



Out holy father St. Gregory Palamas, 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. His holy relics are kept in the Cathedral of Thessalonica. A full service was composed for his feast day by the Patriarch Philotheus in 1368, when it was established that his feast be celebrated on this day. Since works without right faith avail nothing, we set Orthodoxy of faith as the foundation of all that we accomplish during the Fast, by celebrating the Triumph of Orthodoxy the Sunday before, and the great defender of the teachings of the holy Fathers today.

**TODAY'S READER: MICHAEL KITSOULIS**

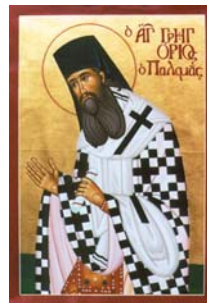
**EPISTLE Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3**

"IN THE BEGINNING, you O Lord, didst found the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end." But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet?" Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him.

**GOSPEL Mark 2:1-12**

At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum and it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is a blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-he said to the paralytic-"I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

*O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation, O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians, O wonder-working Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved. (Troparion, Tone 8)*



**ST. GREGORY PALAMAS:  
DEFENDER OF HESYCHASM**

Hesychasm (from Greek *hesychia* ("silence", "calm" "tranquility")) is a practice originating from the Holy Mountain (Mt. Athos). It was given its most powerful explanation by St. Gregory Palamas in his polemics with the Catholic rationalistic theologian Barlaam of Calabria. This practice included: 1). Constant repetition of the Jesus prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, be merciful to me a sinner"). It is "mindful prayer" or "heart prayer"; 2) The practice of bringing the mind into the heart combined with the mental concentration on the heart as the spiritual center of man; and 3) Some special contemplative body postures and breathing techniques combined with the Jesus prayer. The whole purpose and goal of hesychastic prayer is *theosis* — to help man realize and become one with the image and energy of God within himself. It is to become by grace what God is by nature. St. Gregory taught that Christ's Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor, revealed God's uncreated energies. Through these energies, man achieves oneness with the Divine Creator. Hesychastic prayer is a means, through constant practice and repetition, of attaining that oneness with God by grace. Hesychast theology was declared an essential part of Orthodox theology and belief by the Church Councils of Constantinople of 1341 and 1351. St. Makarios the Great expressed it perfectly: "The only path leading to heaven is that of complete stillness, the avoidance of all evil, the acquisition of blessings, perfect love towards God and communion with Him in holiness and righteousness. If a man has attained these things he will soon ascend to a divine realm. Yet the person who aspire to this realm must first mortify the earthly aspects (Col. 3:5). For when our soul rejoices in the contemplation of true goodness, it does not return to any of the passions energized by sensual or bodily pleasure receives the manifestation of God with pure and undefiled mind. It is only after we have guarded ourselves rigorously, endured bodily suffering and purified the *soul*, that God comes to dwell in our hearts, making it possible for us to fulfill His

**PRAYER LIST:** Antonia "Nitsa" Kempf, Connie Kanaris, Diana Lazar, George Markomanolakis, Argie Palaios, Katherine Panagakos, Priscilla Preuss, George Virvan, Sylvia Basdekas, George Speris, Mariah Smiley, Doris Webb, the child Camille Feruzzi who is gravely ill, the child Heather Greene, Irene Pappas, Marty Levine, Lindsey Reijsoo, the child Ashley Lyvers, the child Alexis Ross, Thomas Jenkins, the child Joseph Saxon, Francine Bruggeman, Estrella Grandea Ocampo, Artie Constantinides, Stephanie Skanderis, Michael Giatzis, Georgia Haldas, and Robert Shriver. **US ARMED FORCES:** (Col.) Fr. Alexander Webster, Rev. Fr. John Kalantzis, Lt. Nicholas Karnaze, Spc. Spiro Nino, John Xanthakos, Maj. Sydney Pennix, Colonel James Karas, and Gary Hogman (Iraq) and his wife Cindy, and 2nd Lt. Phillip Natsios

commandments without going astray. He Himself will then teach us how to hold fast to His laws, sending forth His own energies, like rays of the sun, through the grace of the Spirit implanted in us. By way of trials and sufferings we must purify the divine image in us in accordance with which we possess intelligence and are able to receive understanding and likeness of God; for it is by re-forging our senses in the furnace of our trials that we free them from all defilement and assume our royal dignity." O Holy Father Gregory, pray to God for us!

**DIVINE SERVICES THIS WEEK**

**Wednesday:** Third Presanctified Liturgy, 6:30 p.m., followed by a spiritual discussion with Fr. Kostas Pavlakos from St. Katherine's in Falls Church.

**Friday:** Third Salutations to the Most Holy Theotokos, 7:00 p.m.

**40 DAY BLESSING**

A 40 Day Blessing will be given today to **Christopher Elias**, beloved son of Annitsa and Elias Agritellis. May God grant him many years!

**MEMORIALS**

A Memorial Service will be offered today for **James Constantine Kostalas** who reposed in Greece, requested by his sister Carol Kostalas Sylvester and his brothers George and Anthony; and for **John Fotios Karakostas (1 Year)**, requested by his wife Chrisanthi and by Eleni, Frank, Tina, and Christopher and their families. May their memories be eternal!



**THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION**

The Holy Sacrament of Confession will be offered during Great Lent on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. and Fridays at 6:00 p.m., or by making an appointment with one of the Priests. Make your Lent a holy and profitable one for your soul. Come to this healing Sacrament and make things right with God!

### PASTORAL VISITATIONS

Please inform the Church Office 301-469-7990 (ext 300) of any loved ones who are hospitalized or “shut-ins,” so they may be visited and receive the grace of Holy Communion.

### ORTHODOX INQUIRY

If you or anyone you may know are interested in embracing Holy Orthodoxy and being baptized or chrismated, please contact Fr. Dimitrios at 301-469-7990 or by email at [FrAntokas@stgeorge.org](mailto:FrAntokas@stgeorge.org)



Today the 5th Grade Sunday School Class will receive small boxes of incense at the end of Divine Liturgy. This tradition at St. George is meant to reinforce their lessons on Great Lent which refer to the Presanctified Liturgy's "Let my prayer arise, O Lord, in Thy sight like incense and let the lifting up of my hands be as an evening sacrifice."

### PARISH ACTIVITIES

**SALT TALKS** the SALT Talks (Sunday Afternoon Lenten Talks) will be held each Sunday during Great Lent from 12:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. These Lenten talks are for students from 12 to 18 years of age and will deal with spiritual messages in the context of their lives and experience.

**GREAT LENT BOOK DISCUSSION** Wednesdays during the Great Fast, after Presanctified Liturgy 6:30 p.m., and Lenten Supper 7:30 p.m. **This week:** Fr. Kostas Pavlakos from St. Katherine's in Falls Church will discuss the chapter "God and the Salvation of Mankind" in *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* by Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky.

**FIFTY PLUS** Meeting on **March 10** at 11:30 am in the Founder's Hall. Fr. Dimitrios Antokas will be speaking on "Pastoral Reflections". Guests are always welcomed. Keep in mind as you do your spring cleaning to save any unwanted items for Yiayia's Attic. No clothing or cook books, please.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO NOTE ON YOUR STEWARDSHIP CHECKS "STEWARDSHIP 2010".** If you have not submitted a 2010 pledge card, please do so as soon as possible. You need not give a check when submitting a pledge card.

# ST. GEORGE BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 28, 2010

## SUNDAY OF SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS



### THE ENTHRONEMENT OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

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