



SAINT
GREGORY PALAMAS

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Second Sunday of the Great Fast

February 28, 2010

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Deacon Kenneth
E. Ellis and Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and
Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area. We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Please join us Friday evening at 7: 30 PM for the Presanctified Liturgy. Confessions are heard prior to and after the celebration.

+++ This Saturday is the third All Souls' Day. The Divine Liturgy and Memorial Service are celebrated at 9:00 AM. Please come and join us in prayer and praise of our God.

+++ A recent winner of the Ten Week Club, Stella Wanca, mother of our good parishioner, Debra Szmaida, donated \$50.00 to our parish from her winnings. We express our sincerest gratitude and acknowledge her generosity. We pray the Lord continues to bless her and loved ones with good health for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ We are pleased to announce and thank the four additional family units who joined the previous three with increased Sunday offerings, one of which is practicing tithing, that is, offering one tenth of income to our generous God. Having the example and support of these generous souls is important to the glory of our God and the good of our parish. We pray others will pray and follow their example. We pray their generosity be blessed with good health of body and soul for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ We remind our faithful that at the last Diocesan Council this past summer, the Diocesan Dues were raised, due to inflation and need, from the past \$50.00 per adult individual, eighteen years and older, to \$60.00 per year. Our envelope offering system still has the old amount on it, so please disregard that figure and make your offering according to the new mandated amount. If this offering was made in the old amount, please correct it by submitting the additional amount with a notation on the envelope because the parish must send the entire amount to the diocesan chancery.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week-end: Tithe Offering, \$612.00; Candles, \$54.00; Food Coupons, \$360.00; Special Gifts, \$200.00, \$50.00, \$1000.00; Kitchen, \$189.00; Holyday, \$30.00; Great Fast Self Denial, \$40.00; Christian Fellowship, \$5.00, for a total of \$2540.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 41 adults and 15 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, +Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, Kent Pasquino, Kyle Pasquino, Robert Gorbich, and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a PENNIES FROM HEAVEN Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1567.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$102,715.00. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ Please check the Sign-Up-Sheet for the weekly Christian Fellowship for the coming weeks. Simple foods without need for preparation are the best. Marilyn Korba coordinates this vital apostolate. Please assist her in making it a success by bringing your donation early so that all are present at the worship of our God.

+++ Be certain your child attends the spiritual formation classes held each Sunday following the Divine Liturgy. We make a serious attempt to share the love of our Lord with all.

+++ Please be certain to see **Helen Karpiak** or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5050.00 on this project to date!

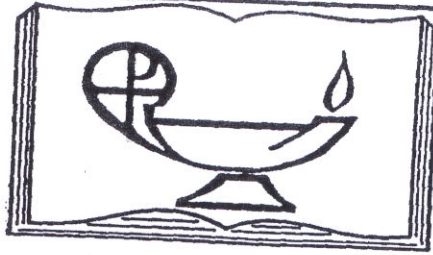
+++ **This coming Friday and Saturday we will have our monthly Pirohi Sale. We will need additional help since the Great Fast is here and larger orders are expected. Instead of preparation time on Thursday, we ask for helping hands to clean up the kitchen in preparation for the sale. Please secure orders and come and help fill them.**

+++ **Catalogues and order blanks are available for Spring Candy orders for the coming feast of the Resurrection. Please secure orders from friends and relatives to assist our parish.**

+++ We remind our faithful only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."

+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

LORD



TEACH
US

Promises To The Penitent

The Lord is close to those whose hearts are breaking; he rescues those who are humbly sorry for their sins Psalms 34: 18.

It is a broken spirit you want, remorse and penitence. A broken heart and a contrite heart, O God, you will not ignore Psalms 51: 17.

But fill the followers of God with joy. Let those who love your salvation exclaim, "What a wonderful God he is!" Psalms 70: 4.

Satisfy us in our earliest youth with your loving kindness, giving us constant joy to the end of our lives. Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery! Replace the evil years with good Psalms 90: 14, 15.

He is close to all who call on him sincerely, He fulfills the desires of those who revere and trust him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them Psalms 145: 18.

He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds Psalms 147: 3.

But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins and begins to obey my laws and do what is just and right, he shall surely live and not die. All his past sins will be forgotten and he shall live because of his goodness. Do you think I like to see the wicked die? asks the Lord. Of course not! I only want him to turn from his wicked ways and live Ezekiel 18: 21 - 23..



*Wisdom Of
The*



*Byzantine
Fathers*

You will follow the only true and reliable Teacher, the Word of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who because of his great love became what we are so that He might bring us to be what He is St. Ireneus of Lyons.

When we teach our children to be good, to be gentle, and to be forgiving – all attributes of God; to be generous, to love their neighbor, to regard this present age as nothing, we will instill virtue in their souls, and reveal the image of God within them. This then is our task: to educate both ourselves and our children in godliness; otherwise what answer will we have before Christ's judgment seat?...Let us be greatly concerned for our wives, and our children and for ourselves as well. The good God himself will bring this work to perfection so that all of us may be counted worthy of the blessings He has promised St. John Chrysostom.

When the intellect forgets the purpose of a religious observance, the outward practice of virtue loses its value. For whatever is done indiscriminately and without purpose is not only of no benefit – even though good in itself – but actually does harm St. John Damascene.

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

Today the time of earthly deeds is revealed, for judgment is at hand. Let us be found fasting, and let us bring tears of supplication, begging mercy and crying out: "My sins are more numerous than grains of sand at the sea, but forgive me, O Creator of all, that I may receive the crown which does not perish" Kontakion, Second Sunday of the Great Fast.

I have loved the fleeting pleasures of the earth and have thrown away eternal blessings, O Christ Jesus. You alone love mankind, and You do not cut sinners off without hope, pouring out mercy upon those who repent. O Jesus, do not turn from me now as I repent, but see in me the thief who was saved by his confession, the tax collector who was cleansed by mercy, and the prodigal who resolved to weep, for in all of these You have instilled a pattern of repentance. When You see me from afar repenting and running to You as Father, come out with warm and tender mercy. If You wish, You can forgive the sins by which I have polluted myself after baptism and my promise to lead a blameless life: but forgive us, O Creator of all, that we may receive the crown that does not perish Matins Hymn, Second Sunday of the Great Fast.

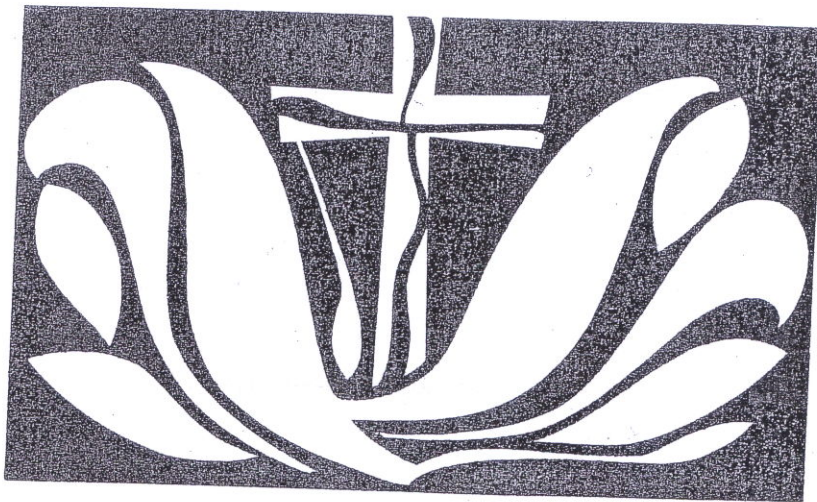
We do not glorify three gods, but only one divinity. In truth, we honor three Persons: the Father unbegotten, the Son begotten from the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father, the Trinity of one God, and in faith we glorify each with the name of God Matins Hymn, Second Sunday of the Great Fast.

With what lips shall we mortals praise this holy bishop? He is the teacher of the Church and the herald of divine light, the one who is immersed in the Trinity, for the most beautiful adornment of holy monks, renowned for his divine contemplation and the brightness of his virtues; the pride and glory of Thessalonica; and the holy Demetrius, whose relics flow with holy oil, shares with you the kingdom of heaven Matins Hymn, Second Sunday of the Great Fast.

O light of the true faith, teacher and support of the Church, adornment of monks and invincible rampart of theologians, O holy Gregory the Wonderworker, the glory of Thessalonica and herald of grace, intercede with God for the salvation of our souls Troparion of St. Gregory Palamas.

Did You Know That ...

- ...you never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough?
- ...a man's only wealth is the good he does in this world?
- ...everyone has talent; what is rare is the courage to pursue the talent to the dark place it many times leads?
- ...goals are dreams with deadlines?
- ...those who wish to sing along ways find a song?
- ...peace is costly, but it is worth the expense?
- ...love sought is good, but offered unsought is much better?
- ...the best memory is that which forgets nothing but injuries, writes kindness in marble and injuries in dust?
- ...the more light of Christ you permit within you, the brighter the world you live in will be?
- ...love is a newt that catches hearts like a fish?
- ...if you wish a kinder world, then behave with kindness; if you desire a peaceful world, make peace within?
- ...if there is bitterness in the heart, sugar in the mouth won't make it sweeter?
- ...people who lose all their charity generally lose all their logic?
- ...time is an invisible web on which everything may be embroidered?
- ...at any moment all that you claim as your own maybe swept away?
- ...with astounding accuracy, our thoughts, deeds and words return to us?



Examining Our Conscience

To submit ourselves to the blessed grace of the sacramental Mystery of Reconciliation or confession of sin, a personal preparation is necessary. We cannot just simply approach the throne of our God without prayer and seriously thinking about our shortcomings in sin and examining our conscience to realistically see how far we have departed from the path of Christ.

Examining our conscience is far more than simply recalling of sin, the faults, the commission and omission of acts, for it is also a placing of our intention, a personal acknowledgement of our sorrow for sins committed and private soulful resolve by the grace of the Lord not to sin again. This prayerful examination must focus on our sins against God's right order, against the precepts of the Church, which is his Body, against the community and others in violating charity and justice.

We initially should consider the revealed Law of God, known to us as the Ten Commandments and our relationship with our heavenly Father:

Do I direct my thoughts to God in whom I have faith? Am I aware of his care and goodness to me? Do I worship him and respond to the Holy Spirit through devotion and giving honor to God?

Do I abuse his goodness by presumption or by using his name irreverently?

Do I worship at the Divine Liturgy every Sunday and holy day on which the Church makes it possible for us to honor the Holy Trinity? Do I recognize whatever I substitute for worship is my newly chosen god?

Do I deliberately or inadvertently fail to avail myself of the sacramental Mysteries as a means of gaining my salvation?

Do I act against my religious faith by denying our heavenly Father or using false symbols or indulging superstitious practices?

In the Ten Commandments our God asks that we show our love for him through positive action and our relationship with others, our service to and love for our neighbors, especially fellow believers.

Do I criticize or belittle others and cause them to be discouraged?

Do I make false judgments or detract from anyone's good name or reputation?

Do I carry out my promises to others; do I act honestly with others even if they are strangers?

Do I fairly pay others who serve my needs?

Do I try to help others on their way to salvation, or do I hinder them through false and hypocritical action, bad example, or my selfish interests and ways?

Have I been proud intellectually or in my actions?

Do I act violently against others? Do I strike them or harm them? Do I spiritually injure them or kill them? Have I shown hatred for anyone in action or out of prejudice? Have I harmed their reputation or discriminated against them? Have I been angry with others? Have I failed or been slow to respond to the needs of others?

Have I treated others with dignity, or have I used them badly by sexual abuse, by adultery or fornication, by unchaste actions or example? Have I used reading or thoughts or pictures to arouse sexual actions?

Have my words or actions caused others to sin, or have I by example caused them to sin? Have I taken part in an abortion or used the life or rights of others to life?

Have I abused the rights of the young, the aged, the retarded or the handicapped? Do I try to serve others in charity and love with justice?

Have I stolen from another? Have I been just in what I am obliged to pay; in how I serve and work for others? Have I supported the Church as God asks me to? Have I stolen from God by holding back my offering and using it on my selfish needs? Do I speak falsely about another; do I lie or cheat? Do I detract from the life or rights of another?

Do I speak the truth when I am called upon to do so? Do I falsely accuse another or blame another for my actions? Do I fulfill my responsibilities with joy or do I permit laziness to detour me?

Do I make excuses for my sinfulness instead of repenting honestly?

Have I thought of another's person, his wife, or husband or children, to harm them, to take what is theirs, to mislead them on their way to salvation?

Have I been a good example to others? Have I sought to deprive another or his or her good name?, his or her possessions, or have I harmed or broken or destroyed what belongs to others?

Have I compounded my own neglectful sin in adding to it the sin of others because I did not fulfill my obligation to them?

Do I through prayer and good works strive to help others to live a Christian life? Do I actively promote the good of others so they may come to salvation?

In worship of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and in service to our neighbors, we show our love and fulfill the commandment of charity. We must ask ourselves if we have practiced the spiritual and corporal works of mercy:

Have I done all I can to help others who are hungry, sick, hopeless, in want of clothing or shelter? Have I been aware of the social wrongs done to others? Do I visit those in prison or who are sick? Do I help the dying and bereaved?

Do I take care of my health by avoiding overeating, drunkenness, by not taking harmful drugs or other substances?

Do I seek my own spiritual growth and that of others? Do I try to respond to the grace of the Holy Spirit in seeking my own good and the good of others?

Do I presume on the goodness of God by assuming I am saved without investing the effort God expects from me? Do I persist in sin of any kind rather than trying to overcome it?

The Church is the Body of Christ and is instituted to help us give worship to our God, to receive the grace of the sacramental Mysteries and to direct us in prayer and good works in attaining our salvation and join the Holy Trinity in eternal glory. The Church has precepts which aid us and we should respond to her expressed love by recognizing her authority and submitting graciously to it.

In response to God's first expressed love to me, do I gladly worship at the Divine Liturgy each Sunday and holy day? Do I conscientiously fast and abstain from proscribed food when required by the Church? Have I sought sacramental confession of my sins in the Mystery of Reconciliation at least once a year? Do I worthily prepare to receive the Eucharist each time I worship?

Have I contributed generously my talents, my earthly treasure and my use of time in support of my parish church?

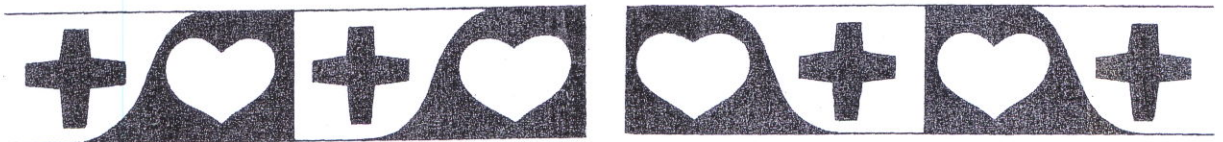
Have I obeyed the laws, regulations and precepts of the Church concerning marriage? Have I done all these things to serve my Creator more worthily?

And finally, I am aware now of my sins and how seriously I have offended God and separated myself from him.

I am sorry for all my sinful transgressions.

I am willing to accept and do penance for my sins and will seriously try to avoid sinning in the future that I may come through love of God and my neighbor to personal salvation.

I wish to persevere in doing all these things simply because I strongly trust in the mercy and protective love of our heavenly Father, his only-begotten Son and the Holy and adorable Spirit.



ST. GREGORY PALAMAS & LENT: WHAT IS THEIR CONNECTION?

The Ecclesiastical Calendar of our Holy Orthodox Church follows a distinct pattern annually. This is readily seen during the Great Fast, where year after year, we find the same commemorations observed on its various Sundays. The reasoning behind these Sunday remembrances is usually quite clear. The Second Sunday of the Great Fast, however, does not, at first glance, seem to have a logical explanation for its dedication to St. Gregory Palamas. Let us then, take a closer look at why we honor the memory of this 14th century saint during Lent.

Gregory's life followed a pattern similar to many of God's saints. Born into a wealthy family and provided with the finest secular education possible, Gregory gave all of this up to enter into a strict monastic way of life. Even after his subsequent election to the prestigious position of "Archbishop of Thessalonika," he was much more comfortable when engaged in the ascetic practice of "Hesychasm," or "prayer of the heart." Gregory taught only through fasting and continuous mental prayer - particularly the constant recitation of the Jesus Prayer - can we hope to be touched by the "energies" of God and receive His saving grace, which he compared to the Uncreated Light that shone on Mt. Tabor at the Lord's Transfiguration. Gregory's teachings were not initially understood or accepted by the Church as a whole - he was even banished and imprisoned because of them. Eventually, Gregory's viewpoints were deemed to be theologically true, and he was restored to his prior Episcopal dignity. With this brief background on St. Gregory, his connection with Lent should now be apparent, for his life was anchored in the spiritual practices that play such a significant role in our Lenten journey.