



The Weekly Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

301 Struthers Liberty Rd

Campbell, OH 44405

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest



MARCH BULLETIN SPONSOR

In memory of my father George— Given By V.R. Andrew Bartek

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, March 31

9:30 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Swearing in of the new Council / Lenten social Monthly B-day & Anniversary cake

5:00 PM: Mahoning Valley Vespers @ Holy Trinity—Romanian) at 626 Wick Ave

Wednesday, April 3

5:15 PM: Confession

6:00 PM: Presanctified Liturgy / Social / Lenten talk

Friday, April 5

6:15 PM: Confession

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy / Social / Lenten talk

Saturday, April 6

5:15 PM: Confession

6:00 PM: Vespers followed by Confessions

Sunday, April 7

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Social

5:00 PM: Deanery Lenten Akathist to the Cross @ Holy Assumption at 2027 18th St NE in Canton

5:00 PM: Local Mahoning Vally Vespers @ St John the Forerunner-Greek at 4955 Glenwood Ave, Boardmen

MARCH SOCIALS

31— Open / Birthday & Anniversary remembrances

Monthly Charity

March 2024 - St. Basil's Workers

April 2024 - St. Tikhon's Seminary

2024 - COUNCIL MEMBERS

Nancy Tusinac (President)

Phone- 724-456-7366

Melenie Rusnak (Vice-President)

Phone— 330-398-3700

Cindy Ferrick (Treasurer)

Phone 330-531-1119

Joann Sirilla (Financial Secretary)

Phone 330-881-6775

Nadine Sabo (Secretary)

Phone 330 533-5600

Sub-deacon Dr. Donald Tamulouis (Council)

Phone 330-774-8860

Natalia Simko (Council) (Cemetery issues)

Phone- 330-980-3033

Linda Livosky (Council) (Kitchen issues)

Phone- 330-402-6573

Maintenance Issues:

Michael Simko - 330-747-2639

Michael Centofanti - 330-544-3518

Reminder:

Per the **OCA Statutes**, Father Andrew, as rector, needs to be told of all communications that occur within the St. John the Baptist Church. Any & all communications (email, letter, flier, etc) prior to distribution must be done with the knowledge, consent and blessing of the rector. This includes all events, including those that are normally done (i.e. baking, clean-up, choir rehearsals, etc.). Please speak to Father Andrew if you have any questions or concerns.

40 Day Remembrance

March 31

Subdeacon Wylie Meath / Paul

April 7

Charlette Zenko

April 21

His Holiness, Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria / Sandy Pleban

Office: 330-755-4931 / Cell: 570-212-8747

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St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary celebrates 85th anniversary

On March 8-10, 2024, Archangel Michael Church, Broadview Heights, OH helped to celebrate St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary's 85th anniversary.

The gathering brought together hierarchs, clergy and STOTS alumni, along with faithful from the area. His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon of America and Canada welcomed by His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of Chicago to the Diocese of the Midwest, along with His Eminence Archbishop Michael of New York and Bishop Irenej of Eastern America of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

On Friday, the seminary Board of Trustees met in the Woodside Event Center and attended a special dinner at the Shoreby Yacht Club. On Saturday, the Memorial Liturgy was celebrated by Archpriest John Memorich, as St. Tikhon's Seminary choir sang responses, followed by a luncheon. Archimandrite Sergius, Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery, brought with him the Miracle-working St. Anna Icon for the weekend. That evening Vespers was served, again with the seminary choir singing responses. Following this, a festive congratulatory

banquet honored STOTS board chairman, and our parishioner, Reader Michael Herzak as he stepped down from his position after eleven years of service.

On Sunday, a hierarchical liturgy was concelebrated by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, His Eminence Archbishop Michael, and His Grace Bishop Irenej. Also serving were Archpriest Alexander Rentel, Chancellor of the OCA, Archpriest John Memorich, Rector, Archpriest John Parker, Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary, Archpriest John Kowalczyk, Professor of Practical Theology, and Priest Paul Witek, Dean of students, Protodeacon Peter Ilchuk, Protodeacon Alexander Kichakov, and Protodeacon Daniel Kovalak. The seminary choir and the parish choir sang the responses.

Following the liturgy, Bishop Irenej presented His Beatitude with relics of St. Nikolai (Velimirovich) of Zhicha for the seminary, with a very moving, personal testimonial and remembrance. A brunch for all our honored guests and visitors was held in the parish Event Center.

Over \$79,000 was raised that weekend for the benefit of St. Tikhon's Seminary.

The faithful and parishes of the Orthodox Church in America are urged to intentionally pray **Con't Next Pg**

PRAYER LIST– Updated 3-27-24

PARISHIONERS: Achilles Arvan / Audrey Chengelis / Donna Chiarelli / Helen Colaluca / Joan Cross / Ann Cvercko / Pauline Fesz / Mary Fredericks / George Horodnic / Anthony Jesko, Jr. / Paula Kennedy / Sue Kennedy / George Kolesar / Barbara Kolesar / Ronald (Thomas) Moore / Matushka Helen Psinka / Mary Jane Puskas / Carol Ruff / Kenny Ruff / Joanna Shepelevich / Dorothy Shirilla / Julia Simko / Emilia Yannitto / Marion Zwinski

HIERARCHS & CLERGY: Archbishop Benjamin / Archbishop Alexander / Archbishop Melchizedek / Archbishop Nathaniel / Bishop Matthias / Fr. James Gleason (Fr.) / Dc. James Hryb

FAMILY & FRIENDS: Chrissy (Fr.) / David (Willison) / Frank Batura (Fr.) / Dominic (Centofanti) / Ellen (Clark) / Genna & her un-born baby (Koval) / Paul Demkosky (Fr.) / John Galpin (Fr.) / Bruce Harris (Sabo) / Katie (Garrity) / Basil Glovinsky (Fr.) / Ellen (Kessler) / Paul (Kolesar) / Karen (Vansuch) / Kathy (Kolesar) / Malakai (Kolesar) / Joe Kollar (Fr.) / Andrew LaChard (Jesko) / Jonathan Leso (Fr.) / Mea (Mahan) / Mary (Mahan) / Pauline Meath (Fr.) / Matushka Raissa (Nicoloff) / Eugene (Pallai) / Teri Petroff (Fr.) / Chris Quotap (Fr.) / William Romanchak (Fr.) / Roxanne Yannito / Julia Shirilla / Katherine (Steffaro) / Johanna (Tusinac) / Richard (Tusinac) / Brian (Shirilla) / Joseph (Vansuch) / Eleanor Marie (Vansuch) / Paula (Voytilla) / Mary Ann Bozichovich (Kennedy) / Patty Bozichovich (Vansuch) / Drew (Willison) / Catherine Zile (Fr.) / Zoland Zile (Fr.) / Brenna & her unborn baby (Fr.)

MILITARY FAMILY & FRIENDS: Cory Deaton (Fr.) / Alena Grabavoy (Fr.) / Liam Garrity (Zelinsky)

MISCELLANEOUS: Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo) & Archbishop John (Archdiocese of Aleppo) still being held captive / The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers around the world / Those suffering persecution in Syria, Iraq, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and around the world.

St Tikhon's 85th Ann. Con't from previous pg

for vocations and to support the seminaries, students, faculty, and their families. It is also vital to commit to financially support the three OCA seminaries as they continue the necessary work of providing exceptional education and spiritual formation for the future leaders of the Orthodox Church.

Parishes are reminded of the resolution approved at the 16th All-American Council in Seattle, which calls for parishes of the Orthodox Church in America to allocate 1% of their budget towards the support of these seminaries.

2nd Sunday of Great Lent StGregory Palamas Commemorated on March 31

This Sunday was originally dedicated to Saint Polycarp of Smyrna (February 23). After his glorification in 1368, a second commemoration of Saint Gregory Palamas (November 14) was appointed for the Second Sunday of Great Lent as a second "Triumph of Orthodoxy." Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica,

was born in the year 1296 in Constantinople. Saint Gregory's father became a prominent dignitary at the court of Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328), but he soon died, and Andronicus himself took part in the raising and education of the fatherless boy. Endowed with fine abilities and great diligence, Gregory mastered all the subjects which then comprised the full course of medieval higher education. The emperor hoped that the youth would devote himself to government work. But Gregory, barely twenty years old, withdrew to Mount Athos in the year 1316 (other sources say 1318) and became a novice in the Vatopedi monastery under the guidance of the monastic Elder Saint Nikódēmos of Vatopedi (July 11). There he was tonsured and began on the path of asceticism. A year later, the holy Evangelist John the Theologian appeared to him in a vision and promised him his spiritual protection. Gregory's mother and sisters also became monastics.

After the demise of the Elder Nikódēmos, Saint Gregory spent eight years of spiritual struggle under the guidance of the Elder Nikēphoros, and after the latter's death, Gregory transferred to the Lavra of Saint Athanasius (July 5). Here he served in the trapeza, and then became a church singer. But after three years, he resettled in the small skete of Glossia, striving for a greater degree of spiritual perfection. The head of this monastery began to teach the young man the method of unceasing prayer and mental activity, which had been cultivated by monastics, beginning with the great desert ascetics of the fourth century: Evagrius Pontikos and Saint Macarius of Egypt (January 19). **Con't pg 6**

Office: 330-755-4931 / Cell: 570-212-8747

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APRIL Candle & Bulletin Sponsors

Bulletin: In Memory of by mother Dorothy on the occasion of her b-day—Given by AP Andrew Bartek

Wine: In memory of my family & friends— Given by AP Andrew Bartek

Incense: AVAILABLE

Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light: In memory of George & Mary Vasile- Given by Jim & Elaine Johnston / In loving memory of parents Nicholas & Mary K. Libertin, and brother Dr. Nick Libertin, Given by Charissa & Tom Oliphant, Mark & Colette Libertin

Altar Candles: In memory of the 5th Anniversary of Ted Liszka falling asleep in the Lord— Given by Beth Liszka / In memory of my father Michael Boldish- given by Nancy Tusinac

Tetrapod Candles: In memory of my parents George & Marie Gresko- given by Mary Gresko

St. Herman Candles: Commemorating all who participate in maintenance of the church, the teachers, singers & those who participate in social events. Praying for everyone to love one another.

St. Panteleimon Icon Candles— In memory of my God-Father Andrew Basala— Given by AP. Andrew Bartek

Protection Icon Candles: In memory of His Eminence AB Paul & His eminence AB John— Given by AP Andrew Bartek

St. John the Baptist Candles: In memory of my grandfather Matthew Kollar— Given by AP Andrew Bartek

Flowers: In honor of John Liszka attaining his license for Certified Nurse Practitioner— Given by Beth Liszka / In memory of my mom Baba – Given by the Willison Family / For the Health of the St. John’s parish family—

	<u>\$50 per month</u>	<u>\$30 per month</u>	<u>\$25 per month</u>
*Wine	*Bulletin	*St. Herman candles	Incense
*Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light	*Altar Candles	*St. Panteleimon Icon candles	Flowers - \$50 for 2 weeks at a time— Updated
*Tetrapod Candles		*Protection Icon candles	
		*St. John the Baptist candles	

ATTENDANCE: A Comparison - MARCH	2023	2024	MARCH FINANCIALS	
1st week			Expenses	\$15,927.94
Vespers	7	No Vespers (vacation)	Income	\$11,124.00
Divine Liturgy	87 / 56 Communicants	73 / 40 Communicants	TOTAL	(\$4803.94)
2nd Week			Weekly Tithe	\$9,962
Vespers	23	16	Weekly Candles	\$302
Divine Liturgy	48 / 32 Communicants	51 / 37 Communicants	Weekly Flowers	\$50
3rd Week			Incense	\$50
Vespers	12	8	Eternal Light	\$100
Divine Liturgy	65 / 40 Communicants	67 / 44 Communicants	Protection Candles	\$30
4th Week			Altar Candles	\$200
St. Theodore Lit.	NO Vespers (weather)	8	Wine	\$50
Vespers		11	Pascha Flowers	\$370
Divine Liturgy	53 / 40 Communicants	60 / 37 Communicants	Advent Social	\$10
Annunciation	16 / 13 Communicants	14 / 8 Communicants	Other Income: (that doesn't stay here):	
5th Week			Cleveland Deanery	\$35
Vespers	No record (4 weeks)		Monthly Charity Income	
Divine Liturgy	No record (4 weeks)		St. Basil Workers	\$372
			Note: There was a check made directly to charity so the amount to date	\$472

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REPOSED LIST FOR APRIL

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|--|---|
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| 31- James Malli (1925) © | 14- Luba Despotovich (1936) © |
| 31- Katherine Hamanzi (1946) © | 14- Peter Magriplis (1937) © |
| 1- Andy Basala (1982) | 14- Matushka Carol Steffaro (2023) |
| 1- Andreas Basala (1923) | 16- Catherine Pavlick (2004) © |
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| 6- John Sabol (2017) | 23- Nikita Patzakis (1925) © |
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| 7- Angela Angelides (1960) © | 24- Olga Buly (2011) © |
| 8- Anna Hamney (1982) © | 24- Anna Salber (1921) © |
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| 10- Frank Boldish (1940) © | 28- Alan Andras (2002) © |
| 11- Archbishop John (1982) | 28- Bessie Pangere (1958) © |
| 11- Ann Konik Voytilla (2022) © | 29- John Dunchak (2001) © |
| 12- Sub-deacon George Gresko (2015) © | 29- Nicholas Dushan (1924) © |
| 12- Marie Gresko Fedak (2015) © | 29- John Malutic (1928) © |
| 12- Charles Rich (2002) © | 29- Tim Nolder (2023) |
| 12- Michael Shubeliak (1943) © | 30- Sevasti Tsaknis (1930) © |
| 12- Emanuel Ellinos (1945) | 30- George Libertin (1939) © |

Mark 2:1-12 (Gospel)

And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" – He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

St. Tikhon's Seminary Receives Ten Year Reaffirmation Of Accreditation

Following a Comprehensive Site Visit by members of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) in October 2023, the most recent biannual meeting of the ATS Board of Commissioners reaffirmed the accreditation of Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary for a period of 10 years. In their letter to the Seminary's Rector, His Eminence Archbishop Michael, the Commissioners praised the Seminary's "laser sharp clarity of identity and mission", "strong community of formation", and its "committed faculty, talented leadership team, and dedicated students". In addition to the extension of accreditation till Spring 2034, the Commissioners reaffirmed its approval of the Seminary's M.Div. degree. To add to the joyful news, Dr. Barbara Mutch, Senior ATS Director of Accreditation, notified the Seminary that the community's 2023 Self-Study Report would be added to the Association's library of exemplary self-studies that would be shared at workshops designed to help member schools begin the process of self-study under the recently updated 2020 Standards of Accreditation.

Regarding this wonderful announcement, Archbishop Michael noted: "To receive the maximum of 10 years of accreditation is a monumental accomplishment for a seminary of our size. We are humbled that our Self-Study will be a reference resource for others. Certainly, we are grateful to God for all His blessings, especially for all those whose labors made this possible for us." In relaying the news to the community, the Seminary's Dean, Father John Parker commented: "We give thanks to the Lord for all the good He is doing at St. Tikhon's - and we look forward to the coming decade of growth and strength." In his role as Director of Self-Study, the Seminary's Academic Dean, Fr. Paul Witek, noted that "the ten-year reaffirmation is an exceptional achievement for the school and displays the unwavering commitment of so many to the embodied mission of Saint Tikhon's in providing for the solid formation of future servants and leaders of Christ's Church." The Seminary extends its thanks to all those who contributed to the Self-Study process and asks for the continued prayers and support of the faithful throughout the Church for our theological school in fulfilling its unique vision for years to come.

The faithful and parishes of the Orthodox Church in America are urged to intentionally pray for vocations and to support the seminaries, students, faculty, and their families. It is also vital to commit to financially support the three OCA seminaries as

they continue the necessary work of providing exceptional education and spiritual formation for the future leaders of the Orthodox Church.

Parishes are reminded of the resolution approved at the 16th All-American Council in Seattle, which calls for parishes of the Orthodox Church in America to allocate 1% of their budget towards the support of these seminaries.

If you want to know more about supporting our seminaries, their work, or learn more about vocation and theological formation, seminary contact information is available on the national OCA website.

St Gregory con't from pg 3

Later on, in the eleventh century Saint Simeon the New Theologian (March 12) provided detailed instruction in mental activity for those praying in an outward manner, and the ascetics of Athos put it into practice. The experienced use of mental prayer (or prayer of the heart), requiring solitude and quiet, is called "Hesychasm" (from the Greek "hesychia" meaning calm, silence), and those practicing it were called "hesychasts."

During his stay at Glossia the future hierarch Gregory became fully imbued with the spirit of hesychasm and adopted it as an essential part of his life. In the year 1326, because of the threat of Turkish invasions, he and the brethren retreated to Thessalonica, where he was then ordained to the holy priesthood.

Saint Gregory combined his priestly duties with the life of a hermit. Five days of the week he spent in silence and prayer, and only on Saturday and Sunday did he come out to his people. He celebrated divine services and preached sermons. For those present in church, his teaching often evoked both tenderness and tears. Sometimes he visited theological gatherings of the city's educated youth, headed by the future patriarch, Isidore. After he returned from a visit to Constantinople, he found a place suitable for solitary life near Thessalonica the region of Bereia. Soon he gathered here a small community of solitary monks and guided it for five years.

In 1331 the saint withdrew to Mt. Athos and lived in solitude at the skete of Saint Savva, near the Lavra of Saint Athanasius. In 1333 he was appointed Igumen of the Esphigmenou monastery in the northern part of the Holy Mountain. In 1336 the saint returned to the skete of Saint Savva, where he devoted himself to theological works, continuing with this until the end of his life.

In the 1330s events took place in the life of the Eastern Church which put Saint Gregory among the most significant universal apologists of Orthodoxy, **Con't Pg 9**

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APRIL Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

- 2- Fr. Andrew Bartek
- 4- His Grace Bishop Matthias
- 11- Lynn Polewan, Christopher Mihaly
- 12- Michele Basile
- 13- Margarita Leso
- 18- Diane Tryon
- 20- Nectarios Mihaly
- 23- Paul Demkosky Jr., Andrew Zelinsky
- 24- Matt Lariccia III

ANNIVERSARY

- 17- Matt & Brittany
- 30-2011- Retired Bishop Matthias of Chicago

NAMES DAY

- 22- AB Nathaniel of Detroit
- 23- Fr. Andrew Bartek
- 25- AB Mark of Philadelphia



Orthodoxy Sunday in Cleveland, Ohio

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 24, over twenty priests and faithful from various jurisdictions gathered to celebrate the Triumph of the true Faith. With the blessing of His Eminence Daniel of Chicago and the Midwest, the oldest Orthodox parish in Ohio, St. Theodosius Cathedral, hosted the festal celebration.

His Eminence Nicolae Romanian Archbishop and Metropolitan to the Americas presided over the Great Festal vespers. In his sermon, His Eminence underlined that “the icon is a window into the Absolute which reveals to us the world transfigured, the world of those who partake of divine grace and bring us this transfiguration, that is holiness.” The clergy led the icon procession around the church, followed by the faithful.

At the conclusion of the services, Priest Jan Cizmar, Cathedral Dean, expressed his gratitude to His Eminence for leading the Cleveland Orthodox in this prayerful service. A festive meal and friendly gathering followed in the church hall.

Archbishop Daniel Leads Clean Week Services in Chicago

During the first week of Great and Holy Lent, March 18 – March 22, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Midwest lead services at the local communities in Chicago.

On Clean Monday, His Eminence read the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete at the Diocesan Cathedral, Holy Trinity Cathedral. Priest Alexander Koranda, Cathedral Dean, served Great Compline.

On the second day of the fast, the Archbishop presided at St. George Cathedral. There he served with the Priest Nikolai Lochmatow. On the following day, March 20, the Archbishop was again at Holy Trinity Cathedral for the third reading of the Great Canon.

Clean Thursday welcomed Archbishop Daniel at Christ the Savior Church. There the Archbishop read the fourth reading of the Great Canon and prayed with the Priest John Kennerk. Later that evening, His Eminence met with the catechumens of the parish.

Archbishop makes First Archpastoral Visit to Kokomo, Indiana

The parish of St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Kokomo, IN received an episcopal visit from Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Midwest on March 23 and 24.

In commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the community, the Archbishop presented the parish with a gramota. The Archbishop tonsured Gabriel Faust as a Reader prior to Divine Liturgy.

EASTERN ORTHODOX CLERGY ASSOCIATION OF MAHONING VALLEY / LENTEN VESPERSCHEDULE– SERVICES BEGIN @ 5:00 pm

April 14: St. John Climakos- (St John the Baptist OCA– 2220 Reeves RD NE, Warren)

April 21: St Mary of Egypt– (St Nicholas Greek– 220 North Walnut St, Youngstown)

This is a great opportunity, through our Orthodox worship services, to re-enter our Lenten spiritual exercise of preparation for the Great Days of Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Pascha.

Come and share fellowship with the Orthodox faithful in and around the Mahoning Valley. Make new acquaintances, renew old friendships, grow in your Orthodox Faith. Visit the Clergy Association website:

orthodoxyyoungstown.org

Office: 330-755-4931 / Cell: 570-212-8747

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Attendance: Lenten Services	2023	2024
1st week		
Forgiveness Vespers	30	34
Monday AM	4	2
Monday PM	30 Canon	17 Canon
Tuesday AM	2	0
Tuesday PM	20 Canon	25 Canon
Wednesday AM	2	0
Wednesday PM	26 Canon	18 Canon
Thursday AM	1	4
Thursday PM	22 Canon	22 Canon
Friday AM	1	0
Friday PM	31 / 16 Communicants	29 / 18 Communicants
2nd week		
Monday AM	3	None– Annunciation
Tuesday AM	1	0
Wednesday AM	2	0
Wednesday PM	22 / 7 communicants	
Thursday AM	2	
Friday AM	2	
Friday PM	16 Akathist	
3rd week		
Monday AM	1	
Tuesday AM	1	
Wednesday AM	1	
Wednesday PM	33 / 16 Communicants	
Thursday AM	1	
Friday AM	3	
Friday PM	21 Akathist	
4th week		
Monday AM	3	
Wednesday AM	1	
Wednesday PM	41 / 22 Communicants	
Thursday AM	6	
Friday AM	2	
Friday PM	Was Annunciation vespers 22	
5th week		
Monday AM	4	
Wednesday PM	36 / 22 Communicants	
Thursday AM	1	
Thursday PM	19 Full Canon	
Friday AM	1	
Friday PM	30 Akathist	

QUIET TIME WITH GOD

One of the most effective means of rising above the daily routine, a way of transcending the imprisonment of human frailties, is private and corporate prayer—not just saying a prayer now and then but rather getting serious about prayer and developing a life of prayer. St Gregory Palamas connected the experience of “theosis” with the

practice of “hesychasm.” “The power of prayer fulfills (completes) the sacrament of our union with God,” according to St Gregory. The connection between prayer and “theosis” is what’s behind the Orthodox practice of “hesychasm”—a rich spiritual tradition about how to pray not only with the lips and the mind but also the heart.

Prayer is an essential part of Lenten discipline. That’s why the Church seeks to awaken us to the power of prayer and to the mystery of our “theosis” in Christ by offering opportunities for worship during Great Lent; including the following special services:

The Presanctified Liturgy— A very old Liturgy of great beauty and solemnity consisting of psalms, biblical readings, and prayers. It is called “presanctified” because the sacred gifts offered for Holy Communion have been sanctified at the Liturgy of the previous Sunday. Combined with Vespers, the Presanctified Liturgy is normally celebrated on Wednesday and Friday evenings during the Fast.

The Akathist Hymn— a poem in praise of the Theotokos. Composed of twenty-four stanzas, the Akathist extols the Virgin Mary as the servant of the mystery of salvation, especially of the Incarnation. Combined with the Small Compline (consisting of psalms and evening prayers) the Akathist Hymn is chanted usually on some Friday evenings in the Great Fast.

The Great Compline— an evening prayer service consisting of psalms, prayer, and hymns. It may be recited one or more times weekly at home or at Church on the Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays of the Great Fast.

The Canon of St Andrew— A lengthy poem (200 hymns arranged in nine odes) composed by St. Andrew of Crete and dealing with the themes of human sinfulness, repentance, and the mercy of God. It is usually chanted in parts along with the Great Compline during the first four days of the Great Fast and the full Canon chanted on the 5th Thursday of the Great Fast. (A Year of the Lord— Liturgical Bible Studies, Vol. 3)

St. Gregory con't from pg 6

and brought him great renown as a teacher of hesychasm.

About the year 1330 the learned monk Barlaam had arrived in Constantinople from Calabria, in Italy. He was the author of treatises on logic and astronomy, a skilled and sharp-witted orator, and he received a university chair in the capital city and began to expound on the works of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite (October 3), whose “apophatic” (“negative”, in contrast to “kataphatic” or “positive”) theology was acclaimed in equal measure in both the Eastern and the Western Churches. Soon Barlaam journeyed to Mt. Athos, where he became acquainted with the spiritual life of the hesychasts. Saying that it was impossible to know the essence of God, he declared mental prayer a heretical error. Journeying from Mount Athos to Thessalonica, and from there to Constantinople, and later again to Thessalonica, Barlaam entered into disputes with the monks and attempted to demonstrate the created, material nature of the light of Tabor (i.e. at the Transfiguration). He ridiculed the teachings of the monks about the methods of prayer and about the uncreated light seen by the hesychasts.

Saint Gregory, at the request of the Athonite monks, replied with verbal admonitions at first. But seeing the futility of such efforts, he put his theological arguments in writing. Thus appeared the “Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts” (1338). Towards the year 1340 the Athonite ascetics, with the assistance of the saint, compiled a general response to the attacks of Barlaam, the so-called “Hagiorite Tome.” At the Constantinople Council of 1341 in the church of Hagia Sophia Saint Gregory Palamas debated with Barlaam, focusing upon the nature of the light of Mount Tabor. On May 27, 1341 the Council accepted the position of Saint Gregory Palamas, that God, unapproachable in His Essence, reveals Himself through His energies, which are directed towards the world and are able to be perceived, like the light of Tabor, but which are neither material nor created. The teachings of Barlaam were condemned as heresy, and he himself was anathemized and fled to Calabria.

But the dispute between the Palamites and the Barlaamites was far from over. To these latter belonged Barlaam’s disciple, the Bulgarian monk Akyndinos, and also Patriarch John XIV Kalekos (1341-1347); the emperor Andronicus III Paleologos (1328-1341) was also inclined toward their opinion. Akyndinos, whose name means “one who inflicts no harm,” actually caused great harm by his heretical teaching. Akyndinos wrote a series of tracts in which he declared Saint Gregory and the Athonite monks guilty of

causing church disorders. The saint, in turn, wrote a detailed refutation of Akyndinos’ errors. The patriarch supported Akyndinos and called Saint Gregory the cause of all disorders and disturbances in the Church (1344) and had him locked up in prison for four years. In 1347, when John the XIV was replaced on the patriarchal throne by Isidore (1347-1349), Saint Gregory Palamas was set free and was made Archbishop of Thessalonica.

In 1351 the Council of Blachernae solemnly upheld the Orthodoxy of his teachings. But the people of Thessalonica did not immediately accept Saint Gregory, and he was compelled to live in various places. On one of his travels to Constantinople the Byzantine ship fell into the hands of the Turks. Even in captivity, Saint Gregory preached to Christian prisoners and even to his Moslem captors. The Hagarenes were astonished by the wisdom of his words. Some of the Moslems were unable to endure this, so they beat him and would have killed him if they had not expected to obtain a large ransom for him. A year later, Saint Gregory was ransomed and returned to Thessalonica.

Saint Gregory performed many miracles in the three years before his death, healing those afflicted with illness. On the eve of his repose, Saint John Chrysostom appeared to him in a vision. With the words “To the heights! To the heights!” Saint Gregory Palamas fell asleep in the Lord on November 14, 1359. In 1368 he was canonized at a Constantinople Council under Patriarch Philotheus (1354-1355, 1364-1376), who compiled the Life and Services to the saint.

Hebrews 1:10-2:3 (Epistle)

And: “You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.” But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

PRAYER

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. In this season of fasting and continence, O Christ our Lord, You have shone as a light on them who walk in the darkness of sin. Bring us to the holy day of Your saving passion, that we may cry out to You: Arise, O God, and have mercy on us. Amen. Matin Hymn of Praises, 2nd week of Lent

All of us naturally long for fulfillment but often we feel empty. A student is unsatisfied despite doing well in academic studies. A homemaker is frustrated by what seem to be endless chores. A worker feels trapped in a monotonous job. A sick person lying in bed experiences a physical or mental paralysis. A businessman is never content with rising profits. What do all these people have in common? They all yearn for inward fulfillment. Although they may have experienced reasonable success in their lives, they all hunger for something more.

St Gregory Palamas (14th century), whose feast is celebrated on the second Sunday of the Great Fast, taught that the “something more” is life with God. As a young scholar, monk, and later Archbishop of Thessalonike, he was an inspiring example to his contemporaries. The central teaching of St. Gregory was that through faith, prayer, and the sacraments of the church, Christians experience a personal sharing in the life of God. The life and work of St. Gregory can be summed up by two key words in the Orthodox Christian tradition: theosis” (Divinization or becoming like God) and “hesychasm” (quietude or prayerful stillness before God). A Year of the Lord, Liturgical Bible Studies, Vol. 3

WHAT IS THEOSIS?

Theosis, according to the Church Fathers, is the renewal of all things in God. It is the experience of salvation as a personal sharing in God’s “own glory and goodness” (2nd Peter 1:3). The Transfiguration of Jesus (Mark 9:2-8), Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), and the vision of St. Steven (Acts 7:55-56) are examples of “theosis”. St Paul’s teachings about inner renewal through the indwelling of Christ and the Spirit (Romans 8:10-11; 2nd Corinthians 3:17-18), about the change of our earthly bodies into heavenly bodies at the resurrection (1st Corinthians 15:51-55), and about the future glory of creation freed from decay and death (Romans 8:18-21) are also examples of “theosis”. “Theosis” is God’s plan for all—the glorification of human beings as well as of creation. The goal of the whole cosmos is to be like a “burning bush” (Exodus 3:1-6) ablaze with

The glory of God.

However, “theosis” is not only an ultimate goal but also the wonderful gift of new life, a dynamic process already begun through the person and redeeming work of Christ. For each Orthodox Christian “theosis” begins at Baptism. It is the grace of God seeking to renew us inwardly in the image of Christ and to lift us up into heaven from the ordinary conditions of life. Christ is our bridge to heaven. “God became man in order that man might become God,” St. Athanasios wrote in his treatise On the Incarnation. To know Christ through faith, prayer, and the cleansing of the heart from evil, to be united with Him through the power of the Spirit, and to worship and serve Him with all our hearts—this is the essence of Christian renewal through the “divinizing” grace of God. God’s abundant life then flows into our earthly existence as we experience the mystery of the living Christ, the source of all grace and truth.

A Year of the Lord, Liturgical Bible Studies, Vol. 3

WHAT IS HESYCHASM?

Hesychasm has to do with private prayer. Hesychasm means “quietude” or “stillness” before God, a gathering of thoughts and feelings in the presence of God by means of spiritual reading and fervent prayer. Hesychasm is a quiet time with God, a way of finding a spiritual focus in one’s life. It is not an escape from responsibilities but rather a way of personal fellowship with God, a source of daily renewal, in order that we may carry out our responsibilities with inspiration and effectiveness.

But how difficult it is to achieve peace and serenity even for a few moments! “The mind is like a wagonful of monkeys,” as an ancient ascetic put it. Thoughts flow in and out of our consciousness. The mind wanders off in different directions. Feeling that “I need to do this or that” surge over us. In short we find it difficult to keep still in order to be with God.

Yet as we honestly share all these thoughts and feelings with God including our seeming inability to control them, spiritual reading and prayer act as stabilizers. They become the very means by which spiritual concentration increases. The words of our prayers and of our reading, recited unhurriedly and carefully, while calling back to prayer our wandering mind, lead us gradually to the presence of God, our source of life and renewal.

A Year of the Lord, Liturgical Bible Studies, Vol. 3

MEDITATION

Union with God is achieved by the practice of virtues and communication with Him through prayer. However, the practice of virtues prepares one to be united with God but does not cause the union itself. It is intense prayer by its holy action that accomplishes the soaring of man to God and union with him; for in its essence prayer is the union of spiritual beings with their Creator...When we sit down, when we walk, when we eat, when we drink we can always pray inwardly and practice mental prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me. Let us work with the body and pray with the soul. Let the outer person perform bodily tasks, and let the inner person be entirely dedicated to the service of God, never abandoning spiritual prayer...This practice of inner prayer tames passions as Daniel tamed the wild beasts. By it the dew of the Holy Spirit is brought down upon the heart, as Elijah brought down rain on Mount Carmel. This mental prayer reaches to the very throne of God and is the light which illuminates man's soul and inflames the heart with the fire of the love of God.

St Gregory Palamas, On Prayer and Purity of Heart

PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk. *(Prostration)*

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant. *(Prostration)*

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. *(Prostration)*

O God, cleanse me a sinner. *(12 times)*
deep bow, then:

Read the entire prayer again with a single prostration at the end.

Pascha Flowers

If you would like to help defray the cost of the flowers, and would like to have your loved one (deceased or in honor) remembered, please see Fr. Andrew. Cost: \$15 per flower.

Bartek Family: (12 Flowers)

- ◆ For the Health of my family and friends
- ◆ For the Health of all our parishioners & their families
- ◆ For the Health of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon & His Eminence AB Daniel and the entire Synod and all Orthodox Patriarchs & bishops around the world
- ◆ For the Health and safety of the Campbell Fire & Police Departments
- ◆ For the Health of the City Council and Mayor and all residents of Campbell
- ◆ For the less fortunate of the world who have no one to pray for them
- ◆ For all the military around the world
- ◆ In memory of my ordaining Bishop, His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas
- ◆ In memory of my parents George & Dorothy and all my family and friends
- ◆ In memory of all the diptychs of this parish
- ◆ In memory of all the hierarchs of this Diocese & the Carpatho-Russian Diocese
- ◆ For all the military who had given their lives for this country

APRIL SOCIALS

April 7– O Club

April 14– Altar Society

April 21– Church Council (Archbishop's social dinner)

April 28– B-day & Anniversary Cake & Coffee

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- In what ways have I put my faith and trust in Jesus?
- How can I increase my desire to follow in the path of Christ?
- Do I view fasting as a treasure or just a chore?
- Do I allow the Lenten services to influence by prayer life?
- As I look upon the Cross, am I mindful of the unconditional love that Christ has for me?
- Do I see the loving hand of Jesus in everyone and everything that is part of my life?
- Do I make good use of the opportunities for quiet time and listen to what God may be saying to me?

