

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 concluding the second week of Great Lent. Believers' focus on their souls should be increasing as Great Lent progresses. Repentance is a major theme of Great Lent.

Purification of the soul comes with repentance. St. Mark's Gospel for today describes Jesus' power to forgive sins. The same Gospel demonstrates Jesus' healing power.

Sins create paralysis in believers. Sin inhibits growth and progress. Jesus healed the man from his inability to walk. Jesus absolved the man of his sin. Jesus gives believers the opportunity to have sins forgiven.

Jesus creates opportunities for believers to be freed of the paralysis of sin. Great faith is involved in approaching Jesus in repentance. Coming to the priest in Holy Confession with a desire for forgiveness is necessary,

Jesus welcomes believers seeking to repent. Jesus' love and mercy are unlimited. Great Lent is the opportunity to begin life anew in Jesus Christ. St. John's Gospel for today states Jesus gives life abundantly.

Families experiencing difficulties do well to begin anew in Christ. Parishes having turmoil are renewed when parishioners collectively embrace repentance as primary in the journey to Pascha.

Beginning anew in Christ involves seeking forgiveness from Christ and being forgiving in daily life. The value of forgiveness from Christ and forgiving others in daily relationships is revealed by deep and sincere prayer.

Opening the heart to God leads to repentance and understanding forgiveness. Focusing the mind on Jesus Christ creates perspective for life. Jesus' love is revealed in St. John's Gospel for today.

Jesus stands by those who follow Him. Jesus died and rose from the dead for His followers. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Jesus does not run when there is turmoil in life.

Jesus is present to help believers face and deal with life's turmoil. Jesus faced the crisis of the man being unable to walk that was brought to Him in faith. Jesus clearly understood the value of forgiveness of sins and the connection with healing.

Great Lent is an opportunity to free believers from the paralysis of sin. Great Lent is a journey in God's Holy Church to life abundantly in Jesus Christ. The hunger in the soul is addressed during Great Lent.

The believer's need for personal peace and freedom is addressed during Great Lent. Encounters with Jesus result in peace. Jesus is the personification of freedom and peace.

Jesus opens the doors to abundant life. Jesus enables believers to freely use talents and gifts for God's glory. Jesus destroys the shackles of sin. Peace rests in the heart, soul and mind when forgiveness occurs.

Great Lent is time-limited. Each day has great value in life. Wise believers seek to make use of each moment of earthly life to be united with Christ. The Church offers daily wisdom and nourishment for believers to grow in Christ.

Thank God for the opportunities to repent and grow in Christ during Great Lent. Thank God for the increased Divine services. Thank God for the Gospel nourishment and the opportunity to partake of Christ's Precious Body and Blood.

The Second Sunday of Great Lent. St. Gregory Palamas. St. Cyril of Jerusalem. March 18/31. 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic