

PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR ...

The health and salvation of—

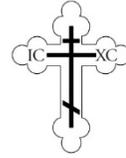
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|---|-------------------|
| Metropolitan Onufriy + Ukrainian Orthodox Church | William Vivian |
| Metropolitan Isaiah Archbishop Benjamin | Valerie Deanna |
| Bishop Neofitos of Eldoret | Thomas |
| Archpriests Matthew & George | James |
| Hieroschemamonk Ambrose | Matthew |
| Subdeacon James | Keith |
| Reader Aleksei | Michael |
| than • Phoebe • Anne | Rose |
| Iraida • Longinus • Nina | Abi |
| Amal • Nicula • Maximus | Gregory |
| Dmitry • Natalia | John |
| Danil • Anna • Kenneth | Keith • Diane |
| Irina • Galina • Sergey • Evgenij | Robert |
| Catherine • Katherine w/ child | Skyler |
| | Craig |
| Catechumens Rebecca, | Michael |
| Isaac, Anna, | Patricia |
| Adalie, Everett, Ivey, | |
| Emily, David, | |
| Gregory, Christian, Michael, | |
| Lucy, Corey, Bryan, | |
| Damon, Samuel | |

The repose and salvation of—

Reader Jospeh (3/6)

Please let Father know if there are any names you would like added to the list.

*A mission parish under the omophorion of His Eminence Benjamin,
Archbishop of San Francisco and the Diocese of the West,
Orthodox Church in America*



ST TIKHON ORTHODOX
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Sunday, March 16, 2025

St. Gregory Palamas
Martyr Sabinas of Egypt



Relics of St. Gregory Palamas in Thessaloniki, Greece

Sundays at 9:05 AM – Hours + Divine Liturgy
This Friday., March 21, 5:50 PM – Typika + Presanctified Liturgy
This Saturday, March 22, 5:30 PM – Great Vespers + Confession

Archpriest Alexander Vallens, *Rector*

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Protodeacon John Manutes

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2nd Sunday of Great Lent: St. Gregory Palamas

St. Gregory Palamas was an Athonite monk who later became the Archbishop of Thessalonica. Born in Constantinople to a noble Anatolian family, he had always been interested in the monastic life. Around 1318 he and his two brothers went to Mount Athos and became monks. However, with the Turks encroaching upon Greece, he fled to Thessalonica, where he entered the priesthood in 1326. Shortly afterward, he lived as a hermit at a mountain near Beroea, and eventually returned to Athos in 1331. Six years later, he became involved in a debate with Barlaam, a Greek monk from Calabria, Italy.

In 1347, St. Gregory became Archbishop of Thessalonica, but the political climate made it impossible for him to take up his see until 1350. During a voyage to Constantinople, he was captured by Turks and held in captivity for over a year. He died in 1359, and was glorified as saint a mere 9 years later.

In the early 14th century, Barlaam of Calabria encountered the monks of Mount Athos. These monks practiced the spiritual art of hesychasm, a life of quiet, stillness, and unceasing prayer, and testified that through this type of prayer they could see the uncreated light of God. Barlaam claimed that the monks wasted their time in fruitless prayer when they could instead come to truly know God through their intellect. In other words, he believed the highest knowledge of God came only from rational means or through the created world. We could not, according to Barlaam, have a direct and unmediated communion with God. Naturally, St. Gregory sensed the danger in Barlaam's teaching here, and he stepped up to defend hesychasm.

After St. Gregory's initial criticism of Barlaam, Barlaam replied with a vicious attack on the hesychastic life of the Athonite monks. In rebuttal, St. Gregory wrote the *Triads in defense of the Holy Hesychasts* (c. 1338), a brilliant work affirmed by his fellow Hagiorites. A synod held in Constantinople in 1341 supported Palamas' views, condemning Barlaam. Three years later, the opponents of hesychasm in the West secured a condemnation for heresy and excommunication for St. Gregory. Despite this, two additional synods in Constantinople (1347 and 1351) reaffirmed his theology.

Perhaps the most important contribution St. Gregory made to Orthodox Christian theology was his distinction between the essence and energies of God. While we cannot know God in His essence, we can know Him in His energies (the work of God's grace in our lives, and who God is in relation to the creation and mankind). Both essence and energies are fully God. Therefore, when interacting with God's energies, we interact with the uncreated God Himself, while His essence still remains unknowable and unreachable.

Imagine that God is the sun. We all experience the power and energy of the sun every day. We experience its warmth and light (both of which are energies) through the rays that shine down on us. These rays don't give us a mere impression of what the sun is; they are not a substitute for the sun, nor do they merely illustrate what the sun is like. They are a real participation in the very energies of the sun itself. In other words, by our contact with the sun's rays, real changes occur in our human chemistry. At the same time, however, we cannot participate in or experience the essence of the sun. If we tried to approach the essence of the sun, it would overwhelm and annihilate us. So it is with God and His grace. God's grace is not a participation in the transcendent and unknowable essence of God. However, it is a real experience of God through His divine energies. In fact, according to

St. Gregory Palamas and many other theologians, the Apostles actually witnessed the uncreated light of God; and it is possible for others to see that same uncreated light of God with the help of repentance, spiritual discipline and contemplative prayer.

Adapted from <https://www.saintjohnchurch.org/saint-gregory-palamas-essence-energies-distinction/>

Troparion – Tone 5 (Resurrection)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, /
Co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, /
Born for our salvation from the Virgin; /
For He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, /
To endure death, / And to raise the dead /// By His glorious Resurrection.

Troparion – Tone 8 (St. Gregory)

O Gregory the Wonderworker, light of Orthodoxy, /
Support and teacher of the Church, /
Glory of monks and invincible protector of theologians, /
Pride of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, ///
Pray without ceasing for the salvation of our souls.

Kontakion – Tone 8 (St. Gregory)

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, joyful trumpet of theology, /
With one accord we sing thy praises, O Gregory inspired by God. /
But since thou standest now in mind and spirit before the Original Mind, /
Guide our minds to Him, O father, ///
That we may cry to thee: Rejoice, preacher of grace.

Kontakion – Tone 4 (Triodion)

The season of the virtues now has come, and the Judge is at the door. /
Let us not hold back with darkened face, /
But let us keep the Fast, offering tears, contrition and almsgiving; /
And let us cry: / Our sins are more in number than the sand of the sea; /
But, Deliverer of all, forgive each one of us, ///
That we may receive an incorruptible crown.

Epistles: Hebrews 1:10 – 2:3 (Sunday); Hebrews 7:26 – 8:2 (Martyrs)

Gospels: Mark 2:1-12 (Sunday); John 10:9-16 (Martyrs)

Also this week: Ven Alexis, Man of God; St Patrick, Apostle to Ireland (March 17); St Cyril, Abp of Jerusalem; Repose of St Nikolai of Zbicha (March 18); Martyrs Chrysanthus and Daria, and those with them at Rome (March 19); Holy Fathers slain at the Monastery of St Sabbas: Ven John, Sergius, Patrick, and others (March 20); St James the Confessor, Bp of Catania; (March 21); Hieromartyr Basil of Ancyra (March 22);

** Lenten fast all week; wine & oil allowed Saturday **