

This Sunday was originally dedicated to Saint Polycarp of Smyrna (February 23). After his glorification in 1368, a second commemoration of Saint Gregory Palamas (November 14) was appointed for the Second Sunday of Great Lent as a second “Triumph of Orthodoxy.”

Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, was born in the year 1296 in Constantinople. Saint Gregory’s father became a prominent dignitary at the court of Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328), but he soon died, and Andronicus himself took part in the raising and education of the fatherless boy. Endowed with fine abilities and great diligence, Gregory mastered all the subjects which then comprised the full course of medieval higher education. The emperor hoped that the youth would devote himself to government work. But Gregory, barely twenty years old, withdrew to Mount Athos in the year 1316 (other sources say 1318) and became a novice in the Vatopedi monastery under the guidance of the monastic Elder Saint Nicodemus of Vatopedi (July 11). 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 the demise of the Elder Nicodemus, Saint Gregory spent eight years of spiritual struggle under the guidance of the Elder Nicephorus, and after the latter’s death, Gregory transferred to the Lavra of Saint Athanasius (July 5). Here he served in the trapeza, and then became a church singer. But after three 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 Saint Macarius of Egypt (January 19).

Later on, in the eleventh century Saint Simeon the New Theologian (March 12) 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 fully imbued with the spirit of hesychasm and adopted it as an essential part of his life. In the year 1326, because of the threat of Turkish invasions, he and the brethren retreated to Thessalonica, where he was then ordained to the holy priesthood.

Saint 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. Sometimes he visited theological gatherings of the city’s educated youth, headed by the future patriarch, Isidore. After he returned from a visit to Constantinople, he found a place suitable for solitary life near Thessalonica the region of Bereia. Soon he gathered here a small community of solitary monks and guided it for five years.

In 1331 the saint withdrew to Mt. Athos and lived in solitude at the skete of Saint Sava, 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 Sava, where he devoted himself to theological works, continuing with this until the end of his life.

In the 1330s events took place in the life of the Eastern Church which put Saint Gregory among the most significant universal apologists of Orthodoxy, and brought him great renown as a teacher of hesychasm.

About the year 1330 the learned monk Barlaam had arrived in Constantinople from Calabria, in Italy. He was the author of treatises on logic and astronomy, a skilled and sharp-witted orator, and he received a university chair in the capital city and began to expound on the works of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite (October 3), whose “apophatic” (“negative”, in contrast to “kataphatic” or “positive”) theology was acclaimed in equal measure in both the Eastern and the Western Churches. Soon Barlaam 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 (i.e. at the Transfiguration). He ridiculed the teachings of the monks about the methods of prayer and about the uncreated light seen by the hesychasts.

Saint 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). Towards the year 1340 the Athonite ascetics, with the assistance of the saint, compiled a general response to the attacks of Barlaam, the so-called “Hagiorite Tome.” At the Constantinople Council of 1341 in the church of Hagia Sophia Saint Gregory Palamas debated with Barlaam, focusing upon the nature of the light of Mount Tabor. On May 27, 1341 the Council accepted the position of Saint Gregory Palamas, 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.

But the dispute between the Palamites and the Barlaamites was far from over. To these latter belonged Barlaam’s disciple, the Bulgarian monk Akyndinos, and also Patriarch John XIV Kalekos (1341-1347); the emperor Andronicus III Paleologos (1328-1341) was also inclined toward their opinion. Akyndinos, whose name means “one who inflicts no harm,” actually caused great harm by his heretical teaching. Akyndinos wrote a series of tracts in which he declared Saint Gregory and the Athonite monks guilty of causing church disorders. The saint, in turn, wrote a detailed refutation of Akyndinos’ errors. The patriarch supported Akyndinos and called Saint Gregory the cause of all disorders and disturbances in the Church (1344) and had him locked up in prison for four years. In 1347, when John the XIV was replaced on the patriarchal throne by Isidore (1347-1349), Saint Gregory Palamas was set free and was made Archbishop of Thessalonica.

In 1351 the Council of Blachernae solemnly upheld the Orthodoxy of his teachings. But the people of Thessalonica did not immediately accept Saint Gregory, and he was compelled to live in various places. On one of his travels to Constantinople the Byzantine ship fell into the hands of the Turks. Even in captivity, Saint Gregory preached to Christian prisoners and even to his Moslem captors. The Hagarenes were astonished by the wisdom of his words. Some of the Moslems were unable to endure this, so they beat him and would have killed him if they had not expected to obtain a large ransom for him. A year later, Saint Gregory was ransomed and returned to Thessalonica.

Saint Gregory performed many miracles in the three years before his death, healing those afflicted with illness. On the eve of his repose, Saint John Chrysostom appeared to him in a vision. With the words “To the heights! To the heights!” Saint Gregory Palamas fell asleep in the Lord on November 14, 1359. In 1368 he was canonized at a Constantinople Council under Patriarch Philotheus (1354-1355, 1364-1376), who compiled the Life and Services to the saint.

BIBLE READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 4

Mar. 4 Heb. 1:0-2:3
Mark 2:1-12

Mar. 6 Genesis 7:1-5
Proverbs 8:32-9:11

Mar. 9 Genesis 8:4-21
Proverbs 10:31-11:12

Mar. 5 Genesis 6:9-22
Proverbs 8:1-21

Mar. 7 Genesis 7:6-9
Proverbs 9:12-18

Mar. 10 Heb. 10:32-38
Mark 2:14-17

Mar. 8 Genesis 7:11-8:3
Proverbs 10:1-22

Memorial Saturdays
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PRAYER REQUESTS

Departed:

Ill Afflicted & Special Intentions:

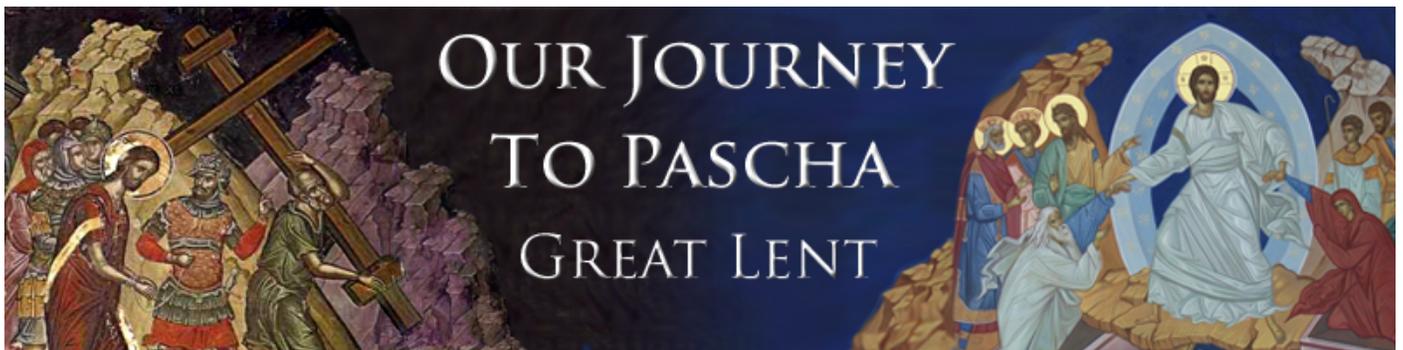
Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan
Archpriest Theodore Bobosh
Child Katie Repasky (*friend of Fr. John*)
Julia
Christopher Baymiller (*friend of Paul Pangrace*)
Paula Baymiller (*friend of Paul Pangrace*)
Carol Bohurjak
Marie Borland
Elizabeth Bullock (*friend of the Jacobsons*)
Gregory Cervo
Elsie Conrad
Arlene Czajkowski
Jerry Czajkowski
Horia Dascalescu (*Lavinia Morris's brother*)
Gregory Galan
Joseph Gammalo

Joy Jahans (*friend of Paul Pangrace*)
Stephen Jahans (*friend of Paul Pangrace*)
Diane Kearsey (*Janice Tkacz's sister*)
John Kovalski (*friend of Paul Pangrace*)
Chris Magee (*Erin Zawolowycz's brother*)
Natalya Miller (*Arlene Neale's great-niece*)
Paul Mihal
Irene Mysiw (*friend of Helen Antonik*)
Andrew Mytrohovich
Daniel O'Donnell
Pat O'Donnell
Debra Parhamovich (*Karen Felon's sister*)
Grace Parhamovich (*Karen Felon's mother*)
James Peter Petkac
Anastasia Pogorily
Elena Rich (*Jerry Czajkowski's daughter*)

Julia Sankovic (*Child*)
Leon Sheehan
Andrew Sykaluk
Elaine Sudnick (*Joy Pfeiffer's mother*)
Janice Tkacz
Eleanor Wachovec (*friend of Karen Felon*)
Robert Walsh (*friend of The Felons*)
Colleen Walsh (*friend of the The Felons*)
Elisabeth Wright (*friend of Paul Pangrace*)
Erin Zawolowycz
Peter Zimmerman

Richard & Natalie (Evans) Thombs & Unborn Child

Joseph & Ellie Tabeling & Unborn Child



Welcome Visitors

Our parish welcomes you and thanks you for joining us at today's Divine Liturgy. While only Orthodox Christians may approach the chalice for Holy Communion, everyone is welcome to partake of the Holy Bread after Liturgy. You are also invited to join us for fellowship in the Parish Hall following Liturgy.

COFFEE HOUR & GREETERS SCHEDULES

Coffee Hour:



3/4/18	Lauren Miklos & Chanda Czaruk
3/11/18	Cathy Weber & Mat. Jenn Boerio
3/18/18	Dan & Lavinia Morris
3/25/18	Joyce Tabeling & Judy Schwind
4/1/18	TBA
4/8/18	PASCHA
4/15/18	TBA

Greeters:

Igor Gajewsky & Michael Tabeling
Tammy & Eva Ponomarenko
Nina & Elizabeth Antonik
Paul Pangrace & Michael Tabeling
Tammy & Eva Ponomarenko
Debby Pinta & Michael Tabeling (Midnight Service)
Nina & Elizabeth Antonik



FOOD PANTRY

Our Food Pantry ministry continues through Merrick House. They currently use the bags in their Moms First program. We can always use your help by "sponsoring a bag". Envelopes are in the foyer, \$10 fills a bag. Thank you and God bless you for helping those in need. - Dan Morris



Dome Lighters

Donations to offset the cost of lighting the domes can be made for *The Health Of* or *In Memory Of* your loved ones. Contact the Parish Office if you are interested.

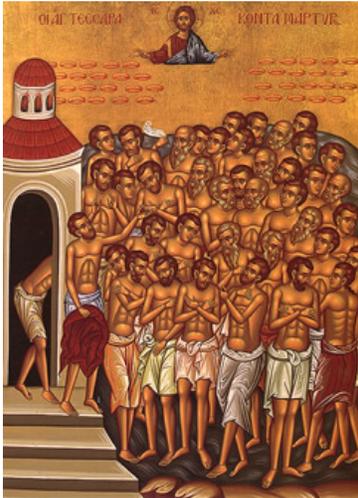
For the entire 2018 year:

In loving memory of Olga Fritskey

from John & Ruth Fritskey

Keep Hold of Good Instruction

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.



On Monday of this week remember the Forty Martyrs of Sebastea. They are an appealing group because of their youthful energy and courage, and their unyielding faith.

The story is well-known to many of us. The forty were brave and disciplined soldiers in the Roman army, and were sometimes referred to as the "Thundering Legion." They also were Christians. When a persecution of Christians began, the young men staunchly refused to deny Christ, even when threatened with being stripped of their military status.

Such an act of defiance could only be bad for army morale. Their commander decided to make an example of them. On a cold winter night he had them bound and thrown into a lake. He also had built, in their sight, warm fire-lit baths, and told them they could escape to the warmth if they would pay homage to Rome's idols.

We read in the soldiers' story that throughout the terrible night they didn't curse their captors or blame God, or express self-pity. They sang hymns, recited prayers, and called out encouragement to one another.

What enabled these young men to sustain their faith in such extremity? One of the readings chosen for this day (Proverbs 3:34-4:22) gives us some clues. We read there, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live; get wisdom, get insight. Do not forsake her (wisdom), and she will keep you. Keep hold of [good] instruction; do not let go."

In these words a father exhorts his son to "keep hold" of what he has been taught and not let go, and that is precisely what these young men did in their ordeal. We have the similar but much more recent story of a man consigned to hard labor in a Soviet prison camp with Father Arseny, the priest who comforted and saved from despair so many fellow prisoners. As he watched Father Arseny save another man's life, he writes, he unexpectedly remembered the long-forgotten prayers his mother had taught him, and he rediscovered his faith in that awful place.

The reading from Proverbs also contains these words: "She [wisdom] will honor you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a fair garland." This was exactly the experience of the forty soldiers. A light shone from heaven and wreaths appeared above their heads. Though one of them denied Christ for the warmth of the baths, a guard was overwhelmingly drawn to the heavenly sign, and ran to take his place and join the others in martyrdom.

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy we remember many who gave their lives for the faith. Perhaps, like the forty, they were strengthened by the Christian instruction they had received. If we are granted the privilege, as parents or teachers or friends, of instructing others, let's be sure that we have learned the truths of our faith. Then we can provide to others sound teachings they can "keep hold" of no matter how dark the times.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

2018

Sunday, Mar. 4
ST. GREGORY PALAMAS
VEN. GERASIMUS
OF THE JORDAN
RT. BLV. DANIEL, MOSCOW
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, Mar. 5
MARTYR CONON
OF ISAURIA
MARTYR EULOGIUS
6:00 PM Daily Vespers
7:00 PM Bible Study @ Parish Hall

Tuesday, Mar. 6
42 MARTYRS OF AMORIA
6:00 PM Daily Vespers

Wednesday, Mar. 7
SEVEN HIEROMARTYRS
OF CHERSON
6:00 PM Presanctified Liturgy



MARCH
Special Collection
ORTHODOX
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP



Thursday, Mar. 8
ST. THEOPHYLACTUS,
BISHOP OF NICOMEDIA
11:00 AM Faith Enrichment @
Copper Stone
6:00 PM Daily Vespers

Friday, Mar. 9
HOLY FORTY MARTYRS
OF SEBASTE
6:00 PM Presanctified Liturgy

Saturday, Mar. 10
MARTYR QUADRATUS,
AND THOSE WITH HIM
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
6:00 PM Great Vespers

Sunday, Mar. 11
VENERATION OF THE
PRECIOUS CROSS
ST. SOPHRONIUS,
PATR. OF JERUSALEM
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

St. Theodosius Orthodox Cathedral
733 Starkweather Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

MARCH