

Sts. Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church

First-enthroned of the apostles, teachers of the universe: Entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy!

Rev. Nicholas Dellermann (Rector) (860) 861-7468 - Very Rev. Dennis Rhodes

frnicholas490@aol.com - <http://sspeterpaulphila.org/>

March 28, 2021

SUNDAY OF ST GREGORY PALAMAS

TONE 1

Today	10:00am	Divine Liturgy
Wed. 31	7:15pm	Presanctified Liturgy & Lenten Study
Sun. 04	10:00am	Divine Liturgy

One must be baptized and chrismated an Orthodox Christian to receive Holy Communion. Guests are invited to receive a blessing at the chalice and partake of the post-Communion bread (Antidoron).

Fast Days: Strict fast Monday and Tuesday (fasting from meat, fish, eggs, dairy, oil, wine and hard spirits as you are able.) Wine and oil allowed on Sunday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

Troparion – Tone 1 (Resurrection)

*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!”*

Troparion – Tone 4 (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!”*

Prayers for those in our Sts. Peter and Paul community (parishioners, family, friends) can be listed for remembrance in our litanies during the Liturgy. Feel free to give names to Fr. Nicholas - please indicate how each person listed is connected to us (parishioner, family, friend, etc.), as well as why we are praying for them (health, memory, travel, etc.).

Confessions can be heard by appointment. If you need, I will come to you during the week. Please do not hesitate to call for a time to drop by the church or to have me visit you.

Remembrances for both the living and the dead during the prayers of preparation of the Eucharistic Lamb and during the Augmented Litany should be given the week before the desired remembrance so that the names can be put into the bulletin and given to the Deacons for the prayers. Any names of the living that are not marked as sick or traveling will be listed under general prayers.

SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK

Church Lectionary

Today

Hebrews 1:10-2:3
Mark 2:1-12

Monday

Isaiah 8:13-9:7
Genesis 6:9-22
Proverbs 8:1-21

Tuesday

Isaiah 9:9-10:4
Genesis 7:1-15
Proverbs 8:32-9:11

Wednesday

Isaiah 10:12-20
Genesis 7:6-9
Proverbs 9:12-18

Thursday

Isaiah 11:10-12:2
Genesis 7:11-8:3
Proverbs 10:1-22

Friday

Isaiah 13:2-13
Genesis 8:4-21
Proverbs 10:31-11:12

Saturday

Hebrews 10:32-38
Mark 2:14-17

Reading the Bible in a Year

Mar 28: 3 Kings 9-12
Mar 29: 3 Kings 13-16
Mar 30: 3 Kings 17-20
Mar 31: 3 Kings 21-24
Apr 01: 3 Kings 25-29
Apr 02: 4 Kings 1-4
Apr 03: 4 Kings 5-8

A man becomes spiritual insofar as he lives a spiritual life. He begins to see God in all things, to see His power and might in every manifestation. Always and everywhere he sees himself abiding in God and dependent on God for all things. But insofar as a man lives a bodily life, so much he does he do bodily things; He doesn't see God in anything, even in the the most wondrous manifestations of His Divine power. In all things he sees body, material, everywhere and always - "God is not before his eyes." (Ps. 35:2)

-*St. John of Kronstadt*

Health of the Parish



March/April Events

March

28 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

31 - 7:00pm Presanctified Liturgy followed by Lenten study

April

04 - 10:00am Divine Liturgy

07 - 7:00pm Presanctified Liturgy followed by Lenten study

11 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy with Met. Tikhon

We are not compelled to love God

We are not compelled to love God, having been created with free will. God does not, nor can He, compel His creatures to love Him. Mutual love requires, by its very nature, freedom to either respond in love, or not. Yet when we respond to God's love with love His mercy leads us into holiness, for entering into this relationship with our Creator transforms us, changes us. When we respond to God's offer to commune with Him, He changes us into His likeness. We were meant from the beginning to be in His image and likeness and our positive response to the invitation to enter into divine communion leads to holiness.

Like Saint Paul we can say that whatever good we do is Christ in us. We can do nothing good without God's grace, which is why Saint John Chrysostom tells us, "faith's workings themselves are a gift of God, lest anyone should boast". No man can call Jesus the Christ but by the power of the Holy

Spirit and the gift of faith implants in us the grace to do good works. Can good works save us? No! God's mercy and grace saves us.

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works (James 1:17)."

Our Christian vocation is to acquire holiness (become whole), something that can only take place by the power of the Holy Spirit. Faith by itself, without good works, is indeed dead. Yet good works can only be done with God's grace (Christ in us).

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead (James 2:14-17). If we claim Christ to be our Savior yet have no love in us, and do no good works, we delude ourselves, thinking we have Christ when in reality we simply have religion. Religion is dead, but Christ in us is alive! Works don't save us, Christ saves us. Good works are a sign that we are being transformed, made holy, because Christ dwells in our hearts. Anything good we do is because Christ is in us, and His grace abounds.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

A Prayer for Use During the Week

Dear Lord, I struggle with keeping an eternal perspective, and when I do, I stumble into deception and selfishness. And when this happens, I find myself enslaved to my feelings and desires. Please help me stay awake to this temptation and stay free from slavery by seeking Your perspective on all things. Amen

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,

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!"

Children's Word

Our Lord doesn't change!

You probably have heard people talk about how things have changed. They might talk about how a kid has grown taller, or how a city has changed, or how we do things differently now than we did before.

Things are always changing, aren't they? Everything changes. Even rocks change. Stars change. People change. Families change. Towns change. Countries change. Everything changes!

Well, not everything! The epistle tells us today of something that never changes. God never changes. God is always the same! The epistle says, "In the beginning, You, Lord, founded the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain...But you are the same, and your years will never end."

Our Lord is the same forever. God is the same God always. He is always loving and fair. He is always ready to care for us. He is always looking to save us, even when we do the wrong thing. God is the same, and His years will never end. God never changes!

These words in today's epistle can be so comforting to us! We will see so many things change. Sometimes we might like the changes, but a lot of times, we won't. But let's always remember that our Lord is the same, and His years will never end. He is here for us always!

BEING QUIET SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS

How many times have your parents or your teachers told you to sit still, to be quiet?

Every Sunday during Lent we remember something different. Today we hear about a saint who made a big difference in our Church. Saint Gregory was the saint who told us how important it is to be still, to be quiet.

Why? Because when we're quiet, we can listen. We can listen to our Lord. We can pray to Him. We can say the Jesus prayer, again and again. If we have a question for God, if we are wondering what to do, we can be still and pray, and God will listen to us. And...we can listen to God! When Saint Gregory Palamas lived, about 700 years ago, another monk (named Barlaam) said that we humans can't know much about God. He thought it was more important to study than to be still and pray. But Saint Gregory wrote many, many things to explain how God wants to reveal Himself to us. God wants us to know Him. And we can try to know God better when we are silent. We can try to know God better when we are still. We can try to know God better when we are praying to Him! So that's why today is such a big day. This Lent, let's try to listen to Saint Gregory's example—Be still! Be quiet!

We celebrate St. Gregory Palamas on the second Sunday of Lent.

Mary Gives Her Free Yes!

March 25, 2021 · Fr. Barnabas Powell

Right here during our Lenten journey, the Church brings us to one of the six feasts of the Theotokos, the Virgin Mary. And it is the Feast of the Annunciation. Of course, you know this story well. God sends the angel Gabriel to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph and the angel (interestingly, the Greek word for “angel” is literally “messenger.” That’s a big hint by the way!) tells this young lady that she is going to have a baby, but that this Baby will be “the Son of the Most High.”

Every Jewish woman wondered if she’d be the mother of the Messiah. Every Jewish generation to this point expected to be the generation that witnessed the coming of the Messiah. In other words, the Jewish people were well prepared for this event! And here it was! And here she was! And here He comes!

Look at the passage we read on today’s Feastday from Luke 1:24-38:

In those days, Elizabeth the wife of Zacharias conceived and for five months she hid herself, saying, “Thus the Lord had done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.” In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you! But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

The significance of this moment and the reason why the Church insists we remember this event with liturgies, prayers, hymns, and devotions is because of three distinctions preserved for us in this universe-changing moment. First, God fulfills His promises. The first we hear of the Messiah is all the way back in the Garden of Eden after our first parents fell for the lie of the serpent. God told the serpent that he would bruise the heel of the “seed of the woman.” By the way, this is an allusion to the Virgin birth since women have the egg and men have the seed, but that’s for another day! All the promises of the Messiah’s coming God fulfills in sending us His Son “born of a woman, born under the Law” (see Galatians 4:4).

Next, God not only fulfills His promises, He also enlists one of our race to participate in humanity’s salvation. You see, God loves us, and His intention for each of us is to be His eternal companions fit to be with Him forever. But He refuses to force us. He invites us, He calls us, He woos us. But He never forces us. And He doesn’t force Mary. He tells her His plans and He waits for her response. You see, dearest, God wants companions, not slaves or even submissive and cowed servants. But He knows unless we actively choose (and keep on choosing) to participate in His work in our lives, we will either think of Him as nothing more than a heavenly “sugar daddy” or, worse yet, an “angry god” only to be obeyed rather than loved. And it’s best for us if we love Him, not for His benefit (He needs nothing, including me!) but for ours. He knows we will never be able to “hang” with Him forever if we don’t do so willingly!

Finally, He not only fulfills His promises and chooses one of us to bring salvation to everyone, but He also invites us all to learn how to do as she did by entering into the “family” of God. You see, it seems all other religions either allow you to be “religious” by yourself OR they get God so wrong that you are “forced” to obey out of fear and intimidation rather than motivated by love and trust. But this revelation of Christ invites me to a “family” with a mother and brothers and sisters, all seeking to follow our mother’s good example when she was confronted with an unbelievable message of Good News. She said “yes!” And now we are called to do the same. And if we do, then the same thing that happened to her will happen to us! The Holy Spirit will form the Person of Christ within us!

Today, on this Feast of the Annunciation, know that you, too, are being visited by the messenger of Good News and you, too, are being offered to have Christ formed inside you. You too are being asked to trust an amazing message; that God wants you to so be transformed by Christ within you that you actually participate in the very divine nature Himself. Just like her, you are called to say “yes” and become Orthodox on Purpose!

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 изменяется; 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 утвердились слышавшими [от Него],

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.

Hebrenjve 1:10-2:3

Edhe: "Ti, o Perëndi, në krye themelove tokën dhe qiejt janë vepër e duarve të tu. Ata do të prishen, por ti mbetesh; edhe të gjithë do të vjetrohen si rrobë, dhe ti do t'i mbështjellësh si një mantel edhe do të ndërrohen; por ti je po ai, dhe vitet e tua nuk do të shteren kurrë." Dhe cilit nga engjëjt i tha ndonjë herë: "Rri në të djathët time, gjersa t'i vë armiqtë e tu shtroje të këmbëve të tua"? A nuk janë ata të gjithë frymëra shërbënës, që dërgohen për të shërbyer për të mirën e atyre që kanë për të trashëguar shpëtimin? Prandaj ne duhet t'u përbahemi më shumë atyre që dëgjuam, se mos shkasim ndonjë herë nga ruga. Sepse, në qoftë se fjala që u fol nga engjëjt është e patundur dhe çdo shkelje e mosbindje mori një shpagim të drejtë, si do të shpëtojmë ne, nëqoftëse e lëmë pas dore një shpëtim kaq të madh? Ky shpëtim, si u shpall në fillim prej Perëndisë, u vërtetua ndër ne nga ata që e dëgjuan,

Marku 2:1-12

Pas disa ditësh, ai erdhi përsëri në Kapernaum dhe u muar vesh se ai gjendej në shtëpi; dhe menjëherë u mblodhën aq shumë njerëz, sa nuk gjeje më vend as përpara derës; dhe ai u predikonte Fjalën. Atëherë i erdhën disa që i paraqitën një të paralizuar, që po e bartnin katër vetë. Por, duke qenë se nuk mund t'i afroheshin për shkak të turmës, zbuluan çatinë në vendin ku ndodhej Jezusi dhe, mbasi hapën një vrimë, e lëshuan vigun mbi të cilin rrinte shtrirë i paralizuari. Jezusi, kur pa besimin e tyre, i tha të paralizuarit: "O bir, mëkatet e tua të janë falur!" Por aty po rrinin ulur disa shkribë, të cilët, në zemër të vet, po mendonin: "Pse vallë ky po flet blasfemi. Kush mund të falë mëkatet, veç Perëndisë vetë?" Por Jezusi, i cili menjëherë kuptoi në frymën e vet se ata po i mendonin këto gjëra në veten e tyre, u tha atyre: "Pse i mendoni këto gjëra në zemrat tuaja? Çfarë është më lehtë: t'i thuash të paralizuarit: "Mëkatet e tua të janë falur," apo t'i thuash: "Çohu, merre vigun tënd dhe ec"? Dhe tani, që ta dini se Biri i njeriut ka pushtet të falë mëkatët mbi dhe, unë po të them (i tha të paralizuarit): Çohu, merre vigun tënd dhe shko në shtëpinë tënde!.." Dhe ai u ngrit menjëherë, mori vigun e vet dhe doli përjashta në praninë e të gjithëve dhe kështu të gjithë u habitën dhe lëvduan Perëndinë duke thënë: "Një gjë të tillë s'e kemi parë kurrë!"