

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)

God's Holy Church is now in the Second Week of Great Lent. Today's Gospel of St. Mark describes Jesus' power to heal and to forgive sins. Forgiving sins is a form of healing and renews energy and life in the believer.

Believers are encouraged to repent during Great Lent. Seriously confessing personal sins is certainly part of repentance. A great weight is lifted from the believer when confession occurs.

Experiencing communion with the Lord Jesus Christ follows serious confession. Jesus Christ welcomes the repentant believer with love, joy and unity. The hunger in the soul is satisfied with repentance, confession and communion.

Great Lent is the time for new beginnings in Christ. The believer's senses, heart, mind and soul are awakened to Jesus Christ. The Church fosters and encourages the Lenten effort for new beginnings in Christ.

Fighting sin and being moved to repent will be met with resistance. Deeply embedded sin is difficult to overcome. The Lord God provides the hope, the strength and the reasons to repent.

Life is much different when fully resting in the Lord God. Life focused in Christ and lived for Christ is filled with deep peace, love and joy. Relationships are better, stronger and more lasting when founded in Christ.

Love, hope and forgiveness are characteristics of the life in Christ. Greed, unbridled anger, jealousy and deviousness have no place in the Christian life. Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd and knows His own sheep and is known to them.

When Jesus Christ fills the mind, heart and soul, all else in life takes the proper perspective. The remaining days of Great Lent will be well used if the believer aggressively repels sin and adheres to the narrow path to God's Kingdom.

Investing in the Kingdom of God has a place in each day of life. Believers are firmly encouraged to invest in rooting out sin in the time remaining during Great Lent.

The Good Shepherd stands firm in protecting His sheep against the wiles of evil. God's Holy Church offers the nourishing environment to address sin and unite with Jesus Christ.

The Divine services during Great Lent offer instruction, guidance and nourishment. Believers seeking to repent and experience communion with Jesus Christ are able to do so in God's Holy Church.

The time of life exists only once. Wise believers are grateful for life and cherish God's granting of life. Life is restored to health when Jesus Christ's is central to the heart, mind and soul.

Today's Gospel readings illumine Jesus' power to forgive sin, heal, love and protect His followers. Observant believers cherish Jesus Christ and their relationship with Him.

Each Gospel reading strengthens, nourishes and guides the believer. Great Lent is well structured in the Church and has an orderly progression toward Holy Week and Pascha.

Being attuned to the Church during Great Lent guides the believer through each day. Barriers and temptations are overcome when Jesus Christ is the Guide, the Shepherd and the Goal.

The Second Sunday of Great Lent. St. Gregory Palamas. Holy Seven Bishops, Hieromartyrs of Cherson. March 7/20, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

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