

OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. THEOPHAN LEONARCZYK, Eparchial Chancellor

"Enter the Church and repent ... for here is the physician, not the judge.

Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)

March 17, 2019

The Second Sunday of the Great Fast

The Commemoration of our Holy Father Alexis, the Man of God

THE SUNDAY OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

THE SUNDAY OF THE HOLY RELICS

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

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Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

The Troparion of the Resurrection (2nd Tone) Page 48

The Troparion of the Holy Relics (2nd Tone)

O victorious witnesses of the Lord, blessed is the earth fertilized by your blood, and holy are the heavenly places that opened to your souls. You have vanquished the enemy in the stadium, and proclaimed Christ with courage. We beg you to intercede with Him who is all good, that He may save our souls.

The Troparion of St. Gregory Palamas (8th Tone)

O Gregory the Wonderworker, light of Orthodoxy, support and teacher of the Church, glory of monks and invincible protector of the theologians, pride of Thessalonica and preacher of grace: pray without ceasing for the salvation of us all.

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1st Tone): Page 15

The Kontakon of the Annunciation (8th Tone): Page 16

THE PROKIMENON:

YOU, O LORD, WILL KEEP US
AND PRESERVE US ALWAYS FROM THIS GENERATION.

*Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any holy man,
for truthfulness has vanished from among the children of men.*

Today's Readings: Hebrews: 1: 10-14; 2: 1-4 and Mark 2:1-12

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday (March 16) 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Lorette Leafe (2nd), Louise Ashooh (3rd), Nimnoon David (45th),
Lamia Solomon (34th), and Annie Attalla (36th)



Sunday, (March 17) 10:30 AM:

For the repose of Josephine Paquette (One Year Memorial)
by Saideh Dagher, Ibrahim Dagher,
Salam & Martha Dagher and Families

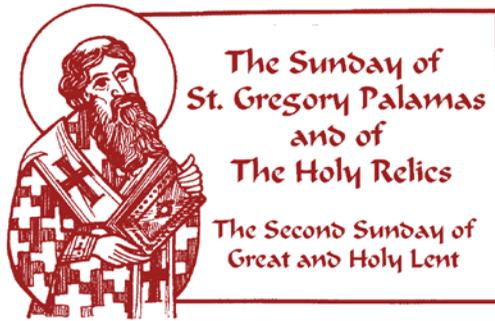


Next Saturday, (March 23) 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Alice Page (34th), Peter Gula (21st), Salam Fawaz (24th),
Souad Kessop (7th), Stephen Stephen (41st), and Bedra Ashkar (43rd),

Next Sunday (March 24) 10:30 AM:

For the repose of Alma Blanchette,
by the Jonathon and Sarah Hetu Radny Family



Although the commemorations for this Sunday have changed over the years, the focus has always been on those who have stood fast against the tide of sin and heresy. In early Church history, this Sunday was first set aside for the commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who was martyred on February 23, 155. Later, in 1368, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheus, set aside the Second Sunday of Lent as a day of

commemoration of St. Gregory Palamas, who had died nine years earlier. Finally, in 1843, the Patriarch of Antioch, Maximos III Mazloum, declared that on the Second Sunday of Lent the relics of all saints should be venerated. As a result, we maintain two commemorations today: St. Gregory Palamas and the Holy Relics.

Have lunch with the parish!

The parish is invited to share a Lenten lunch of spinach pies and French fries following the Sunday Divine Liturgy. There is no charge for the lunch. Following the lunch we will watch a video presentation by Bishop Robert Baron on *“Conversion: Following the Call of Christ.”* Bishop Baron will discuss the Gospel stories of the healing of blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 46-52) and the Rich Young Man (Mark 10: 17-31).

Our annual Lenten Dinner will be held on Sunday, March 31.

Shepherd’s Care

Lenten gift boxes are available in the back on the church. Please use them to support Shepherd’s Care, the charitable outreach of our diocese. And remember, this is not just a children’s activity. As followers of Christ we have a solemn obligation to participate in almsgiving, especially during the season of Great and Holy Lent.

Please Support the Lenten Raffle!

Attendance Last Sat. 4:30 PM: 39 Sun. 10:30 AM: 61

Last Weekend’s Collection: \$1,046.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope donation: \$32.⁴⁰

The balance on our mortgage is: \$66,175.⁴³

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Mon., Mar. 18	7:00 PM	Great Compline
Wed. Mar. 20	7:00 PM	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
Fri., Mar. 22	7:00 PM	Akathist Hymn
Sat., Mar. 23	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of The Holy Cross
Sun., Mar. 24	9:40 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Mar. 24	10:30 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of The Holy Cross

“More Valuable than Precious Stones...”

The relics are the physical remains of saints, as well as clothing, or other articles have been sanctified by being touched to the physical body or grave of the saint. Relics, like the holy icons, are a means of Divine Grace for us -- a visible and tangible means of contact, and a vehicle of innumerable miracles.

The bible describes many events in which the relics of saints perform miracles. It also testifies that even material articles associated with saints have divine powers:

* When Elisha struck the water of river Jordan with the cloak of Prophet Elijah , the river divided into two parts. (2 Kings 2:14)

* When a man’s corpse fell into Elisha’s tomb and touched his bones that man resurrected to life (2 Kings: 13:21)

* People used to bring the sick into the streets and lay them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. (Act 5:15)

* Acts 19:11-12 reads: “God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.”

The earliest surviving mention of relic veneration after the New Testament occurs in a work called *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, dated to about 150 AD. St. Polycarp was the bishop of Smyrna and a disciple of the Apostle John. In this account of his death, his admirers in Smyrna wrote: “We took up his bones, which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place, where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom.”

The relics of the saints are a reminder to us of the real, physical, historical, and human presence of these champions of God. Relics, like icons, affirm that the physical world indeed *DOES* have the potential for being transfigured and resurrected, as it participates in the restoration of humanity to the beauty of the Divine Image and Likeness. They are remnants of those who said "yes" to God and allowed themselves to become transformed into the Divine Image and became filled with God's life-giving energy.

The sanctified and transfigured bodies of the saints, are so powerful that numerous miracles occur by means of the saint's relics, or even by being anointed with oil from the lamps burning by their relics, or from soil from the ground where the saints are or were buried. Of course, most of the saints were also vehicles of miracles while they were yet in their bodies, and this miraculous grace continues to flow from them after their repose. In venerating their relics we give honor to God, the source of this grace, as well as to the holy saint from whom the relic comes.



Seeing the Divine Light

On the Second Sunday of Great Lent, we commemorate St Gregory Palamas. His main contribution to the life of the Church is his articulate and definitive presentation of *Hesychasm*, what he called “Sacred Quietude,” the monastic ideal of withdrawal and silence in order to focus on union with God.

Who Is St Gregory Palamas?

This future saint was born in Constantinople in 1296 into a family of some standing at the imperial court. Gregory rejected this life and went to Mount Athos and became a monk. After spending ten years on the Holy Mountain, Gregory and the other monks of his skete withdrew to Thessaloniki, because of the threat of Turkish invasion. He continued in his monastic calling there and in Berea before returning to Athos in the 1330s.

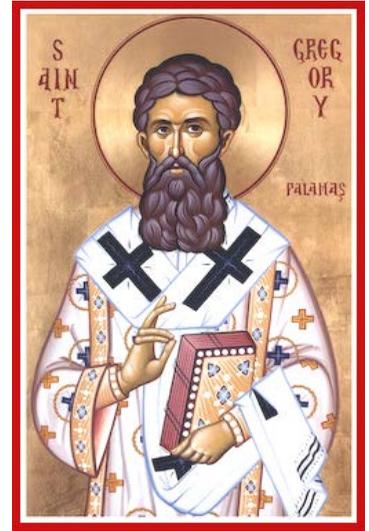
It was upon his return to Mount Athos that Gregory first encountered Barlaam of Calabria, an Italo-Greek monk and humanist who was head of the Monastery of Our Savior in Constantinople. Barlaam was involved in diplomatic missions for the emperor and discussions with the legates of Pope John XXII aimed at the reunion of the Greek and Latin Churches.

Barlaam had written 21 treatises critical of Latin theology, particularly the Filioque (that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*) and the doctrine of papal primacy which came to the attention of Gregory Palamas. While Barlaam had upheld the traditional Byzantine thinking on these issues, Palamas criticized him for teaching that the Filioque was wrong because it is impossible to determine from whom the Holy Spirit proceeds, since God is ultimately unknowable. Thus began a rivalry that would affect the Church in both East and West until our own day.

What Is Hesychasm?

The Filioque controversy was simply the preliminary. The “Main Event” concerned the practice of Hesychasm, a style of contemplative prayer observed in many Greek monasteries of the day. Eastern monastics had long seen the heart as the “inner chamber” to which we must go for prayer. Communion with God becomes possible when the mind, with its memories, concerns and plans for the future, is subjected to the heart that loves God above all. The Jesus Prayer had become the means for silencing the mind and thus entering this inner chamber of the heart. To this the Hesychasts added certain psycho-physical techniques such as rhythmic breathing and a particular way of sitting. Barlaam objected to these methods, calling the monks he met “navel gazers.”

The heads of the Athonite monasteries asked Gregory Palamas to respond to Barlaam’s critique, which he did in a series of treatises. The controversy soon centered on the theological basis of Hesychasm, the possibility of experiencing the Uncreated Light of God as the Apostles did at the Holy Transfiguration of Christ. Hesychasts believed that through ever deepening prayer the monk could experience this Light which they believed to be a divine energy. Barlaam, trained in Aristotelian scholasticism, attacked this teaching as heretical and the entire Hesychast method as anti-intellectual, holding that philosophy was the true means of attaining the knowledge of God.



The controversy so affected the Byzantine Church that several local councils were held in Constantinople between 1341 and 1351 to discuss the issues raised by Barlaam and Gregory. They ultimately affirmed the teachings of St Gregory Palamas, namely that:

- The light which shone at Tabor, during the Transfiguration of the Savior, is declared to be neither a creature nor the essence of God, but His energy: the uncreated and natural grace springing eternally from the divine essence itself;
- There are in God two inseparable things: His essence and the natural and substantial energies flowing from His essence in line with the relationship of cause and effect. We cannot enter into His essence but we can participate in His energies. Both the one and the other are uncreated and eternal;
- This real distinction between essence and energies or operations does not destroy the simplicity of God...;
- The word θεότης (godly) does not apply solely to the divine essence, but is said also of its operation...;
- The light of Tabor is the ineffable and eternal glory of the Son of God, the Kingdom of Heaven promised to the saints, the splendor in which He shall appear on the last day to judge all mankind.

After the Councils

The patriarchs of Constantinople spent the rest of the fourteenth century sharing this teaching with the other patriarchs and local Churches, securing their assent. Gregory Palamas became archbishop of Thessalonika where he died in 1359. He was glorified as a saint in 1368 by Patriarch Philotheos of Constantinople, who composed the service for his feast.

Barlaam left Constantinople in 1341 after the council which condemned his teaching. He was received by the Pope of Rome at Avignon and was consecrated bishop of Gerace, a Greek diocese in Calabria. He died in 1348.

Hesychasm and the West

Palamas' teaching was long considered suspect, if not heretical, in the West, which had embraced Aristotelian scholasticism as adapted by St Thomas Aquinas as its official theology. It was only in the twentieth century that St Gregory's teaching was seen positively by Western Catholic theologians such as Henri de Lubac, Jean Danielou and Louis Bouyer. In the 1930s Danielou wrote how excited he was to read of Palamas' "vision of humanity transfigured by the divine energies".

In 1996 Pope John Paul II commented positively about the underlying doctrine behind Hesychasm: the possibility of *theosis*. He wrote, "In the East, hesychasm means a method of prayer characterized by a deep tranquility of the spirit, which is engaged in constant contemplation of God by invoking the name of Jesus. There was no lack of tension with the Catholic viewpoint on certain aspects of this practice. However, we should acknowledge the good intentions which guided the defense of this spiritual method, that is, to emphasize the concrete possibility that man is given to unite himself with the Triune God in the intimacy of his heart, in that deep union of grace which Eastern theology likes to describe with the particularly powerful term of '*theosis*' ('divinization').

(John Paul II, *Eastern Theology Has Enriched the Whole Church*).

Saint Patrick, the Enlightener of Ireland

was born around 385, the son of a Roman tax collector. He lived in the village of Bannavem Taberniae, which may have been located at the mouth of the Severn River in Wales. The district was raided by pirates when Patrick was sixteen, and he was one of those taken captive. He was brought to Ireland and sold as a slave, and was put to work as a herder of swine on a mountain. During his period of slavery, Patrick acquired a proficiency in the Irish language which was very useful to him in his later mission.

He prayed during his solitude on the mountain, and lived this way for six years. He had two visions. The first told him he would return to his home. The second told him his ship was ready. Setting off on foot, Patrick walked two hundred miles to the coast. There he succeeded in boarding a ship, and returned to his parents in Britain.

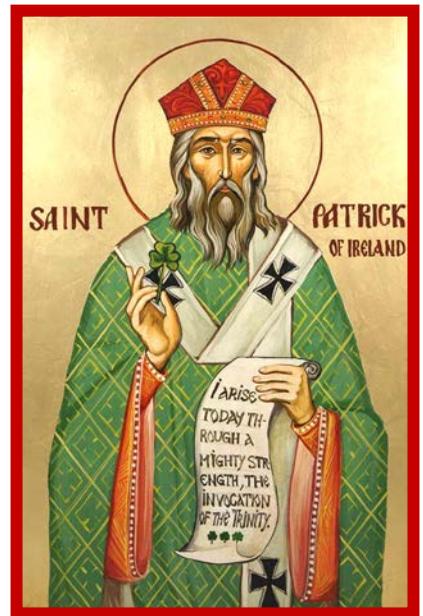
Some time later, he went to Gaul and studied for the priesthood at Auxerre under Saint Germanus. Eventually, he was consecrated as a bishop. Patrick had a dream in which an angel came to him bearing many letters. Selecting one inscribed “The Voice of the Irish,” he heard the Irish entreating him to come back to them.

Although Saint Patrick achieved remarkable results in spreading the Gospel, he was not the first or only missionary in Ireland. He arrived around 432 (though this date is disputed). There were also other missionaries who were active on the southeast coast, but it was Saint Patrick who had the greatest influence and success in preaching the Gospel of Christ. Therefore, he is known as “The Enlightener of Ireland.”

Saint Patrick founded many churches and monasteries across Ireland, but the conversion of the Irish people was no easy task. There was much hostility, and he was assaulted several times. He faced danger, and insults, and he was reproached for being a foreigner and a former slave. There was also a very real possibility that the pagans would try to kill him. Despite many obstacles, he remained faithful to his calling, and he baptized many people into Christ.

In his writings, we can see Saint Patrick’s awareness that he had been called by God, as well as his determination and modesty in undertaking his missionary work. He refers to himself as “a sinner,” “the most ignorant and of least account,” and as someone who was “despised by many.” He ascribes his success to God, rather than to his own talents: “I owe it to God’s grace that through me so many people should be born again to Him.” By the time he established his episcopal See in Armagh in 444, Saint Patrick had other bishops to assist him, many native priests and deacons, and he encouraged the growth of monasticism.

Saint Patrick is often depicted holding a shamrock, or with snakes fleeing from him. He used the shamrock to illustrate the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Its three leaves growing out of a single stem helped him to explain the concept of one God in three Persons. Many people now regard the story of Saint Patrick driving all the snakes out of Ireland as having no historical basis. Saint Patrick died on March 17, 461.



Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Donna Andruskiewicz, Olivia Aragon, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Henry Bilodeau, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Fr. Michael Carl, Danielle Caron, Michael Cavanaugh, Meghan Connors, Sarah Cullen, Theresa Cullen, Sarah Dagher, Bishop John Elya, Sher Farrow, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, John Gallagher, Marguerite Ganem, Mary Ann Garvey, Loretto Gauvin, Bonnie Gomez, Gail Fisher, Laurice Haddad, Nick Haddad, Lucille Harper, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Leila Khoury, Shirley Lanoue, Susan Latvis, Diana Label, Haley Lesmerises, Ramona Matias, Susan Merrill, Maria Moser, Joanne Nader, Mimi Nasser, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Raymond Nehme, Samira Nehme, Stefan Notter, Steven O'Leary, Ellen Osgood, Alice Paymant, Marco Enrique Peschiera, MaryJo Pond, Ellen Powell, Sheila Quinn, Daniel Quintal, Deborah Roberts, Julia Rose, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Kara Salvas, Barbara Schultz, Raymond Sherburne, Tarrant Smith, Iris Angelina Velasquez, Catherine Waldron, George Webber, Martha Webber, Kathy Wise, and Marilyn Whitmore.

If you are visiting our church, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled *“Welcome to this Holy House,”* located on the table in the back of the church.





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Today's Readings:

The Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 1: 10-14; 2: 1-4)

You in the beginning, O Lord, did found the earth, and the heavens are works of your hands. They shall perish, but you shall continue; and they shall all grow old as does a garment, and as clothing shall you change them, and they shall be changed. But you are the same, and your years shall not fail (Ps. 101: 26-28)

Now, to which of the angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool at your feet" (Ps. 109: 1)? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent for service, for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation?

That is why we should all the more earnestly observe the things we have heard, lest perhaps we drift away. For if the word spoken by angels proved to be valid, and every transgression and disobedience received a just punishment, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? For it was first announced by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard it.

الرسالة (عبرانيين 1: 10 الى 2: 3)

أنت أيها الرب في البدء أسست الارض، والسموات هي صنع يديك. هي تزول وأنت تبقى، وكلها تبلى كالثوب، وتطويها كالرداء فتتغير، وأنت أنت، وسنوك لن تقنى. ولمن من الملائكة قال قط: اجلس عن يميني حتى أجعل أعداءك موطناً لقدميك؟ أليسوا جميعهم أرواحاً خادمة، مرسلّة لخدمته من أجل المزمعين أن يرثوا الخلاص؟ فذلك يجب علينا أن نتنبّه إلى ما سمعناه غاية التنبّه، لئلا نبتعد عنه. فإنها إن كانت الكلمة التي نُطقَ بها على ألسنة الملائكة قد ثبتت، وكلُّ تعديٍّ ومعصيةٍ قد نالَ جزاءً عادلاً، فكيف نُفِيتُ نحن إن أهملنا خلاصاً عظيماً كهذا قد نُطقَ به على لسان الربِّ أولاً، ثم تَبَّته لنا الذين سمعوه.



The Holy Gospel According to St. Mark, the Evangelist (Mark 2:1-12)

At that time Jesus entered Capernaum, and it was reported that he was at home. And immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even around the door. And he spoke the word to them.

And they came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four. And since they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was, and, having made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the Paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

Now some of the Scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this man blaspheme in this way? Who can forgive sins, beside God?" And at once Jesus, knowing in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, said to them, "Why are you arguing these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, and take up your pallet, and walk?'"

"But that you may know the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the paralytic — "I say to you, arise, take up your pallet, and go to your house," And immediately he arose and, taking up his pallet, went forth in the sight of all, so that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, "Never did we see anything like this!"

انجيل الاعد الثاني من الصوم

(مرقس 2 : 1 - 12)

في ذلك الزمان، دخل يسوع كفرناحوم. وسمع أنه في بيت، ففي الحال اجتمع خلق كثير بحيث لم يبق موضع يسع ولا عند الباب، وكان يخاطبهم بالكلمة. فأتوا اليه بمخلع يحمله أربعة. وإذا لم يقدر أن يقربوا اليه بسبب الجمع، كشفوا السقف حيث كان، وبعد ما نقبوه دلو الفراش الذي كان المخلع مضطجعا عليه. فلما رأى يسوع إيمانهم قال للمخلع: يا بني مغفورة لك خطاياك. وكان قوم من الكتبة جالسين هناك يفكرون في قلوبهم: ما بال هذا يتكلم هكذا بالتجديف؟ من يقدر أن يغفر الخطايا إلا الله وحده؟ فلوقت علم يسوع بروحه انهم يفكرون هكذا في أنفسهم. فقال لهم: لماذا تفكرون بهذا في قلوبكم؟ ما الايسر: أن يقال للمخلع مغفورة لك خطاياك. أم أن يقال قم احمل فراشك وامشي؟ ولكن لكي تعلموا ان ابن الانسان له سلطان على الارض ان يغفر الخطايا، قال للمخلع: لك أقول قم احمل فراشك واذهب الى بيتك. فقام للوقت وحمل فراشه وخرج أمام الجميع، حتى دهبوا كلهم ومجدوا الله قائلين: ما رأينا قط مثل هذا.