

## The Second Sunday of Great Lent

Mark 2:1-12

And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion. (KJV)

### St. Gregory Palamas

John 10:9-16

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. (KJV)

Believers in the Holy Orthodox Church are called to actively participate in the journey to Pascha. The Church provides Great Lent to facilitate the full life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

St. John's Gospel for today describes the Lord Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd. The Shepherd knows His sheep and is known to them. The Good Shepherd protects His sheep and is willing to lay down His life for them.

Serious believers value Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd. Serious believers rejoice and are strengthened by Christ. Jesus Christ brings life more abundantly. Believers adhere to Christ's teachings to experience life more abundantly.

During Great Lent, the Church encourages believers to repent of their sins. St. Mark's Gospel for today describes Jesus' forgiving the sins and healing the man with palsy. Each person has the opportunity to seek forgiveness and healing.

Sin is to be firmly rejected and abhorred by Christians. Welcoming and harboring sinful thoughts and performing sinful actions prevent the abundant life in Christ.

Jesus describes Himself as the Door through which entry can be made for the person to be saved. God's Holy Church is the opening to the Door for the believer. Christ the Door is always open for the believer seeking salvation.

Many doors exist in the world to paths to destruction. Some doors open to destinations far from the Heavenly Kingdom. There are doors which open to experiences of misery.

God's Holy Church provides the Gospel and nourishing teachings to keep the believer on the path to the Heavenly Kingdom. The Church offers life more abundantly in the Divine services.

The Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ enable believers to be firmly and fully united with Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ enters and radiates within the communing believer.

The journey to Pascha is underway in the Church. Great Lent is to be taken seriously as salvation of the soul is of utmost seriousness. The soul is not to be jeopardized or to be cast into sin.

Believers are encouraged to restore purity to life. Becoming more unified with and like Christ is the intended goal of Great Lent. The joy of Christ's Resurrections beckons believers to be serious each day of Great Lent.

The time of each day is a gift from God to be treasured and used for God's glory. Believers learn in and from the Church ways to live pleasing to the Lord. Beginning anew in Christ is possible while consciousness remains in the body.

The Lenten services offers nourishment for the soul and foster repentance. Attentive and welcoming hearts and minds rejoice in the Lenten journey. Serious believers welcome the expectation of increased fasting and prayer.

Individuals concerned about the conditions of their souls know that honoring Great Lent will make a beneficial difference. Hunger in the soul for Jesus Christ is addressed in Great Lent.

Honoring Great Lent in daily life provides a refuge and safe haven from the horrors, trials and temptations of the world. The Lord is ever-present with the believer seeking salvation of the soul.

The Good Shepherd does not abandon His sheep. The Good Shepherd is always present to guide, protect and nourish His own. Serious followers of the Lord Jesus Christ listen attentively and adhere to His ways.

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The Second Sunday of Great Lent. St. Gregory Palamas. Holy Martyr Agapius and the Six Martyrs with Him. March 15/28, 2021. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.  
Father Rodney Torbic