

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

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SUNDAY, MARCH 12

Second Sunday of Great Lent – St. Gregory Palamas

TONE 6 Tone 5

Troparion
(Resurrection)

**Tone 4
Troparion
(to the Theotokos)**

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos,
Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with
thee!
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb,
for thou hast borne the Savior of our
souls.

**Tone 5
Troparion
(Resurrection)**

The Angelic Powers were at Thy
tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Thy grave,
seeking Thy most pure body.
Thou didst capture hell not being
tempted by it.
Thou didst come to the Virgin,
granting life.
O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead,
glory to Thee.

**Tone 2
Troparion
(St. Gregory Palamas)**

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!

**Tone 8
Kontakion
(St. Gregory Palamas)**

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!"

**Tone 4
Kontakion
(from the Lenten Triodion)**

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!"

✠ Prokeimenon ✠

Tone 5

Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us / and preserve us from this generation forever. (Ps. 11:7)

V. Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly! (Ps. 11:1a)

Tone 1 Prokeimenon (St. Gregory Palamas)

My mouth shall speak wisdom; / the meditation of my heart shall be understanding. (Ps. 48:3)

☞ The Epistle Reading ☞

Hebrews 1:10-2:3

(Epistle)

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,

Hebrews 7:26-8:2

(Epistle, Saint)

For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever. Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: 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 sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

Hebrenjve 1:10-2:3

Edhe: "Ti në fillim, o Zot, themelove dhenë, edhe punë të duarve të tua janë qiejt. Ata do të prishen, po ti mbetesh; edhe të gjithë si rrobë do të vjetërohen, edhe si të veshur do t'i mbështjellësh ata, edhe do të ndërrohen; por ti je po ai, edhe vitet e tua nuk do të shterrojne". Edhe cilit prej engjëjve i tha ndonjëherë: "Rri në të djathtën time, deri sa të vë armiqtë e tu nënkëmbje të këmbëve të tua"? A nuk janë të gjithë frymëra shërbyese, që dërgohen për shërbesë për ata që kanë për të trashëguar shpëtim? Prandaj duhet ne më tepër t'ua vëmë veshin atyre që dëgjuam, se mos shkasim ndonjëherë. Sepse nëse doli e vërtetë fjala që u fol me anë të engjëjve, edhe çdo shkelje e mosdëgjim mori shpagim të drejtë, atëherë si do të shpëtojmë ne, në e lëmë pas dore një shpëtim kaq të madh? i cili, pasi zuri të flitet prej Zotit, u vërtetua ndër ne prej atyre që e dëgjuan.

Hebrenjve 7:26-8:2

Sepse i tillë kryepriift na duhej, i shenjtë, i pafajshëm, i papërljer, i ndarë nga mëkatarët dhe i bërë më i lartë se qiejt; i cili nuk ka përditë nevojë, si ata kryepriiftërinjtë, të blatoj therorë më përpara për mëkatet e tij, dhe pastaj për ato të popullit; sepse këtë e bëri një herë e përgjithmonë, kur pruri theror veten e tij. Sepse ligji vë kryepriiftërinj njerëz që kanë dobësi; po fjala e betimit që u bë pas ligjit vuri Birin, i cili është i përsosur për gjithë jetën Edhe përmbledhja e atyre që themi është kjo: Kemi një kryepriift të tillë, i cili ndenji në të djathtë të fronit të madhërisë në qiejt, edhe një shërbyes i shenjtërores dhe i tendës së vërtetë, të cilën e ngriti Zoti, e jo njeri.



К Евреям 1:10-2:3

И: в начале Ты, Господи, основал землю, и небеса--дело рук Твоих; они погибнут, а Ты пребываешь; и все обветшают, как риза, и как одежду свернешь их, и изменятся; но Ты тот же, и лета Твои не кончатся. Кому когда из Ангелов сказал [Бог]: седи одесную Меня, доколе положу врагов Твоих в подножие ног Твоих? Не все ли они суть служебные духи, посылаемые на служение для тех, которые имеют наследовать спасение? Посему мы должны быть особенно внимательны к слышанному, чтобы не отпасть. Ибо, если через Ангелов возвещенное слово было твердо, и всякое преступление и непослушание получало праведное воздаяние, то как мы избежим, вознерадев о толиком спасении, которое, быв сначала проповедано Господом, в нас утвердилось слышавшими [от Него],

К Евреям 7:26-8:2

Таков и должен быть у нас Первосвященник: святой, непричастный злу, непорочный, отделенный от грешников и превознесенный выше небес, Который не имеет нужды ежедневно, как те первосвященники, приносить жертвы сперва за свои грехи, потом за грехи народа, ибо Он совершил это однажды, принеся [в жертву] Себя Самого. Ибо закон поставляет первосвященниками человек, имеющих немощи; а слово клятвенное, после закона, [поставило] Сына, на веки совершенного. Главное же в том, о чем говорим, есть то: мы имеем такого Первосвященника, Который воссел одесную престола величия на небесах и [есть] священнодействователь святилища и скинии истинной, которую воздвиг Господь, а не человек.

Tone 6

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

V. He who dwelleth in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God.

(Ps. 90:1)

V. He will say to the Lord: "My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust." *(Ps. 90:2)*

Tone 2

V. The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak of judgment.

(Ps. 36:31)

St. Gregory Palamas



The Gospel Reading

Mark 2:1-12

(Gospel)

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!"

John 10:9-16

(Gospel, Saint)

I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

Markut 2:1-12

Edhe pas disa ditësh përsëri hyri në Kapernaum; dhe u dëgjua se është në një shtëpi. Edhe përnjëherë u mblodhën shumë vetë, aq sa as vendet pranë derës s'i nxinin më; edhe ai u predikonte atyre fjalën. Edhe vijnë tek ai e sjellin një të paralizuar që e ngrinin katër vetë. Edhe pasi s'mund të afroheshin tek ai nga turma, zbuluan kulmin ku ishte ai, edhe si bënë një vrimë, zbritën shtratin, mbi të cilin dergjej i paralizuari. Edhe Jisui, kur pa besimin e tyre, i thotë të paralizuarit: Bir, t'u falën mëkatet e tua. Edhe ca nga shkruesit ishin atje duke ndenjtur, edhe duke menduar në zemrat e tyre: Ç'flet ky kështu blasfemira? Cili mund të falë mëkate, përveçse një, Perëndia? Edhe Jisui menjëherë si e mori vesh në shpirtin e tij se po mendohen kështu me veten e tyre, u tha atyre: Përse i mendoni këto në zemrat tuaja? Ç'është më lehtë t'i them të paralizuarit: T'u falën mëkatet, apo t'i them: Ngrihu, e merr shtratin tënd, edhe ec? Po që ta dini se i Biri i njeriut ka pushtet të falë mëkate mbi dhe, – i thotë të paralizuarit: Ty të them, ngrihu dhe merr shtratin tënd e shko në shtëpinë tënde. Edhe ai u ngrit menjëherë dhe mori shtratin, edhe doli përpara të gjithëve, aq sa të gjithë çuditeshin dhe lavdëronin Perëndinë, duke thënë se kurrë s'kemi parë kështu.

Joanit 10:9-16

Unë jam dera. Në hyftë ndonjë me anën time, do të shpëtojë, edhe do të hyjë, edhe do të dalë, edhe do të gjejë kullotë. Vjedhësi nuk vjen, veçse për të vjedhur e për të therur e për të prishur. Unë erdha që të kenë jetë, edhe ta kenë me të tepërt. Unë jam bariu i mirë; bariu i mirë vë jetën e tij për dhentë. Po ai që

është rrogëtar, edhe që s'është bari, i cili nuk i ka dhentë të tijat, sheh ujkun duke ardhur, edhe lë dhentë e ikën, edhe ujku i rrëmben ato, edhe shpërndan dhentë. Edhe rrogëtari ikën, sepse është rrogëtar, edhe s'do t'ia dijë për dhentë. Unë jam bari i mirë, edhe njoh të miat, edhe njihem prej të miave. Siç më njeh Ati, edhe unë e njoh Atin; edhe vë jetën time për dhentë. Kam edhe të tjera dhen, të cilat s'janë prej këtij oborri; duhet t'i mbledh edhe ato; edhe do të dëgjojnë zërin tim; edhe do të bëhet një tufë, një bari.

От Марка 2:1-12

Через [несколько] дней опять пришел Он в Капернаум; и слышно стало, что Он в доме. Тотчас собрались многие, так что уже и у дверей не было места; и Он говорил им слово. И пришли к Нему с расслабленным, которого несли четверо; и, не имея возможности приблизиться к Нему за многолюдством, раскрыли [кровлю] дома, где Он находился, и, прокопав ее, спустили постель, на которой лежал расслабленный. Иисус, видя веру их, говорит расслабленному: чадо! прощаются тебе грехи твои. Тут сидели некоторые из книжников и помышляли в сердцах своих: что Он так богохульствует? кто может прощать грехи, кроме одного Бога? Иисус, тотчас узнав духом Своим, что они так помышляют в себе, сказал им: для чего так помышляете в сердцах ваших? Что легче? сказать ли расслабленному: прощаются тебе грехи? или сказать: встань, возьми свою постель и ходи? Но чтобы вы знали, что Сын Человеческий имеет власть на земле прощать грехи, --говорит расслабленному: тебе говорю: встань, возьми постель твою и иди в дом твой. Он тотчас встал и, взяв постель, вышел перед всеми, так что все изумлялись и прославляли Бога, говоря: никогда ничего такого мы не видали.

От Иоанна 10:9-16

Я есмь дверь: кто войдет Мною, тот спасется, и войдет, и выйдет, и пажить найдет. Вор приходит только для того, чтобы украсть, убить и погубить. Я пришел для того, чтобы имели жизнь и имели с избытком. Я есмь пастырь добрый: пастырь добрый полагает жизнь свою за овец. А наемник, не пастырь, которому овцы не свои, видит приходящего волка, и оставляет овец, и бежит; и волк расхищает овец, и разгоняет их. А наемник бежит, потому что наемник, и нерадит об овцах. Я есмь пастырь добрый; и знаю Моих, и Мои знают Меня. Как Отец знает Меня, [так] и Я знаю Отца; и жизнь Мою полагаю за овец. Есть у Меня и другие овцы, которые не сего двора, и тех надлежит Мне привести: и они услышат голос Мой, и будет одно стадо и один Пастырь.

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

Hymn to the Theotokos

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 Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil tidings! *(Ps. 111:6)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

PRAYERS	Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries	SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK
<i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i>		
<p>Newly-Departed Shane, Newly-Departed Jonas</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i></p> <p>Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the war in Ukraine: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.</p>	<p><i>March 12 – 18</i> Elizabeth Shaloka (B)</p> <p><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u></p> <p>Seven-Day Vigil Candles are used for the Eternal Light that hangs above the Royal Doors and are often placed in front of the icons of Christ or the Birth-giver of God. Often, people will donate these candles in honor of a loved one or along with special prayers. If you would like to donate a Seven-Day Vigil Candle, Please include the name or names of those for whom the candle is donated, and we will place them in this section for special prayers.</p>	<p><u>Church Lectionary</u></p> <p><i>Today</i> Hebrews 7:26-8:2 John 10:9-16 Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Mark 2:1-12</p>
<i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i>		
<p>Virginia, Denise, Olvian, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Tom, Nina, Sophia, Jim, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angjeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Fr. Milorad, Naomi, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Aleena, Lester Jr., Luke and his family, Natalia, Otari, Lasha</p>		<p><i>Monday</i> Isaiah 8:13-9:7 Genesis 6:9-22 Proverbs 8:1-21</p>
<i>Prayers In General</i>		
<p>Fr. Dennis and his family, Fr. Ioan, Christian, Michael, Erica, Kaida, DuDash family, Michael, Robert, Ally, Steve, Jake and Amanda and their children, Katherine, Ron, Anthony, Volodymyr, Nick, Sophia, Michael, Rafael, Bob, Barbara, Juliya and the child to be born of her, Isaac, Jemima and the child to be born of her, Ansley and the child to be born of her, Sandra, Nicholas, Catherine and the child to be born of her, Enoch, John, Marianna in her labor and the child to be born of her</p>		<p><i>Tuesday</i> Isaiah 9:9-10:4 Genesis 7:1-15 Proverbs 8:32-9:11</p>
<p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i></p> <p>Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the war in Ukraine.</p>		<p><i>Wednesday</i> Isaiah 10:12-20 Genesis 7:6-9 Proverbs 9:12-18</p>
<p><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i></p> <p>Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p>		<p><i>Thursday</i> Isaiah 11:10-12:2 Genesis 7:11-8:3 Proverbs 10:1-22</p>
<p>We give thanks to You, O Lord our God, Who in Your mercy and providential care, has called forth Archimandrite NIKODHIM to become a shepherd of wisdom and strength for our Albanian Archdiocese. We ask that You Bless Father NIKODHIM as he readies himself to become our future archpastor so he may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care for our spiritual well-being, • unite us in a zealous confession of our holy faith, • commit us in loving service to one another in bright witness to the glory of Your holy Name. <p>Hear us and have mercy.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COFFEE HOUR</p> <p>March 12 – Schaeffer Family 19 – Rubis Family 26 – None</p> <p>Coffee Hour is a wonderful chance for us to get together to break bread and spend time with each other, to celebrate those whom we have held memorials for, and to come together as the family of God outside of worship. To sign up, to host a coffee hour, contact Fr. Nicholas or Donna Bacon.</p>	<p><i>Friday</i> Isaiah 13:2-13 Genesis 8:4-21 Proverbs 10:31-11:12</p> <p><i>Saturday</i> Hebrews 10:32-38 Mark 2:14-17</p> <p><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></p> <p>Mar 12: 2 Samuel 13-16 Mar 13: 2 Samuel 17-20 Mar 14: 2 Samuel 21-24 Mar 15: 1 Kings 1-4 Mar 16: 1 Kings 5-8 Mar 17: 1 Kings 9-12 Mar 18: 1 Kings 13-17</p>

Isaiah Preaches Fire and Brimstone!

March 8, 2023 · Fr. Barnabas Powell



In front of the Supreme Court is the statue of “Lady Justice.” This is an ancient symbol of the purpose of law-based society. Notice the “Lady” is blindfolded. In one hand she holds the scales and in the other a sword. The symbolism is clear. The application of the Law will be blind and won’t show favoritism AND the law will be enforced. No wonder St. Paul declares about the authorities “if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain...” (Romans 13:4)

So, let me ask you an honest question: Do you think we live up to those ideals or not? Forgive my cynicism, but clearly we humans struggle with consistency here. So, does that failure mean we stop trying? Of course not. We must always strive for this ideal. So, what keeps us from doing better at this?

Look at our lesson today in Isaiah 5:16-25:

But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness. Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture, fatlings and kids shall feed among the ruins. Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, who draw sin as with cart ropes, who say: “Let him make haste, let him speed his work that we may see it; let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near, and let it come, that we may know it!” Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right! Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom go up like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against his people, and he stretched out his hand against them and smote them, and the mountains quaked; and their corpses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away and his hand is stretched out still.

St. Isaiah continues his proclamation of the truth to the People of God who seem to have forgotten their fidelity to the God Who rescued them from Egypt all those years ago. They, like us, grew satisfied and happy with the results of God’s salvation but forgot to remain grateful and faithful to that salvation. It’s an old story and one we repeat often even in our own lives.

So, how are we to take these “hellfire and brimstone” sermons from our dear Isaiah? Very seriously, that’s how!

While we know our God is love, we are never free to assume that love is anything other than the terrible and awful love of a Creator that made us for Himself and for our good, and the forgetting of that awful love results in a hellish living filled with just the opposite of what our God created us for in the first place. God's love is actually a terrifying reality when you realize that God loves you so much that He will not allow you to escape the consequences of your childish living. It is ultimately unloving to enable me to remain enslaved to my selfish choices, so God loves me too much to allow me to live in the fantasy world where I'm "rescued" from all my bad choices.

We were not made to "draw iniquity with cords of falsehood" or to "call evil good and good evil. who put darkness for light and light for darkness." The language Isaiah uses is of a people who are so purposefully confused as to turn society upside down in the name of insisting they know better than the Creator how to run their own lives. These rebels become "heroes at drinking wine." What a powerful phrase to show society has so forgotten wisdom that they make celebrities out of people who become drunk with their own pleasures. To enable the fantasy thinking of our self-centered delusions is the very definition of a deranged society. Helping people stay sick so you don't "offend" them is a level of childishness and silly immaturity that should NEVER be allowed to survive! Madness leads to destruction. Thank God!

And, of course, Isaiah reveals that this chaos and purposeful unfaithfulness triggers God's "anger." The "anger" of God is nothing less than our loving Creator allowing the natural consequences of foolish living to be undeterred by His power. The people foolish enough to forget God live with the full results of their rebellion against wisdom. This is the "tough love" of the Creator Who longs for your true freedom and not merely catering to your foolish, deluded, desires.

St. Theophylaktos, the bishop of Nicomedia in Asia, was a prime example of someone who refused to participate in the delusions of a society that had moved away from the wisdom of the Faith. He lived in a time when society was gripped by iconoclasm and the State persecuted all those who insisted that venerating the holy icons was both a venerable tradition and consistent with the theology of the Faith that Christ became flesh to make God's love for humanity visible! the saint was sent into exile where he died after confronting the emperor and rebuking him to his face over this persecution of the true Orthodox Faith.

So, today, are you experiencing the results of foolish living? If you're like me, you have to answer "yes." What to do? Remember the season you are in now and embrace the loving wisdom of God in repentance, which isn't saying I'm sorry for breaking a rule as much as it is confessing just how far I've missed the mark of God's justice and righteousness. Then you'll be on your way to being Orthodox on Purpose.

You lived a life hidden in God, O all-famed Theophylact, but Christ revealed you unto all as a shining light set upon the spiritual lampstand, and He placed in your hands the tablets of the Spirit's doctrines; whereby you enlighten us.

Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxchurch01810>

March Events

March

12 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
4:00pm Lenten Vespers
15 – 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
Pot-luck & Study
19 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
22 – 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
Pot-luck & Study
25 – 9:00am Divine Liturgy
Feast of the Annunciation

26 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
29 – 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
Pot-luck & Study

April

02 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
05 – 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
Pot-luck & Study
09 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

God's Love Consumes All

It is good to remember that in Orthodox teaching, heaven and hell are not about places, but about relationships. God is everywhere, and He did not create a heaven for some, and a hell for others. We choose how we will experience the presence of God in the afterlife. God can not be absent from anywhere, and those who have chosen, in this life, to ignore God, will, nevertheless, be in His presence for all of eternity.

At the age of seventy-seven (I can't believe I'm this old), I'm beginning to see a thinning in the ranks of my friends. I've lost a number of close friends, a few younger than myself, as well as both my parents. I've also lost relatives whom I dearly loved, and although my faith has been a very important part of my life since early childhood, I'm aware that some of those whom I've lost to death, were not people who placed any importance whatsoever to having a relationship with God.

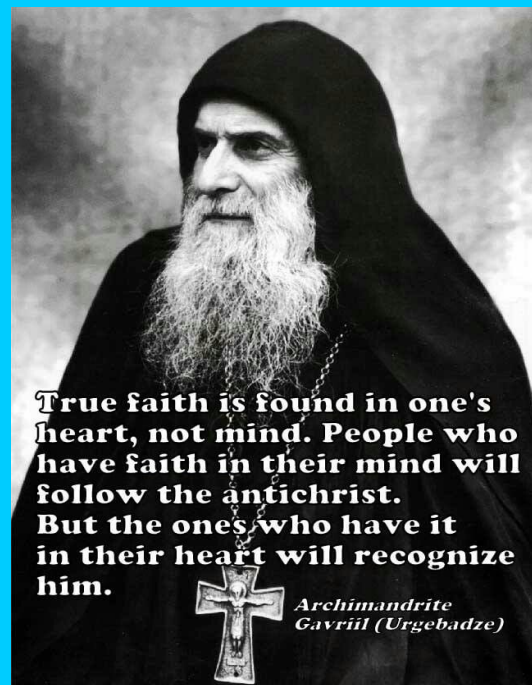
Although some of my Evangelical friends would hold to the view that anyone who has not committed their life to Christ, will be damned, I am personally comforted with the knowledge that God is a loving, compassionate, and merciful God, and that He desires all be saved. I rely on His mercy, and I trust in His ever abiding love. There is comfort in knowing His mercy even extends to those who've ignored Him. I believe God will take into

account the hearts of those who have not placed Him as the center of their lives, and that if they love others, and put others before self, God will take that into account.

God's love permeates the cosmos, and some experience His presence as blissful joy, while others experience His presence as a burning fire, and as emptiness. As to how we will feel about those whom we've loved in this life, but who have entered eternal life without a relationship with God, we can not know. We do know the prayers of the saints are heard by God, and are a comfort and support to even those who've died in a state of estrangement. We also know that our loving God hears our prayers, and that our intercessory prayers bring comfort to even those who have passed this life without having developed a relationship with God. Our role as intercessors is just as important as that of the saints, and if I must take my neighbor's salvation as seriously as my own.

All this being said, I am not a proponent of the idea of universal salvation. I am simply sharing my heartfelt gratitude for a personal God Who has been merciful to me, a sinful and unworthy monk of almost thirty years.

Love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon



The Greater Philadelphia Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood

invites everyone to attend the 2023
Lenten Vespers Services

March 12
4:00pm

Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas
St. Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral
6740 N 5th St, Philadelphia, PA 19126

March 19
4:00pm

Sunday of the Cross
Saint Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church
1855 Middletown Rd, Glen Mills, PA 19342

March 26
4:00pm

Sunday of St. John Climicus
St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
8210 West Chester Pike, Upper Darby, PA 19082

April 2
4:00pm

Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt
St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church
2300 W Huntington Dr, Wilmington, DE 19808

April 9
4:00pm

While not usually included with the Lenten Vespers, all are welcome to attend the service of Bridegroom Matins at St. Stephen Orthodox Cathedral 8598 Verree Rd, Philadelphia, PA 19115

Letter of Complaint for the Misuse of the Albanian Public Television by Journalist Ilir Yzeiri.

To: Mr. Enkelejd Joti, the General Director of the Albanian Public Television
& Ms. Armela Krasniqi, the Head of the Audiovisual Media Authority

On Thursday, January 12, 2023, in the ADN show, "Janullatos and the Decline of Independence of the Albanian Orthodox Church", by journalist Mr. Ilir Yzeiri, where Mr. Pellumb Xhufi was a guest, there were some unacceptable attacks against the Archbishop of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania and the entire Albanian Orthodox Community.

Our concern is not about these individuals' personal attitudes, but about their anti-orthodox tendency and their disrespectful and divisive propaganda which is openly declared on a public television which role is the recognition and promotion of religious communities and their harmony. Not to mention the fact that the orthodox people pay taxes contributing therefore in the preservation of public TV service and for this reason they feel upset when it is used against them.

Let's remember that:

The Orthodox Autocephalous Church and Archbishop Anastasios, who is elected according to the Holy Orthodox Canons, are both recognized as canonical and equal by all the Orthodox Churches in the world and by all the other Christian Churches and religious communities.

Archbishop Anastasios is the head of the Orthodox Community in Albania, and he is recognized, accepted and welcomed since 1992 from all the governments of our country. He has contributed to the continuation of the work of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania (canonically recognized in 1937) and clearly stated even in the Agreement with the Albanian State that is ratified by the Assembly of Albania (Law No.10 057, dated 22.1.2009)

Archbishop Anastasios, a well-known and widely appreciated figure both in the country and abroad, is a founding member of the Interreligious Council of Albania, with a "Honor of the Nation" decoration and has always contributed to strengthen religious harmony in the country considering it a precious national asset. He is an Albanian citizen, who is awarded with the "Skënderbeu" Order and "Honorary Citizen" in Tirana and in several other cities.

Our Church and His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios have always valued and continue the colossal work of His Eminence, Theofan Noli. Fr. Arthur Liolin who is the Chief Chancellor of the Albanian Orthodox Church in Boston, USA has claimed: "...I am sure that Noli would be friend with His Eminence Anastasios ..."

With hope and convenience that you will do your best to correct these anomalies, we express our great respect and willingness to cooperate in the future too.

The Press Office of the Archiepiscopate