

ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 16, 2014 ~ St. Gregory Palamas

without us, without our efforts and struggle. Acts of faith are necessary to make us able to accept Christ, for they show us that we cannot heal ourselves without God. Only when I am drowning, when there is nobody on the shore, do I realize I need a Savior, and only when I feel I am drowning in the ruling passions, do I turn to Christ. And He comes and helps. This is where the living saving faith starts. Orthodoxy's teaching is about the freedom and worthiness of man as God's co-worker in his salvation, and not as a "pillar of salt" which, according to Luther, cannot do anything. This makes clear the meaning of all Gospel commandments, leading a Christian to salvation, not by faith alone, and this makes obvious the truth of the Orthodoxy. This is how the Orthodoxy opens for a person, not just Christianity, not just religion, not just faith in God. — *A. I. Osipov, a professor of the Moscow Theological Academy*

• SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

Prayer and converse with God is a supreme good. [...] I do not mean the prayer of outward observance but prayer from the heart, not confined to fixed times or periods, but continuous throughout the day and night. Our spirit should be quick to reach out toward God not only when it is engaged in meditation; at other times also, when it is carrying out its duties, caring for the needy, performing works of charity, giving generously in the service of others, our spirit should long for God, and call him to mind, so that these works may be seasoned with the salt of God's love, and so make a palatable offering to the Lord of the universe. The spirit... like a child crying tearfully for its mother, it craves the milk that God provides. It seeks the satisfaction of its own desires, and receives gifts outweighing the whole world of nature. [...] I speak of prayer, not words. It is the longing for God... a gift not given by man but by God's grace. The apostle Paul says: We do not know how we are to pray but the Spirit himself pleads for us with inexpressible longings. [...] Practice prayer from the beginning. Paint your house with the colors of modesty and humility. Make it radiant with the light of justice. Decorate it with the finest gold leaf of good deeds. Adorn it with the walls and stones of faith and generosity. —*from a homily by Saint John Chrysostom*

• TROPARION OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS, Tone Eight:

O light of Orthodoxy, pillar and teacher of the Church, glory of monks and invincible protection of theologians, O Gregory, thou wonderworker, boast of Thessalonika, and preacher of grace, ever pray that our souls be saved.

• KONTAKION OF ST GREGORY, Tone Eight, Special Melody:

With one accord, we praise thee as the sacred and divine vessel of wisdom and clear trumpet of theology, O our righteous Father Gregory of divine speech. As a mind that standeth now before the Original Mind, do thou ever guide aright and lead our mind to Him, that we all may cry: Rejoice, O herald of grace divine.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, March 15: 5 PM, VIGIL
- Sunday, March 16: 9–10 AM, Confession
9:30 AM, Akathist *Nurturer of Children*
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape luncheon in Hall
12:45 PM, Talk on St. Gregory Palamas
- Tues., March 18: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
- Wed., March 19: 8 AM, Lenten Matin
3 PM, *Catechism on the Creed, part 3*
5 PM, Confessions
6:15 PM, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, Meal and Spiritual Reading
- Thurs., March 20: 8 AM, Lenten Matins
Noon, Senior Lunch Fellowship (potluck)
7 PM, Master Planning Meeting, all welcome

- Friday, March 21: 10 AM, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
6 PM, Akathist to the Theotokos
- Sat., March 22: 10 AM, Baptism of Eleanor Scarborough
5 PM, Vigil for the Veneration of the Cross

- CONGRATULATIONS:

Elections were held during last Sunday's Sisterhood meeting. The following women accepted to serve, and were confirmed by acclamation: Kira Staykow—Sisterhood President; Juliana Veenis—Treasurer; Catherine Carpenter—Secretary. We congratulate and thank them for taking on these responsibilities. May God bless them.

- ON ST. GREGORY PALAMAS:

Vincent Rossi will give a short talk Sunday on why the Church dedicates the second Sunday of the Great Fast to the memory of St. Gregory Palamas. Tentatively, we will gather for the talk on the Hall Porch at 12:45 PM.

- SENIOR LUNCH FELLOWSHIP:

Our retired and senior parishioners are invited to the monthly Senior Lunch Fellowship (Potluck, Lenten) on Thursday, March 20 at Noon. As a special treat, our fresco painter Father Patrick will give a short presentation on the meaning of the iconographic program of the dome.

- MASTER PLANNING:

You are invited to participate in the parish Master Planning meeting, our fourth in this series, on Thursday, March 20 at 7 PM. The discussion is very well moderated and directed by Sean Esbjorn-Hargens. We end the meetings at 8:30 PM.

- UPCOMING IMPORTANT CHURCH SERVICES:

Monday, March 24: Eve of the Great Feast of the Annunciation. Vigil for the Feast at 6:15 PM. The beautiful hymns of Matins are a joyful reminder, during this season of repentance, that God became man so we, ourselves, might become as gods by His uncreated Grace.

Tuesday, March 25, Annunciation Vesperal Divine Liturgy at 5 PM.

We fast starting at Noon (if not before) in preparation for Holy Communion. After Liturgy we may have fish, wine and oil.

Thursday, April 3: On this, the fifth Thursday of Lent, we will sing the entire “Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete,” in Matins, which begins at 9 AM. This Service promises to be quite long, but also with a great deal of liturgical variety: singing, praying, and then sitting during the Life of St. Mary of Egypt (note that it is read in two parts during Matins), psalmody, and prostrations with the Canon of St Andrew. It's a “full course meal”—liturgically and spiritually fulfilling, which culminates in the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts which immediately follows Matins. This year, we aim to be done by 12:30 PM.

- OLD TESTAMENT FORESHADOWING OF LENT:

And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. —*Deuteronomy 8:2*

- IDLE TALKING/GOSSIP:

I exempt children: they have the right to chatter, but only until the age of fifteen or sixteen. When children chatter, they are learning to communicate and are practicing their language; but when these “children” are already twenty, or sometimes older than forty—this means they are being pitiless towards their own lives. Let us consider (and let us be honest with ourselves): how much longer do we have to live? Not much longer at all. Therefore, I repeat, we should value life and love the gift that God has given us, remembering that we will carry into eternity only that which we have in our hearts. Idle talk and blathering are frightful words, for they involve killing time. —*Russian Archpriest Alexander Men, murdered in 1990*

- SAVING FAITH:

Correct Christian life reveals to man: first, his passions, his illnesses; second, that God is near each of us; and finally, that at any instance He is ready to come to the rescue and save us from sin. But He does not save us