



St. Michael the Archangel Eastern Orthodox Mission

Newsletter

March 2010

**Christ is in our midst!
He is and ever shall be!**

**Divine Liturgy or Akathist service
10:00 A.M.**

When you read the Gospels, Christ speaks to you; when you pray, you are speaking to Him. O sweet discourse, joyous, amiable discourse! God speaks to man, the King of Heaven converses with his corruptible servant! - St. Tikhon of Zadonsk (+1775)

Important Upcoming Church Dates:

Feb. 28th - Sunday of **St. Gregory Palamas** (See article on page 2).

Mar. 7th - **Sunday of the Holy Cross.**

✠ We will have the Baptism of Bob and Mary Zarzaur's grandson, Peyton Michael Zarzaur, son of Brad Zarzaur and Kristin Teegarden after the Divine Liturgy.

✠ There will also be a memorial service for Jim Pamfilis and Steve Pamfilis, Vangie's husband and son.

Mar. 28th - **The Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem.**

Mar. 29th - Passion Week begins.

Service Schedule for March:

Mar. 6th - Vespers, 6:00 PM

Mar. 7th - Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Mar. 14th - Akathist Service, 10:00AM

Mar. 20th - Vespers, 6:00 PM

Mar. 21st - Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Mar. 28th - Akathist Service

✠ Confessions will be heard on Saturdays after Vespers; also on Sunday mornings before Divine Liturgy 9:30 am to 10 am.

Father Gregory's contact info:

Home ph: 608-835-2565 & cell: 608-334-1073.

Email: frgregory@charter.net

Coffee Hour: (Lenten Fast through April 3rd)

Mar. 7th - Pamfilis

Apr. 4th - **The Pascha of the Lord.**

Mar. 14th - Pastrick

Apr. 11th - Zarzaur

Mar. 21st - Patterson

Apr. 18th - Bergantz

Mar. 28th - Platt

Apr. 25th - Buska

If you will be unable to serve coffee hour on your Sunday, please make arrangements to switch with another family. Thanks!

March Birthdays:

God Grant Them Many Years!

March 4th - Orest Buksa

20th - Irena Buksa

22nd - Andrej Jakovljevic

24th - Mark Moots

Anniversaries:

March 21st - Steve & Janice Demora

Church Cleaning:

March - Pastrick

April - Zarzaur

This is your Church - help keep it clean!

News Items? Please send church news items to the Newsletter editor Rick Kaiser at:

rkmk2001@bellsouth.net

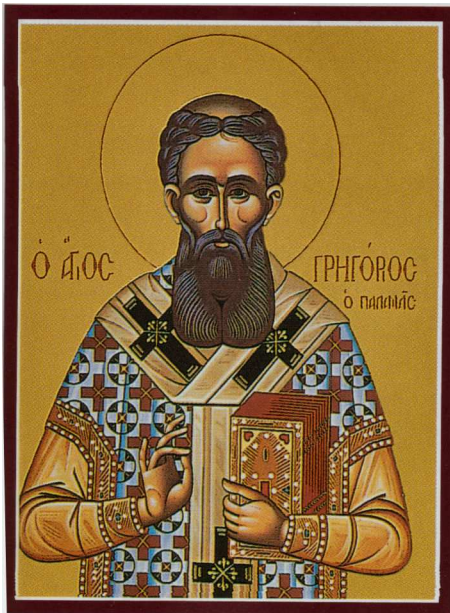
Prayer Requests: Please remember in your prayers: Child Jovana (2 years old – leukemia); Anna with child; Angela with child; Katarzyna Bazylewicz; Tatiana Kukhtareva; Mariam & Tom Calache; Mary Kochoff; Glenn Dengler (friend of Jokich family) and daughters Haley (7) and Nicole (3); Dessie Jokich (mother of Mike Jokich); Sandy & Roger Ellis; Daniel Ellis (brother of Roger); Ted Gulas; Edythe Hales; Markela Hatzakis; Brian Jokich; Elena Meagher and her son Igor; Daniel & Anne Kobasa (parents of H. Bergantz); Rhonda Lovette; Tim & Ron Waskerwitz; Evangeline Pamfilis; Pat Darzy; Mary Zarzaur; Fryne McCreary; and Dick Kaiser (Father of Rick Kaiser).

For the Departed: His Eminence Archbishop Job of Chicago. May his memory be eternal.

The Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas (by Fr. Gregory Schultz)

Each year, on the Second Sunday of Great Lent, the Church places before us the remembrance of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica. St. Gregory was born in 1296 in Constantinople into the pious and noble Palamas family. His father, Constantine, was a Senator at the court of the Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus (1282-1328). He was a gifted student and received an excellent education, both in Theology and Philosophy, yet did not want to go into the imperial service at court, like his father, and instead withdrew to Mt. Athos, where he became a monk. St. Gregory was consecrated Metropolitan of Thessalonica in 1347.

When the Church of Rome broke away in the great schism 1054, it began to abandon some of the spiritual and mystical way of life and to replace authentic spiritual experience with rational thought and a philosophical outlook (i.e.; scholasticism). The Latin monk Barlaam heard about Orthodox Christian monks on Mt. Athos who practiced hesychasm (from the Greek word hesychia “quietude”). These hesychasts were dedicated to contemplation, constant prayer and the ascetic, spiritual life. It was not uncommon for the Athosite monks to sometimes see the uncreated light of God, since they drew near to God during their life of prayer and silence.



Barlaam, could not understand how these monastics could have visions of uncreated light and provoked a controversy that threatened the hesychast tradition, suggesting that they were either deluded or that there must be some natural, worldly explanation that they mistook for God’s uncreated light. A local Council was convened in Constantinople in 1341 and again in 1351. St. Gregory was called upon to defend the hesychast tradition and spiritual way of life.

At these Councils, he explained and proved that the monks of Mt. Athos were indeed experiencing the uncreated light, in which our Lord Jesus Christ was seen in His

Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor. When Barlaam argued that this was heretical, St. Gregory showed the distinction between God's essence and God's energies, 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.*" (Letters 234, 1)

Orthodox theology holds that while humans can never know God's "essence" and that direct experience of God would simply obliterate us (much as Moses could not survive seeing God's face), God's "energies" can be directly experienced (as Moses could see God's back and live) Exodus 33:21-23. "*In accordance with the Orthodox Faith, he [St. Gregory Palamas] taught that the ascetic endeavor of fasting and prayer, particularly the practice of the Jesus Prayer according to the teachings of the hesychastic Fathers, prepares one to receive the grace-filled light of the Lord, which is like that which shone on Mt. Tabor at the Lord's Transfiguration. In other words, if God wills, according to one's striving, one can partake of divine blessedness while still on this sinful earth.*" (Archpriest Seraphim Slobodskoy, Law of God, p. 600)

Archimandrite George, Abbot of St. Gregorios Monastery on Mt. Athos, wrote in 1997, "If we touch a bare electric wire, we will die. However, if we connect a lamp to the wire, we are illuminated. We see, we enjoy, we are assisted, by the energy of electricity, although we cannot touch its essence. Let us say that something similar occurs with the uncreated energy of God."

After centuries of erroneous teaching, the heterodox western churches have developed a distorted view of the Christian faith drawn largely from secular humanism and Deism; emphasizing a superficial, external moral worldview, but not going deeper into the spiritual life. A young man who grew up in various Protestant churches, once asked his minister if he

could help him understand who God really is. The minister explained that all he needed was to do nothing morally wrong, (i.e.; don't kill, don't steal, etc.) and that God was a mystery and it was not possible for us to experience Him in a real way at this time. When we die and go to heaven, then we will understand everything. There is also the idea of a 'limited age of miracles'- -that the miracles we read about in the ancient times were only a special occurrence that happened historically but do not happen in our modern times. This is not only nonsense, but poses a tremendous stumbling block for Christians today. That is why the Christian faith seems so weak and ineffective in light of the many challenges we face, because this superficial, worldly "faith" is not a living faith that is real to many people. It is like the seed that fell among rocky soil and sprouted up quickly, but when the hot sun came out, withered and died, because it had no deep roots.

We need a strong Christian faith deeply rooted in the spiritual life that cannot be destroyed by vain and worldly ideas. St. Gregory Palamas helped open the way for us to have access to that spiritual life through the practices the Holy Church has given us in prayer, fasting, almsgiving and all the wealth and richness of the spiritual life which our Holy Fathers and Martyrs sacrificed and labored so much to preserve.

This is why we remember St. Gregory Palamas each year during the Lenten fast, to remind us that there is another world beyond this mundane, boring, materialistic world. Not only is that other world real and accessible to us, but in fact, we are not really living a fully Christian way of life unless we make the effort to struggle and participate in the spiritual life. Let us therefore turn to God each day, repent of our sins and ask for His help that we too may go deeper in our faith!