

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)

Today is the Second Sunday of Great Lent in God's Holy Church. The time to peel away the tarnish of the soul is at hand. St. Mark's Gospel for today describes the Lord Jesus Christ's ability to forgive sins.

St. Mark's Gospel verifies the Lord Jesus Christ's power to heal. The man afflicted with palsy in St. Mark's Gospel was given the power to walk. Jesus gives believers paralyzed by sin the ability to walk when they repent of their sins.

St. John's Gospel for today describes that Jesus Christ came to give life, life more abundantly. Great Lent is the annual opportunity in the Church for believers to refresh themselves in the abundant life in Jesus Christ.

Repentance is clearly emphasized in Great Lent. Repentance has a place throughout earthly life. Believers think, say and do things that are not pleasing to the Lord God. Believers often fail to do things that are pleasing to God.

Sin creates a barrier between the believer and God. Sin inhibits believers from enjoying the abundant life in Christ. Sin paralyzes the believer. Sin deters full growth in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank God for the immeasurable love and mercy enabling repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Thank God for the guidance and nourishment in the Church. Believers valuing Great Lent welcome the opportunities to repent.

Increased prayer, fasting and almsgiving encouraged by the Church focus believers' attention during the Lenten journey. The desire to unite and remain united with Jesus Christ is strong within each human soul.

Peeling the way the tarnish from the soul created by sin enables Jesus Christ to shine through the believer in daily life. When Jesus Christ fills the heart, mind and soul, sin has no room to triumph.

The Lenten journey restores Jesus Christ as the priority for believers. Seeking first the Kingdom of God is the priority established at Baptism. The Lenten journey intends to keep the believer on the narrow path to God's Kingdom.

Each year on the Second Sunday of Great Lent, the Church commemorates St. Gregory Palamas. Believers benefit greatly when considering the writings, personal example and inspiriting life of St. Gregory.

Much is to be learned from St. Gregory about the prayer of the heart. Believers invest wisely in assessing the contents of the heart. Believers benefit when filling the heart with Jesus Christ in prayer.

Great Lent is time limited each year. Earthly life is time limited for each person. Each day is to be greatly valued as a gift and blessing from the Lord God. Each day is to be lived in ways pleasing to God.

The paralysis of sin can be cast aside during Great Lent. The abundant life in Jesus Christ awaits each person choosing to repent. Conscious action is required for repentance. Jesus Christ provides the motivation for repentance.

May today's Gospel readings inspire repentance in each believer. May the love of Jesus Christ fill each heart and peel away the darkness of sin. Let the brightness of Jesus Christ shine forth from within each believer.

The Second Sunday of Great Lent. St. Gregory Palamas. St. Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus, Martyrs. March 3/16, 2025. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic