

(No Bulletin Sponsors This Sunday)

	<u>2nd Sunday of Great Lent</u>	<u>Saint Gregory</u>
<u>Readings:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hebrews 1:10-2:3 • Mark 2:1-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 24:36-53 • Hebrews 7:26-8:2

Brethren, "You O Lord, in the beginning, didst found the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end." But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet?" Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him.

At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum and it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is a blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-he said to the paralytic-"I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Saturday service: Vespers – 6:30 PM	
Sunday service:	
Hours – 9:40 AM	Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM
Private Confession – Half hour before any service.	
See Fr Matthew for other times.	
General Confession – 9:45 AM on the first Sunday of each month	
Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3rd Sunday of each month	

Coffee hour – after Liturgy, downstairs in the Community Room

Church School - Sunday 9:30 AM (no classes 1st Sunday of each month)

Pre-school class meets immediately after the Liturgy every Sunday.

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.

Announcements:

- **The Sisterhood will again be sponsoring a Cinderella cheesecake sale this Paschal season.** The orders for cheesecakes will be due by March 22nd. Cost of the cheesecakes will be \$22, or \$25 for specialty cheesecakes. See Tamara Zimmerman.
- **The Sisterhood will be raffling off a traditional Pascha basket including delicious holiday items.** Tickets are \$1.00 and each person is asked to sell 10 tickets. The raffle will be held on March 29th. See Lore Stefy for tickets.
- **The next Parish Council meeting** will be March 29th, after coffee hour.
- **This week's services of Great Lent:**
 - March 11 6:30 PM Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with potluck to follow (Wednesday)
 - March 14 6:30 PM Vespers (Saturday)
 - March 15 Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, Divine Liturgy 10 AM
 - March 15 Deanery Lenten Vespers, 4:00 PM Holy Cross Church, Medford, NJ (Next Sunday)
- **On Sunday March 22, at 4:00PM, our parish will be hosting the New Jersey Deanery South for Lenten Vespers.** The Sisterhood will be serving a light meal after the Lenten vespers. If you would like to contribute an item for the meal, please see the sign-up sheet downstairs.

Special Announcements:

- **Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail to:** Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org
- **Volunteers are needed to clean the church.** Please use the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, downstairs, to indicate when you can help.

HOW CAN WE KEEP GREAT LENT?:

Written by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

It is obviously impossible for us to go to Church every day. And since we cannot keep the Lent liturgically, the question arises: what is our participation in Lent, how can we spiritually profit by it? The Church calls us to deepen our religious conscience, to increase and strengthen the spiritual contents of our life, to follow her in her pilgrimage towards renewal and rededication to God.

1. Fasting - The first universal precept is that of fasting. The Orthodox teaching concerning fasting is different from the Roman Catholic doctrine and it is essential to understand it. Roman Catholics identify **fasting** with a "good deed," see in it a sacrifice that earns us a "merit." "What shall I give up for Lent?" - this question is very typical of such an attitude toward fasting. Fasting thus is a formal obligation, an act of obedience to the Church, and its value comes precisely from obedience. **The Orthodox idea of fasting is first of all that of an ascetical effort.** It is the effort to subdue the physical, the fleshly man to the spiritual one, and the "natural" to the "supernatural." **Limitations in food are instrumental;** they are not ends in themselves. Fasting thus is but a means of reaching a spiritual goal and, therefore, an integral part of a wide spiritual effort. Fasting, in the Orthodox understanding, includes more than abstinence from certain types of food. It implies prayer, silence, an internal disposition of mind, an attempt to be charitable, kind, and - in one word - **spiritual.** *Brethren, while fasting bodily, let us also fast spiritually...*

And because of this the Orthodox doctrine of fasting excludes the evaluation of fasting in terms of a "maximum" or "minimum." **Everyone must find his maximum,** weigh his conscience and find in it his "pattern of fasting." But this pattern must necessarily include the spiritual as well as the "bodily" elements. The Typicon and the canons of the Church give the description of an ideal fast: no dairy products, total abstinence on certain days. **"He that is able to receive it, let him receive it"** (Matt. 19:12). But, whatever is our measure - our fasting must be a total effort of our total being.

2. Prayer - We must always pray. But Lent is the time of an increase of prayer and also of its deepening. The simplest way is, first, to add the Lenten prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian to our private morning and evening prayers. Then, it is good and profitable to set certain hours of the day for a short prayer: this can be done "internally" -at the office, in the car, everywhere. The important thing here is to remember constantly that we are in Lent, to be spiritually "referred" to its final goal: renewal, penitence, and closer contact with God.

3. Spiritual Reading - We cannot be in church daily, but it is still possible for us to follow the Church's progress in Lent by reading those lessons and books which the Church reads in her worship. A chapter of the Book of Genesis, some passages from Proverbs and Isaiah do not take much time, and yet they help us in understanding the spirit of Lent and its various dimensions. It is also good to read a few Psalms-in connection with prayer or separately. Finally, a religious book: Lives of the Saints, History of the Church, Orthodox Spirituality, etc. is a "must" while we are in Lent.

4. Change of Life - And, last but not least: there must be an effort and a decision to **slow down** our life, to put in as much quiet, silence, contemplation, meditation. Radio, TV, newspapers, social gatherings-all these things, however excellent and profitable in themselves, must be cut down to a real minimum. Not because they are bad, but because we have something **more important** to do, and it is impossible to do without a change of life, without some degree of **concentration** and discipline. Lent is the time when we re-evaluate our life in the light of our faith, and this requires a very real effort and discipline. Christ says that a **narrow path** leads to the kingdom of God and we must make our life as narrow as possible. At first the natural and selfish man in us revolts against these limitations. He wants his usual "easy life" with all its pleasures and relaxations. But once we have tasted of such spiritual effort, once we have made by it one step towards God, the reward is great! **God Himself enters our soul:** and it is this wonderful coming that constitutes the ultimate end of Lent.

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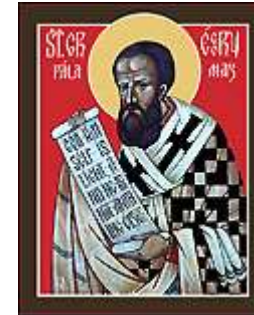
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St. Gregory Palamas

Glory to
Jesus ChristGlory
Forever*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."*

Kontakion — Tone 4

Today the Church remembers:

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT • St. Gregory Palamas • Synaxis of the Venerable Fathers of the Kiev Caves Lavra • St. Theophylactus, Bishop of Nicomedia (842-845) • Ven. Lazarus (1391) and Athanasius (15th c.), of Múrom • Apostle Hermas of the Seventy (1st c.) • Hieromartyr Theodoretus of Antioch (4th c.) • Ven. Dometius (363) • The "KURSK-ROOT" Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos.

March 8, 2015**Tone 6 of the Octoechos****Triodion week 6
Second Sunday of Lent**