

SECOND SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST  
SUNDAY OF SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS



*Icon of Saint Gregory Palamas*

# Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church

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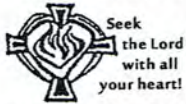
Monsignor Russell A. Duker, Pastor



## SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2017 THE SUNDAY OF THE PALSIED MAN (THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE HOLY GREAT FAST)

### LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR PENITENTIAL WEEK

Sunday, March 12:



Seek the Lord with all your heart!

11:00 a.m. – Sunday Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great

- \* For the Intention of our Holy Spirit Parish
- + Irene Beley by Miss Mary Anne Meredith, niece



4:00 p.m. – Greatfast Vespers (Saint Gregory Nazianzus Church, Upper Saint Clair)

Monday, March 13:



Penitential Monday: The Commemoration of Saint Gregory Dialogos



9:00 a.m. – Greatfast Matins for the Feastday of Saint Gregory Dialogos

7:00 p.m. – Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts of St. Gregory Dialogos

Tuesday, March 14:



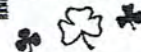
9:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy: \* 97th Birthday of Amelia Petrilak by Mr. & Mrs.

George Carr

Wednesday, March 15:



Penitential Wednesday (Day of Abstinence)



9:00 a.m. – 3rd & 6th Greatfast Penitential Hours

7:00 p.m. – Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts of St. Gregory Dialogos

Thursday, March 16:



9:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy: + Sandford King-Smith by Mrs. Phyllis P.

O'Donnell



Friday, March 17:



Penitential Friday: The Commemoration of Saint Patrick (Day of Abstinence)

9:00 a.m. – Greatfast Matins for Saint Patrick's Feastday

7:00 p.m. – Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts of St. Gregory Dialogos

Saturday, March 18:



Penitential Saturday: Third All-Souls Saturday



9:00 a.m. – Requiem Divine Liturgy and Panachida with Hramoty

Sunday, March 19:



The Third Sunday Of The Paschal Forty-Days Fast: The Sunday Of The Solemn Veneration Of The Honorable Cross



11:00 a.m. – Sunday Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great

- \* For the Intention of our Holy Spirit Parish
- + Gerald J. Bacasa, Jr. by M/M Gerald J. Bacasa, Sr., parents

**AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY.....** The cure of the palsied paralytic at Capernaum epitomizes Jesus' healing powers. He not only cures the body, but He *heals the soul* by granting the FORGIVENESS OF SINS. The early Jewish Christians were told that the Messiah was to have absolute power and authority over all creation. Jesus—our Savior—possesses these messianic attributes, and we can approach Him through the sacraments to forgive our sins.

## **SCRIPTURAL LESSONS FOR TODAY'S DIVINE LITURGY**

### **EPISTLE: *Hebrews 1:10-2:3 (Section 304)***

In this portion of the letter to the early Jewish Christians, we are shown that Jesus amply fulfills all of the highest expectations that the Jewish religion anticipated in the promised Messiah. As the true Son of God, Jesus had complete *power* and genuine *authority* over all creation. God's new covenant established with humanity through His Son Jesus is infinitely more important and definitely supersedes the old agreement which was made with Abraham and then confirmed through Moses. This new covenant, however, carries a greater responsibility with respect to serving God, keeping His commandments, and living in conformity with His teachings. The period of the Holy Great Fast gives us time to concentrate on securing our eternal salvation. We have the opportunity once again in this year of 2015 to demonstrate our sorrow and repentance for our sins and failures. Because He has complete power and authority, the Lord Jesus Himself can grant each of us, through the ministry of the Church, the FORGIVENESS OF SINS. How can we escape the judgment of God if we reject Jesus' invitation to salvation (*especially now during the greatfast season*)?

### **GOSPEL: *Mark 2:1-12 (Section 7)***

This gospel lesson, taken from the account of the Holy Evangelist Mark, carries the theme brought forth in today's holy epistle and then shows that the fulness of Jesus' *power* and *authority* can be seen in His ability to grant salvation through the FORGIVENESS OF SINS. Jesus' healing power is a sign of the ultimate salvation that He will give us in the "New Life" that He attained by His redemptive acts. From this gospel passage, we learn that a large gathering collected at the house in Capernaum where Jesus was preaching. As our Lord gave His message, a group of people arrived, bringing a palsied paralytic man. They couldn't get him close to Jesus because of the dense crowd. So they climbed-up to the roof, removed some tiles, and then lowered the palsied man before Jesus. Impressed by their faith, the Lord addressed the sick man, saying: "My son, your sins are forgiven!" He then cured the man of his physical debilitation. Some criticized Jesus, maintaining that God alone can forgive sins. Jesus, however, retorted that He spoke and acted as He did in order to epitomize that "the Son of Man has full authority to forgive sins on earth." The Son of God came to earth to cure the illnesses of our souls by freeing us from the clutches of sin and the power of evil.

## **✠✠✠ FOR YOUR GREATFAST INFORMATION ✠✠✠**

### **THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE HOLY GREAT FAST.....**

The designation for this second Sunday of the Great Fast comes from our holy gospel account. It is called **The Sunday of the Palsied Man**. On this second greatfast Sunday, our Byzantine Catholic Church presents the premise that the FORGIVENESS OF SINS comes from Jesus when we have strong faith and when we engender true repentance and sincere sorrow. If we desire forgiveness from the Lord Jesus, then we must repent for our sins, express sorrow for having committed them, and manifest that we wish to amend our life-styles in the future for having offended God, our loving Heavenly Father, by our many iniquities. As examples and models for our lives, the Church places before us today the many Christian martyrs—the witnesses who gave-up their very lives in the cause of the faith that they had in Christ. Through their pious works of prayer, fasting, and penance, these holy martyrs (witnesses) received the healing graces of the Lord in order that the weaknesses of their souls and the frailties of their bodies might be overcome. Jesus truly can save each of us as He healed the soul and cured the body of the palsied man of Capernaum. We, however, must exhibit a strong faith in Him and show an ardent desire for His healing powers. This attitude can be exemplified through our prayers; by our acts of fasting, mortification, and self-denial; and with sincere repentance for any and all of the sins that we have committed either voluntarily or involuntarily. In this way, we also, just like the palsied man of Capernaum, can experience the same healing power that comes from the Lord. Our spiritual weaknesses can be healed only by God's graces, and the primary sources for such graces are the holy mysteries—the sacraments of the Church.

### **COMMEMORATION OF SAINT GREGORY DIALOGOS TOMORROW.....**

On Penitential Monday, **March 13th**, we shall be observing the Feastday of **Saint Gregory Dialogos**, and the Presanctified Divine Liturgy celebrated Monday evening will honor this eminent saint who was a seventh-century pope and who had great admiration for the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Prior to his election as the Bishop of Rome and thus the Pope of the Universal Church, Gregory was a papal legate at the court of the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople. It was here during the season of the Great Fast that he became acquainted with the eloquently expressive and penitentially stirring Presanctified Divine Liturgy, for he saw this enchanting eucharistic rite being served in the magnificent churches of the Byzantine empire's capital city. Later on when Gregory became the Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of the West in the year 590 A.D., he is credited with having promoted the Presanctified Divine Liturgy. Pope Gregory died in Rome in the year 604 at the age of sixty-three on the 12th day of March which was Palm Thursday, the sixth Thursday of the greatfast season. History has recorded him as Saint Gregory "the Great" or "the

**MONDAY'S REMEMBRANCE OF SAINT GREGORY DIALOGOS (Continued).....**

Dialogos" (*Dialogos* in Greek). Because of his deep devotion and affection for this greatfast eucharistic service, we thus make a commemoration of Saint Gregory in the dismissal prayer of the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

**SAINT PATRICK'S DAY TO BE OBSERVED ON FRIDAY .....**

This coming Friday, March 17th, we will observe The Feast of the Venerable Bishop Saint Patrick. Born in 387 A.D. in Roman-ruled Britain, Patrick did not take his Christian faith seriously or live by its precepts. At age 16, Irish marauders captured him and transported him to Ireland where he was enslaved. Here his life was transformed through God's intervention, and with the zeal of a fiery new faith, he escaped to Britain, eventually becoming a priest and a bishop. Patrick later returned to Ireland as a missionary. Renowned for his effective preaching, he explained the Holy Trinity by using a shamrock. He died at the age of seventy-four on the 17th of March in 461 A.D., which in that year was Penitential Friday, the third Friday of the Great Forty-Days Fast. As Christians worldwide celebrate the memory of Saint Patrick, we likewise honor him as the noted enlightener of Ireland, for he vividly epitomizes what weak yet determined mortals, in the face of admitted shortcomings, can accomplish by dedication to God's holy will.

**WHAT PENITENTIAL PRACTICES ARE YOU DOING???......**

In practical terms, what does the Church require us to do during this sacred penitential greatfast season? – 1) To fast, not only on the required days, but also self-imposed, personal fasts; 2) Engage in charitable practices—good works of mercy for others; 3) Increase prayer, both public and private: attend church *at least once during* the week (Monday–Friday), and participate in the Presanctified Divine Liturgy; 4) Frequent confession: approach the Holy Mystery of Reconciliation; 5) Receive Holy Communion often; 6) Perform acts of self-denial: monetary and ascetical; 7) Practice almsgiving by donating daily a sum of money not spent on yourself: fill your greatfast folder; 8) Read the Holy Bible, a small portion of the Old and New Testaments each day; 9) Make a daily meditation, reading from the greatfast booklet of reflections for each of the forty days; 10) Keep a period of silence—the “desert experience”: quiet time with the Lord, not talking or listening to anyone or anything for a specific time, just offering our thoughts to God. Make this a spiritually meaningful greatfast season! Put forth the effort now, and the Lord will bless your endeavors!

**THE HOLY MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION: GREATFAST COESSIONS .....**

During this sacred penitential period of the Holy Great Fast, let us all approach the loving Lord Jesus through the Holy Mystery of Penance, reconciling ourselves with Him in this sacramental forum and seeking His merciful forgiveness. As we now commemorate the salutary passion of Christ, remember to make your greatfast confession!

*Wisdom from St. Gregory Palamas*

“If, then, the time of this life is for repentance, the very fact that a sinner still lives is a pledge that God will accept whoever desires to return to Him. Free will is always part and parcel of this present life. And it lies within the power of free will to choose or to reject the road of life or the road of death ... for it can pursue whichever it wishes. Where, then, are the grounds for despair, since all of us can at all times lay hold of eternal life whenever we want to?”

“The passion for popularity brings such injury upon those it masters that it shipwrecks faith itself.”

“Natural things are not indictable; for they were created by God who is good, so that through them we can act in ways that are also good. Hence in themselves they do not indi-

cate sickness of soul, but they become evidence of such sickness when we misuse them. When we coddle the flesh in order to foster its desires, then the passion becomes evil and self-indulgence gives rise to the carnal passions and renders the soul diseased.”

“We start the imitation of Christ with Holy Baptism, which symbolizes the Lord's Burial and Resurrection. Virtuous living and conduct in accord with the Gospel are its intermediate stage, and its perfection is victory through spiritual struggles against the passions, which procures painless, indestructible, heavenly life.”

“It is pointless for someone to say that he has faith in God if he does not have the works which go with faith ... namely, deeds of love and compassion.”

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