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| CHURCH BULLETIN | V. Rev. Fr. George Veselinovic, Parish Priest Monroeville, Pennsylvania 15146 412.622.4714 (cell) 412.856.8166 (office) dj.veselinovic@yahoo.com www.stnicholasmonroeville.org stnicholasmonroeville@gmail.com | SUNDAY March 24, 2019 |
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SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT – ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

Epistle: Hebrews (1: 10 – 2:3)

And You, Lord, in the beginning, laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail. But to which of the angels has He ever said, “Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool?” Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

Gospel: Mark (2: 1-12)

And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned so within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” – He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

TROPARION TONE II

When You did descend to death, O Life immortal, You did slay hell with the splendor of Your godhead! And when from the depths You did raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS -TROPARION TONE VIII

Light of Orthodoxy, pillar and doctor of the Church, adornment of monks, invincible champion of theologians, O Gregory the wonderworker, praise of Thessalonica, preacher of grace, ever pray that our souls may be saved.

**TRANSFER OF THE RELICS OF ST. NICHOLAS, WONDERWORKER
TROPARION TONE IV**

The day of the joyous celebration has come; the city of Bari rejoices and with it the whole universe leaps from joy, singing the spiritual songs and psalms. For today, the holy feast, on the occasion of the transfer of the honorable and exceedingly healing relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, has shone forth with the radiant rays, like the sun that does not set, driving away the darkness of temptations and calamities from those who faithfully exclaim to thee: “Save us, as our protector, O great Nicholas!”

KONTAKION TONE II

Hell became afraid, O Almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with You! And the world, O my Savior, praises You forever.

KONTAKION TONE III

TRANSFER OF THE HOLY RELICS OF ST. NICHOLAS, WONDERWORKER

Your relics, O Saint Nicholas, came out as a star from the east to the west. The sea was sanctified by your journey, and the city of Bari, through you, has received the grace. For working for us, you have appeared as an excellent, wonderful and merciful Wonderworker.

ST GREGORY - KONTAKION TONE VIII

O Gregory, the preacher of God, we magnify you with one accord as a holy and divine instrument of wisdom and as a bright trumpet of theology. Therefore, as a mind standing before the First Mind, direct, O father, our mind to Him, so that we may sing: “Rejoice, O preacher of grace!”

SAINTS WE COMMEMORATE TODAY – St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem

REMINDERS

Adult Bible Study – Bible study has resumed every Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

Confession – Every Saturday at 6:30 p.m. after vespers and Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. before Liturgy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is a reminder to all parishioners to not talk or congregate in the vestibule during Liturgy. Also, during Sunday school lessons, please refrain from loud talking or socialization near classes. Lately, the children have been very distracted during their lessons and the teachers are frustrated with this. PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL!

Today – Parastos for victims of the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia and for Simeon ðSamö Saula. May their memory be eternal! Vjecnaja pamjat!

Today – The Tammies will be sponsoring a delicious posno soup sale. Stock up for the Lenten season! Take out only! \$8/quart.

House Blessings ó Father George has resumed house blessings. He will contact you with his availability.

Tonight– Lenten vesper services will be held at Holy Ascension in Youngwood at 5:00 p.m. Our *Father George* is the guest lecturer and will deliver a homily on ðTheology of St. Gregory of Palamas.ö

Wednesday, March 27th – Presanctified liturgy services at 6:00. Confession at 5:30. Parishioners are kindly reminded to refrain from food or drink after 12:00 p.m. Please take all necessary medications.

Saturday, April 6th – The Federation of Circles of Serbian Sisters together with St. Nicholas parish in Monroeville, with the Blessing of His Grace Bishop Irinej, will be hosting a Lenten retreat in our church hall. Guest speaker will be Father Maksim Ilic from New Marcha Monastery in Ohio as well as honored guest Mother Christophora from Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City, PA. Registration & breakfast will begin at 9:00 a.m. Spiritual lecture beginning at 10:00 a.m. Contact Martha Springborn with questions and/or reservations: mspringborn78@comcast.net

Sunday, April 7th – *Posna Vecera* ó Vesper services begin at 5:00 with a lenten dinner to follow. We welcome our clergy brotherhood from greater Pittsburgh and Father Maksim as guest homilist.

Easter Candy Orders – The church school is selling Easter candy from Dorothyø of White Oak. Please see Sophie Vargo for a form. All orders are due April 1st.

Easter Flowers - Orders are being taken by Sophie Vargo (412 466-2760) and Pat Kolar (412 372-4239)/patkolar@verizon.net. The deadline for orders is Monday, April 15, 2019. Please see the insert in the bulletin or refer to the email sent to parishioners for additional information.

The Noodle-Makers of St. Nicholas are at it again! Four weeks only! Wide or fine noodles. To order, call Rose 412 824-7609.

Kolo – There will be a meeting after church on Sunday, March 31st. All are welcome!

Maintenance Committee ó Sour cabbage heads, smoked kielbasa, and limited smoked spare ribs available to purchase for your Easter meal. See anyone from the maintenance committee to order.

Matthew Shaffer, son of Melissa Karas Shaffer needs our prayers, love, and support. Matthew is a wonderful, faithful young man and a member of our parish family. We are appealing for your compassion and help. Please see Father George and/or Nick Jokola. Make your checks payable to Melissa Karas Shaffer.

The Committee for the 2019 SNF Summer Golf Tournament has met and is excited to begin planning for this big event for our church and local SNF lodges. To be successful, we will need everyone's help! There will be many opportunities for you to contribute. The Committee will keep you informed of our progress over the coming months. Pam Matejevich will be coordinating volunteers for the event which will take place August 7-11, 2019. Reach out to Pam or to Chairman Dushan Markoff to offer your help or ask any questions!

Fish Fry Cake Table - The Men's Club Fish Fry began Friday, March 8th, and will continue every Friday through April 19 from 4 - 7 pm. This means that the Fish Fry Cake Table will be in operation during this time as well. Any help that can be offered to make this project a success would be greatly appreciated, either to bake and donate Lenten desserts, or volunteer to sell the baked goods to our customers. We are grateful for any assistance parishioners may give, whether it is one cake or one hour, or many! To volunteer, please contact Janet Tumbas at church, or by phone or email: 412-751-3809 / jtumbas@gmail.com. Thank you!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Who was St. Gregory?

On the Second Sunday of Lent the Orthodox Church commemorates our Holy Father Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, the Wonderworker. Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, was born in the year 1296 in Constantinople. Saint Gregoryø'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) had 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's 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.

