

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, Primate
Very Rev. Father Joseph Kimmett, Pastor
Very Rev. Father Nifon Abraham, Pastor Emeritus



23 MARCH
2008

GREGORY
PALAMAS
SECOND
SUNDAY IN
LENT

WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS AND FRIENDS.

IT IS A BLESSING TO HAVE YOU WITH US AT SAINT GEORGE.
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT OUR PARISH,
OR THE ORTHODOX CHURCH, PLEASE SEE THE PRIEST.

ONLY THOSE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS WHO ARE REPENTANT OF THEIR
SINS AND HAVE PREPARED THEMSELVES THROUGH FASTING ARE INVITED
TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION. EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO VENERATE
THE CROSS AND SHARE HOLY BREAD FOLLOWING THE LITURGY.

THIS WEEK AT SAINT GEORGE

Today -	<i>Bible Bowl Study Session, during coffee hour</i>
Monday -	<i>Great Vespers for the Feast 7:00 pm</i>
Tuesday -	<i>Annunciation: Divine Liturgy, 9:00 am</i> <i>Fish Dinner, 5:00 pm</i>
Wednesday -	<i>Pre-Sanctified Liturgy (NO potluck this week), 6:00 pm</i>
Friday -	<i>Third Salutations on the Akathist, 7:00 pm</i>
Saturday -	<i>Great Vespers, 5:00 pm</i> <i>and Footlamps Program</i>
Next Sunday -	<i>Matins & Divine Liturgy, 9:00 / 10:00 am</i> <i>Ladies Meeting, after coffee hour.</i>

The Great Lenten Fast has begun. Meat, fish, dairy, eggs, wine and oil are not to be consumed until Pascha. There is katalysis for wine and oil Saturdays and Sundays and for fish on the Annunciation.

HOLY BREAD

The gifts today are offered by the Fotopoulos Family, in memory of Nicholas.

COFFEE HOUR

Please join us for refreshments today, following the Divine Liturgy. Our host is the Fotopoulos family.

FLOWERS

The bouquets before the Icon of Christ and the Theotokos are given by Yvanne Jean-Michel, Lena and Maya, in memory of Nicholas Fotopoulos.

6 Atwood Avenue • Norwood, MA, 02062
tel:781-762-4396 • fax:781-255-1871 • email: geonorwood@aol.com

LADIES NEWS

March is Antiochian Women's Month throughout our archdiocese. Here in Norwood, the *Coffee Hour Baskets* during March will benefit "The Project".

Our Ladies president, Katie Birtwell will speak more about this at the end of the Liturgy today.

This Tuesday, the Ladies are sponsoring a *Fish Dinner* for the Feast of the Annunciation.

Make reservations today during coffee hour.

HOLY WEEK BOOK

Last year was the first time the new Archdiocese Holy Week text was used. Many people found this book to be quite good. If you would like a copy, complete the form in the parish hall; we are sending the order in on April 1st.

WATER BOTTLES

Those cool, almost indestructible water bottles? They're back, they are being sold by the Teen SOYO are available today for \$10 each. Great for your work out, or for sipping H₂O during the day.

LENTEN RETREAT

Archangel Michael Church on Cape Cod is having a retreat on April 5th. The leader is Father Ephraim Peters. Registration forms are in the parish hall.

LENTEN DINNER

In addition to the Fish Dinner Tuesday, the potluck on most Wednesdays, plan now for a *Lenten Supper on Friday the 11th April*, before the Akathist service.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year at Saint George, the Boulis Scholarship is awarded to graduating high school students, who have been active in our parish. Other scholarships are also available for faithful Orthodox Christians including one from the Nicholas Beram Veterans and one from the Antiochian Women. See Helen Abril, head of the Scholarship Committee if you have any questions,

ALMS BOXES

Don't forget to take home a *Food For Hungry People* box and contribute to it each day during Lent.


IOCC

In February, IOCC was awarded a \$1.6 million grant from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America to continue and expand its current relief and recovery work for Greek farmers who lost livestock and pasturelands to last summer's wildfires. This latest grant will enable IOCC to reach an estimated 2,000 farming families with emergency supplies of animal feed and forage seed. For many farmers, IOCC's help will mean the difference between saving their family farm or having to return to Athens to find work.

The Greece program is the latest example of IOCC's ability to respond to emergencies. We mobilized IOCC headquarters staff and members of our Belgrade and Athens offices to make assessments, oversee distributions, and also to consult with scientists in order to identify forage seed that will allow the Peloponnese to begin recovering its damaged pasturelands — a long-term solution for farmers.


In 2008, I am excited about our development programs including the expansion of our HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention campaign in Ethiopia, our new program to combat drug abuse in Georgia, and providing food security to more villages in the West Bank. These programs have been carefully planned and assessed. While it is impossible to know when and where the next emergency will be, we will carefully and wisely assess our resources and our capabilities so that we can respond in the most appropriate and effective way.

BLOOD DRIVE

 The American Red Cross blood drive will be in Norwood April 14th, from 2:00 to 7:00 pm at the Civic Center.
Phone 800-448-3543 to make an appointment.

HERE THIS SATURDAY: DON'T MISS IT

The Diocese of Worcester & NewEnglandFellowship of St. John the divine


The **FOOTLAMPS** LECTURE SERIES 

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
Psalm 119:105

Raising a Balanced Family in an Unbalanced World.

March 29, 2008 at St George, Norwood, MA with **Dr. Philip Mamalakis**

Come and spend an evening with Dr. Philip Mamalakis, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary, and father of 6 to discuss how to live in the real world of parenting, and paying bills without losing sight of the kingdom of God. It is so easy to live in the world of daily life disconnected from God, and when we do make it to church feel like the world of church has very little to do with our daily lives. Come take an evening to discuss how to connect the world of our Church with the world of daily family life.



Dr. Philip Mamalakis, together with his wife Georgia and six children live in Boston, Massachusetts where he is the Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. Dr. Mamalakis teaches classes on pastoral care, marriage and family. He assists with the Field Education program at Holy Cross, is a member of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Roundtable on the Family and has a private practice in Newton, Massachusetts where he works with individuals, couples, and families. Dr. Mamalakis has an MDIV from Holy Cross and a PHD from Purdue University in child development and family studies, specializing in marriage and family therapy. He has written numerous articles and book chapters on various issues related to marriage and family life and Orthodoxy and counseling.

Open to everyone. Vespers service begins at 5pm followed by lecture and light refreshments. Suggested Donation \$5.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

April 12th 2008 Fr. John Heropoulos at St. George West Roxbury (the fulfillment of the law and the prophets).

May 17th 2008 Fr. Ed Hughes at St. John of Damascus (the Orthodox view about death).

For more information and to RSVP please Contact Ghada Khouri : 781.275.7244 or online: nerfellowship@yahoo.com www.antiochian.org/footlamp

TOTAL DEPOSITS <i>MARCH 9TH</i>	PLEDGES	MEMORIALS & DONATIONS	TRAYS	SPECIAL TRAY	COFFEE HOUR OUTREACH
\$2334.00	\$1745.00	\$144.00	\$210.00	N.A.	N.A.



VOTIVE CANDLES A seven day candle burns before the Icon of the Theotokos, given by Maria Piccirilli in memory of her mother Concetta.

PRAYERS OF OBLATION AND DONATIONS

Yvanne Jean-Michel in memory of Nicholas Fotopoulos
 Emaline Eakle in memory of Marshall Kelley

A list of donations, made in memory of Helen Abdallah, will be printed next week.

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Pray for the good health of the servants of God: Archpriest Edward, Priest Robert, Deacon Elias, Khouriye Joanne, Florence, Alice, Hayes, Katrina, Elsa, John, Jeanne, Gregory, Albert, Dimitri, James, Frederick, Anne, Grace, Renee, Robert, Nicole, Mary, Pauline, Ioana, Nicolae, Kathleen, Lillie, Jennifer, Edward, Carrie, Sam, Camille, Michael, Angela, Mikayla, Christopher, Nancy, Kenneth, Joy, Claudia, Thomas, Sarah, Nicholas, Charles, Catherine, Joyce, Janice, Barbara, Beverly, John, Katherine, Mary, Beverly, Najlae, Irene, Edmond, Helen, Stanley, George, Frances, Marlene, Felecia, Catherine, Lana, Gail, Margaret, Brian, Nicole, Marion, Donna, Linda, Edmond, Emaline, Carrie, Nicholas, George, Lovee, Elizabeth, Sarah, Charles, Jenine, Josephine, George, Sandy, Edward, Michael, Madeline, Rosemary, John, Margaret, Sarah, Nima, Dean, David, Sterling, William, Mary.

Pray for Erik, our catachumen.

Pray for Joseph (Irwin), soon to be deployed in Afghanistan and all those in the armed forces.

THE PARISH COUNCIL

Leeann Plouffe - Chairwoman
 Barbara Campbell, Paul Eysie, Camille Florio (Secretary), Andrew Howard (Vice Chairman),
 Marlene Lupaczyk, Marwan Samman (Treasurer), Linda Thomas and Sharon Weiskerger

CHURCH LEADERS

Ladies of Saint George - Katie Birtwell, President	Church School - Rich Plouffe, Superintendent
Parish Chanter - Paul Eysie	Choir Director - David Franciosi
Teen Advisor - Michele Markatos	Teen President - Jenna Weiskerger
Ushers - Andrew Howard & Marwan Samman	Epistle Reader Coordinator - Lovee Thomas
Bible Bowl Team Leader - Emily Shay	Seminarian - Michael Razook
Web-Master - Ekaterina Oleinik	Scholarship Committee Chair - Helen Abril
Church custodian - Gerry Mullen	



FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Tomorrow: Great Vespers & Artoklasia, 7:00 pm
 Tuesday: Divine Liturgy, 9:00 am / Fish Dinner in the parish hall, 5:00 pm

SUNDAY 23 MARCH 2008 • SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS

TONE 2 • EOTHINON 10 • THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Eisodikon

Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, save us who sing unto thee, Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 2)

When thou, O immortal Life, didst humble thyself unto death, then didst thou destroy death by the brightness of thy Godhead; and when thou didst raise the bowels of the earth, then all the heavenly powers exclaimed, O Christ, thou art the Giver of life! Glory to thee, O our God!

Troparion of Saint Gregory Palamas (Tone 8)

O Star of Orthodoxy, support of the Church and its teacher, O comeliness of ascetics, and incontestable champion of those who speak theology, Gregory the wonder-worker, the pride of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, implore thou constantly for the salvation of our souls.

Troparion of Saint George, Patron of our Community (Tone 4)

As deliverer of captives, and defender of the poor, healer of the infirm, champion of kings, victorious Great-Martyr George, intercede with Christ our God, for our souls' salvation.

Kontakion of the Annunciation (Tone 8)

To thee, the Champion Leader, I thy city ascribe thank-offerings of victory; for thou hast delivered me from terrors, O Theotokos; but as thou hast that power which is invincible, from all dangers set me free, that I may cry out unto thee: "Hail, O Bride without bridegroom!"

EPISTLE & GOSPEL

Prokeimenon and Verse:

O Lord, Thou wilt preserve us and keep us from this generation. Save me, O Lord, for the godly man ceaseth.

The Reading is from Apostle Paul's Letter to the Hebrews

(1:10-2:3 - 2nd Sunday in Lent)

In the beginning, thou O Lord, didst found the earth and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end." But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him.

Alleluia

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Mark (2:1-12 - 2nd Sunday-Lent)

Glory to Thee O Lord, Glory to Thee

Jesus returned to Caper'na-um after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within them-selves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" --he said to the paralytic-- "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Glory to Thee O Lord, Glory to Thee

Saint Gregory Palamas

"This Is The Light": Prayer, Fasting & The Grace of the Holy Spirit

Our journey through Great Lent toward Pascha is one that will involve fasting and prayer—not as a way to punish ourselves, but as a way to heighten our prayer life and draw our entire being into a prayerful communion with our Creator.

Our Orthodox Christian faith teaches us to think of God in "negative" terms—God is unknowable; God is indescribable; God is uncontainable. How, then, is it possible for us to know a God who is by nature unknowable? St. Basil the Great tells us that "We know God from His energies, but we do not claim that we can draw near to His essence." It was upon this basic teaching that St. Gregory Palamas helped build our most fundamental understanding of Orthodox Spirituality.

What, then, constitutes God's **essence** and what are His **energies**? Saints Basil and Gregory teach us that understanding the difference between them is very important to how we offer prayer to our Creator.

God's essence (*ousia*) is the very nature of God and what constitutes Him—we can never partake of God's essence for to do so would make us gods. God's energies, however, are generated by His essence and take the form of grace and spiritual gifts that He bestows on humankind. It is God's energies that the spiritual masters partake of. The greater their spiritual discipline or askesis, the greater is their basking in God's energies. Think of the sun giving off illumination. If we are far away, we can still feel and see the sun. The closer we approach it, the more intense the light of the sun becomes, and as we enter its corona we are totally consumed by it. The closer we are, the more we par-

take of its energies. It is this trip into the light—this uncreated light—that St. Gregory Palamas teaches us about. When we partake of this uncreated, divine light we achieve what the Orthodox Church calls theosis.

Put simply, *theosis* is the end goal of Orthodox spirituality and that goal is a *mystical union with God*. St. Paul speaks of this "mystical union" in Scripture when he writes, "He has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of His will, according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, **to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth**" (Ephesians 1:9-10). This gathering together is what we call "union with God"—and was asked for by Christ to the Father when he prayed "**that they all may be one**, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; **that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21).

Practically, St. Gregory Palamas and the spiritual masters of our faith have offered a way for each of us to come closer to God. It is a closeness that allows us to bask in the light the pours forth from the very essence of the One who created each of us. Such closeness is not achieved by the mind alone but **by the mind and body together** focusing in such a way that our entire being is directed in prayer to God. Is such prayer only the domain of a few monks? Hardly. Very soon, we begin a period of fasting and prayer that will ultimately bring us to the Cross and Empty Tomb of Christ. In this most holy period of the year, we are engaged in the same type of spiritual exercise that this great saint taught us about.

Our journey through Great Lent toward Pascha is one that involves fasting and prayer—not as a way to punish ourselves, but as a way to heighten our prayer life and

draw our entire being into a prayerful communion with our Creator. The purpose of the fast is to lighten the body so it can more properly focus itself in prayer. Indeed, this is why we fast before every Liturgy. So we see that St. Gregory Palamas calls us all to a type of prayer that uses the two most basic weapons to combat evil—weapons that Christ gives us in Scripture—prayer and fasting. We see this when Christ tells His Apostles, "... this kind [of demon] does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21).

A common mistake that is made is to divorce one from the other (that is, prayer without fasting or vice versa). St. Gregory Palamas, however, teaches that **true** spiritual prayer can only be achieved by combining prayer and fasting in a set regimen designed for spiritual growth. We also tend to think of fasting in terms of avoidance of food, but true fasting is much deeper. It involves the fasting from the passions and desires in an effort to allow us to focus on the spiritual much more closely. We do not seek to "kill the desires," but rather to be a person "in harmony with ourselves, with others, and with the world in its cosmic dimensions." The goal is not to "reject the body, pleasure, or matter" but rather to draw them into "communion with the Holy Spirit."

St. Seraphim of Sarov remarked that all of the ascetic practices are tools for one purpose—the **acquiring of the Holy Spirit of God**. From the Orthodox Christian perspective, it is one thing to call upon the Holy Spirit, yet an entirely different one to be able to receive the Holy Spirit. There is a story told of a golden Buddha that was covered with clay to hide it from invading enemies. To the workers who found it many years later, it was only a lump of clay. However, when we chip away at the covering of hardened dirt a gold statue is revealed beneath. The clay can be thought of as our sins and passions which must be

stripped away to reveal the "image of God in us." Seeking out the Holy Spirit is only half of the equation. We must strip off our preconceptions and prejudices in order to gain access to and comprehend that which the Holy Spirit is communicating to us. In today's society, we are trained from a very early age to think in our own individualistic terms—so much so that we often claim to know how God works and what His desires are. When we pray and fast, however, we must do so **in humility**, so that we do not confuse our will with that of God.

When we pray and when we fast, we are drawn closer to the divine light which St. Gregory Palamas so eloquently spoke of. **This is the light** we are all drawn to like the moth to the flame. **This is the light** that ignites within us when we partake of Holy Communion. **This is the light** that shines forth from the sanctuary when the priest stands at the Beautiful Gates on Pascha and proclaims, "Come ye and receive the light from the unwaning Light". **This is the light** that Christ Himself spoke of when He said, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

We are all children of God and as His children we are called to His uncreated light. St. Gregory Palamas knew this and offered us the way to do so. As we begin our journey this Great Lent, we should take heed of St. Gregory's counsel so that when we finally reach that glorious Paschal Day, we will see The Light—the light that signaled the dawn of a new creation.

May God bless you and keep you.

-- Rev. Fr. Demetrios E. Tonia is the pastor of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Concord, NH, one of many "Share the Light Parishes" around the country that partner with the Orthodox Christian Network.