon

Wednesday, March 16, 2022
St. Nicholas

Wednesday, April 6, 2022
Sts. Anargyroi

Wednesday, March 23, 2022
St. Mary

Wednesday, April 13, 2022
St. Nicholas

Each Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will begin at 6:00 p.m. The faithful should prepare themselves for Holy Communion in the usual way: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and regular confession. There will be a modest 'pot-luck' lenten meal offered after the Liturgy. People are encouraged to bring something to share with others

COMMUNITY NEWS

PSALTIKON will offer a concert entitled: *Byzantine Hymns of the Triodion*, on **Thursday, March 31st, at 7:30pm**, at [St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral](#), 102 Russell St, Worcester, MA. This program is sponsored by the Hellenic Arts Society.

A MEDICATION TAKE BACK opportunity will be held on **Saturday, April 30th from 10:00am to 2:00pm**, at the Shrewsbury Senior Center, 98 Maple Ave, Shrewsbury. No fee. No proof of identification. No questions. This is open to the general public. Bring in your expired or unused medications for safe and proper disposal. If you're unable to make it that day, you can search for year-round Pharmaceutical Public Disposal Locations by [clicking here](#).

ALL THINGS ORTHODOX is a weekly show hosted by Fr. Christopher Stamas of St. Spyridon Cathedral. Fr. Chris interviews people active in the life of the Church on questions of faith and action. It is aired on the **Worcester Cable channel 194** on **Mondays** at 7 pm, **Saturdays** at 8 pm and **Sundays** at 9 pm. Also look for it on the Cable website: wccatv.com, or the **Worcester TV** Roku app.

NOTES FROM HOLY TRINITY

IN FOND MEMORY OF CYNTHIA L. FOTOS - Cynthia was a dear resident of Holy Trinity and a member of St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral. To her family, our staff sends our deepest condolences. We will miss her, too!

COVID-19 UPDATE - Holy Trinity currently has one employee who tested positive for Covid and is now in recovery. In addition, two Covid patients, recently admitted for rehabilitation, are quarantined in our dedication isolation rooms.

DIVINE LITURGY is celebrated each Wednesday morning at 9:30 am for the residents. We welcome volunteers and visitors who would like to attend and be involved.

HOLY TRINITY IS HERE TO HELP! - We have a limited number of beds available, priority is given to our Orthodox members. To inquire about long-term or short-term rehab admissions, please call our **Admissions Director, Mary Charmchi**, on her cell: (774) 502-5745 or, by email: mcharmchi@htnr.net.

JOB OPENINGS - Skilled, highly respected, and valued professionals are the hallmark of our patient-centered care. To join our award-winning team and advance your career, [Click here](#) for a full listing of our openings with detailed job descriptions. Recent grads and people familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

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 Lenten Prayer

Let us pray to the Lord

O Lord and master of our lives: Educate us, your ignorant servants, during these lenten days, by letting your wisdom enlighten our minds and hearts. Make us alert, lest the deceits of this world seduce us. Teach us how to distinguish between substance and appearance, how to discern what is of the Holy Spirit and what is not. Do not leave us to fight the enemy of our life by ourselves, for he is constantly striving to silence the word of life within us. Rather, be with us today, and every day, through your loving mercy.

For you are good and full of love for us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen. Amen.

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.

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

Mon, March 7 Great Lent Began
Sat, March 19 Vespers/Confession, 5 pm
Mon, March 21 Movie, Man of God, Life of St. Nektarios
Wed, March 23 PreSanctified, St. Mary, 6 pm
Fri, March 25 Feast of the Annunciation, at St. Mary's, 9:30am
Sat, March 26 Vespers/Confession, 5 pm
Wed, March 30 PreSanctified, St. Spyridon 6 pm
Sat, April 2 Food Pantry, 9 am - noon
Vespers/Confession, 5 pm
Fri, April 15 Mustard Seed Meal
Sun, April 17 Western Easter
Sun, April 24 Great and Holy Pascha

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