



Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

March 20th , Tone 7, Jn.10:9-16

St. Gregory Palamas

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 6

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb. The guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure Body. Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin granting Life. O Lord who didst rise from the dead: Glory to Thee!

Troparion of Annunciation, Tone 4

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you.

Troparion for Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas Tone 2

O Light of Orthodoxy! Teacher of the Church. Its Confirmation! O Ideal of Monks and invincible Champion of Theologians! wonder-working Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and Preacher of Grace! Always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be save

Now is the truly great preacher of the Radiant Light led by the Source of Light to the never-setting Light. This son of the divine and never-setting Light was a true man of God indeed, and a wondrous servant and minister of the divine mysteries, having been born in the imperial city (Constantinople) of most radiant and glorious parents. Through his virtue and instruction he desired to adorn not only the outer of mankind according to the senses, but also much of the unseen inner being.

When he was yet quite young, his father died. His mother, brothers and sisters raised him and instructed him in morals, catechism and sacred scripture, and sent him to teachers of worldly wisdom, from whom he learned well. Cleverly combining his learning with a natural zeal, he soon became skilled in verbal arts. At the age of twenty, regarding all earthly things as inferior and passing dreams, he sought recourse to God the Author and Giver of all wisdom, to consecrate his entire self to God through a perfect life. Hence he disclosed his great love for God, his pious intentions and burning desire to his mother, and he found that for a long she too had been desirous of this and rejoiced at his decision. And straightway gathering her children his mother said with joy, "Behold, I and the children God has given me!" And she disclosed to them the intent of the great Gregory, asking if it seemed to them to be good. And he with words of instruction soon convinced them all in earnestness to follow him in his love and withdrawal from life.

Distributing then his earthly possessions to the poor according to the teachings of the Gospel, and cheerfully abandoning human love, earthly honor and the approbation of men, he followed after Christ. Placing his mother and sisters in a convent, he and his brothers went to the sacred Mount Athos, where he convinced his brothers to stay in different monasteries, so that they would have no time to be together, thereby perfecting their life in God. He himself became obedient to a wondrous man named Nicodemus who had consecrated his life of silence to God alone. Learning from him through actions every precept and every virtue, through a mystical revelation there he received the protection of the all pure Theotokos, an invincible help in all things.

(Taken from The Synaxarion, the First Sunday of Great Lent)

***From the Lives of the Saints...* THE VENERABLE MARTYR JOHN AND THOSE WITH HIM FROM THE MONASTERY OF SAINT**

Announcements and Activities

Presanctified Liturgy— Wednesday, at 6PM. Those desiring to receive Holy Communion should not eat or drink after their lunchtime meal. A light lenten supper will be served after the Liturgy. Luci has a signup sheet out and you are invited to prepare a lenten meal for after Presanctified. Thank you.

Vigil for the Feast of the Annunciation— Thursday, at 6PM. His Grace, Bishop Daniel, will be with us for the Vigil and the Liturgy.

Vespertine Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Annunciation— Friday, at 6PM. A festal banquet will follow. See the sign-up for potluck.

Saturday Great Vespers— on Saturday, at 5:30 PM.

Sunday Divine Liturgy— 10AM.

Church School/Adult Ed.— will next meet on Sunday, March 27th.

Coffee Hours— This week's Coffee Hour is being sponsored by Brian and Kerrie and Robert and Rachel. Next week's Coffee Hour will be our mini potluck. Remember: No Meat, eggs, dairy or things with dairy in them (sour CREAM, MILK chocolate, etc) may be served at coffee hours until Pascha on April 24th (fish may be served at Coffee Hour on Palm Sunday, April 17th.) A blessed lent to all.

Pray for... Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)— battling cancer. Samir's friend, **Johnny**, who has been improving in the battle to save his sight. **Brian**, Sunday's brother. **George and Alex**, health problems. **All those who have lost their lives or are suffering as a result of the current Pandemic**. **Archimandrite Alexander**— Fr. Lawrence's long-time father confessor, who reposed. **Our Vladyka Benjamin**— battling on-set parkinsons. **Tsige Roman and Abraham**— I know we are always mindful of Tsige, but please continue to pray for the work and for Ethiopia, torn by civil war, with all the problems that go with a regional terror. **Reposed Jonathan T. George and Alesis**, Brother and Daughter of Peter and Irene S. **Matushka Ioanna R. reposed. Matushka Priscilla, ill. Anya J**— a longtime friend of the parish who is ill. **Stephen F.**— battling back pain. **John F.**— battling cancer. **Archpriest Anthony** — battling cancer. **Julie**— sister of Kathy M., battling health problems. **Rhoda's requests for Douglas and Kayana. Reposed Constance** — the mother of Andrew F. **Will**— reposed, Michael T.'s brother-in-law. **Reposed Vadim. Christian**— undergoing some medical testing. **Stacy**— hand surgery. The reposed— **Novice Nonna, Robbie**— cancer. **Raphael**, cancer. **Child Aidan**— seizures. **Child Henry**.

SAVA THE SANCTIFIED NEAR JERUSALEM

This glorious monastery, which still exists today, was visited by St. Sava of Serbia and endowed by several Serbian rulers. Many times it was attacked, pillaged and laid waste by ruthless Arabs. But, by the providence of God, it was always restored and is preserved to this day. During the reign of Constantine and Irene, it was attacked and pillaged by the Arabs. The monks did not want to flee, but taking counsel with their abbot Thomas they said: "We have fled from the world into this wilderness for the sake of our love for Christ, and it would be shameful if we fled from the wilderness out of fear of men. If we are slain here, we will be slain because of our love for Christ, for Whose sake we came here to live." Having decided this, they awaited the armed Arabs, unarmed like lambs before wolves. The Arabs slew some of the monks with arrows and some they sealed off in the cave of St. Sava. Then the Arabs lit a fire at the entrance of the cave, and the monks were suffocated by the smoke. Thus many of them died as martyrs for the sake of Christ and went to the Kingdom of Him Whom they loved and for Whose love they perished. They suffered honorably before Pascha [the Feast of the Resurrection] in 796 A.D., during the time of Constantine and Irene, and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Elias. A just punishment quickly befell the savage marauders. Returning to their tents, they began to quarrel among themselves and, fighting with one another, slew one another.

THE HOLY MARTYR PHOTINA

This was the Samaritan woman who had the rare fortune to converse with the Lord Christ Himself at the Well of Jacob, near Sychar (John 4:4-31). Believing in the Lord, Photina afterward went to preach His Gospel with her two sons Victor and Josiah, and with her five sisters, Anatolia, Phota, Photida, Parasceva and Cyriaca. They went to Carthage in Africa. There they were arrested, taken to Rome and thrown into prison during the reign of Emperor Nero. By God's providence, Domnina, the daughter of Nero, came into contact with St. Photina, who converted her to the Christian Faith. After imprisonment they all suffered for the sake of Christ. Photina, who was first enlightened with the light of truth at the well of Sychar, was now thrown into a well where she died and entered the Eternal Kingdom of Christ.

REFLECTION

God punishes a sinner not because it gives Him gratification to destroy men. If that gave Him gratification, He would not have created man from nothing. He punishes a sinner for more important and constructive reasons, two of which are most apparent to us. First, by punishment, He corrects him and leads him on the true path of salvation, and second, He frightens others from sinning. St. Isaac also thinks this when he says: "A righteous wise man is like unto God--for he punishes a man not to reproach him for his sin but either to correct him or to instill fear in others." One recalcitrant young man, who ridiculed God and his parents, suddenly went insane. The whole city in which this young man lived saw in this the punishment of God and was filled with the fear of God. The young man was held bound in isolation for three years. His mother wept bitterly and prayed to God for her son. One year, on the Feast of Pentecost, the mother brought him to the Monastery of St. Basil of Ostrog. Following prayers, the insane youth was cured and came to himself. After that he repented and became an exemplary person and a true Christian.

Taken from the Prologue of Ochrid, Compiled and edited by St. Nikolai Velimirovic)

"There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives" (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)