SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS, ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONIKI

MARCH 20, 2022

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
250 Gallows Hill Road, Westfield, New Jersey 07090
908.233.8533 www.holytrinitywestfield.org

Rev. Fr. Peter Delvizis, Presiding Priest
Live streaming of services
On the Second Sunday of Great Lent, we commemorate Our Holy Father St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki. On the twentieth day of the month, we commemorate the Righteous Fathers of the Monastery of St. Savvas who were slain by Saracens; St. Myron the New Martyr of Crete.

Plagal of the Second Tone Ηχος πλ. β’

Apolytikion of the Resurrection: “When the angelic powers appeared at Your tomb and those who guarded You became as though dead, and standing by Your sepulcher was Mary seeking Your pure and sacred body. For You did vanquish Hades and uncorrupted by its touch You came unto the virgin woman bestowing the gift of life O You who rose from the dead. Lord we give glory to You.”

Apolytikion of St. Gregory: “Beacon of Orthodox belief, the strong support of the Church and her teacher inspired by God, you are the ornament of monks, the unassailable champion of theologians, O Gregory the Wonder-worker and the boast of Thessaloniki, the messenger of grace. Forever earnestly entreat for the salvation of our souls.”

Apolytikion of the Church: “Blessed are You, O Christ our Lord and God, You who made all wise the fishermen Your Apostles, sending down upon them Your Spirit, which is Holy and through their work drawing the world into Your net, glory to You Who loves mankind.”

Kontakion: “To you, Theotokos, invincible Defender, having been delivered from peril, I and your City [Constantinople], dedicate the victory festival as a thanksgiving offering. In your irresistible might, keep me safe from all trials, that I may cry out to you: ‘Hail, Unwedded Bride!’”

Click links for Scripture Readings

Epistle Reading: Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3
Gospel Reading: St. Mark 2:1-12
SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT, ST. GREGORY OF PALAMAS
A SECOND “TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY”

On the Second Sunday of the Great Fast, we remember St. Gregory Palamas, who is best known for his strict adherence to the monastic way of life and his devotion to contemplative prayer. The son of a prominent family, Gregory was born in Constantinople in 1296 A.D. At age 20, he abandoned a promising secular career to become a monk on Mt. Athos. It is said that he spent the next 20 years of his life as a hermit, spending 5 days a week in complete solitude, then joining his monastic brothers on weekends for Divine Liturgy and its accompanying services. In 1335 A.D., Gregory was called upon by his fellow monks to defend the spiritual lives that they were attempting to live.

A philosopher name Barlaam of Calabria attacked the spirituality of Hesychasm that they followed – a practice based on the constant recitation of the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” Barlaam further maintained that their prayer life was a waste of time, for it could not bring them any closer to real knowledge of God. Addressing the accusations of Barlaam, Gregory drew a distinction between knowing God in His ESSENCE and knowing him in his ENERGIES or ACTIVITIES. It was the position of Palamas that we can best know God through the work of Jesus Christ.
He further asserted that through intense prayer, we can see the uncreated light of God that Peter, James and John experienced when they witnessed the Transfiguration. After years of debate and suffering persecution for his teachings, Gregory ultimately won the approval of the Church for his views. For this reason, the Sunday on which he is commemorated during Lent is commonly referred to as the “Second Triumph of Orthodoxy.”

Gregory was eventually elected to serve as Archbishop of Thessaloniki in 1347 A.D. He died 12 years later, and was so revered by his flock that the Church declared him to be a saint in 1368 A.D. – only 9 years after his death.

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The Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloths, faintheartedness, lust of power, and idle talk.

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.

Yea, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother, for Thou art blessed unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

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Prayer Request

Thomas, Andrea, Thomas, Alexandra, Ronald, Galina, Angela, Lubove, Despina, Maria, John, Paraskevi (Parri), Dianna, Stephanie, Edward, Brian, Janeen, Cathy, James, Christine, Andrea, Molly, Anastasios, Michael, Angela, Lauren, John, Effie, Stella, Guerline, Phyllis, Denise, Cloy, Mirka, Stamatia, Theresa, James, Matthew, Antoinette, William, Angela, Tanner, Stefanos, Helen, Katherine, Ashley, Angela, Nick, Lindsey, Alexandria, Evdokia, Chris, Zach, Notis, Erica, Christina, Fran, Joan, Hellen, Joseph, Angela, Cleopatra, James, Rosa, George, Kathy, Theresa, Dorothy, Shannon, Jeff, Jeffrey, Rowena, Craig, Paul, John, Marien, John, Vasia, Hellen, Natalia, Angela, Katherine, Patricia, Lily, Thomas, Brennan, Elvira, Bill, Alicia, Diane, Michael, Dorka, Stavroula, Maroulla
A Great Movie to fill you spiritually during Lent!

“Man of God”
the 2021 critically acclaimed movie about the life of St. Nektarios of Aegina

Holy Trinity Private Viewing
Sunday, March 27, 2:00 PM
Cinemark in Watchung

Seating is limited for this private event. Please contact the church office for ticket information. Admission is a free-will offering to help fund the Holy Trinity Capital Campaign.

Exiled unjustly, convicted without trial, slandered without cause. Man of God depicts the trials and tribulations of Saint Nektarios of Aegina, as he bears the unjust hatred of his enemies while preaching the Word of God.

Watch trailer here: Man of God (Trailer) - YouTube

The life of St. Nektarios: A Wellspring of Humility - Saint Nektarios of Aegina - YouTube

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Trinity Circle
Trinity Circle Annual Fundraiser - Cemetery Palm Cross Sale on Sunday April 3 - during Fellowship hour - $11.00 ea. Kindly place your order with Marina LoAlbo at marinaloalbo@hotmail.com or call 908-272-4341. Tuesday, April 5 Lenten Luncheon/Meeting 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM, will be donated by Jasmine Mestanas in memory of her beloved sister Barbara Manos. May her memory be eternal.
Help Support Ukraine
Special Collection

In response to the tragic humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, and the immediate aid needed there, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America announced a major fundraising effort to help those most affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Parish Council of Holy Trinity has committed to donate $2,500 to this relief effort which is a collaboration with International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC). Your donation will be added to the parish amount airmarked for the Ukrainian Relief Fund. For more info visit: www.goarch.org/donate/ukraine

St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival – Sunday, March 20
Holy Trinity hosts its annual St. John Chrysostom Parish Oratorical Festival after church services this Sunday. You are invited to attend to support and hear our youth and celebrate afterward with a lenten luncheon.

Blood Drive at Holy Trinity on Wednesday, March 16, helping to restock blood supply.
Remember to pray together as a family this Lenten Season

Ideas for families during Lent

- Pray the Jesus Prayer – “Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me a sinner.”
- Fill up your OCMC Lenten Coin Box – a good way to practice almsgiving.
- Fast from meat, (and dairy if you can)! Even if it’s a few days a week.
- Eat meals together and mention why we should be thankful for what we have.
- Make a special offering to the church. Bake prosphoro (altar offering-bread) and give it to Fr. Peter so it can be used during a Divine Liturgy. [Prosforo Orthodox Offering Bread Recipe](https://thespruceeats.com)
Philoptochos Bake Sale,
Sunday, April 10 and Sunday, April 17

Save-the-date for a Spring Fling - "BLOOM!" Tuesday, May 17, 2022. Brooklake Country Club, Florham Park, NJ. 6:00 PM Cocktails & Raffles; 7:00 PM Dinner & Fashion Show by Emily's Boutique, Staten Island, NY. Please stop by the Philoptochos Table to learn more about BLOOM!, how you can help, and pick up Ad Journal forms for business advertising, as well as personal ads for the special women in your life.

Lenten Coin Box Project 2022 For Parish and Sunday School
OCMC Coin Boxes have been distributed. Please joyfully fill your box during Lent with your coins and bills. The boxes will be collected on April 10 (the week before Palm Sunday.) The entire collected amount will be sent to the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC). Our 2022 Holy Trinity goal is to raise over $1500 for the OCMC. Thank you for your prayers and generosity.
Φωτός λαμπρόν κήρυκα νυν ὅντως μέγαν,
Πηγή φάους ἄδυτον ἄγει προς φέγγος.

Ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος ο Παλαμᾶς ήταν δεινὸς θεολόγος καὶ διαπρεπέστατος ρήτορας καὶ φιλόσοφος. Δεν γνωρίζουμε τὸ χρόνο καὶ τὸν τόπο τῆς γέννησης του. (Ὁ Σ. Εὐστρατιάδης ὁμοίως, στὸ αγιολογίῳ του, ἀναφέρει ὅτι ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος γεννήθηκε τὸ 1296 μ.Χ. στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολι, ἀπὸ τὸν Κωνσταντῖνον τὸν Συγκλητικὸ καὶ τὴν εὐσεβέστατα Καλλονῆ). Ξέρουμε ὅμως, ὅτι κατὰ τὸ πρῶτο μισὸ τοῦ 14ου αἰῶνα μ.Χ. ἦταν στὴν αὐτοκρατορικὴ αὐλὴ τῆς Κωνσταντινούπολις, ἀπ’ ὅπου καὶ ἀποσύρθηκε στὸ Άγιο Ὀρος χάριν ἤσυχοτηρῆς ᾝχῆς, καὶ ἀφιερώθηκε στὴν θυκὴ τοῦ τελειοποίησης καὶ σὲ διάφορες μελέτες.

Τὸ 1335 μ.Χ. με τοὺς δύο αὐτοκράτεικοὺς λόγους τοῦ «Περὶ εκπορεύσεως τοῦ Αγίου Πνεύματος», ἤθελε σὲ σύγκρουσις μὲ τὸν Βαρλαάμ τὸν Καλαβρό, ὁ ὁποῖος δίδασκε πῶς ὁ ἀνθρώπος δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ γνωρίζῃ τὸ Θεό, κἂν ἄκομα περισσότερο δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ενωθεῖ μαζὶ Του. Κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα τοῦ Βαρλαάμ, ὁ Θεός εἶναι «κλειστὸς στὸν εαυτὸ τοῦ» καὶ δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ενωθεῖ μὲ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους. Ἐπομένως, οἱ «συγχαστές», οἱ μοναχοὶ δηλαδὴ εκεῖνοι που ἔλεγαν ὅτι μπορεῖ ὁ ἀνθρώπος, ἀν ἔχει καθαρῆ καρδιὰ καὶ αν συγκεντρωθῇ στὴν «καρδιακὴ προσευχή» (τὸ «Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστὲ, Υἱὲ Θεοῦ, ελέσθον με»), νὰ ενωθεῖ μὲ τὸ Θεὸ καὶ νὰ φωτισθεὶ καὶ νὰ δεῖ τὸ Ἀκτίστο φῶς, ασχέτως τῆς μόρφωσής του, δὲν ἦταν Ὁρθόδοξοι ἀλλὰ «μεσσαλανιστές» καὶ «ομφαλόψυχοι». Μετά ἀπὸ αὐτές τὶς τοποθετήσεις τοῦ Βαρλαάμ, ὁ Παλαμᾶς εγκαταστάθηκε στὴν Θεσσαλονίκη ἀπὸ ὅπου καὶ ἄρχισε τὸν αγώνα «ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶς ἰσχαζόντων», δηλ. αὐτῶν που ασκοῦσαν τὸν πνευσμό, συγγράφοντας μάλιστα καὶ τοὺς ὁμώνυμους λόγους του. Τὸ ζητοῦμεν τῆς πάλης αὐτῆς ἦταν κυρίως τὸ μεθεκτικὸν ἢ ἀμεθέκτον τῆς θείας οὐσίας. Ο Γρηγόριος, στελεχόμενος μὲ μεγάλη πολυμάθεια καὶ συχυρή κριτικὴ γιὰ τὸματα αγίων Γραφῶν, διέκρινε μεταξὺ θείας οὐσίας αμεθέκτου καὶ θείας ενεργείας μεθεκτικῆς. Καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ στήριξε σύμφωνα μὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τῶν Πατέρων καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία επικύρωσε τὴν ερμηνεία του μὲ τέσσερες Συνόδους. Στὴν τελευταία, που ἔγινε στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολι τὸ 1351 μ.Χ., ἦταν καὶ ὁ ἰδιὸς ο Παλαμᾶς. Ἀλλὰ ο Γρηγόριος ἔγραψε πολλὰ καὶ διάφορα θεολογικά έργα, περίπου 60.

Ἀργότερα ο Πατριάρχης Ισιδώρως, τὸν ἐξέλεξε ἀρχικὰ επίσκοπο Θεσσαλονίκης. Λόγω ὅμως τῶν τότε ζητημάτων, ἀποχώρησε πρόσκαιρα στὴν Λήμνο. Ἀλλὰ κατόπιν ανέλαβε τὰ καθήκοντά του. Πέθανε τὸ 1360 μ.Χ. καὶ τιμήθηκε αμέσως σαν Ἁγίος. Ο Πατριάρχης Φιλόθεος, ἔγραψε τὸ 1376 μ.Χ. εγκωμιαστικὸ λόγο στὸ Γρηγόριον Παλαμᾶ, μαζὶ καὶ
ακολουθία και όρισε την εκκλησιαστική μνήμη του στη Β' Κυριακή της Μ. Τεσσαρακοστής.

Το τίμιο σώμα του, μετά από την εκταφή, υπήρξε άφθαρτο, δηλαδή δεν σάπισε, αλλά ευωδίαζε και θαυματουργούσε. Στους λατίνους όμως, τους υποτελείς του Πάπα, ήταν χονδρό αγκάθι η ενθύμιση του Αγίου και μάλιστα ολόσωμο. Γι αυτό πολλες φορές τον συκοφαντούσαν λέγοντας, πως για τα αμαρτήματά του έμεινε «άλυωτος», δεν δέχθηκε από απέχθεια η γη να τον διαλύσει «στα εξ ων συνετέθη»! Τον 19ο αιώνα μ.Χ. ο ναός του Αγίου καταστράφηκε από φωτιά και το τίμιο σκήνωμάτος του κάηκε αφήνοντας μόνο τα οστά ανέπαφα!

Τόσο γινάτι κράτησαν οι καθολικοί που όταν τυπώνονταν οι εκκλησιαστικές μας ακολουθίες στην Βενετία - κατά τους χρόνους της τουρκοκρατίας - ο Δόγης έδινε την άδειά του για την έκδοση, μόνον εφόσον δεν υπήρχε σχετική αναφορά στον Αγιό. Έτσι για αρκετά χρόνια που κυκλοφορούσαν τα έντυπα από την Βενετία, η γιορτή του είχε σχεδόν ξεχαστεί. Περί τα μέσα και τέλη του 20ου αιώνα, επανήλθε η μνήμη των ενδόξων αγώνων του και έλαβε την πρέπουσα θέση στον χώρο των Ορθόδοξων ναών.