

St Gregory Palamas /

The Second Sunday of Great Lent

3 / 16 March

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 5: Let us, the faithful; praise and worship the Word, / Co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, / born for our salvation from the Virgin; / for He willed to be lifted up on the cross in the flesh, / to endure death, / and to raise the dead / by His glorious Resurrection!

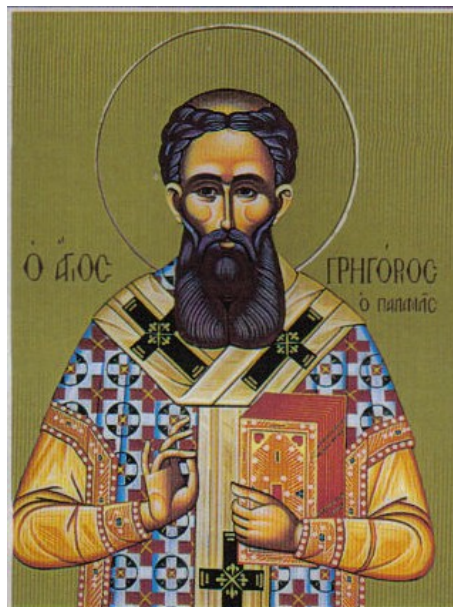
Tropar of St. Gregory Palamas, Tone 8: Light of Orthodoxy, pillar and teacher of the Church, adornment of monastics, invincible champion of theologians, O Gregory thou wonderworker, boast of Thessalonica, herald of grace, ever pray that our souls be saved.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 5: Thou didst descend into hell, O my Saviour, / shattering its gates as Almighty, / resurrecting the dead as Creator, / and destroying the sting of death. / Thou hadst delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man, / and we cry to Thee, O Lord, save us.

Kontakion of St Gregory Palamas, Tone 8: O sacred and divine instrument of wisdom, joyful trumpet of theology / with one accord we sing thy praises, O Gregory inspired by God. / But since thou standest now in mind and spirit before the Original Mind // guide our minds to Him, O father, that we may cry to thee Hail, preacher of grace.

Kontakion from the Triodion, Tone 4: The season of the virtues hath now been revealed / and judgement is at the doors / therefore let us arise and keep the Fast / offering tears of compunction together with our alms / and let us cry: our sins are more than the sands of the sea / but do Thou pardon us, O Creator of all // that we may receive incorruptible crowns.

St. Gregory Palamas — Gregory's father was an eminent official at the court of the Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus. The gifted Gregory, completing his secular studies, did not want to go into imperial service at court, but withdrew to the Holy Mountain and became a monk, living in asceticism at Vatopedi and the Great Lavra. He waged war against the heretic Barlaam, and finally overcame him. He was consecrated Metropolitan of Salonica in 1347, being glorified both as an ascetic and a theologian, both as a hierarch and a wonderworker.. He was the defender of the Hesychasts. He upheld the doctrine that the human body played an important part in prayer, and he argued that the Hesychasts did indeed experience the Divine and Uncreated Light of Tabor. To explain how this was possible, St. Gregory developed the distinction between the essence and the energies of God. He set Hesychasm on a firm dogmatic basis, by integrating it into Orthodox theology, and by showing how the Hesychast vision of Divine Light in no way undermined the doctrine that God can not be comprehended. His teachings were confirmed by the local councils held in Constantinople in 1341 and 1351. St. Gregory began by reaffirming the Biblical doctrine of man and of the Incarnation; i.e. the whole man, united in body and soul, was created in the image of God, and Christ, by taking a human body at the Incarnation, has 'made the flesh an inexhaustible source of sanctification'. The Hesychasts, so he argued, in placing emphasis on the body's part in prayer, are not guilty of a gross materialism but are simply remaining faithful to the Biblical doctrine of man as a unity. Christ took human flesh and saved the whole man; therefore it is the whole man that prays to God. How is it possible for man to know God and, at the same time, affirm that God is by nature unknowable? St. Gregory answered this question by quoting St. Basil the Great who said "We know our God from His energies, but we do not claim that we can draw near to His essence. For His energies come down to us, but His essence remains unapproachable". St. Gregory added "God is not a nature, for He is above all beings.... No single thing of all that is created has or ever will have even the slightest communion with the supreme nature, or nearness to it". Even though God's essence may be remote from us, He has revealed Himself through His energies (or grace). These energies do not exist apart from God, but are God Himself in His action and revelation to the world. It is through these energies that God enters into a direct and immediate relationship with us. When we say that the saints are 'deified' by the grace of God, we mean that they have a direct experience of God Himself through his energies (or grace), not in His essence. The vision of Light that Hesychasts receive is the same Light that surrounded Christ on Mount Tabor. It is a true vision of God in His divine energies.



Vespers: Lord I have Cried, Tone 5, on 10: Octoechos 6; Hierarch 4 (What hymns of praise - from the Triodion); G: Hierarch (Thrice-blessed saint); N: Sunday Dogmatic Tone 5. Aposticha: Octoechos; G: Hierarch (Thy tongue, watchful in teaching); N: Theotokion, Tone 8 (O unwedded Virgin).

Matins Gospel V

Epistle: St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews 1:10 - 2:3.

10 And: "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; 11 They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; 12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." 13 But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool?" 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

HEBREWS 2: 1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 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.

WE MUST GROW AND CHANGE WHILE ON EARTH

The hereinafter provides no more opportunities for change. So this leaves our life on earth as the only time during which change is possible. St. Paul says 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation' (I Cor.6:12). Of this passage, St. John Chrysostom says: "Let us therefore strive for the mastery in the time of this gift. It is the day of grace, of grace divine, wherefore with ease even we will obtain the crown [of heaven]" (Homily XII on II Cor. 6.)

"If you approach now, you will receive both grace and mercy, for you approach 'in due season,' but if you approach then, i.e., at the Day of Judgement, no longer will you receive it...Even now it is hard for those to find repentance who sin after baptism of grace...Now is the time of the gift; let no man despair of himself. Then will be the time of despairing, when the bride chamber is shut...For still are the spectators assembled; still is the contest; still is the prize in suspense," (Ibid. Homily VII on Hebrews IV).

So how do we use this 'accepted time' to benefit us for all eternity? The Church, in her wisdom, has made available to us the sacraments for this purpose: Baptism, Confession, Communion, and Holy Unction. But none of these can help us in the depth of our being or effect the necessary essential change in us without our own contributing effort and without that crowning virtue: humility. A baptism casually buried in the mire of subsequent sin, a perfunctory confession, communion taken without the fear and devout love of God, and holy unction received without fervent belief in its power of healing - all these are useless to us. Indeed they are a mockery and a sacrilege.

The change that must take place in us must be in the heart, 'with much groaning and weeping' (Cf. Rom.8:23). It must be real. For only the real and the pure can enter heaven.

Second Reading: St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews 7:26 - 8:2

The Gospel According To St. Mark 2: 1-12

1 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 were 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, 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.

Brothers and sisters, we have lived this week in the light of last Sunday—the Triumph of Orthodoxy. A wonderful feature was pointed out to us in the Gospel which was then read: Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? (Jn. 1:45-46).

Both of them, Philip and Nathanael, wanted to believe in the right way, praise God rightly, that is, to be Orthodox. But for them it meant first of all to determine who was the true Messiah. With such an intention they approached Christ. Seeing Nathanael, Christ said, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Nathanael saith unto Him, whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee” (Jn. 1:47-48).

What happened under the figtree we do not know. But we do know that Christ hit on just the right point, got right to the heart of this man. Here is Nathanael’s answer: “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God” (Jn. 1:49). Nathanael truly and rightly praised Christ, and in this way he became the first Orthodox man. And all because Christ touched his heart, touched something intimate lying deep, deep within Nathanael’s heart.

The triumph of Orthodoxy always starts in a person’s heart, and only afterwards is it expressed externally. True, sometimes there are cases when the external attracts the heart, as if waking it up. But for this to happen, there must be something in the heart which makes such an awakening possible. God demands our heart. To serve God without heart, Orthodoxy without heart—this is the same as a man without heart.

And here today’s Gospel speaks about the same thing. A paralytic was brought to the Lord, carried by four people. Unable to get near Christ because of the multitude, they removed the roof of the house, broke through and lowered the bed on which the paralytic was lying. See how difficult it all was. This is the fulfilment of the commandment of love in external life. Yes, such is life in the triumph of Orthodoxy.

But where is its source? Let’s listen further: ‘When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee’ (Mk. 2:5). These four had faith in their hearts, and this faith impelled them to make every effort to help; and seeing this faith, Jesus helped. The external happened as a result of the internal. God did not say at once to the paralytic: “Arise, take up thy bed,” but said, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” See, not the external first, but the internal. After all, sin was in the heart. A heart paralysed by sin could not sense God in Christ and could not rightly praise Him. And here Christ healed this heart, made it Orthodox. And then followed the external: “I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine house” (Mk. 2:11).

But what would have happened if the Lord had started with the second thing, with the external healing? The paralytic would have gotten up in the same way, would have taken his bed and gone, but only with a heart which was dead from sin. This would have been a living corpse. Here is what the Pharisees could not understand. ‘Whether is it easier?’ said Christ to them, “to say to the paralytic, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the paralytic) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine house” (Mk. 2:9-11). To this paralytic the Lord gave both the internal and the external. And he walked home and brought there with him the quiet feeling of the triumph of Orthodoxy.

And here, St. Gregory Palamas, to whom this Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated, shows us so clearly by his whole life that Christian life, Orthodox life, always begins in our heart, and only then expresses itself in feats of asceticism.

Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful.

[Second Reading: St. John 10: 9-16](#)

Saints of the Week

3 / 16 March —The Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus - They were comrades of St Theodore the Tyro. When glorious Theodore gloriously laid down his life, they remained behind in prison, and were not condemned for a long time because of the courage of the imperial governor of the town of Amasea. When a new governor arrived, more inhuman than his predecessor, he ordered these three to be brought before him . All three were young men; Eutropius and Cleonicus were brothers and Basiliscus a kinsman of Theodore's. But all three were, through their brotherly love, as blood-brothers. And they therefore said to the governor: 'As the Holy Trinity is indivisible, so are we indivisible in faith and inseparable in love . ' All flattery on the governor's part was in vain, as were all his efforts to bribe Eutropius. He first invited him to dine with him, which Eutropius refused with a quotation from the Psalms: 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsels of the ungodly', after which he offered him vast wealth—150 litres of silver—which Eutropius likewise refused, reminding the governor that Judas lost his soul for silver. After all these attempts, followed by interrogation and torture, the first two were condemned to be crucified, for which they gave thanks to Christ that He had counted them worthy to die the death He had died; and the third, Basiliscus, was beheaded. They all entered into the Kingdom of joy, where their commander, Theodore, was waiting for them, glorified before Christ the Lord and Victor. They suffered with honour in 308.

St. Non - also known as Nonna; Nonnita - Nobility, possibly of a royal house. A widow, it is said she was the unwed mother of Saint David of Wales. Lived in convents in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Alexandra of Alexandria; Venerable Winwaloe of Brittany; St. John IV, Catholicos of Georgia; Nun-martyr Martha (Kovrova) and Martyr Michael Stroevea; Righteous Zeno and Zoilus; 'Volokolamsk' Icon of the Mother of God; Synaxis of all the saints of the Kiev Caves Monastery.

4 / 17 March — St James the Faster - lived in the sixth century. He was so perfected in godliness that he was able to heal the gravest illnesses by his prayers. But the enemy of the human race brought a heavy temptation on him. There was once sent to him a woman who had been corrupted by some mockers. She pretended to weep before him, but enticed him to sin. Seeing that he would fall into sin, James put his left hand into the fire and held it there until it was completely burned. Seeing this, the woman was filled with fear and horror, repented and reformed her life. But on a second occasion he did not resist and fell with a young girl whom her parents had brought to him to be healed of her madness. He indeed healed her, but then sinned with her and, in order to conceal the sin, killed her and threw her into a river. As always, the path from lust to murder was not very long. James spent ten years after that as a penitent, living in a grave. He learned after that that God had forgiven him, because, when he at one time prayed for rain in a time of great drought from which both men and cattle were suffering, it fell. Here is an example, similar to that of David, of how wicked the evil demon is; how, by the permission of God, the greatest spiritual giants can topple, and how again, by sincere repentance, God in His compassion will forgive the greatest sins and does not punish those who punish themselves.

The Venerable Gerasimus - This remarkable and famous saint first learned about the ascetical life in the Egyptian Thebaid. He then went to the Jordan and there founded a community in which there were seventy monks. This community still exists today. He instituted a special Constitution [Rule] for his monastery by which the monks spent five days in their cells weaving baskets, reeds and rush mats. They were never allowed to light a fire in their cells. For five days they ate only a little dry bread and dates. The monks were required to keep their cells open so that when they went out, anyone could enter and remove whatever he needed from their cells. On Saturdays and Sundays they gathered in the monastic church. They had a common meal with a few vegetables and a little wine to the glory of God. Each monk would then bring in and place before the feet of the abbot that which he had made during the past five days. Each monk had only one robe. St. Gerasimus was an example to all. During the Great Lenten Fast he did not eat anything except what he received in Holy Communion. On one occasion, he saw a lion roaring from pain because there was a thorn in his paw. Gerasimus drew near to the lion, crossed himself, and removed the thorn in the animal's paw. The lion became so tame that he returned with Gerasimus to the monastery and remained there until the elder's death. When Gerasimus died, the lion succumbed from sorrow for him. Gerasimus attended the Fourth Ecumenical Council [Chalcedon, 451 A.D.] during the reign of Marcian and Plucheria. Even though in the beginning, Gerasimus leaned toward the Monophysite heresy of Eutyches and Dioscorus, he was a great defender and champion of Orthodoxy at the Council. St. Euthymius dissuaded him from this heresy. Of all of the disciples of Gerasimus, the most famous was St. Cyriacus the Recluse. St. Gerasimus died in the year 475 A.D., and was translated into the eternal joy of his Lord.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Paul and his sister Juliana and with them Quadratus, Acacius, and Stratonicus; Translation of the relics of Blessed Prince Wenceslaus (Vyacheslav) of the Czech Lands; Venerable Gerasimus of Vologda; St. Gregory, bishop of Assos; Right-believing Prince Basil

of Rostov; Venerable Joasaph of Snetogorsk Monastery, Pskov; Venerable Basil of Mirozh; Right-believing Prince Daniel of Moscow; Righteous Peter of Tomsk; New Hieromartyr priest Dimitry Ivanov; Hieromartyr Alexander Likhareva, priest; St. Gregory, bishop of Constantia.

5 / 18 March — Saint Nikolai, (Velimirovic) of Ochrid - Saint Nikolai was internationally known in the religious literary world. He was born to very religious parents in 1880 in Lelic, Yugoslavia. After finishing high school, he applied to a military academy and was rejected because he did not possess the physical requirements. Small in body but high in spirit, he decided to be a soldier for the Kingdom of Heaven. He applied to a theological seminary in Belgrade, where he was accepted. He graduated from theology in 1902. For a while he was teaching, but as he was an outstanding student, he was sent to enrich his education in France, Switzerland, Germany, England, and sometime later in Russia. He was fascinated by the firm beliefs of the Russian Orthodox people. In 1908, he received his doctorate of theology in Bern. The school year of 1908-09, he spent at Oxford University and earned his doctorate in philosophy. After a serious illness, he decided to serve the Lord who had spared his life. On December 20, 1909, he became a hieromonk in the Rakovica Monastery and put to work his knowledge and ability to serve God and the Serbian people. He lived and worked for God and the Serbian people as well as working in and for the Church, but it was not without serious criticism. From 1915-1919, he lived in America and England where he worked for his church and his government. In 1919, he returned to Serbia and was ordained Bishop of Zica. He worked very hard teaching religion, helping the poor, and opening orphanages. He earned the nickname "Grandpa". He was a zealous reader of the Holy Fathers. In 1941, the Germans arrested him. He was in confinement with Serbian Patriarch Gavrilo in the Ljuboslr Vojlovica Monastery for the greater part of the second world war where he wrote his "Prayer Canon" and a prayer to the Holy Mother of God of Vojlovica. In January 1945, he wrote three prayers which are on the cover of the Gospel in the Serbian Church in Vienna. In September of 1944, Saint Nikolai and Patriarch Gavrilo were taken from Vojlovica to the concentration camp Daxay, where they were subjected to abuse and torture until May 8, 1945, when they were rescued by Americans. Some time later Patriarch Gavrilo returned to Serbia but Nikolai decided to emigrate with one wish: to be buried in his fatherland. He came to America in 1946. Poor in health, he still had a lot of strength for his missionary and church work. He travelled extensively through America and Canada. He was a zealous writer and good teacher, often being referred to as the "New Chrysostom" because of his eloquence. He left a legacy of work both in English and in Serbian. One of these works is Missionary Letters. He died on the eighteenth of May in 1956 in the Monastery of Saint Tikhon in Pennsylvania and was buried in the Monastery of Saint Sava in Libertyville, Illinois. However his relics has since been translated to his homeland.

The Holy Martyr Conon of Isauria - He was brought up in the Faith of Christ and baptized in the name of the All-Holy and Life-giving Trinity by the Archangel Michael, the Commander of the Angelic Hosts of God. Until his death, the archangel of God invisibly watched over him. Conon was illumined and empowered by the Grace of the Holy Spirit so that his heart was not driven by anything worldly but only by the spiritual and heavenly. When his parents forced him into marriage, the first evening he took a candle and placed it under a utensil and asked his bride, "Which is better, light or darkness?" She replied, "Light." He then began to talk to her about the Faith of Christ and the spiritual life as being far more superior and more appealing than the physical. In this he succeeded. Afterwards Conon converted his wife and her parents to the Faith of Christ. Conon and his wife lived as brother and sister. Shortly thereafter, his wife and parents died, and he withdrew completely from this worldly life and devoted himself completely to prayer, fasting and pious thoughts. He performed great miracles through which he converted many to Christianity. Among other examples, Conon compelled evil spirits to serve him. During the time of a persecution, he was captured, tortured and pierced throughout with knives. The sick anointed themselves with his blood and they were healed. After that, he lived for two additional years in his town of Isauria and presented himself before the Lord. This glorious saint lived and was martyred in the second century.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Onisius of Isauria; St. Theophilus, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine; Martyr Conon the Gardener; Martyr Irais (Rhais) of Antioe in Egypt and with her Archelaus and 152 Martyrs; Venerable Mark the Faster of Egypt; St. Kieran, bishop of Saighir; St. Virgilius, bishop of Arles; Venerable Hesychius of Bithynia; Translation of the relics of Right-believing Prince Theodore of Smolensk and Yaroslavl and his children: David and Constantine; Venerable Adrian of Poshekhonye and Venerable Leonid, his fellow ascetic; Martyr John of Bulgaria; New Hieromartyr priest Nicholas Pokrovsky; Hieromartyr John Mirotvortsiev, priest, Monk-martyr Mardarius (Isaev) and Theophan (Grafov); Translation of the relics of St. Luke the Confessor, bishop of Simferopol; Martyrs Eulogius and Eulampius of Palestine; 'Vospitanie' Icon of the Mother of God.

6 / 19 March — The Forty Two Holy Martyrs of Ammoria - these were all generals under the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus. When the Emperor lost the struggle against the Saracens around the town of Ammoria, the Saracens took the town and enslaved many Christians, with these generals among them. The remaining Christians they either killed or sold into slavery, but threw these generals into

prison, where they remained for seven years. Moslem leaders came many times, urging them to accept the Mohammedan faith, but the generals refused to do so. When the Saracens told the generals that Mahomet was a true prophet and Christ was not, the generals asked them: 'If two men were to quarrel about a field, with one saying: "It's mine!", and the other saying: "No; it's mine!", and one had many witnesses that it was his field and the other had not a single witness but himself, what would you say—whose field was it?' The Saracens replied: 'His, of course, who had the many witnesses.' 'You have judged right', the generals answered them. 'So it is with Christ and Mahomet. Christ has many witnesses: the ancient prophets, whom you also recognise, from Moses to John the Baptist, witnessed to Him, But Mahomet only witnesses to himself that he is a prophet, and has no other witness.' The Saracens were confounded, but attempted then to defend their faith thus: 'That our faith is better than Christianity is seen in this: that God has given us victory over you, that He gives us the best lands on earth and an empire much greater than the Christian.' To this the generals replied: 'If that were so, then the idol-worship of Egypt and Babylon, and of Greece and Rome, and the fire-worship of Persia, would have been true faiths, for at some time each of these peoples has conquered others and governed them. It is obvious that your victory and power and wealth do not prove the truth of your faith. We know that God sometimes gives victory to Christians, and sometimes leaves them in torture and suffering to correct them and bring them to repentance and cleansing from sin.' After seven years they were beheaded, in 845. Their bodies were cast into the Euphrates, but they floated to the other bank where Christians collected them and gave them burial.

St. Fridolin, enlightener of the Upper Rhine - c 540. Born in Ireland, he became a monk at Luxeuil in France. Later he founded the monastery of Sackingen and is venerated as the Apostle of the Upper Rhine in Germany.

Translation of the relics of Saints Cyneswitha and Cyneburga, abbesses of Caistor (Daughter of Pendra of Mercia, a fierce opponent of Christianity. Sister of Saint Cyneburga. Relative of Saint Tibba. Benedictine nun. Abbess at Dormancaster (now Castor) abbey in Northamptonshire, England) and Saint Tibba (Benedictine nun at Dormancaster abbey, Northamptonshire, England), nun of Rynall.

Also commemorated on his day: Monk-martyr Conon of Iconium, and his son Conon, deacon; St. Taranius, bishop of Antioch; Venerable Arcadius of Cyprus (4 th C), and his disciples Julian and Euboulos; Martyr Gregorius of Armenia; St. Evagrius the Confessor, patriarch of Constantinople; Venerable Job (Joshua in the schema) of Anzersk Island, Solovki; Finding of the Precious Cross and the Precious Nails by the Holy Empress Helen in Jerusalem; 'Chenstokhov,' 'Shestokhovsk,' and 'Blessed Heaven' Icons of the Mother of God.

7 / 20 March — The Seven Hieromartyrs of Cherson - Basil, Ephraim, Eugene, Elpidius, Agathodorus, Aetherius and Capito. They were all bishops in Cherson at different times, and all suffered from unbelievers (only Aetherius died peacefully), either Jews or Greeks from Scythia. They had all gone to that savage land as missionaries, sent by the Patriarch of Jerusalem to bring the light of the Gospel there. They were all tortured and suffered for the sake of their Lord. Basil raised the son of a prince of Cherson to life, which embittered the Jews and they brought charges against him. He was bound by the feet and dragged through the streets of the town until he gave up the ghost. Ephraim was beheaded. Eugene, Elpidius and Agathodorus were beaten with rods and stones until they gave their souls into God's hands. Aetherius lived in the time of Constantine the Great, and so he governed the Church in freedom and peace, built a great church in Cherson and died peacefully. When the last of them, Capito, was sent as bishop, the savage Scythians sought a sign of him, that they might believe. And they suggested to him that he go into a burning furnace, and, if he were not burned up, they would believe. With fervent prayer and hope in God, Capito put on his episcopal pallium and, crossing himself, entered the burning furnace, holding his heart and thoughts directed towards God. He stood in the flames for about an hour, and came out untouched, with no scorch-mark either on his body or his clothing. Then all cried out: 'There is one God, the great and powerful God of the Christians, who keeps His servant safe in the burning furnace!', and the whole town and surroundings were baptised. Many spoke of this wonder at the Council of Nicaea (325), and all glorified God and praised the firm faith of St Capito. But Scythian unbelievers caught Capito by the River Dnieper and drowned him. They all suffered around the beginning of the fourth century.

Saint Eosterwine - 688. A Northumbrian noble, he entered the monastery of Wearmouth with his relative St Benedict. He succeeded St Benedict as abbot. He was celebrated for his gentleness.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Paul the Simple; St. Paul the Confessor, bishop of Plousias; Venerable Lawrence of Salamis Island; New Hieromartyr Nicholas Rozov, priest; New Monk-martyr Nilus (Tiutiukin) and Nun-martyrs Anna (Gorokhova), Antonina (Novikova), Eudokia (Sinitsina), Catherine (Konstantinova), Ksenia (Petrukhina), Maria (Grosheva), Matrona (Grosheva), and Nadezhda (Kruglova); Venerable Nestor and Arcadius, bishops of Tremithus in Cyprus; Venerable Emilian of Rome, in the world Victorinus; 'Surety of Sinners' Icon of the Mother of God Korets, Odrin, and Moscow.

8 / 21 March — St Theophylactus, Bishop of Nicomedia - When the emperor's advisor Tarasius, as a layman, was elected Patriarch of Constantinople, then with him and from him, many of his friends, admirers, and others of the laity received the monastic tonsure. Among them was Theophylactus. Tarasius appointed him Bishop of Nicomedia. As a bishop, Theophylactus was a good shepherd to his entrusted flock and proved to be exceptionally filled with compassion toward the less fortunate and indigent. After the death of St. Tarasius, the Patriarchal Throne was occupied by Nicephorus and shortly after that, the Imperial Throne was occupied by Leo the Armenian, who was an Iconoclast and, as such, raised up a absolute storm in the Church of Christ. Even though Iconoclasm had been anathematized by the Seventh Ecumenical Council [Nicæa, 783 A.D.], nevertheless, Emperor Leo re-instated it and by this wanted to supplant Orthodoxy. Saint Theophylactus opposed the emperor to his face and, when the emperor would not yield, Theophylactus said to him, "O emperor, violent injury will unexpectedly befall you, and you will not find anyone who will save you from it." Because of these words and by the order of the emperor, Theophylactus was ousted from his position and banished into exile, where he spent thirty years undergoing many hardships and insults and, where, in the end, he rendered his soul to the Lord about the year 845 A.D.

St. Felix of Burgundy, bishop of Dunwich, and enlightener of East Anglia (c.648) - Monk. Priest, In Burgundy he met befriended, converted and baptised King Sigebert who was in exile from East Anglia. England. When Sigebert returned to East Anglia in 630, he invited Felix to bring Christianity to his people. Felix was ordained bishop by Saint Honoratus of Canterbury, and then sailed up the River Kent, apparently starting his work in the area now known as Felixstowe. Evangelized throughout East Anglia, building a cathedral and school at Dunwich, stone churches throughout the region, and the college that became the University of Cambridge. With Saint Sigebert he founded the Bury Saint Edmunds abbey c.637. Worked with Saint Fursey. Spiritual teacher of Saint Audrey.

The anniversary of the repose of Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko) of Jordanville (1960) - the young Archmandrite Vitaly was assigned by his bishop to the Pochaev Monastery in 1902 as a printer and preacher. He turned the Pochaev print-shop into one of the biggest church printing operations in Russia, having St. Job of Pochaev - a champion of Orthodoxy against the Uniates - as his heavenly patron. His efforts were interrupted by the First World War and the Russian Revolution, however, as the print-shop was plundered by Ukrainian nationalists and the Bolsheviks. In 1924 Vladika Vitaly managed to re-establish the print-shop in Ladomirovo, situated just inside the Czechoslovakian border. In 1944 the brotherhood was forced to move again, this time because of the Second World War. Once again everything was lost, this time to advancing Soviet troops. Archimandrite Vitaly was ordained Bishop and appointed to North America. He asked the monks at the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville to accept him as one of the brethren which they did. He moved the print-shop of St. Job of Pochaev there in 1947, where it operates to this day. He was Abbot of the monastery from 1948 until his repose in 1960. One of the great figures of the Russian Diaspora, Vladika Vitaly was a great printer-missionary and stalwart of Orthodoxy in these times. May his memory be eternal!

New Martyr Archpriest Michael Edlklinsky - little is known of Father Michael. He was the parish priest of the Church of Sts. Boris & Gleb at Podol in Kiev from at least 1889 until the Revolution. He worked tirelessly for his parishioners. He was especially attentive to the problem of drunkenness, considering it to be the foremost reason for human depravation and spiritual fall. Through his prayers, many were healed from this terrible weakness. He was given much money by others for charitable purposes. He established a parish cafeteria which distributed food for the poor and also an orphanage and a day school for the children of working women. He, his Matushka, and their daughters dressed poorly so as to give everything they could to the poor. Once, when the people began to attack the local Jewish population, he proceeded together with his clergy in full vestments and admonished the rioters, who began to disperse. He had great faith, and prayed fervently with tears. His sermons greatly profited those who heard him, and all who confessed in his presence experienced spiritual joy and peace. He died in a Kiev prison in 1938. There have been many miracles worked through his prayers, both during his life and after his martyrdom. Holy New Hieromartyr Michael, pray for us!

Also commemorated on this day: Holy Apostle Hermas of the Seventy; Hieromartyr priest Theodoretus of Antioch; Venerable Dometius the Persian; Venerable Lazarus and Venerable Athanasius of Murom; New Hieromartyr John Znamensky, priest; New Martyr Vladimir Ushkov; 'Kursk-Root' Icon of the Sign of the Mother of God, in memory of miraculous preservation of the icon from the attack of militant atheists.

9 / 22 March — The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste - These were all soldiers in the Roman army, but believed firmly in the Lord Jesus. When a persecution arose in the time of Licinius, they were all taken for trial before the commander, who threatened to strip them of their military status. To this one of them, St Candidus, replied: 'Do not take only our military status, but also our bodies; nothing is dearer or of greater honour to us than Christ our God.' Then the commander ordered his servants to stone the holy

martyrs to death. But when the servants threw the stones at the Christians, the stones turned back and fell on them themselves, causing them grievous injuries. One stone fell on the commander's face and smashed his teeth. The torturers, in bestial fury, bound the holy martyrs and threw them into a lake, setting a watch all round it to prevent any of them escaping. There was a terrible frost, and the lake froze around the bodies of the martyrs. To make the torture worse, the torturers built and lit baths by the lake, in the sight of the freezing sufferers, with the idea that one of them might deny Christ and acknowledge the idols of Rome. In fact, one of them did abjure, came out of the water and went into the baths. But lo, during the night a strange light appeared from heaven, which heated the water in the lake and the bodies of the martyrs, and with that light there descended from heaven thirty-nine wreaths for their heads. One of the sentries on the shore saw this, confessed the name of Christ and went into the lake to be worthy of the fortieth wreath in place of the traitor. And the fortieth wreath was seen to descend upon him. The next day, the whole town was amazed to see the martyrs still alive. Then the wicked judges commanded that their legs be broken and their bodies thrown into the water, so that the Christians should not be able to find them. On the third day the martyrs appeared to the local bishop, Peter, and told him to search beneath the water and bring out their relics. The bishop went out on a dark night with his clergy, and saw where the martyrs' relics were glowing in the water. Every bone that had been broken off from their bodies rose to the surface and burned there like a candle. They gathered them, and gave them burial, and the souls of these martyrs went to Him who was martyred for us all and rose with glory, the Lord Jesus. They suffered with honour and were crowned with unfading glory in 320. On this day it was a tradition in Russia to make cookies in the shape of swallows which were then arriving with the approaching spring. In our own times Blessed Father Seraphim (Rose), who always baked swallow cookies for the feast, would also make lizard cookies as spring in Platina, where his Monastery of St. Herman of Alaska was situated, brought lizards, and not swallows.

St. Bosa, bishop of York - Died 686. Saint Bosa was a Benedictine monk at Whitby, England, under Saint Hilda. In 678, he was consecrated bishop of Deira (the southern half of Northumbria, now Yorkshire) by Saint Theodore, with his see at York, when Saint Wilfrid was driven out by King Egfrid for refusing to accept the division of his see. Wilfrid returned in 686, but Bosa took over the diocese in 691 when Wilfrid was again exiled following a quarrel with King Aldfrid; Bosa ruled it with great holiness and ability until his death. Saint Bede praises Bosa as "a man beloved by God . . . of most unusual merit and sanctity." One of his disciples was Saint Acca, who later followed and succeeded Wilfrid at Hexham.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Urpasianus of Nicomedia; Righteous Caesarius, brother of St. Gregory the Theologian; Venerable Philoromus the Confessor of Galatia; Translation of the relics of Martyr Abraham of Bulgaria; St. Jonah, bishop of Novgorod; Righteous Theodosius Levitsky, priest of Balta, Odessa; New Hieromartyrs Alexius Smirnov, Demetrius Glivenko, Michael Maslov, Sergius Lebedev, Sergius Tsvetkov, priests, Nicholas Goriunov, deacon, Monk-martyr Ioasaph (Shakhov), Nun-martyrs Alexandra (Samoilova) and Natalia (Ulianova); 'Albazin' Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos ('The Word Was Made Flesh').

‡ Daily Scripture Readings ‡

Monday - Isaiah 8:13-9:7 (6th Hour); Genesis 6:9-22 (Vespers, 1st Reading); Proverbs 8:1-21 (Vespers, 2nd Reading)

Tuesday - Isaiah 9:9-10:4 (6th Hour); Genesis 7:1-5 (Vespers, 1st Reading); Proverbs 8:32-9:11 (Vespers, 2nd Reading)

Wednesday - Isaiah 10:12-20 (6th Hour); Genesis 7:6-9 (Vespers, 1st Reading); Proverbs 9:12-18 (Vespers, 2nd Reading)

Thursday - Isaiah 11:10-12:2 (6th Hour); Genesis 7:11-8:3 (Vespers, 1st Reading); Proverbs 10:1-22 (Vespers, 2nd Reading)

Friday - Isaiah 13:2-13 (6th Hour); Genesis 8:4-21 (Vespers, 1st Reading); Proverbs 10:31-11:12 (Vespers, 2nd Reading)

Saturday - Luke 21:12-19 Matins Gospel; Hebrews 10:32-38; Mark 2:14-17; Hebrews 12:1-10 40 Martyrs; Matthew 20:1-16 40 Martyrs

REFLECTION

St. Gregory Palamas learned much through heavenly revelations. After he had spent three years in stillness in a cell of the Great Lavra, it was necessary for him to go out among men and benefit them with his accumulated knowledge and experience. God revealed this necessity to him through an extraordinary vision: One day, as though in a light sleep, Gregory saw himself holding a vessel in his hand full to overflowing with milk. Gradually, the milk turned into wine which likewise spilled over the rim, and drenched his hands and garments. Then a radiant youth appeared and said: "Why would you not give others of this wonderful drink that you are wasting so carelessly, or are you not aware that this is the gift of God's grace?" To this Gregory replied: "But if there is no one in our time who feels the need for such a drink, to whom shall I give it?" Then the youth said: "Whether there are some or whether there are none thirsty for such a drink, you are obligated to fulfill your debt and not neglect the gift of God." Gregory interpreted the milk as the common knowledge (of the masses) of moral life and conduct, and the wine as dogmatic teaching.

The second time Gregory secluded himself in a monastery he was writing his Principles of Orthodoxy. On the eve of the Feast of St. Anthony the Great, the monks summoned him to the all-night vigil service, but he remained at his work in the cell while all the brethren went to church. St. Anthony suddenly appeared to him and said: "Perfect stillness is good, but sometimes it is necessary to be with the brethren." Convinced by this revelation, Gregory immediately went into church to the joy of all the monks.

HOMILY

-About enduring to the end-

**"But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved "
(St. Matthew 24:13).**

O Lord most wonderful, You have endured all, all to the end. That is why You became not only blessed but the source of blessings for all men who desire good for themselves throughout the ages of ages. The apostles endured all to the end and entered into blessed eternity. The saints willingly endured the difficulties and sufferings to the end and were glorified, both in heaven and on earth. The martyrs willingly endured all pains to the end and became the adopted co-inheritors of the Kingdom of Christ. Every founder of a new organization recruits followers for himself with the promise of good fruits and many pleasures but deliberately remains silent about the hardships and labors which lead to those fruits and pleasures. Our Lord Jesus is the only one Who spoke the whole truth to His followers, both the bitter and the sweet side of the truth. He did not promise fruits without service, nor glory without suffering, nor ultimate rest without the thorny path, nor victory without struggle, nor pleasure without bitterness, nor the kingdom without tears and self-denial.

Although our Lord counted the many difficulties which would befall His followers, in the end He does not abandon them without comfort. He gives meaning to their sufferings and does not leave them in darkness. He says, "**The one who perseveres to the end will be saved.**" What is that blessing which awaits those who endure to the end that He Jesus fully revealed and that has been witnessed even until today and is being witnessed by many saints, who, have either appeared in glory to the faithful from the other world or who, while yet in the flesh, were uplifted in the spirit to a vision of that glory and blessedness which await the faithful, the chosen and persevering?

O Lord, You are our strength. Help us to endure to the end with faith that You are beside us.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.