

## Today's Scripture Readings

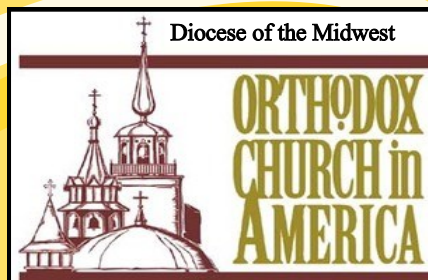
### Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3

And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

### Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" – He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

*Glory to Thee, O Lord, Glory to Thee!*



## Ss Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

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# Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

March 31, 2024

Tone 2



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent

*St. Gregory Palamas*

### Divine Liturgy Readings

*(Readings on Back)*

- ◆ Hebrews 1:10-2:3
- ◆ Mark 2:1-12

## Announcements:

### Book Club

Our next Book Club meeting will be Monday, April 1 at 6:00pm at Louise M's home. We will be discussing the book, "God's Revelation to the Human Heart" by Fr. Seraphim Rose. Please let Louise know if you plan to attend.

### Church Cleaning

We will have a church cleaning party on Lazarus Saturday, April 27th at 11:30am. Come for Liturgy at 9 and stay, or come for the cleaning of the chandelier and rest of the temple.

### Preparation for Holy Communion

The expectations for those preparing to receive Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts are the same as for receiving the Holy Mysteries at any other Liturgy. The communicant should prepare by repentance and confession, and keeping the customary Eucharistic fast prior to receiving the Lord's Body and Blood. When the Presanctified Liturgy is celebrated in the evening, the highest ideal is to keep a strict fast the whole day, from the moment of rising from sleep — however, if the practical needs of living in the world make this impossible, the individual intending to commune in the evening may have a little to eat in the morning, but must fast strictly from at least noon. That being said, medical needs may permit a relaxation of this normal practice.

## The Week Ahead

### Wednesday, April 3

6:00pm - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

### Saturday, April 6

6:00pm - Great Vespers

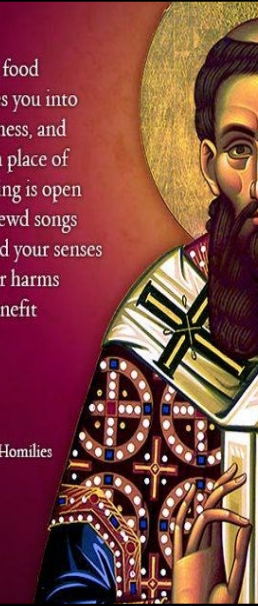
### Sunday, April 7

9:30am - 3rd & 6th Hours

10:00am - Divine Liturgy

"If you abstain from food while your sight lures you into adultery, inquisitiveness, and malice in the hidden place of your soul, your hearing is open to insulting words, lewd songs and evil slanders, and your senses are open to whatever harms them, what is the benefit of fasting?"

p. 62, Homily 9,  
St. Gregory Palamas: The Homilies



## Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

The 2nd Sunday of Lent was originally dedicated to St. Polycarp of Smyrna. After his glorification in 1368, a second commemoration of St. Gregory Palamas was appointed for the 2nd Sunday of Great Lent as a second "Triumph of Orthodoxy." Barely twenty years old, Gregory withdrew to Mount Athos in the year 1316 and became a novice in the Vatopedi monastery under the guidance of St Nikódēmos of Vatopedi. There he was tonsured and began on the path of asceticism. A year later, the holy Evangelist John the Theologian appeared to him in a vision and promised him his spiritual protection. Gregory's mother and sisters also became monastics.

After several years he resettled in the small skete of Glossia, striving for a greater degree of spiritual perfection. The head of this monastery began to teach the young man the method of unceasing prayer and mental activity, which had been cultivated by monastics, beginning with the great desert ascetics of the fourth century: Evagrius Pontikos and St Macarius the Great and continuing with St Simeon the New Theologian. Their teachings provided detailed instruction in mental activity for those praying in an outward manner, and the ascetics of Athos put it into practice. The experienced use of mental prayer (or prayer of the heart), requiring solitude and quiet, is called "Hesychasm" (from the Greek "hesychia" meaning calm, silence), and those practicing it were called "hesychasts."

During his stay at Glossia the future hierarch Gregory became filled with the spirit of hesychasm and adopted it as an essential part of his life. In the year 1326 he was then ordained to the holy priesthood. There St Gregory combined his priestly duties with the life of a hermit. Five days of the week he spent in silence and prayer, and only on Saturday and Sunday did he come out to his people. He celebrated divine services and preached sermons. For those present in church, his teaching often evoked both tenderness and tears.

In 1331 the saint withdrew to Mt. Athos and lived in solitude at the skete of Saint Savva, near the Lavra of Saint Athanasius. In 1333 he was appointed Igumen of the Esphigmenou monastery in the northern part of the Holy Mountain. In 1336 the saint returned to the skete of Saint Savva, where he devoted himself to theological works, continuing with this until the end of his life.

About the year 1330 the learned monk Barlaam had arrived in Constantinople from Calabria, in Italy. Soon he journeyed to Mt. Athos, where he became acquainted with the spiritual life of the hesychasts. Saying that it was impossible to know the essence of God, he declared mental prayer a heretical error. Journeying from Mount Athos to Thessalonica, and from there to Constantinople, and later again to Thessalonica, Barlaam entered into

disputes with the monks and attempted to demonstrate the created, material nature of the light of Tabor. He ridiculed the teachings of the monks about the methods of prayer and about the uncreated light seen by the hesychasts.

St Gregory, at the request of the Athonite monks, replied with verbal admonitions at first. But seeing the futility of such efforts, he put his theological arguments in writing. Thus appeared the "Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts" (1338). At the Constantinople Council of 1341 in the church of Hagia Sophia, St Gregory debated with Barlaam, focusing upon the nature of the light of Mount Tabor. On May 27, 1341 the Council accepted the position of St Gregory, that God, unapproachable in His Essence, reveals Himself through His energies, which are directed towards the world and are able to be perceived, like the light of Tabor, but which are neither material nor created. The teachings of Barlaam were condemned as heresy, and he himself was anathemized and fled to Calabria. In 1351 the Council of Blachernae solemnly upheld the Orthodoxy of his teachings.

St Gregory performed many miracles in the three years before his death, healing those afflicted with illness. On the eve of his repose, St John Chrysostom appeared to him in a vision. With the words "To the heights! To the heights!" St Gregory Palamas fell asleep in the Lord on November 14, 1359. He was canonized in 1368.



## Importance of the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Orthodox Lent is the various services that are offered during this time. The most important being the Presanctified Liturgy. This unique Liturgy (only celebrated during Great Lent) is a gift given by the Church to the faithful during the spiritual rigor of Lent. In order for the faithful to have the spiritual strength to fast and repent during Lent, the Church offers a mid-week Liturgy with the Eucharist to those who wish to be fed. This ancient service dates back at least to the 6th century and has been an integral part of the Lenten fast for Orthodox Christians for fifteen hundred years.

It is an evening service that incorporates many of the characteristics of Vespers, but also offers Holy Communion. There is no consecration of the Eucharistic gifts during Presanctified Liturgy, instead gifts sanctified during the previous Divine Liturgy are used. Most churches offer a Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays during Lent, with some larger churches also having a Presanctified Liturgy on Fridays.

The overall mood is very somber and reflective. The lights are dimmed so that the faithful may pray and worship with minimal distractions. All of the hymns are sung in haunting, minor tones. The entire body is involved as multiple prostrations are made, incense is smelled, hymns are sung, and the Scriptures are heard. The service itself is in the evening, so even the darkness outside seems to foster a contemplative, repentant atmosphere.

So why is Presanctified Liturgy so important?

- Taking the Eucharist multiple times in a week provides spiritual nourishment and strength needed for the increased intensity of Lent. Lent can be a time of spiritual attack as the evil one seeks to cause us to sin or cease repentance.
- The Presanctified Liturgy reflects the penitential and somber mood of Lent. If you only attend Divine Liturgy on Sundays, you will miss out on this important reminder of Lent's purpose.
- The meditative and quiet atmosphere of the Presanctified Liturgy gives refreshment in the midst of a chaotic world. The quiet and stillness of this midweek service renews a weary soul.
- Meeting together with other Christians encourages us in our Lenten journey. Where two or

## Prayers Appreciated for:

### Living:

Archbishop Nathaniel  
Subdeacon Theophan  
Olga, Marianne,  
Dan, Don, Joyce  
Mat. Nadean  
Mat. Krystyna  
Mat. Kathy

### Departed:

Walter

### Tall Candles

Tall Candles are on order and should be arriving any day. If you would like to sponsor them for a Sunday please see Fr. Joseph

## WEEKLY READINGS

### Monday, April 1

St. Mary of Egypt  
Genesis 6:9-22  
Proverbs 8:1-21

### Tuesday, April 2

St. Polycarp of Alexandria  
Genesis 7:1-15  
Proverbs 8:32-9:11

### Wed, April 3

St. Niketas the Confessor  
Genesis 7:6-9  
Proverbs 9:12-18

### Thurs, April 4

Ven. Joseph the Hymnographer  
Genesis 7:11-8:3  
Proverbs 10:1-22

### Friday, April 5

Martyr Agathopodes the Deacon  
Genesis 8:4-21  
Proverbs 10:31-11:12

### Saturday, April 6

St Methodius, Equal-to-the-Apostles  
Hebrews 10:32-38  
Mark 2:14-17

three are gathered, Christ is in our midst.

With all of the pressures and time commitments placed on modern families, it can be difficult to make time for the Presanctified Liturgy. As children get older and have more activities and sporting events, it can seem nearly impossible to attend more than just a Sunday Liturgy. However, the effort to attend this special Lenten service, is well worth it!

