



HOLY RESURRECTION ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
Ecumenical Patriarchate
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YouTube: HROC Media



Very Rev. Peter Zarynow, Pastor
Protopresbyter John Fedornock

Subdeacons Anastasios Davis & Michael Vaporis Reader Stephen Sudik

Sunday 31 March 2024

Sunday of St Gregory Palamas

St. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem

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

Tone Two

THE SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES FOR THE WEEK IS AS FOLLOWS:

31 March (SUN) 2nd Sunday of the Great Fast

Sacrament of Chrismation: Maria Aukward 9:00am

Chanting of the 3rd Hour 9:15am

Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great 9:30am

Panachida: +Bernadette Awkward, by niece Maria

Coffee Social to Follow

03 April (Wed) 3rd Wednesday of the Great Fast

Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts 7:00pm

(fast from 4pm if receiving Communion)

05 (Fri) 3rd Friday of the Great Fast

Liturgy of the PreSanctified Gifts 9:30am

06 April (Sat) All-Souls Saturday

Divine Liturgy & Panachida: 9:30am

07 April (SUN) 3rd Sunday of the Great Fast

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE

THEOTOKOS/Sunday of The Holy Cross

Chanting of the 3rd Hour 9:15am

Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great 9:30am

Coffee Social to follow



Announcements:

Confessions will be heard after Divine Services on Sundays and weekdays and by appointment. Please contact Fr Peter to schedule. All faithful are encouraged to come to the Sacrament every 8-10 weeks, on average, to help maintain spiritual health. Make note that the final opportunity to have your Confession heard before Pascha will be after Holy Unction on Great & Holy Wednesday evening, 1 May. Please do not wait until the last minute.

Congratulations and God's choicest blessings to Maria Aukward on her entry into the Orthodox Faith through the Sacrament of Chrismation this morning, prior to the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. We welcome her into the Faith and say for her: *Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!*

A reminder that we are in the midst of the Great Fast. All fasting guidelines apply.

Extra copies of the Lenten Reading books have arrived. If you would still like to join in on the reading, please see Father during Coffee Social. Let's all read together during the coming season of the Great Fast!

In your envelope box is the offering for the annual **Patriarchal Pence** in support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This annual diocesan gift was established by +Metropolitan Orestes (of blessed memory) in the late 1930's in thanks for the Patriarchate accepting our Diocesan Faithful back into the fold of Holy Orthodoxy. Please hand your offering in by Palm Sunday, 28 April, so that the gift can be sent to Johnstown in a timely manner.

We are trialing a small group format for anyone who like to meet in person for fellowship and discussion with fellow parishioners mid-week. We will be meeting weekly at the Mt Airy Starbucks (441 E Ridgeville Blvd, Mt Airy, MD) on Thursdays at 7PM. Contact Jason Aumen with any questions or to let him know you are going to participate.

The next Bake Day is scheduled for Saturday 13 April with work beginning at 8am. Even if you did not sign up originally, we still need help, especially at the end of the day with clean up. Light snacks will be available in the morning and a light lunch will be served.

CANDLE OFFERINGS

Sacramental Table: Health & Wellness of Panfilov & Mazar families-Irina Panfilov (*Mnohaja L'ita!*)

Eternal Light: Eternal Memory Dad on his anniv of repose-Daughter Rose (*Vicnaja Pamjat!*)Eternal Memory niece Kelly on anniv of repose-Aunt Rose (*Memory Eternal!*) *from 24 March

Vigil Candles Offered For the Living (*Many Years! Mnohaja L'ita!*)

- 2-for health-love Mom & Dad
Jonathan & Lara; Stephanie
- 1-health of Melanie-love Alex
- 1-health of Alex-love Melanie
- 1-health & Special intention John & Marie Smith, Georgene & Ray Ammon, Fr Peter & Pa i Bernadette, Alex Zarynow, Marie Skasko, Fr John & Pa i Marge Fedornock, Lois Erhard, Charlie & Debi Myers, Chris Fallon, Barbara Homick, All parishioners of HROC-Carol Miller
- 2-for health-Sheila
HROC parishioners; Family members
- 3-special intention-Sheila
Fr. Peter & family; Diocesan Priests & their families; OCMC Missionaries
- 1-health of children & grandchildren-Tom & Amy
- 1-health of Chris Fallon-Michael, Kathleen, John & Anna
- 2-special intention-brother George
Archbishop Michael; Barbara Knighton
- 2-special intention-George Dahulich
Metropolitan Gregory; Bishop Matthias
- 13-for health-George Dahulich
Archbishop Michael; Fr Tom Kadlec; Fr Jim Dutko; Chris Fallon; Charlie Myers; Barbara Knighton; Pañi Kathy Dutko; Alex Zarynow; Emily Dzubak; Bishop Matthias; Katherine Chow; Psa. Diana Acsente; Fr. John & Pañi Marie Brancho
- 5-happy birthday-George Dahulich
Mike Mosher; Linda Taveira-DaSilva; Nadia Sumner; Bishop Matthais; Fr. Jim Dutko
- 1-happy Ordination Anniv Fr. George Acsente-George Dahulich
- 1-health of Savannah, Chloe, Caroline, Christopher, Natalie, Cole-love Grandparents
- 18-health & healing-John & Marie Smith
Irene Dzubak; Melanie Sampson; Carol Miller; Barbara Homick; Marie Skasko; Georgene & Ray Ammon; Fr Tom & Pañi Linda Kadlec; Fr John & Pañi Marge Fedornock; Fr John & Pañi Eleanor Pribish; Eleanor Breno; Charlie Myers; Lois Erhard; Pañi Marie Brancho; Pañi Jean Hutnyan; Chris
- Fallon; Fr Peter & Pañi Bernadette, Dorothy Sudik; Angela & son*
- 2-safety & peace-John & Marie Smith
for the Ukrainian people; Israel & its people
- 6-special intentions-the Breno Family
Breno Family; Fedornock Families; Peart Family; Nakonecznyj Family; Zankey Family; Fabian Family
- 1-health of Nadya & baby-the Breno Family
- 2-specail intention-Mom & Dad
Brian, Angela & Dominic; Stephen
- 16-for health & special intention-Mark & Marie
Mom; Nancy Shields; Mike Czap; Skeets & Beth; Charlie; Irene Dzubak; Carol Miller; Ray & Georgene Ammon; Eleanor Breno; FrJohn & Pañi Marge; FrPeter & Pañi Bernadette; Chris & Mike Fallon; Dan Zelensky
- 1-health of Andrew Myers-Mark & Marie
- 4-health-Charlie, Debi, Jacob & Joey
Skeets; Jessica; Aunt Dorothy; Carol Miller
- 2-specail intention Jacob & Joey-love Mom & Dad
- 1-health & healing Hayley, Bob, Peggy and Bruce, Andrea, Katie, Carol Miller, Cathy and her dad John, Chris Fallon, Cindy, Sharon, AnneMarie, Dorothy Sudik, Pa i Jean, Ray Ammon, Vickie Sullivan, Tom Delare, Chryl-Lois
- 1-for health Savannah, Caroline, Natalie, Karen K, Elizabeth Michel, Jeanne Delasko, Irene Dzubak, Barbara Homick, Georgene, Debbie Delare- Lois
- 1-safe travels Sally & Laura-Lois
- 1-health and wellbeing of Artem-Olga Vovk
- 1-health and wellbeing of Andrey, Lidia and Tatiana, Natalia, Konstantin, Eva, George, Michael, Lubov, Anastasia, Maxim and Ivan-Olga Vovk
- 1-health and wellbeing of Sofia, Sergey, Eva, Matthew, Yuliia, Alex, Dru, Irina and Dennis-Olga Vovk
- 3-for health-Rose Plowchin
Carol Miller; Barbara Parimucha; Lois Erhard
- 1-health & recovery Kate Burke-Diane Rowland
- 1-health & wellness of Panfilov & Mazar families-Irina Panfilov
- 2-blessed birthday-the Fallons
Bishop Matthias; Nadia Sumner

Vigil Candles In Loving Memory: (*Memory Eternal! Vicnaja Pamjat!*)

- 1+in loving memory of Les-love Carol
- 1+in memory Mother & Father. Carol Miller
- 1+In loving memory of Chris Hudack, Grandparents, Bettie Searfoss, Myrtle Miller, John Hudack, John Hrapchak, John Homick, Marge Tomasevich-Carol Miller
- 1+in loving memory of our father & mother-Taina and Craig
- 1+in loving memory of Chrysa Thear-Taina and Craig
- 2+loving memory-the Fallons
Pañi Jeannette; Anna & John Luchok
- 1+in memory of parents Helen & Larry Rowland-Diane
- 1+in memory of grandparents Helen & Peter Sedlar-Diane R
- 1+Memory Eternal Parents/Grandparents-Koval Family
- 1+Memory Eternal Uncle George, Aunt Marge & Uncle Tony-Koval Family
- 2+Memory Eternal-love Alex, Melanie
parents Michael & Elaine; parents John & Katherine
- 6+in memory-Sheila
John; Dad Kraynok; Mom Kraynok; Charles Hrapchak; Anna Hrapchak; Evelyn Hrapchak
- 1+In loving memory of Metro-Love, Joan and Family
- 1+in loving memory of parents Peter & Ann Dahulich-love son George
- 1+in memory of Pa i Jeannette Moriak-George Dahulich
- 1+in memory of Grammy-Charlie, Debi, Jacob & Joey
- 4+in memory-Mark & Marie
Chris Hudack; Verna Czap; Charlene Myers; Marge Tomasevich
- 1+loving memory of Vladmir, Irina, Sergey, Nina, Rafael, Germina, Maxim, Anna, Irena, Lidia, Pavel, Tatiana, Natalia, Olga-Olga Vovk
- 1+loving memory of Leonid, Anna, Izot, Natalia, Afanasii, Anastasia, Lidia-Olga Vovk
- 2+in memory-John & Marie Smith
John Homick; Marge Tomasevich

Prayers for our Lenten Prayer Friends

- 1-Sofia Sabirova-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Blessed Lent Alana Greenwald-YLPF
- 1-Blessed Lent Matthew Heimbach-YLPF
- 1-Cyndi Dzubak-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Michael Fallon-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Brandon Patrick-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Pa i Jean Hutnyan-Your Lenten Prayer friend
- 1-Susan Peart-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Marie Skasko-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Pa i Marge Fedornock-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Barbara Parimucha-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Janet Yakubik-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Christina Chow-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Katherine Chow-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Karoline Davis-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Irina Panfilov-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Tom Koval-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Philip Breno-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Michael Sumner-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Sebastian Greenwald-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Nick Yakubik-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Georgene Ammon-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Staci Fitzwater-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Debi Myers-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Nicholas Heimbach-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Amy Koval-Your Lenten Prayer Friend
- 1-Emily Dzubak-Your Lenten Prayer Friend



Prayer For The Priesthood

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our **Metropolitan Gregory**, and our spiritual fathers who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Remember also, O Lord, our priests and deacons, especially **Fr Edward Pehanich, Fr John Pribish, Fr Deacon Art Steinstra and our Diocesan Seminarians Dn. Peter Sodini, Nicholas Worobey, Seamus Murry, Samuel Loposky, Timothy Paproski, Nicholas Laliberte, Ignatios Leonardo, an Alexander Hurtsellers.** Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God who loves us, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.



Please pray for the following: Metropolitan GregoryLBishop MatthiasLFr. Frank & Pa i Connie MiloroLPa i Betty Jean BaranikLFr Michael RustikLFr. Mark LeasureLFr. John FencikLFr. Paul StollLFr. Robert & Pa i Peggy TeklinskiLDn. Peter Skoog & familyLFr James & Pa i Kathy DutkoLFr. Gregory AllardLPa i Linda BarrigerLFr. James Gleason, Fr. Luke MihalyLFr. Ted & Pa i Marjorie MozesLFr. Thomas BlaschakL Hieromonk MichaelLFr Thomas KadlecLFr Stephen KrivonakLPa i Donna SmoleyLPa i Annamarie SloveskoLPa i Patricia DurankoLFr John & Pa i Cindy Zboyovski, Fr. Jonathan & Pa i Marsha Tobias, Pa i Delores ZuderLPa i Amy GeorgeLPa i Sharon HolowatyLPa i MaryMargaret ConjelkoLFr Vasily & Matushka Olga AndreyukLFr John & Pa i Eleanor PribishLFr John MikitishLFr Michael & Pa i Karen MiklosLPa i Marie BranchoLPa i Joan MahlerLPa i Jean HutnyanLFr David & Pa i Paula KossyLPFC Joey MyersLBeth & Ed SkeetsqWilliamsLCarol MillerLDorothy MastronicolaLTony ZankeyLJustin PopekLFlorence Gregoric, James & Melody PeytonLJennifer BradyLCarol Blum, Katie Bleeker, Alexi Williams, Missy Johns, Susan Buckley, Constance Amey, James Lazor, Debbie DellGrace YoonLMichael DinneenLJoan DetwilerLJoan KondratickL Barbara HomickLJim David & Jeanne DelaskoLMelanie SamsonLLaura GaryLRichard & Wendy SulichLWendy TaylorLJames DurachkoLRandi Caffalle, Hayley Marshall, Jon Green, MaryJane, Kyle & Rosie Brant, Mary Agnes, Alicia, Lisa Chernob, Stephen BranchoLEmilyLMaryMargaretLLeslie PerezLThomas & Deborah DelareLDiana HannanLBridget MyersLDevan MerrillLBob FitzurkaLOlga VovkLLelaLCarlyLRobertLVic FitzwaterLTaina FergusonLOlya RomanovaLUke GriffithLRichard DurachkoLJennifer HaireLMary, Simon, AllaLArtem VovkL Charles ArnholdLDanielle VLDebbie AumenLDavid BulkoLBill FinkenLAngelo Taveira-DaSilva, Andrew S.L Natalie ZLStephen HutnyanLBarbara DrillockLCassidy RiselvatoLKatie AtkinsonLPhillip TrivettLCamila BonillaL Hilary SoperakLRobert KnowltonLRay RushnakLJenn Riselvato & babyLNadya Breno & baby

May Our Lord Jesus Christ Touch Them with His Healing Hand!!

All Soul Saturdays

The remaining All Soul Saturdays for 2024 will be observed on 6 April and 22 June. If there are any additions to make to your family list (or if you need to begin a family list), contact Fr. Peter as soon as possible. Please come and pray for the departed of your family and our parish family. Divine Liturgy and Panachida will be at 9:30am on each of these Saturdays. (Note: This year we are observing 3 of the 5 All-Souls Saturdays in the hope of boosting attendance at these Divine Services)



CHURCH CLEANING/WORK DAY Saturday, April 27

Attention Parish Family: Come and help clean our church in preparation for Pascha! Join us after the Saturday, Lazarus Holy Day Liturgy starting about 10:30 am until everything is done around mid-afternoon. Sign the "I am coming to clean on April 27" sign-up sheet on the hall bulletin board to let us know you are coming so we can plan for a continental brunch, lunch, and cleaning supplies.

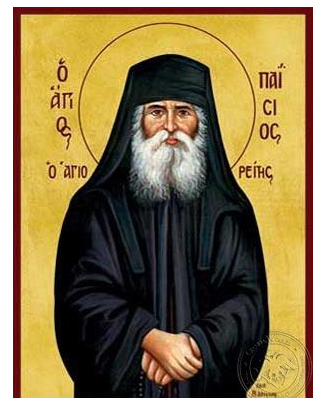


OR – IF YOU CAN'T COME ON THAT DATE, you can still help by doing one of the items at a time that is convenient to you before April 27.

Just write your name next to the item on the Church Cleaning flyer located on the hall bulletin board. After you clean, check it off to indicate completion. If you have questions, talk to Mark Sudik, Curator. Thank you for helping to keep our church beautiful!

What I see around me would drive me insane if I did not know that no matter what happens, God will have the last word.

St Paisios of the Holy Mountain



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH 2024

ATTENDING: Rose Plowchin, Father Peter, Marie Sudik, Marie Smith, Debi Myers, Tim Dzubak, Jason Aumen, Matt Delcher.

We will receive a \$4000 grant from the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS) Nonprofit Security Grant Program. The grant supports nonprofit and faith-based organizations located in Montgomery County to improve their security posture. We will use the funds to hire a security company to install three cameras on our property covering the courtyard, front door and upper parking lot, and lower parking lot. Thanks to Joan Wisnosky for providing the Council with the County's startup information.

A question at the annual meeting indicated we aren't updating the streaming app (free YouTube) because of the camera interface.

POST-MEETING CLARIFICATION: After discussions, our use of the free version of YouTube is the source of streaming and update issues, not a poor camera.

If parishioners experience buffering during the live liturgy stream, they can replay the liturgy later in the day when stream has been saved.

We have no plans to upgrade to "PAY" You Tube.

In April, the Church Council will conduct its annual walk through of parish buildings and grounds. If you have anything to report, please alert Father, Mark Sudik or Rose Plowchin.

A neighbor will be using the parking lot (about 10-20 cars) on Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. Please park in the lower lot.

Chandelier project is complete. We are very grateful to Shiela Hrapchak for the donation of the Chandelier and John Michael Homick for donating the installation.

Upcoming events/plans:

- o Bake day 13 APR
- o Parish Work Day/Lazarus Saturday – 27 Apr
- o Father out of town 6 JUNE-21 JUNE
- o Annual Picnic 16 JUNE

Next Council meeting is Sunday, 21 APR. Any parishioner can attend our meetings!

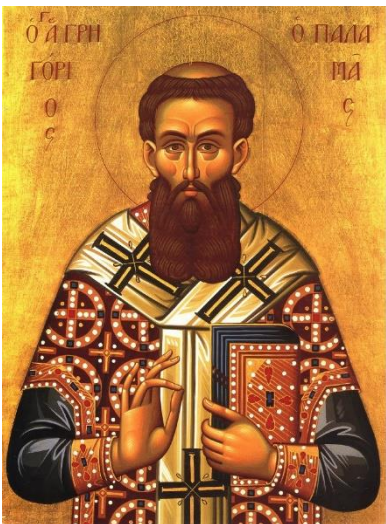


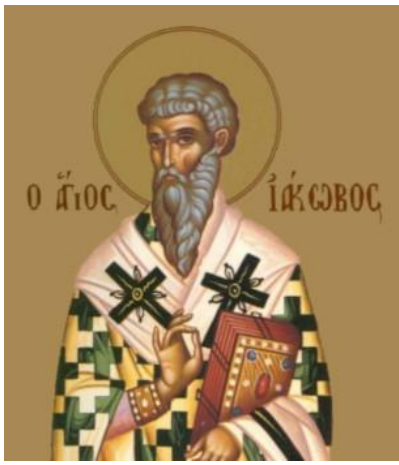
SUNDAY OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

Second Sunday of the Great Fast

This divine Father, who was from Asia Minor, was from childhood reared in the royal court of Constantinople, where he was instructed in both religious and secular wisdom. Later, while still a youth, he left the imperial court and struggled in asceticism on Mount Athos, and in the Skete at Beroea. He spent some time in Thessalonica being treated for an illness that came from his harsh manner of life. He was present in Constantinople at the Council that was convened in 1341 against Barlaam of Calabria, and at the Council of 1347 against Acindynus, who was of like mind with Barlaam; Barlaam and Acindynus claimed that the grace of God is created. At both these Councils, the Saint contended courageously for the true dogmas of the Church of Christ, teaching in particular that divine grace is not created, but is the uncreated energies of God which are poured forth throughout creation: otherwise it would be impossible, if grace were created, for man to have genuine communion with the uncreated God. In 1347 he was appointed Metropolitan of Thessalonica. He tended his flock in an apostolic manner for some twelve years, and wrote many books and treatises on the most exalted doctrines of our Faith; and having lived for a total of sixty-three years, he reposed in the Lord in 1359.

His holy relics are kept in the Cathedral of Thessalonica. A full service was composed for his feast day by the Patriarch Philotheus in 1368, when it was established that his feast be celebrated on this day. Since works without right faith avail nothing, we set Orthodoxy of faith as the foundation of all that we accomplish during the Fast, by celebrating the Triumph of Orthodoxy the Sunday before, and the great defender of the teachings of the holy Fathers today.





SAINT JAMES THE CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF CATANIA

Commemorated 21 March/03 April

Saint James, Bishop and Confessor was inclined toward the ascetic life from his early years. Saint James left the world and entered the Studite monastery, where he was tonsured. He led a strict life, full of works, fasting and prayer. Pious and well-versed in Holy Scripture, Saint James was elevated to the bishop's throne of Catania (Sicily).

During the reign of the iconoclast emperor Constantine V Copronymos (741-775), Saint James was repeatedly urged not to venerate the holy icons. They exhausted him in prison, starved him, and beat him, but he bravely endured all these torments. Saint James died in exile.



MARTYR NIKON AND 199 DISCIPLES WITH HIM IN SICILY

Commemorated 23 March/05 April

The Monk Martyr Nikon was born at Neapolis (Naples). His father was a pagan, and his mother a Christian. He was not baptized, but his mother secretly instructed him in the tenets of Christianity. Nikon was still a pagan when he reached adulthood. He served as a soldier, and showed unusual courage and strength.

Once, Nikon and his military company were surrounded by enemies. In deadly peril, he remembered the Christian precepts of his mother and, signing himself with the Sign of the Cross, he prayed to God, vowing to be baptized if he were saved. Filled with unusual strength, he killed many of the enemy, and put the rest to flight.

He managed to return home, giving thanks to God for preserving his life. With the blessing of his mother, he set off in search of a priest. This was no easy thing to do in a time of persecution. Saint Nikon took a ship to the island of Chios. He went up on a high mountain and spent eight days in fasting and prayer, entreating the Lord to help him.

An angel of God appeared to Saint Nikon in a dream, showing him the way. Saint Nikon went to Mount Ganos, where many monks were hidden, headed by Theodosius the Bishop of Cyzicus. Saint Nikon received from the bishop both the mystery of Baptism and the angelic schema (i.e., monastic tonsure). Living in the cave church, Saint Nikon became an example for all the brethren.

When Saint Nikon had lived on the mountain for three years, an angel revealed to the bishop that Saint Nikon should be consecrated bishop, and should move to the province of Sicily with all the monks. Bishop Theodosius obeyed the angel, and then died after he had entrusted the 190 monks to Saint Nikon. After he buried Bishop Theodosius, Saint Nikon sailed to Sicily with the brethren, and so was saved from approaching barbarians.

By God's grace, Saint Nikon came to his native city Neapolis. He found his mother still alive, and he remained with her for the final day of her life. His mother collapsed on his chest with tears of joy and kissed him. Making a prostration to the ground, she said, "I give thanks to You, O Lord, for You have permitted me to see my son as a monk, and as a bishop. Now, my Lord, hear Your servant, and receive my soul." When she had finished this prayer, the righteous woman died. Those present glorified God and buried her with psalms.

Rumors of Saint Nikon's arrival spread through the city, and ten soldiers, his former companions, came to see him. After conversing with the saint they believed and were baptized, and went with him to Sicily. Having arrived on the island, Saint Nikon settled with the monks in a desolate area, called Gigia, near the river Asinum.

Many years passed, and there was another persecution against Christians. Quintilian, the governor of Sicily, was informed that Bishop Nikon was living nearby with many monks. All 199 monks were seized and beheaded, but they left Saint Nikon alive in order to torture him.

They burned him with fire, yet he remained unharmed. They tied him to the tails of wild horses to be dragged over the ground, but the horses would not budge from the spot. They cut out the saint's tongue, threw him off a high cliff, and finally beheaded him. The body of the Hieromartyr Nikon was left in a field to be eaten by wild beasts and birds.

A certain shepherd, possessed by an evil spirit, went to that place, and finding the body of the saint, he immediately fell to the ground on his face. The unclean spirit, vanquished by the power of the saint, had thrown him to the ground and gone out from him with a loud shriek: "Woe is me, woe is me, where can I flee from Nikon?"

The healed shepherd related this to the people. The bishop of the city of Messina also learned of this, then he and his clergy buried the bodies of Saint Nikon and his disciples.



The Outreach Ministry of Coffee Hour

Fr Jim Kordaris, from the Orthodox Observer (GOA newspaper), Jan-Feb 2018

You may not realize it, but coffee hour is a ministry. It's an extension of liturgy that goes back to the earliest days of the Church when the faithful would gather following the Eucharist for fellowship and to share a meal.

Outreach in the parish is not difficult.

There is no silver bullet – no magic pill. It is a thousand little things we do that send a message of welcome to those that enter our doors.

Is your church friendly? It may not be as friendly as you think. We often hear the story of the person that visited a “friendly” parish only to find that the parishioners are only friendly to each other. Standing in the fellowship hall, coffee cup in hand, visitors are often ignored, left to feel invisible.

We look forward to fellowship after worship. It's our social time – a time to see friends and catch up with their news and to make plans for the week ahead.

But we may need to re-think our parish welcome efforts when it comes to coffee hour. Parishioners should be encouraged to speak to someone new during fellowship, welcoming the stranger and including them in conversation.

Our welcome efforts actually begin the moment people walk through our doors or even when they drive into our parking lot. Visitors decide within five to ten minutes of their arrival whether they will come back. Our welcome efforts may be our most important ministry.

Greeters need to welcome visitors – whether outside the door or as they enter the church. A sincere smile, handshake and greeting are what we offer as we place the Sunday bulletin in their hand.

The bulletin should offer a welcome and an invitation to fellowship following liturgy. This welcome and invitation could be offered again during the announcements by the priest. The greeters' ministry continues as they welcome, guide, and accompany guests into coffee hour, making introductions.

For both the first-time visitor and the person returning after a long absence, entering a fellowship hall filled with people we don't know or haven't seen for a long time is difficult. Greeters can say, “Let me take you in to coffee hour. We'll get a cup of coffee. I'll introduce you to a few people.” This sounds like nothing, but it makes the coffee hour a ministry. It makes entering that room much less intimidating.

Remember – People are not looking for a friendly church. They are looking to make friends at church. When our people meet at church and get together outside of church, we have begun to create a community of friends. In a healthy fellowship ministry, people are making Orthodox Christian friends that are changing their lives.

As with any parish ministry, a hospitality ministry requires leadership and guidance. As parish leaders, we are responsible for how we get along with parishioners as well as how they get along with each other.

Parish leaders find out about the people they lead. They make introductions and help them to find their place, both socially and in service to the community.

This ministry is not without pitfalls.

There can be no “turf.” No one person makes the coffee or controls the coffee hour every week. If one person “owns” the ministry, it can become stale. Leaders are stewards of their position, always asking, “Who can I get involved?”

If possible, create a hospitality team or several teams. Make it a group effort as much as possible. Make it clear that it's a ministry. Communicate that “Your help is welcome here.” Give some thought to what you offer your guests. You are sending a message that “we are glad you're here.”

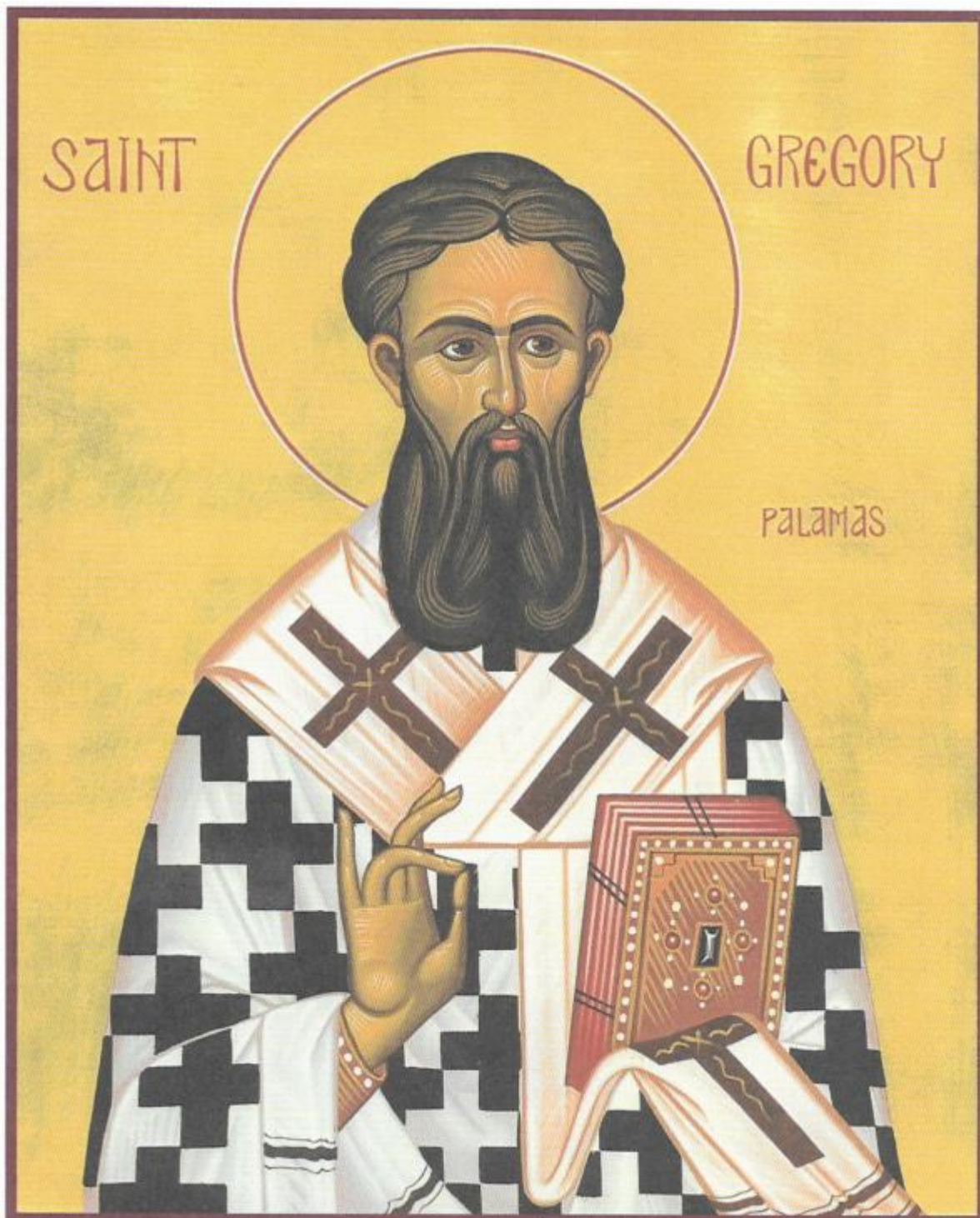
Preparing for coffee hour should not become a competition sport, but what you put out for guests sends a message. Consider them as guests in your spiritual home.

One New Testament Professor liked to tell his students that in the New Testament, bread is never just bread. We can also say that in the parish, coffee is never just coffee. It is so much more.

Many Orthodox Christians come from Southern European or Middle Eastern backgrounds where food equals hospitality. Putting food and drink in a visitor's hands is how we say “Welcome!” When you've shared coffee or food, you've begun to form a friendship. We become the Body of Christ in the Divine Liturgy as we are connected through His Body and Blood. We continue to be the body of Christ when we gather in His name. The Holy Spirit is present if we truly see fellowship as a ministry.



Fr Jim Kordaris serves the GOA as director of Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism and as pastor of St George Church in Kingston, New York



“ENLIGHTEN MY DARKNESS, O LORD”

The Second Sunday of Lent is dedicated to the memory of a saint that may be described as a *“mysterious mystic”*: **St. Gregory Palamas**. Gregory was born in 1296 A.D. and received his secular education in Constantinople. His father was a prominent official in the Emperor’s court, but Gregory chose to devote his life to serving a Heavenly King rather than a temporal one. At the age of 20, he entered a monastery on Mt. Athos, and was ordained to the priesthood 10 years later.

Gregory Palamas became part of a controversial monastic movement called *“hesychasm.”* Hesychasm called for its followers to embrace a life of silence and contemplative prayer. It taught that through fasting, rigorous bodily discipline and repetition of the Jesus Prayer, man can know God in an intimate way. For years, the only words uttered by St. Gregory were: *“Enlighten my darkness, O Lord,”* as he sought to know His Creator with all of his being.

Although he would have been content to remain on Mt. Athos for the rest of his life, Gregory was appointed Archbishop of Thessalonica in 1347 A.D. His views on theological matters came under fierce attack by his enemies, even causing him to be imprisoned for heresy on several occasions. Gregory’s positions eventually became universally accepted by the entire Holy Orthodox Church, and today, Gregory Palamas is extolled as a *“Light of Orthodoxy, a teacher of the Church and an invincible champion of theologians.”*

Gregory Palamas fell asleep in the Lord in 1359 A.D. He was canonized a saint only 9 years after his death.

Icon by Austin Kachek - Marville, NJ