



Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 5

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm! He has trampled down death by death! He has become the firstborn of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world great mercy!

Troparion of the Annunciation Tone 4

O Victorious Leader of triumphant hosts! We, your servants delivered from evil, sing our grateful thanks to you, O Theotokos! As you possess invincible might set us free from every calamity so that we may sing: Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Troparion of the Sunday of Gregory Palamas, Tone 1

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

The Second Sunday of Great Lent Tone 5, March 16th, Mark 2:1-12

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. After Nicodemus' parting from this life to God, having lived for several years in the Great Lavra most zealously with perfection of thought and a love of silence, Gregory left the Lavra and embraced the wilderness.

Increasing ever in love and always desiring to be with God, he dedicated himself to a life of utmost severity, strengthening his reasoning with earnest attention, raising his thoughts to God, practicing prayer at all times, meditating on divine things, and leading an excellent life. With the help of God he overcame the attacks of demons, and cleansing his soul with fountains of tears at all night vigils, he became a chosen vessel of the gifts of the Spirit of God, and often had visions of the Godhead. He was truly great and was recognized as a bearer of the Spirit by those who lived godly lives, revealing himself to those who witnessed the following outward signs: He had authority over demons and was able to release those possessed from their wiles and deceit. He could change barren trees into fruitful ones. He foresaw things to come, and was blessed with other gifts and fruits of the Divine Spirit. For when it lies within our power to act upon the virtues, then we are not able to fall into temptation. Without the virtues there can be no perfection or appearance of faith in God (for, he says, action and passion descending together perfects a man in goodness after God), but frequent falls into various temptation - this great man - so that he is shown to be perfect to all. And what mind can think on this further? What more can be said? First the licentious wiles of the evil contender. And then the lies and slanders of the new theomachists were directed at him. In all twenty-three years he endured

Announcements and Activities

Lenten Vespers— Monday, at 5PM.

Presanctified Liturgy— Wednesday, at 6PM. Those desiring to receive Holy Communion should not eat or drink after their lunchtime meal, along with, of course, saying the Pre-Communion prayers. A light, Lenten meal will follow the Liturgy.

Akathist for the Reposed— Friday at 6PM.

Memorial Liturgy— Saturday, at 9AM. Fr. Lawrence will remember our departed loved ones at this service.

Great Vespers— Saturday, at 5:30PM.

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, at 10AM.

Coffee Hour— This week's Coffee Hour is being sponsored by Brandon, Leanna and Alexandra. Next week's coffee hour will be sponsored by the Darrell, Laura Beth and Diane F. During Great Lent, no meat, no dairy or dairy products (sour Cream, Milk chocolate, cakes with eggs and milk, etc.) are permitted to be served at Coffee Hours. Shrimp and other shell fish are permitted. Fish (with a backbone) is allowed on March 25th and on Palm Sunday, (April 13). That rules of the Fast concerning what may be served at Coffee Hours will not change until after the PASCHAL Liturgy on April 20th. If you have questions, talk with Father Lawrence.

Church School/Adult Education— held on Sunday, March 23rd, at 9AM. Next Sunday.

Parish Council— we adopted a treasurer's report 1500 in the red, but we did have several uncharacteristic expenses: roof repair, mixer repair and Fr. Flight to be at Fr. Justin's ordination. We continued our discussion of getting the rectory ready for the next priest.

Pray for... Sarah, the daughter of Fr. Lawrence's godfather. Eutychia's husband: **Stephen— battling cancer.** Barbara H. health issues. Fr.'s grandson, **Christian, joint pain and problems from an inherited gene.** Archpriest **Matthew Tate— a leader of diocese that is battling Leukemia.** Archpriest **James, seizures.** Linda— general health. Grandson of Larissa. **Rebecca— Philip's daughter, health issues.** **Abbess Victoria** — high blood pressure. **Reposed John & Jakov.** **Tasha Mendez— Reposed on November 8th.** **Rex**— the ailing brother of a friend of Fr. Lawrence's. Tina— friend of the parish, Rebecca's daughter. **Joseph and Ella, and family**— loss of Natalia. **Archpriest Nazari**— several family members facing serious health issues. **Thomas and Linda, John and Irene**— friends of Mike Miller, who passed through a community illness. **Anahi** a friend of the Skete. **Geri**— a friend of Heather's battling illness. **Reposed Veronica**, the mother of Fr. Nazari. **Cindy**, a friend of Tricia's in need of prayers for health.. **Archbishop Benjamin**, who is hospitalized for an infection. The Archbishop's father, **David**, who is also hospitalized. Joshua and McKinsey, (son of Edie) expecting with a complication in utero, twins sharing same placenta.

much anger and affliction. For the Italian beast, Varlaam of Calabria, philosophized in a worldly manner, and through the vanity of his philosophy (for he thought to know everything) he mounted a fierce attack against Christ's Church, against our faith and against those who openly professed it.

For the grace of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is one and the light of the age to come, as also the righteous shine like the sun, as Christ Himself demonstrated beforehand in splendor on the mountain. And simply he erroneously taught that all the power and action of the Godhead in three hypostases and all differences there might be in the divine nature were created, and those who piously believed that the divine Light was uncreated, and all His power and action, as not to one new of that which is naturally in God, through his rhetoric and widespread letters, he called bitheists and polytheists, as the Jews, Savelius and Arius call us.

For the sake of these the divine Gregory, as a defender of piety and most glorious intercessor, fought before everyone and was reviled. He was sent by the Church to Constantinople, and he went. And when the most divine emperor Andronicus, fourth after the Paleologos, sought to defend the faith, a sacred council was assembled. And when Varlaam appeared with his previously mentioned impious teachings and his accusations against piety, the great Gregory, filled with the Spirit of God and clothed with invincible power from on high, stopped his mouth from speaking against God and disgraced him utterly. With words of spiritual fire and documents he burned Varlaam's heresies like brushwood to ashes. Wherefore unable to endure the shame, the enemy of piety ran back to Italy, whence he came. Immediately after this the council exposed his great harm, and with arguments to the contrary dispersed his compositions.

But those who had partaken of these ideas did not cease their struggle against God's Church. For this cause through the great urging of the sacred council, the emperor himself, and most importantly the command of God, Gregory was persuaded to ascend the bishop's throne, and was appointed the pastor of the sacred Church in Thessalonica.

Wherefore he bravely and steadfastly accomplished great deeds in behalf of the Orthodox Faith. But many evil heirs of Acindinus and Varlaam appeared, fierce beasts born of ferociousness, as well as their teachings and compositions...Then God, in an ineffable manner, sent the teacher to the East. He was sent as the elder from Thessalonica to Constantinople to make peace between two quarreling emperors. But he was seized by Moslems and for an entire year was made to travel in suffering from place to place, from city to city, fearlessly preaching the Gospel of Christ. And he affirmed and convinced them in their faith, entreating them to remain steadfast, confirming with divine wisdom those who were wavering in the faith or could not understand or asked questions about the previous events, and freely granting healing to those who asked it.

Then the great saint was freed by the lovers of Christ, and this bloodless martyr returned once more in joy to his flock. In addition to the other many and great gifts and preeminent qualities, which he had, he was also adorned with the wounds of Christ, bearing also in himself Christ's, according to Paul. Let us describe him; these were his characteristics. Along with his excellence he was meek and humble. (We do not speak here of God and divine matters, for he was quite a defender of these.) He did not remember evil and was good-natured, desiring to return good for evil. He never quarreled. He was always patient and magnanimous in the face of adversity. He was above vanity and sensuality. He was always temperate and not extravagant in all personal necessities, and for all that time he was not ill. He endured quietly and silently, always graciously, to the limits of what was done to him, so that all would see him as reasonable, attentive and keen witted. And consequently he never allowed his eyes to be void of tears, but sympathized with a flow of tears.

And so like a martyr from the beginning to the end he struggled against demons and the passions, driving heretics far the Christ's Church, defining the Orthodox Faith through his words and compositions, and by them as with a seal sealing all divinely inspired writing, for his life and word became a seal of the life and words of the saints. He tended his flock for thirteen years more in the godly manner of the Apostles, and having adorned them with his moral teachings, he guided them to the heavenly sheepfold. And having served all Orthodox, both those who lived during his time and those yet to be born, he was translated to the higher life, having lived sixty-three years in all. And he commended his spirit into the hands of God, leaving his body to his flock, as a special portion and a precious treasure, enlightened and glorified at the end.

For every day Christ benefits with wonders those who come near in faith and grants healing of many diseases, many of whom tell of their cures. Through his prayers, O God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Synaxarion for St. Gregory Palamas Sunday)

“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)