

## “ENLIGHTEN MY DARKNESS, O LORD”

The Second Sunday of Lent is dedicated to the memory of a saint that may be described as a “mysterious mystic”: **St. Gregory Palamas**. Gregory was born in 1296 A.D. and received his secular education in Constantinople. His father was a prominent official in the Emperor's court, but Gregory chose to devote his life to serving a Heavenly King rather than a temporal one. At the age of 20, he entered a monastery on Mt. Athos, and was ordained to the priesthood 10 years later.

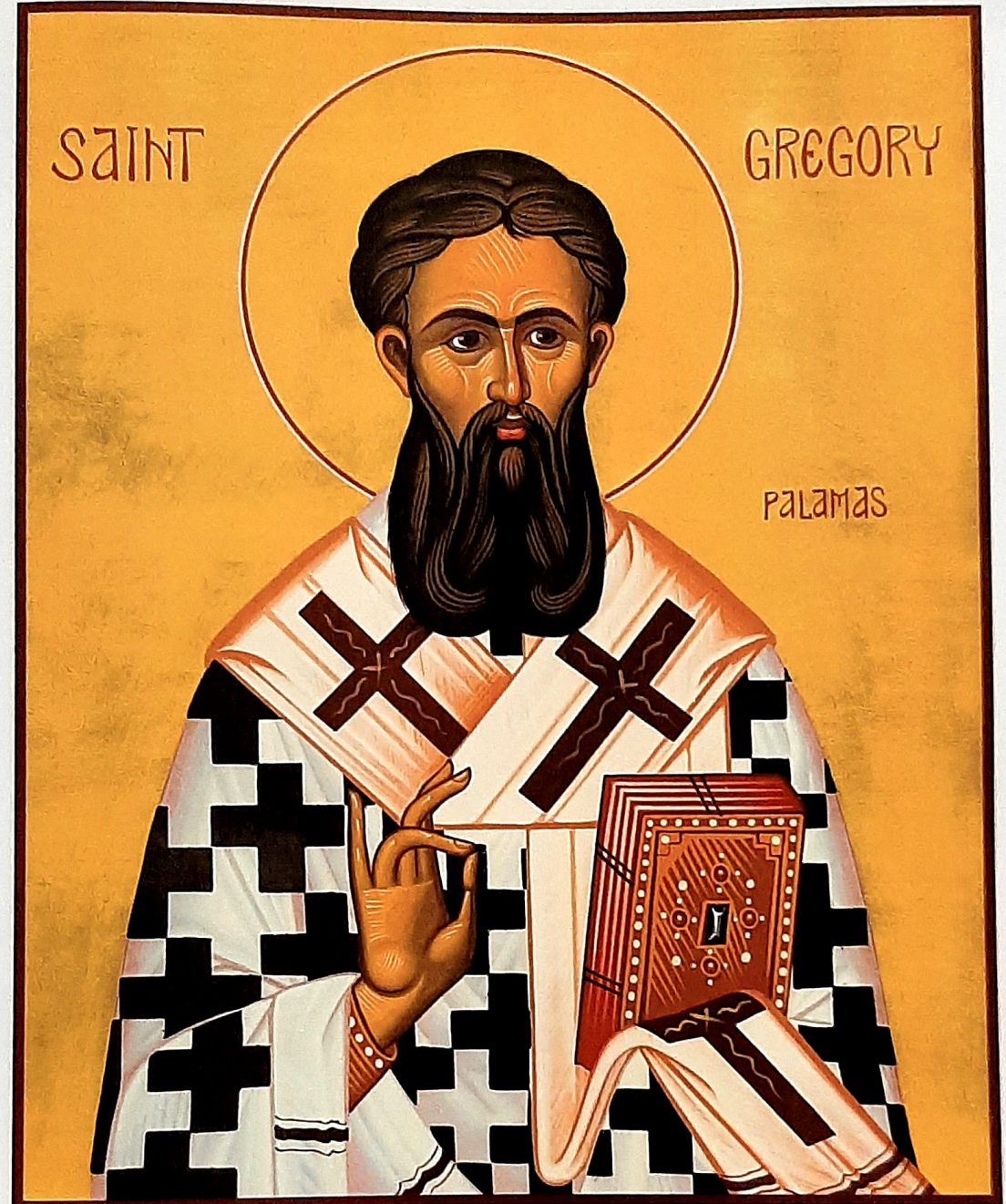
Gregory Palamas became part of a controversial monastic movement called “hesychasm.” Hesychasm called for its followers to embrace a life of silence and contemplative prayer. It taught that through fasting, rigorous bodily discipline and repetition of the Jesus Prayer, man can know God in an intimate way. For years, the only words uttered by St. Gregory were: “Enlighten my darkness, O Lord,” as he sought to know His Creator with all of his being.

Although he would have been content to remain on Mt. Athos for the rest of his life, Gregory was appointed Archbishop of Thessalonica in 1347 A.D. His views on theological matters came under fierce attack by his enemies, even causing him to be imprisoned for heresy on several occasions. Gregory's positions eventually became universally accepted by the entire Holy Orthodox Church, and today, Gregory Palamas is extolled as a “Light of Orthodoxy, a teacher of the Church and an invincible champion of theologians.”

Gregory Palamas fell asleep in the Lord in 1359 A.D. He was canonized a saint only 9 years after his death.

Icon by Austin Kachek - Manville, NJ

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin . . . . . Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey . . . . . Litho in U.S.A.



### ABOUT COMMUNION

*We are happy that you have joined us today. Indeed, we pray for the “unity of the Faith” for the day when all of Christianity are united as ONE and can share a common Chalice. However, this is not the case as yet. Please note that Holy Communion, the actual Body & Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is only for Members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting, and confession, & arrived before the Gospel reading. However, everyone is welcome to partake of the blessed bread and receive a blessing from the pastor at the dismissal. If you are interested, you may inquire with the pastor how you can become a member.*

*If you are a guest or otherwise not a regular communicant, please give your baptismal name when receiving.*





## St. Anthony The Great Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

4031 Aurora Rd.; Melbourne, Florida Mailing address : P.O.Box 267, Melbourne, FL 32902  
Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor & Dean of South Florida Deanery  
Phone: (305) 812-4940 , E-Mail: [elia\\_shalhoub@yahoo.com](mailto:elia_shalhoub@yahoo.com)  
<http://www.stanthonyvorthodoxchurch.com>

### WELCOME TO ST. ANTHONY'S

Where people from around the world come together to serve God and our community.

We are glad you are worshipping with us today! This Church is one community of many in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The Church of Antioch belongs to two thousand years of evangelization, teaching, history, and tradition which expresses the continued commitment of its members to the Orthodox Christian faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

St. Anthony Church is a Pan-Orthodox community, under the omophorion of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X within the Self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. If you are a first time visitor, please fill out the guest form located on the literature table. We want you to feel at home in prayer and worship. Please submit your names to the ushers and introduce yourself to Fr. Elia at the end of the service so he may welcome you personally. Following services, please join us for sharing of fellowship, coffee, and food.

### DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2024 TONE 2 / EOTHINON 10

#### SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

COMMEMORATION OF GREGORY PALAMAS, ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONICA  
HYPATIOS THE WONDERWORKER, BISHOP OF GANGRA; PROPHET JOEL

**\*\*DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT\*\***

~ During the Little Entrance, chant the Resurrectional Apolytikion. The Eisodikon (Entrance Hymn) is "O come, let us worship... save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead..." After the Little Entrance, chant these hymns in the following order:

#### RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE TWO

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

#### APOLYTIKION FOR ST. GREGORY PALAMAS IN TONE EIGHT

O Star of Orthodoxy, support of the Church and its teacher, O comeliness of ascetics, and incontestable champion of those who speak in theology, Gregory the wonder-worker, the pride of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, implore thou constantly for the salvation of our souls.

#### APOLYTIKION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

Thou didst become like the zealous Elijah in his condition, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. Becoming a dweller in the wilderness, and an establisher of the universe by thy prayer O Father Anthony. Wherefore intercede thou with Christ our God to save our souls.

Please support our sponsors




**PERI KIROS**  
321-432-1993  
[perikiros@gmail.com](mailto:perikiros@gmail.com)  
[WWW.MYGREEKAGENT.COM](http://WWW.MYGREEKAGENT.COM)



### FERGUSON PEST MANAGEMENT

**321-258-8311**

140 Tomahawk Dr. #M57  
Indian Harbour Beach, FL 32937

**Georges Ferguson**  
Certified Operator



**Address: 144 Fifth Ave Indialantic FL 32903**  
**Phone #: 321-727-8944**  
**Website: [Skewersgrille.com](http://Skewersgrille.com)**



### FLAMES

Modern Mediterranean Grill

*Live Entertainment Tuesday thru Saturday*

Flames kitchen reignites the Mediterranean flare in today's culinary world of inventions. We honor our traditional recipes with a new take on old favorites. Our scratch kitchen adds culmination to our passion for good food.

1270 N Wickham Rd - Ste 40 - Melbourne, FL 32935  
**(321) 777-6677** ♦ [www.flamesgrille.com](http://www.flamesgrille.com)



Mario J. Mandese D.C.

Address  
1300 Pine Tree Dr #7  
IHB, FL 32937

Phone: (321) 257-7593  
Fax: (321) 420-1762



3RD GENERATION JEWELERS SINCE 1928


**321-777-0093**

1270 Highway A1A  
Satellite Beach, FL 32937

[f](https://www.facebook.com/florentinejewelers) [i](https://www.instagram.com/florentinejewelers) [p](https://www.pinterest.com/florentinejewelers) [e](https://www.ebay.com/str/florentinejewelers)

[FlorentineJewelry.com](http://FlorentineJewelry.com)

If you would like to promote your business, and support our bulletin, place your ad here. Only \$100 a year - that's less than \$2 per ad. To place your ad in our weekly bulletin call or email Yuliya: (321) 960-9564 or [yuliya.warner@yahoo.com](mailto:yuliya.warner@yahoo.com)



1512 SOUTH HARBOR CITY BLVD.  
MELBOURNE, FLORIDA 32901  
P: 321-676-8910 · F: 321-676-8911  
[WWW.OLYMPIACAFEMELBOURNE.COM](http://WWW.OLYMPIACAFEMELBOURNE.COM)  
ADRIANE & TED



# Spiritual Bouquet for the Feast of the Veneration of the Holy Cross (To be celebrated on Sun., April 7th)

Please complete the form below and return with your donation.  
Mark “Veneration of the Holy Cross” on your check’s MEMO  
line.

**IN MEMORY OF:** (please print names clearly below)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**FOR THE GOOD HEALTH OF:** (please print clearly below)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Deadline for submission to be included  
in the bulletin is Friday, April 5, 2024  
If mailed, call Yuliya at (321) 960-9564**

## KONTAKION FOR SUNDAYS IN GREAT LENT (AND AKATHIST SATURDAY) IN TONE EIGHT

To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: Hail, O Bride without Bridegroom.

### THE EPISTLE

*The Lord is my strength and my song. The Lord has chastened me severely.*

#### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (1:10-2:3)**

Thou, “O Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands; they will perish; but Thou remainest; and they will all grow old like a garment, and like a mantle Thou wilt roll them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years will not fail.” But to which of the angels did He say at any time, “Sit on My right hand, until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet?” Are they not all spirits for liturgical ministry, sent forth to minister for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest at any time we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels was confirmed, and every transgression and disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation, which having at first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard?

### THE GOSPEL

#### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (2:1-12)**

At that time, when Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, 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 Jesus a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near Jesus 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, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now, some of the scribes were sitting there, reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they thus reasoned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you reason 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!”

*~ The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great continues as usual.*

### ST. BASIL LITURGY MEGALYNARION

All creation rejoiceth in thee, O thou who art full of grace: the angelic hosts and the race of men. O hallowed temple and spiritual paradise, glory of virgins, of whom God was incarnate and became a little child, even our God who is before all the ages; for he made thy womb a throne, and thy body more spacious than the heavens. All creation rejoiceth in thee, O thou who art full of grace. Glory to thee.

### ABOUT THE DIVINE LITURGY

The Divine Liturgy expresses the entire Christian faith in a continuous song of praise and prayer addressed to God. It is focused on God, not on us. There is nothing just for amusement or entertainment.

Since much of the service is the same every week, worshippers know it and can participate personally, either by singing along or just by prayerful attention. Worshippers are surrounded by icons (pictures of Christ and the saints), which remind us that we are participating, while on earth, in the worship of all the angels and saints in heaven. The entire service (except for the sermon) is sung. The words are all from Scripture or ancient Christian texts. Please follow the service in the books available in the pews. Weekly changes will appear below and marked with a corresponding letter in the service book.



## COME BACK

We hope to see you next week. Each Sunday we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ with our morning Matins service at 8:45am followed by the main Sunday service, Divine Liturgy at 10am. Sunday School for the Children Follows Communion. Fr. Elia would love to speak with you and answer any questions you may have. Please fill out our Guest Form (CONNECTION CARD). There's also a place where you can let us know any specific needs or concerns and we will lift them up in prayer. We welcome everyone who would like to learn more about the Orthodox Christian Faith. Please contact Fr. Elia either by E-Mail ([elia\\_shalhoub@yahoo.com](mailto:elia_shalhoub@yahoo.com)) or on his cell phone (305) 812-4940

### Announcements March is Women's month

During this month, you will notice women reading Epistles, doing Sermons.

	Epistle	Sermon
March 31	Ionica	Holly
April 7		Kh. Odette



### Our April Birthdays

**April 1 Patricia Smith, Heather Hooper; April 2 Carrie Matos;  
April 3 Joy Najjar; April 5 Janet Gorczynski;  
April 7 Mike Gorczynski; April 20 Adriana Matos; April 22 Holly Dick;  
April 23 Deborah Thieme; April 25 Steve Karas; April 28 Michealle Carey**  
**May God grant you many years!**

**April 5 Happy Birthday in Heaven Gusty Abraham. May her Memory be Eternal!**

### TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR IS SPONSORED BY COMBINED EFFORT :)

#### Thank you for supporting Clergy Wives

Our Fish Luncheon last week have raised \$220  
All the proceeds will go to support Widowed Clergy Wives.

### FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE COIN BOX PROGRAM

Please make sure to pick up your coin BOX to take home.  
Please see a calendar in the back to make collecting coins fun with kids.  
Boxes will be due back on Sunday after Pascha.



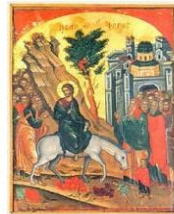
**Please pray for the healing of** Adriana Theodoropoulos, Lori Sorensen, Ethan Packey, Michealle and Tyrone Carey, Beverly Delida, Alix Hall, Nina and Diogo Penas, Beth Manzini, John Archambeau, Alex & Soula.

**St. Anthony Antiochian Orthodox Church**  
4031 Aurora Road, Melbourne, FL 32934  
Fr. Elia's Phone (305) 812-4940; [elia\\_shalhoub@yahoo.com](mailto:elia_shalhoub@yahoo.com)  
Church Phone (321) 428-4819

### THE EVENTS OF HOLY WEEK, 2024

#### Lazarus Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>:

9:00 AM - Orthros  
10:00 AM - Divine Liturgy  
(Children's Communion Breakfast, St. Lazarus Retreat)  
5:30 PM - Great Vespers followed by hearing of Confessions.



#### Palm Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup> :

Entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem.  
8:45 AM - Orthros  
10:00 AM - Divine Liturgy followed  
by **PALM SUNDAY FISH  
LUNCHEON**  
6:00 PM - 1st Bridegroom Service

#### Great and Holy Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup> :

6:00 PM - 2nd Bridegroom Service.

#### Great and Holy Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> :

6:00 PM - 3rd Bridegroom Service.

#### Great and Holy Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>:

10:00AM Presanctified Liturgy

6:00 PM - Sacrament of Holy Unction (Confessions)

#### Great and Holy Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> :

9:00 AM - Orthros

#### COMMEMORATION OF THE MYSTICAL SUPPER

10:00 AM - Vespers Liturgy - On Holy Thursday morning we celebrate the Institution of the sacrament of Holy Communion by our Lord. All of the children of the Parish should be brought to Church for Communion on this day.

#### OFFICE OF THE REDEEMING PASSION OF OUR LORD

6:00 PM - Matins with the reading of the 12 Passion Gospels, and the setting up of the Holy Cross in church.

#### Great and Holy Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>:

9:00 AM - Holy Royal Hours  
10:00 AM - Decorating the Bier  
2:00 PM - Vespers with the bringing out of the shroud.  
Taking down of the Cross and setting up of the Tomb of Our Lord (by the people).

#### LAUDATIONS AT THE TOMB OF OUR LORD

6:00 PM - Matins for Holy Saturday with the singing of the laudations (Lamentations) at the Tomb of Our Lord, and the procession outdoors with the Bier.  
All Night Vigil

#### Great and Holy Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>:

10:00 AM - Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil with the Old Testament readings, during which is the hearing of Confessions.

#### Please Note: Last Chance for Confession!

Those wishing to receive communion on Saturday night and who still need confession, should go to confession during the Vespers with the Old Testament readings.

8:00 PM - Rush Service of the Resurrection

9:00 PM - Resurrection Divine Liturgy  
Followed by the Easter Breakfast.

#### GREAT & HOLY PASCHA - Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> :

10:00 AM - Bright Paschal Vespers with the Reading of the Gospel in various languages.

#### The Bright

Resurrection of Christ!

Christ is Risen!

Truly, He is Risen!





## LENTEN SERVICES

**Great Lent** is the time of preparation for the feast of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a time of renewed devotion: of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Quite often, we over-emphasize fasting and we forget about the need to pray and remembering the poor. For without prayer and almsgiving, fasting is merely a diet. During this coming Lenten season, make time for prayer - **“for prayer is making room for God in our lives.” (Metropolitan Antony Bloom)** The following are the opportunities to come together during the weekdays and pray at Saint Anthony during our Lenten journey.

**The Compline Service** is a worship service before we retire for the evening. We turn to God and ask Him for his protection to "shelter us under the shadow of His wings." It is a series of psalms, hymns and prayers that help us ask forgiveness from God for the sins of the day and protection from evil for the night that comes. · Great Compline Service will be prayed each **Monday at 5:30 PM.**

**On Wednesday evenings** during Lent, the Church offers **the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.** The basic structure of this unique Liturgy is that it contains daily vespers, special prayers and Communion. There are also several OT Bible readings from the Psalms, the Book of Genesis and Proverbs. Since we do not celebrate weekday liturgies during Lent (besides the the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25th), the Church gives us the Presanctified Liturgy to offer us another opportunity to receive Holy Communion outside of Sundays.

**The Presanctified Liturgy will be prayed each Wednesday at 5:30 PM.**

**On the five Fridays of Great Lent**, a service called the **“Salutations to the Virgin Mary”** is held in the Orthodox Church. The origin of this service comes from 626 AD, when Constantinople was besieged by the Avars and sought to take over the great City. Patriarch Sergios led a procession around the city wall with an icon of the Theotokos. The people prayed all night **“without sitting”** (Akathistos in Greek). That night, a strong wind, which many believe was sent by God, after hearing the intercessions of the Virgin Mary, caused a storm which destroyed the enemy fleet, which withdrew from the city, sparing her. This event occurred on August 8, 626. The poem of the Salutations was composed by Saint Romanos the Melodist.

**Salutations to the Theotokos (also known as the Akathist Hymn or Madayah)**  
**Service on the first five Fridays of Lent at 5:30 PM.**

## **UPCOMING SUNDAY CALENDAR**

Below lists the upcoming Sundays from February 18th until Holy Pascha, which falls on May 5th this year. We invite you to join us each week for Sunday Liturgy to celebrate this special commemoration of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection.

Please mark these special dates on your calendar.

March 31	2nd Sunday of Lent
April 7	3rd Sunday of Lent (Sunday of the Cross)
April 14	4th Sunday of Lent
April 21	5th Sunday of Lent
April 28	PALM SUNDAY
May 3	GOOD FRIDAY
May 5	HOLY PASCHA
May 12	THOMAS SUNDAY

## **April Events**

Sunday, April 7	Feast of the Veneration of the Holy Cross. Flower Form is in the back. AWO Meeting after the Coffee Hour. All the ladies are invited.
Saturday, April 13	Church Work Day at 8:30am-12:30pm
Sunday, April 14	Parish Council Meeting after the Coffee Hour.
Saturday, April 20	Lenten Women Retreat "Embrace the Season". Meet at the Church at 9am-1pm
Sunday, April 21	AMen Meeting following the Coffee Hour. All men are invited.
Saturday, April 27	Children St. Lazarus Saturday Retreat and Easter Egg Hunt at 11am-2pm
Saturday, April 27	Making Palm Crosses at 2PM. If you wish to learn how to make Palm Crosses, please join us and we will teach you.
Sunday, April 28	Palm Sunday Fish Luncheon Fundraiser, served by Sunday School.



## **Daily Bread Donations**

**We ask you to please remember those who are in need and bring food, toiletries & clothing items including gently used socks and intimate apparel. Homeless individuals come in all shapes and sizes. Copy this link to see their Amazon Wish List [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2YR2VQPNC3HZ/?ref=nav\\_wishlist\\_lists\\_1?\\_encoding=UTF8&type=wishlist](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2YR2VQPNC3HZ/?ref=nav_wishlist_lists_1?_encoding=UTF8&type=wishlist)**



**MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>**

**SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**

**PREPARING FOR GREAT LENT**  
**Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**  
**Keeping the Faith In the Holy Days**

Guarding the Heart against the Subtle Enemies of Fasting: PRIDE  
Fasting is difficult. And pride is the most obvious means of making fasting easier. If I make my success in fasting a matter of pride, then I can surely improve in abstention from bodily pleasures. But I will have cast out one demon only to be beset by seven more deadly ones. For the delight in my illusory power to prevail on my own in the spiritual warfare is a far worse evil than the base addiction to physical pleasure that it conquers. Since this pride in our success in fasting can mask itself as a legitimate delight in accomplishment, it proves to be a formidable foe. Let us therefore distinguish three different bases for delight in spiritual success, only some of which are godly. The first basis for delight is pleasing God. If we reasonably believe that what we are doing is pleasing to God, then we may delight in this greatest of all approvals: Well done, good and faithful servant. A second basis for delight is impressing our fellows. If impressing our fellows gives us pleasure because we reasonably



esteem their ability to evaluate us—as we should esteem our confessors—then this pleasure is perhaps at least innocuous. But if we define ourselves by this esteem, and not by our relation to God, and if we seek this esteem so as to carve out for ourselves seats of honor within the world or the Church, then our delight in success has become prideful. A final basis for delight in success in fasting despises all other human opinion and basks alone, not in the approval of God, but in self-congratulation, as if the demonically proud self were God. Since this sort of pride does not make a display for other people, and may even hide its feats, it can easily be mistaken for humility, both by others and by the self-deceived faster himself. One remedy to this self-deception is to remember that we fast precisely because of our weakness, because we cannot make ourselves happy by our own efforts. We have no sure hold on the goods of the world, and so look elsewhere, to God, for succor. Hence, to turn success in fasting into a reason for boasting is comically to misread the sign of our utter weakness. One must laugh at this absurdity in oneself, for such laughter is a strong aid in putting down the stealthy insurrection of pride.

(Taken from an excerpt by Richard McCombs, AGAIN Vol. 28 No.1, Spring 2006.)

**In Christ,**  
*Fr. Elia Shalhoub*  
**Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor**



### **TODAY'S FEAST SUNDAY, MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup> 2024** **SUNDAY OF GREGORY PALAMAS 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT**

This divine Father, 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.

### **HYPATIOS THE WONDERWORKER**

This Saint, who was from Cilicia of Asia Minor, became Bishop of Gangra, the capital of Paphlagonia. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council. Because of his confession of the Orthodox Faith, he was put to death by the Novatians, a sect which denied that sins committed after Baptism could be forgiven.



## **FASTING DURING THE GREAT LENT**

The Great Lent is the longest fasting season of the year for the Orthodox. We all know about the importance of prayer, almsgiving and fasting - the three pillars of Lent. But what are the rules of fasting and are there some things we should not do during this season? Read this article and find out.

### **The Orthodox rules of fasting**

Rather than provide us with laws of fasting, the Orthodox Church provides us with guidelines or what could be called as rules. The Lenten fasting rules are very strict and are mostly followed by monastics. Laity usually keeps the first and the last week of the Great Lent super strictly. However, this depends on the person and their parish.

The rules of Lenten fast are written down in the liturgical book called the Typikon.

The Orthodox Church rules for fasting:

\*Weekdays: No meat or any animal products, like dairy. No fish (however, invertebrates - seafood with no backbone - are permitted), no wine, no olive oil.

\*Weekends: Same rules, but oil and wine are permitted.

\*There are two feasts that take place during Great Lent - Annunciation on March 25th (April 7th) and Palm Sunday (the last Sunday before Easter). On those feasts the rules are a bit different: fish, wine and oil are all permitted, regardless of the day of the week.

The Holy Week: monastics eat no meals at all from the Holy Thursday evening until Pascha. Holy Friday is the day of the strictest fast. On Holy Saturday, a little bit of fruit and wine is permitted for sustenance.

The fast is usually broken after the midnight Divine Liturgy on Pascha day.

### **What fasting is not**

Now that we've talked about the rules of fasting, we must understand that there are some actions we should not do while trying to fast.

First of all, it is very important to note that fasting is a very personal action. We should not boast about it or even mention it at all. Here's what the Gospel tells us:

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (Matthew 6:16-18)

Just like with giving alms, when we fast, we must do it in secret. We are not fasting to show others how good we are. We fast because we want to get closer to God by thinking more about Him, not the food.

Which brings us to another point: eating too much “permitted” foods during Lent. Are we really fasting if we eat a huge meal full of rice, seafood and vegetables and go to sleep afterwards, because we are so full? In this case, it would be better to eat a small piece of meat with nothing else on the side, than to feast on “permitted” foods like that.

The point of fasting is to think less about food and more about God; be “hungry” for God and His Word. Feeling slightly physically hungry helps us to get into that headspace. During Lent, our life must become more simple, so the meals we eat must be simple as well. When we fast it is good to cut back on entertainment and take on good things. The point is to try to concentrate on what's more important - God and the people around us.

The third point is that fasting alone doesn't save us or do us any good. Fasting is not a diet; rather, it is a spiritual exercise that we do to open our hearts to God. If we fast but always appear irritated and angry because of it - we are not fasting at all. Fasting always goes together with prayer and giving alms - this is something to always remember.