

Lent: A Time for Healing our Spiritual Infirmities

At first glance, we may wonder why the Church has selected today's particular Gospel to be included in the Lenten cycle of readings. To be sure, it is a wonderful story of persistence and ingenuity, which results in the healing of a paralyzed young man by our Lord. But how does that relate to the Great Fast? A closer examination of this miraculous event gives us our answer.

Finding Christ is not always easy, as evidenced by the fact the 4 friends of the paralytic in the Gospel had to literally "raise the roof" to make it possible for him to see Jesus. It was a real struggle, and in like manner, living a spiritual, Christ-like life during Lent can be a struggle for us as well. We must do battle with our sinful nature, which "paralyzes" our very soul. Contrary to what others may have us believe, sin does not "free" us to do as we please. Indeed, it traps and confines us. When we follow the path of sin, we find it difficult to pray...to believe...to know real joy...to find peace... to experience anything at all that is spiritual. Yes, sin renders us as helpless as the paralyzed young man we read about this morning.

During this season of repentance, we need to remind ourselves that the gift of forgiveness is the greatest gift God can give us. Physical illness can be a burden, putting certain limitations and restrictions on our lives. Spiritual illness, however, can destroy us completely and deprive us of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the "Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim" we ask God to give us the ability to recognize our sins, faults and shortcomings. In the weeks ahead, may we know our sins, confess our sins and ultimately show sorrow for them. Then, and only then, will the Great Physician touch us with His healing hand.

Ss Constantine & Helen

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Pacific



March 24, 2019

2nd Sunday of Great Lent: St. Gregory Palamas, Forefeast
of the Annunciation

930 Lunalilo Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 521-7220 www.greekorthodoxhawaii.org
Office: office@greekorthodoxhawaii.org
Fr. Alexander Leong: fralexanderleong@yahoo.com

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Commemoration of: Artemon the Presbyter; Zachariah the Recluse

Apolytikia - Entrance Hymns

Ote katilthes (Hymn of the Day) Tone 2

When You descended to death, O Life immortal, rendered to Hades a mortal blow by Your radiant Divinity, and when from the depths of darkness You raised the dead, all the power of Haven were crying out to You, O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to You.

Simeron tis pangosmiu (Fore-feast of Annunciation) Tone 4

Today is the prelude of the joy of the universe, and it incites us to sing the forefeast hymns. For behold, Gabriel is coming, and he will say to the Virgin: Rejoice, Maiden full of grace; the Lord is with you. (AgesInitiatives.com)

Orthodoxias of fostir (St. Gregory Palamas) Tone 8

Beacon of Orthodox belief, the strong support of the Church and her teacher inspired by God, you are the ornament of the monks, the unassailable champion of theologians, O Gregory the Wonderworker and the boast of Thessalonica, the messenger of grace. Forever earnestly entreat for the salvation of our souls. (AgesInitiatives.com)

Tu Stavru Su (Hymn of the Church) Tone 8

Having seen in the sky the form of Your Cross and, like Paul, having received his calling not from men, Your apostle among Kings, Lord, placed his reigning city in Your hand, which forever you guard in peace, by the intercessions of the Theotokos, for You alone are the lover of mankind.

Kontakion

Epelevsi Pnevmatos Tone 4

*The Archangel spoke to you, * O Theotokos, * and the Holy Spirit came * on you and thus you did conceive * the Father's Son, who is one in throne * and one in essence. * Through you, thus, was Adam recalled.* (AgesIntitiatives.com)

Epistle Reading

Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3

"IN THE BEGINNING, Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, 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 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.

Gospel Reading

Mark 2:1-12

At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum and 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 a blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, 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!"

Announcements

Today

- ✘ SUN, 3/24 - 2nd Sunday of Lent: St. Gregory of Palamas; Philoptochos Meeting 11:45 a.m.; Great Vespers 2 p.m.

This Week

- ✘ MON, 3/25 - *Feast of the Annunciation: Orthros 8:30 a.m. Liturgy 9:30 a.m.*
- ✘ TUE, 3/26 - Fellowship/Book Club/Sharing of "The Lenten Spring" 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room or via Conference Call. See Fr. Alex to purchase book for \$19 or buy electronically via Amazon Kindle.
- ✘ WED, 3/27 - *Pre-Sanctified Liturgy- 6 p.m..*
- ✘ FRI, 3/29 - *3rd Salutations to the Theotokos - 6:30 p.m..*
- ✘ SAT, 3/30 - *GREAT VESPERS 5:30 p.m..*
- ✘ SUN, 3/31 - Veneration of the Holy Cross

Coffee Hour Sponsors are needed to continue our tradition of offering refreshments and fellowship for our parish and visitors. Please sign up on the board near the door of the social hall.

To Our Visitors:

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us. Just a reminder, however: the Sacrament of Holy Communion is a manifestation of the *unity of the Body of Christ*. As such, only those who are members in spiritual good standing of the Orthodox Church – and who have prepared themselves for the Sacrament – may partake of the Holy Chalice. However, *everyone* is welcome to come up with our people at the end of the service to receive blessed bread.

Please be sure to join us at Coffee Hour following Services.