



# The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

Sun, March 28, 2021 : The Sunday of Gregory Palamas • Saint for the day : Venerable Fathers of the Kiev Caves Lavra

***A very special welcome to our bishop, His Eminence Archbishop Mark.***



## Hymns for Today's Service

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: "Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!"

O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation, O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians, O wonderworking Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

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, preacher of grace!"

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!"

## Epistle Reading - 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,

**DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS:** *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!*

## Gospel Reading - 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 thus 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!"

## *This Week's Schedule*

### This Weekend

**SAT, March 27:** 9 AM Divine Liturgy,  
Parastas for Dan Bisset

**SAT, March 27:** 5 PM Great Vespers

**SUN, March 28:** 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Sunday of St.  
Gregory Palamas w/ Archbishop Mark

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### This Week

#### **3rd Week of Great Lent**

**TUES, 30th @ 4 PM:** Lenten Bible Study

**WED, 31st @ 11 AM-1:30 PM:** Church Open for Prayer  
6 PM: Presanctified Liturgy

**FRI, April 2nd @ 6:30 PM:** Akathist w/ Lity for Departed

**SAT, April 3rd @ 9 AM:** Divine Liturgy

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### Next Weekend

**SAT, April 3rd:** 9 AM Divine Liturgy  
5 PM Great Vespers

**SUN, April 4th:** 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy for  
Sunday of the Cross, Church School

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#### A NOTE ON RECEIVING COMMUNION AT EVENING SERVICES:

Those who would like to receive Holy Communion at evening Liturgies should fast from food and drink from lunch until receiving communion. This excludes anyone who may need more frequent nourishment due to health conditions or the need to take medications. Do as best you can according to your strength and needs. If you have questions please speak with Fr. Innocent.

#### A NOTE ON CONFESSION DURING GREAT LENT

Confession is available before and after services throughout Lent as time permits and also on Wednesdays during our time of silent prayer. Please come or set up an appointment for a specific time with Fr. Innocent.

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### A 4 WEEK LENTEN BIBLE STUDY WITH FR. INNOCENT

### JOURNEY THROUGH

### OUR LORD'S PASSION AND RESURRECTION

Every Tues @ 4 PM Beginning Tuesday, March 30

Join us in person OR online • Link will be sent by email

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## *Announcements & Meetings*

**Bring in your Pussywillows:** Anyone willing to harvest pussywillows from your yard or area for our Paschal celebration can now bring them to the church. Spring weather is upon us and they will soon begin to flower. Thanks so much for your help!

**Wilkes University Food Drive:** We are collecting much needed items for students at Wilkes University. Items needed include: Non-perishable foods, soups, canned fruit, Chef Boyardee meals, personal care items, household items. **The drive ends Sunday, April 25th** (Palm Sunday).

**Lenten Food Sale Success:** Thank you to all who helped make the Lenten Food Sale a huge success. The total raised from this past Friday was \$1750.

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## Birthdays & Anniversaries

**March Birthdays:** Emma Lynn DiBatista (3/3), Abby Harvey (3/4), Lisa Marie Harvey (3/7), Michael Polk (3/11) Nadine Breisch (3/13), Joshua Leonori (3/22), Gerry Stankiewicz (3/27), Jacob Zbegner (3/27), Jean Ann Hutz (3/31), Delores Voda (3/31)

**This Week's Birthdays:** Jean Ann Hutz (3/31), Delores Voda (3/31)

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## Altar Server Schedule

**Sunday, March 28:** All Welcome - Archbishop Presiding

**Sunday, April 4:** Alec B, Kaleb D, Symeon C

**Sunday, April 11:** Vladimir H, Alex H, Andrew N

**Sunday, April 18:** Alec B, Tommy D, Ephraim N

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**PARISH PRAYER LIST Living:** Cynthia Dulsky, Theodore & Elenor Sovryda, Nadine Breisch, Rosalie Bagenski, Sonja & Leanne Kay, Josie Bissett, Lisa & Scott Harvey, Daniel & Shannon Bissett, Delores Karas, Antonette Terry, Archpriest Daniel & Matushka Myra Kovalak, Violet Filipi, Catherine, Danny Gobish, Lorraine Pace, Camden Thomas, Peter Holoviak & Family, Marni Bachman & Family, Rose Marie, Helen Gudaitis, Mahaffey Family, George Scott, Evelyn Kosmiski, Joe Sloan, Louis Gianuzzi, Betty Serafin

**Newly Departed:** Mitred Archpriest Daniel Ressetar

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## On the Church Calendar

### Week 4 of Great Lent

**SUN, April 4th, Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross**

8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy, Church School

**TUES, April 6th @ 4 PM:** Lenten Bible Study

**WED, April 7th @ 11 AM-1:30 PM:** Church Open / Prayer

**WED, April 7th @ 6 PM:** Presanctified Liturgy

**FRI, April 9th @ 6:30 PM:** Akathist w/ Lity for Departed

**SAT, April 10th @ 9 AM:** Divine Liturgy

**SAT, April 10th @ 5 PM:** Great Vespers

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## The Sunday St. Gregory Palamas

from [ww1.antiocian.org](http://ww1.antiocian.org)



On this second Sunday of Great Lent, we commemorate St. Gregory of Palamas' successful defense of the Orthodox belief that humans can both know and experience God. He asserted that we can know with our minds that God exists, and we can also experience Him through His uncreated energies. This flew in the face of the teachings of Barlaam, a critic of St. Gregory's and of Hesychasm in general.

St. Gregory was born in 1296 to a prominent family in Constantinople. His father died when Gregory was still young. The youth was so bright and hardworking that the emperor himself took interest in Gregory, helping to raise and educate him in the hopes that he would one day hold a high government position.

But Gregory left all of the glamour of Constantinople's elite behind when he departed for Mount Athos at age 20 to become a monk. (And he was not the only member of his family to do this. Shortly thereafter, his mother and sisters also became monastics.) As a monk on Mt. Athos, Gregory learned about "Hesychasm," a very calm, still way to pray. He mastered this prayer of the heart, and thus we know him as a "hesychast."

In 1326, Gregory went to Thessalonica and was ordained to the priesthood. He lived the life of a hermit on weekdays, silently praying alone and away from the world. On the weekends, he would celebrate the holy services in his parish and he would preach so beautifully that his sermons brought his listeners to tears.

When Barlaam, a bright and studious monk, came to Mt. Athos and heard about hesychasm, he proclaimed it to be heresy. He insisted that it is not possible for humans to know God's essence or to experience His energies such as uncreated light. His dissent caused quite a stir, and Gregory was called to debate with Barlaam about this. Gregory's studies in the world and his experience as a hesychast put him in the perfect position for this debate. Gregory first tried to speak to Barlaam about all of this, but speaking did not seem to make any progress, so he began to write prolifically about the prayer of the heart and its validity. Although Gregory was writing a lot, they continued to meet and debate in person as well. One of these debates was before the 1341 Council of Constantinople, which took place in Hagia Sophia. This time, they were arguing about the Transfiguration. Gregory stood by the Orthodox belief that God revealed Himself to the disciples on Mt. Tabor, by using His Divine Energies. Barlaam said theirs was not an actual experience of God: just a helpful gift to the disciples, who couldn't really experience God because they are humans. The members of the Council upheld Gregory's position as the truly Orthodox position. They agreed that God, Whose Essence we cannot approach, chooses to reveal Himself through His Energies. Humans can see those Energies, such as the light that the disciples could see on Mt. Tabor. After the Council ruled that Barlaam's teachings were heresy, Barlaam fled to Calabria.

In spite of the ruling, some people still argued against Gregory, even locking him up in prison for 4 years at one point. However, the very next patriarch released him and made him Archbishop of Thessalonica. In his later years, God gave Gregory the gift to perform miracles, including

healing the sick, and he was granted a vision of St. John Chrysostom on the night before he died. His last words were, "To the heights! To the heights!"

Thanks to St. Gregory Palamas, the Church has maintained the truth that we humans are able to experience God through His uncreated energies. St. Gregory's life of dedication to God and His Church, as well as his willingness to stand for truth set him apart as a wonderful example to all of us. Sometimes people refer to the Sunday of St. Gregory of Palamas as "The Sunday of Orthodoxy Part Two," since his defense saved the Orthodox Church when it was under a second major attack.

The Gospel reading for this second Sunday of Lent is the story of the paralytic whose four friends lowered him through the roof of the place where Christ was so that he could be healed by Him. Our Lord not only healed his legs, making him able to walk again, but also healed his sins, telling him, "Your sins are forgiven you." How beautiful it is for us to be reminded, right here near the beginning of Great Lent, that the truth of our Faith is worth standing up for, as did St. Gregory; at the same time receiving the reassurance that Christ is waiting for us to come to Him so that He can heal both our soul and our body.

St. Gregory of Palamas, please intercede for us and for our salvation!