

Readings & Hymns

Second Sunday of Great Lent

Sunday of Orthodoxy



Icon entitled "Great Lent" Images around the Crucifixion, clockwise:
The Triumph of Orthodoxy,; St John of Damascus; The Raising of Lazarus;
The Communion of St Mary of Egypt by St Zossima,
and St Gregory Palamas, in the monastic habit.

Troparion, St Gregory Palamas - Tone 8

○ Light of Orthodoxy! Teacher of the Church. Its Confirmation!
○ Ideal of Monks and invincible Champion of Theologians!
○ wonder-working Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and Preacher of Grace!
Always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

verse: **Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;**

Kontakion, St Gregory Palamas - Tone 8

O Holy and divine instrument of wisdom,
 joyful trumpet of theology,
 together we sing thy praises, O God-inspired Gregory.
 Since thou now standest before the Original Mind,
guide our minds to Him, O Father,//
 so that we may sing to thee: "Rejoice, O preacher of grace!"
verse: now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion, Triodion, 2nd Sunday - Tone 4

Now is the time for action!
 Judgment is at the doors!
 So let us rise and fast,
 offering alms with tears of compunction and crying:
 Our sins are more in number than the sands of the sea;
 but forgive us, O Master of All, //
 so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns.

The Prokeimenon

The Prokeimenon in the 5th Tone: Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from
 this generation forever. (*Sunday*) (*Ps 11 [12]: 7*)
verse: Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly. (Ps 11 [12]: 1)
*and: In the 1st Tone: My mouth shall speak wisdom and the meditation of my heart
 shall be understanding. (St Gregory) (Ps 48 [49]: 4)*

Epistle

§ 304; Hebrews 1: 10 - 2: 3 (*2nd Sunday*)
 § 318; Hebrews 7: 26 - 8: 2 (*St Gregory Palamas*)

The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews.

IN THE BEGINNING, THOU, O LORD,
 didst lay the foundations of the earth,
 and the heavens are also the works of Thine hands;
 they shall all perish, but Thou shalt endure; they shall all wear out like a garment;
 Thou changest them like raiment, and they pass away:
 but Thou art ever the same, and Thy years have no end."
 But to which of the angels hath He ever said:
 "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool"?
 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them
 who shall inherit salvation?
 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard,
 lest at any time we should drift away.
 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast,
 and every transgression and disobedience

received a just recompense of reward,
 how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation;
 which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord,
 and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.

BRETHREN it was fitting that we should have such a High Priest, holy, innocent,
 undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;
 who needeth not daily, as other priests,

to offer sacrifices first for His own sins and then for the people's,
 for this He did once, in offering Himself.

For the law maketh men priests who have infirmity,
 but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son,
 Who is perfected forevermore.

Now this is the sum of the things of which we have spoken:

We have such a High Priest,

Who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the, heavens,
 a Minister of the Holies and of the true Tabernacle which the Lord hath erected,
 and not man.

The Alleluia

The Alleluia in the Tone of the Week, and:

verse: In the 1st Tone: The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom and his
 tongue shall speak of judgment. (*St Gregory*) (*Ps 36 [37]: 30*)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

The Gospel

§ 7; Mark 2: 1 – 12 (*2nd Sunday*)

§ 36; John 10: 9 – 16 (*St Gregory Palamas*)

AT THAT TIME, JESUS entered into Capernaum after some days;
 and it was noised that he was in the house.

- ² And straightway many were gathered together,
 insomuch that there was no room to receive them,
 no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.
- ³ And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.
- ⁴ And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press,
 they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up,
 they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.
- ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy,
 Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.
- ⁶ But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,
- ⁷ Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?
- ⁸ And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit
 that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them,

Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

⁹ Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

¹⁰ But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

¹¹ I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

¹² And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

THE LORD SAID TO THE JEWS WHO CAME TO HIM

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

¹² But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

¹³ The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

¹⁵ As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

¹⁶ And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Hymn to the Theotokos - Tone 8

(Instead of "It is truly meet ...," we sing the following)

All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace:

the assembly of angels and the race of men.

O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins,

from whom God was incarnate and became a child - our God before the ages.

He made thy body into a throne,

and thy womb He made more spacious than the heavens.

All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace. Glory to thee.

Communion Hymns

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest! *(Sunday) (Ps 148: 1)*

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just! *(Fathers) (Ps 32 [33]: 1)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.



St Gregory Palamas, fresco, Vatopedi Monastery, Athos

from the Triodion, for St Gregory Palamas, by Philotheuson "Lord, I call ..."

Tone 2, Podoben: *With what crowns of praise...*

What hymns of praise shall we sing in honor of the holy bishop? / He is the trumpet of theology, / the herald of the fire of grace, / the honoured vessel of the Spirit, / the unshaken pillar of the Church, / the great joy of the inhabited earth, / the river of wisdom, / the candlestick of the light, // the shining star that makes glorious the whole creation.

What words of song shall we weave as a garland, to crown the holy bishop? / He is the champion of true devotion and the adversary of ungodliness, / the fervent protector of the Faith, / the great guide and teacher, / the well-tuned harp of the Spirit, / the golden tongue, / the fountain that flows with waters of healing for the faithful, // Gregory the great and marvellous.

With what words shall we who dwell on earth praise the holy bishop? / He is the teacher of the Church, / the herald of the light of God, / the initiate of the heavenly mysteries of the Trinity, / the chief adornment of the monastic life, / renowned alike in action and in contemplation, / the glory of Thessalonica; / and now he dwells in heaven with the great and glorious martyr Demetrius, // whose relics flow with holy oil.

from the Triodion, for St Gregory Palamas, by Philotheus, on "Glory ..." **Tone 6**

Thrice-blessed saint, / most holy father, / good shepherd and disciple of Christ the Chief Shepherd, / thou hast laid down thy life for thy sheep. / And now in thine intercessions, O God-bearing Gregory our father, // pray that great mercy may be granted to our souls.

The Apostikha

from the Triodion, for St Gregory Palamas, by Philotheus, on "Glory ..." **Tone 8**

Thy tongue, watchful in teaching, rings in the ears of our heart / and awakens the souls of the slothful. / Thy words, inspired by God, / are a ladder leading us from

earth to heaven. / O Gregory, wonder of Thessaly, / Pray to Christ without ceasing, // That we who honor thee may be illumined with the divine light.



SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS SUNDAY

Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh, 11 March 1990

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

In one of the Psalms we can read the following words: Those who have sown with tears will reap with joy... If in the course of weeks of preparation we have seen all that is ugly and unworthy in us mirrored in the parables, if we have stood before the judgement of our conscience and of our God, then we have truly sown in tears our own salvation. And yet, there is still time because even when we enter into the time of the harvest, God gives us a respite; as we progress towards the Kingdom of God, towards the Day of the Resurrection, we still can, at every moment, against the background of salvation, in the face of the victory of God, turn to Him with gratitude and yet, brokenheartedness, and say, 'No, Lord! I am perhaps the worker of the eleventh hour, but receive me as Thou promised to do!'

Last week we have kept the day of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, the day when the Church proclaimed that it was legitimate and right to paint icons of Christ; it was not a declaration about art, it was a deeply theological proclamation of the Incarnation. The Old Testament said to us that God cannot be represented by any image because He was unbottomed mystery; He had even no Name except the mysterious name which only the High Priest know. But in the New Testament we have learned, and we know from experience that God has become Man, that the fullness of the Godhead has abided and is still abiding forever in the flesh; and therefore God has a human name: Jesus, and He has got a human face that can be represented in icons. An icon is

therefore a proclamation of our certainty that God has become man; and He has become man to achieve ultimate, tragic and glorious solidarity with us, to be one of us that we may be one of the children of God. He has become man that we may become gods, as the Scripture tells us. And so, we could last week already rejoice; and this is why, a week before, when we were already preparing to meet this miracle, this wonder of the Incarnation, softly, in an almost inaudible way, the Church was singing the canon of Easter: Christ is risen from the dead! - because it is not a promise for the future, it is a certainty of the present, open to us like a door for us to enter through Christ, the Door as He calls Himself, into eternity.

And today we remember the name of Saint Gregory Palamas, one of the great Saints of Orthodoxy, who against heresy and doubt, proclaimed, from within the experience of the ascetics and of all believers, proclaimed that the grace of God is not a created Gift - it is God Himself, communicating Himself to us so that we are pervaded by His presence, that we gradually, if we only receive Him, open ourselves to Him, become transparent or at least translucent to His light, that we become incipiently and ever increasingly partakers of the Divine nature.

This is not simply a promise; this is a certainty which we have because this has happened to thousands and thousands of those men and women whom we venerate as the Saints of God: they have become partakers of the Divine nature, they are to us a revelation and certainty of what we are called to be and become.

And today one step more brings us into the joy, the glory of Easter. In a week's time we will sing the Cross - the Cross which was a terror for the criminals, and has become now a sign of victory and salvation, because it is to us the sign that God's love has no measure, no limits, is as deep as God is deep, all-embracing as God is all-embracing, and indeed, as tragically victorious as God is both tragic and victorious, awe-inspiring, and shining the quiet, joyful light which we sing in Vespers.

Let us then make ourselves ready to meet this event, the vision of the Cross, look at it, and see in it the sign of the Divine love, a new certainty of our possible salvation; and when the choir sings this time more loudly the canon of the Resurrection, let us realise that step by step God leads us into a victory which He has won, and which He wants to share with us.

And then we will move on; we will listen to the Saint who teaches us how to receive the grace which God is offering, how to become worthy of Him; and a step more - and we will see the victory of God in Saint Mary of Egypt and come to the threshold of Holy Week. But let us remember that we are now in the time of newness, a time when God's victory is been revealed to us, that we are called to be enfolded by it, to respond to it by gratitude, a gratitude that will make us into new people - and also with joy! And joy full of tears in response to the love of God, and a joy which is a responsible answer to the Divine love. Amen!