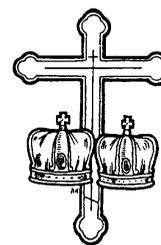


St. Mary Magdalene Byzantine Catholic Church

5390 West 220th St., Fairview Park, OH 44126
Parish: 440-734-4644 | Parish Cell: 216-926-2791 | Hall: 440-734-8974
Web Page: www.stmarymagdalenebyzantine.org
Email: mmbyzantinechurch@gmail.com
Right Reverend Mitred Archpriest John S. Kachuba, Pastor
Father Deacon Daniel Surniak



PRE CANA WEEKEND: If anyone is planning on getting married in 2019, the Eparchial Pre-Cana program will take place Sat. & Sun. April 6 & 7, 12:30 – 6:00 pm at St. Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church, 8111 Brecksville Rd – Brecksville, OH. Register on-line at taborlife.org, call the office at 708-645-0762, email taborlife@earthlink.net or see Fr. John. Your attendance at this program is required in order for your marriage to take place.

March 17, 2019 SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Sat. 5:00 pm For the Christian Family of St. Mary Magdalene
Sun. 9:30 am +Joseph & +Ann Vansach – Carol Koziol

Wed. 7:00 pm Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts

Fri. 7:00 pm Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts
3rd All Souls Saturday Panakhida

Sat. 5:00 pm For the Christian Family of St. Mary Magdalene
Sun. 9:30 am +John Kornick – Joseph and Jeanne Kornick

ATTENDANCE AND OFFERING: (3/9 – 3/10) Saturday: 20 adults;
Sunday: 37 adults, 8 children. Pre-Sanctified: Wed. 14 adults, 2 children; Friday 21 adults,
1 child. **OFFERING:** \$1,885.00

LENTEN BULLETIN BOARD: Take time to look at the bulletin board in the vestibule that our ECF classes created. It is worth taking the time to see.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE POOR: There are Lenten cards in the back of the church to help you fulfill the almsgiving of “to pray, fast, and give alms” during Lent. The donations will be deposited in our “St. Nicholas” Account for the poor.

CONFESSION BOOKLETS AND EPHRAIM PRAYER CARDS are available in the vestibule. Please take them and use them during Lent.

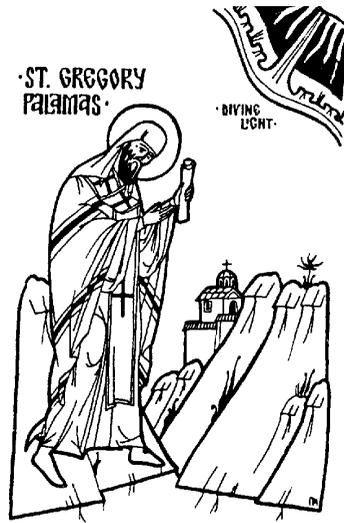
MEN – SAVE THE DATE: There will be a Lenten afternoon of reflection for the men of our area parishes. Saturday, March 30th, from 1-5 pm at the cathedral; prayer, talks, light refreshments will complete the afternoon. Any questions, contact Deacon Gregory Loya at gregloya@yahoo.com

CONFESSION



Why is it necessary for us to make a confession? Can't God forgive us our sins "directly?" Isn't He everywhere present and always ready to show mercy to sinner? Of course God is everywhere and is always ready to receive repentant sinners. But God has revealed Himself to us in His Son, Jesus Christ, who founded the Church and filled it with the power of the Holy Spirit. In the same way that we go to Church to be baptized and chrismated, to be married and buried, to hear the Word of God and to receive Holy Communion, so we go also to confess our sins and to receive the Grace to be reunited with God, the Father, in the Holy spirit by Holy Communion to the Body and Blood of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. We confess in the presence of the priest as if we are confessing to all, which is a practice that evolved only after centuries of fully open and public confession before the whole church community and the entire society. The present practice is a condescension to our human frailty. It is not at all, in the Eastern Catholic understanding, a practice built upon a doctrine of priestly power and authority alone. If we come to the Church to receive all that we have from God, including the Holy Bible and Divine Revelation, which was given by God to the Church of the Old and New Testaments, how odd it would be if we did not come to the same Church to confess our sins and to receive forgiveness and MERCY!

ST GREGORY PALAMAS



Why do we fast? Why do we make sacrifices? Why do we stand at long services? Why do we pray? To those of us who are beginning to doubt and waver after only two weeks of the Fast, the Church brings us an answer today. This answer is in the person of St Gregory Palamas, the fourteenth-century Archbishop of Salonica in Greece to whom this Sunday is dedicated.

In a place up in the hills behind the town of Kavalla near Salonica. There you can still see a cave in the rocks - this was the home of Gregory Palamas before he was consecrated Archbishop. It was in that cave that he spent years in fasting and prayer. And there, not caring for his body, and instead cultivating and caring for the purity of his heart and therefore his mind, he received gifts of the Holy Spirit, he came to know God.

Now at the same time as St Gregory was living in extreme fasting and prayer, there lived a clever philosopher, also a Greek, a Hellenist, whose name was Barlaam. He said that, logically, it was impossible to know God, indeed God was by definition unknowable and inaccessible to the human mind. On hearing and studying Barlaam's philosophy. St Gregory recognized in the so-called logic of Barlaam a blasphemy, a heresy. He recognized that Barlaam lacked purity of heart and therefore mind, and that his logic was the logic of the godless who only trusted in his own mental powers and imagination, the mental powers of the created, not of the Creator. For if Barlaam were right, then all of Christ's work for us, from His Conception and Birth as a man, His Circumcision, His Presentation in the Temple, His Baptism, His Crucifixion, His Resurrection, His Ascension, to His Sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, are futile, they are all in vain. Unlike Barlaam, St Gregory said that since Christ the Creator had become man and part of creation, He had made human nature potentially holy - like His own human nature. By sending down the Holy Spirit, He had given us all access in our human nature to holiness. Just as the Sun is known to us through its energies of heat and light, so God can be known to us through the uncreated energies of the Holy Spirit.

Quite simply, if we reject the teaching of St Gregory on this, we reject all the work of Christ and therefore also reject the coming of the Holy Spirit. Barlaam's philosophy would mean that we cannot know God, that there is no purpose in fasting and prayer. In fact, Barlaam's philosophy was a denial of God and therefore the foundation-stone of the last century's atheism and disbelief with all its massacres and genocides with their hundreds of millions of victims. Indeed, Barlaam's philosophy is the basis of all those recent ideas which said that there is no God, that

man stands alone and lonely at the head of the Universe, for there is nothing greater than man - that he quite magically created himself in an empty and godless Universe.

St Gregory asserted the opposite to Barlaam. He affirmed that man carries in himself two tendencies, one for good, the other for evil. However, the tendency for good can only be developed in man through acquiring the grace of God, the divine energy sent to us from God, accessible insofar as our hearts and minds are pure enough to receive that grace. But this grace which enlightens and brightens us can only come to us if we repent, if we accept the process of fasting and prayer, tears and self-sacrifice.

It is vital for us to understand that the thoughts of St Gregory, expressed in detail in his writings, are not just thoughts, not just another philosophy like Barlaam's, but they were based on his experience, they were divinely inspired. He was not talking about an idea, but about the reality which he had experienced as an ascetic in that cave which you can still visit today. And the fact is that it is the wonder-working relics of St Gregory which go in procession through the streets of Salonica today, not the graceless dust of the bones of Barlaam.

This is the reality of the Church, this is the grace of the energies of God, this is holiness, the experience and knowledge of God, not imagined, not the fruit of fantasy and the studies of the mind, but the reality of God known to and experienced by those who are pure in heart and mind. For as it is written: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'. And this precisely is the aim of all true Christian hearts and minds.

Holy Father Gregory, pray to God for us!

St. Gregory Palamas

The product of a noble Anatolian family, St. Gregory was born, probably at Constantinople, c. 1296. After his father's death, he became a monk, as did several members of his family. He entered a monastery on Mt. Athos and followed the rule of St. Basil. He lived on Athos in solitude for most of the following twenty years. In the 1330's, he began to defend the practice of hesychasm against the attacks of people like Barlaam of Calabria, who denied, among other things, that the light of Tabor which hesychasts experience is the uncreated light. Although the 1341 council of Constantinople upheld Gregory's teachings about theosis, he was excommunicated in 1344. Three years later, he was consecrated bishop of Thessaloniki. Because hesychasm had come to have political as well as theological associations, the choice was not popular, and he entered his see with the aid of the Byzantine emperor. The Turks captured Gregory in 1354 and kept him captive for a year. He died in 1359. Gregory believes that although God is ultimately unknowable, man can experience his energies through the sacraments and mystical experience, which are possible because of the Incarnation of Christ. The practice of the Jesus prayer opens one to God's energies.

PEACE OF SOUL - St. Seraphim

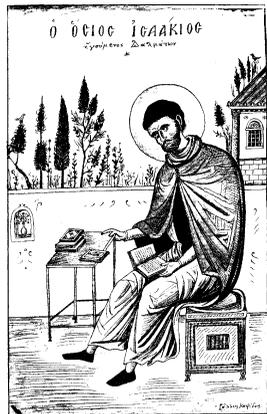


We all strive to be peaceful in the sense of having peace in our soul. Those who have acquired peace of soul can be in constant motion or busyness or in pain, but their souls being united closely to God remains in unshakable peace.

St. Seraphim of Sarov teaches: "we must endeavor by every means to keep peace of soul. Do not be troubled by the insults or slights of other people. It is necessary at all costs to restrain oneself from anger and by watchfulness over oneself to keep the mind and heart from vain movement. For the guarding of peace of our souls, it is also necessary to restrain ourselves and flee from judging others. By being non-judgmental and being silent, our peace of soul will be preserved. When a person attains this state of mind, he receives divine revelation We must keep our hearts from vain thoughts and impressions (Proverbs 4:23). By constant watchfulness over the heart, a purity of heart is born in

which God is seen, according to the words of eternal truth given in Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

His path has been trodden from the ages and from all generations by the Cross and by death. But how is it with you that the afflictions on the path seem to you to be off the path? Do you not wish to follow the steps of the saints? Or have your plans for devising some way of your own, and of journeying therein without suffering?



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St. Isaac the Syrian

A SERIES OF WARNINGS

·THE SOWER OF GOOD SEEDS·



What do non-practicing Christians have in common besides the fact that they do not go to church regularly, nor regularly feed and drink on the words of God in any other way? They often claim to be fully Christian. In today's world, they outnumber the practicing Christians by a wide margin. By what seems to be a particular coincidence in each case, they also, just about unanimously, agree on one doctrinal point: They agree that there cannot be any Judgment in the next life, or if there is one, it will be some kind of sham, with everyone found to be excused and everyone accordingly invited or even marched into Heaven. And they tend to hold this doctrine of denial of Judgment on similar grounds. Many of them claim that Christ, even in the Gospels, never taught it at all. Others admit that the Christ of the Gospels did in fact warn about a coming Judgment, but held that He made these warnings only a couple of times. On this basis, these

warnings, they say, were not meant to be taken seriously, or, perhaps, even were not delivered by the real Christ at all, but were merely inserted into the early Gospels by some fanatics. Here they have made a colossal blunder. In a sense, the Gospels are a series of warnings. Apart from the miracles and the Passion, the rest of what Christ did and said just about always includes a strong note of warning. Even when He teaches about good things, miraculously good things, about the cultivation of mercy, the cultivation of charity, about peace, about Heaven, He puts them in a context which makes it very clear that they can all be lost, and also that the world in general has already lost them (cf. v.g., John 3:18; 16:8-11). Shun the world. Do not follow it. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Christ delivers (by one count) 78 separate and severe warnings, and that is counting the Woes which constitute the whole of chapter 23 as just one warning, and counting the warning parables, that is, almost all of them, the Parable of the Sower, the Weeds, the Net in the Sea, the Unforgiving Servant, the Vineyard, the Two Sons, the Tenants, the Wedding Feast, the Wicked Servant, the Ten Virgins, the Talents, each just as one warning apiece. (Even the Parable of the Prodigal Son can be seen to have a strong warning about the deadliness of sin in it.)

