

## 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)

Great Lent is an opportunity to increase investments in the Kingdom of God. Increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving are wise and profitable investments in the Kingdom of God during Great Lent.

Increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving draw the believer closer to God. Prayer and fasting facilitate greater understanding of personal sin and spur the believer to repentance.

Repentance is consistently emphasized during Great Lent. St. Mark's Gospel for today verifies Jesus' ability to forgive sins. Jesus revealed His ability to forgive sins and His ability to enable the man with palsy to walk.

During Great Lent the Lord Jesus Christ wants believers to: “ lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal (Mt.6:20)

Repentance and forgiveness of sins through Confession in God’s Holy Church provides the believer with greater freedom. The weight of sin restraining the believer is lifted through confession and forgiveness.

The believer’s heart experiences wholeness when sins are forgiven. Healing occurs when the believer partakes of the Precious Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Great Lent is a time for joy in the Church. Receiving forgiveness of sins from Jesus Christ restores joy in the life of the believer. Forgiveness of sins brings joy likened to the joy occurring at the time of Holy Baptism.

The believer experiences newness in Christ through forgiveness of sins. The man in the Gospel became new in Christ when his sins were forgiven and Jesus gave him the ability to walk.

Great Lent is a time of welcome in God’s Holy Church. The Lord Jesus Christ lovingly welcomes individuals seeking newness and renewal in life. Jesus Christ is ever-present. Newness and renewal in Jesus Christ come through repentance.

Today’s Gospel of St. John describes Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Jesus knows His sheep. Each believer is to heed the way of the Good Shepherd.

Great Lent instructs and encourages believers to follow the way of Jesus Christ. Joy occurs when believers repent and adhere to the practices of Great Lent including increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Repentance is expected to take place each year during Great Lent. Repentance is purely voluntary. Believers are greatly encouraged to firmly reject sin in life and recommit to adhering to the way of Jesus Christ.

The Divine services during Great Lent foster repentance. The Church guides believers in repentance. Jesus Christ’s forgiveness and love for each believer heals hurting hearts and cleanses guilty consciences.

Sin restricts the believer. Jesus Christ gives believers mobility through the forgiveness of sins. The Gospel states: “If the Son therefore shall make **you free**, ye shall be **free** indeed.” (Jn/ 8:36)

Thank God for Great Lent taking place in the Church. Thank God for the ability to repent. Let us seek joy in the loving and forgiving Jesus Christ through repentance of sins.

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The Second Sunday of Great Lent. St. Gregory Palamas. Venerable Procopius Decapolis, Venerable Talaleus. February 27/March 12, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic