



**February 28, 2010**  
**SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT:**  
**ST. GREGORY PALAMAS**

**RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE FIVE:**

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted upon the Cross in the Flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

**TROPARION TO ST. GREGORY PALAMAS - TONE EIGHT:**

O light of Orthodoxy! O teacher of the Church, its confirmation! O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians! O wonder-working Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace! Always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved!

**KONTAKION TO ST. GREGORY PALAMAS - TONE EIGHT:**

Holy and divine instrument of wisdom, joyful trumpet of theology, with one accord we sing your praises, O Gregory, inspired by God. But since you now stand in mind and spirit before the Original Mind, guide our minds to Him, O father, that we may cry to you, Hail, preacher of grace.

**KONTAKION FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION - TONE EIGHT:**

Now is the time for action! Judgement is at the doors! So let us rise and fast, offering alms with tears of compunction and crying, Our sins are more numerous than the sands of the sea; but forgive us, O Master of all, so that we may receive the incorruptible crowns.

**HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS (INSTEAD OF "IT IS TRULY MEET"):**

All of creation rejoices in you, O full of grace; the assembly of angels and the race of men. O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins, from whom God was incarnate and became a Child, our God before the ages. He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in you, O full of grace. Glory to you!



## EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

### **THE PROKIMENON IN THE 5<sup>TH</sup> TONE:**

*Thou, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.*

### **HEBREWS 1: 10 - 2: 3**

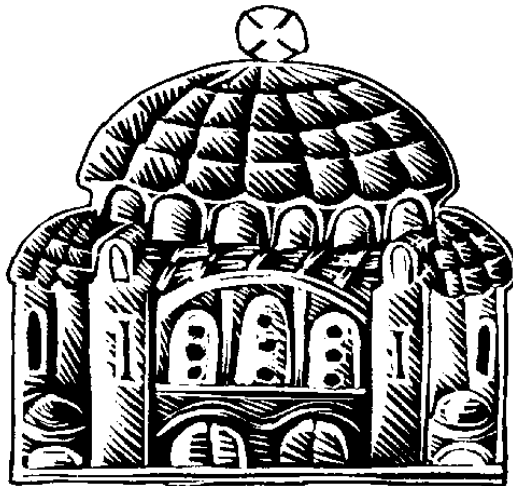
Brethren: “You, Lord in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.” But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him?

### **ALLELUIA**

*The Lord answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you!  
Save the king, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call!*

### **COMMENTARY**

The Church warns us now that we have completed this second week of Great Lent, not to drift away—but to hold fast to Christ. If Israel was expected to obey the words of created angels or suffer punishment (as we hear so often in the Old Testament), how much more are we called upon to obey the commandment of Jesus Christ, the Son of God—Who is Himself divine? And still we fall away from Him in sin so easily. Yet, there is good news! There is time to turn from our sinful and wicked ways and live in Christ! The Mystery of Confession is available at all times, and especially during Great Lent, to help us to turn back toward God. May Christ our God grant us the humility to understand and accept our sinfulness, turn from it, and live in Him.



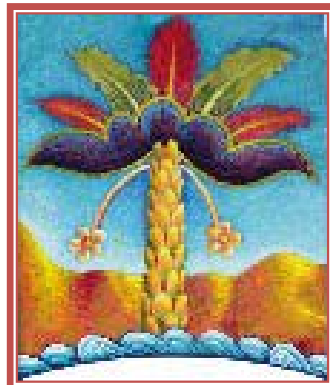
## GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

### **MARK 2: 1-12**

At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" - He said to the paralytic, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed and go to your house." Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

### **COMMENTARY**

As shown by the healing of the paralytic, faith is an indispensable condition for salvation. Faith is collective as well as personal, for the faith of the paralytic's friends helped in his healing. One purpose of Christ's coming into the world is expressly for that purpose, to forgive sins, freeing humanity from its bondage. Forgiving sins is a greater power than physical healing, for, as the scribes correctly not, God alone can forgive sins. Thus, the easier task is to grant physical healing. Though Christ is fully God and holds the authority to forgive, He condescends to those gathered and heals this man in order to draw people to God, whom they glorified. May Christ our God heal our sinful hearts through His word, as we ask Him to forgive us our sins, even as we forgive those who sin against us!



## SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

**From *The Prologue* for Feb. 15/Feb. 28 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:**

### **The Holy Apostle Onesimus**

Onesimus was one of the Seventy. He was a slave of Philemon but transgressed against his master and fled to Rome. There he heard the Gospel from the Apostle Paul and was baptized. Since the Apostle Paul had earlier converted Philemon to the true Faith, he reconciled the two of them—Philemon and Onesimus, master and slave—writing a special epistle to Philemon. It is one of the most touching compositions in Holy Scripture. *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds... For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever. Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me* (Philemon 1:10,15,16). Indeed, moved by this letter, Philemon received Onesimus as a brother, freeing him from slavery. Later Onesimus was consecrated a bishop by the apostles themselves, and he accepted the episcopal throne at Ephesus at the death of the Apostle Timothy. This is evident from the Epistle of Ignatius the God-bearer. At the time of Trajan's persecution, Onesimus, already an old man, was arrested and brought to Rome. In Rome Onesimus gave an account of himself before the judge Tertulus, and he was imprisoned and finally beheaded. A wealthy woman removed his body, placed it in a silver coffin and buried it honorably, in the year 109.

### **The Venerable Eusebius**

A Syrian hermit, Eusebius first lived an ascetic life under the direction of holy men, and later he withdrew and became a recluse. He fed entirely on vegetables; he did not even taste fruit. He spent all of his time in prayer in the open spaces, enduring all conditions of weather. He lived to be ninety-five years of age and died peacefully in the year 440.

### **HYMN OF PRAISE**

Saint Onesimus the Apostle  
The all-glorious Onesimus began his life as a slave  
And ended it as Christ's apostle and martyr.  
The lawless Tertulus asked him for his name.  
"My name is Christian, my surname Onesimus."  
"Are you a freeman or someone's slave?"  
"A slave of Philemon I was, and a slave of Christ God I am."  
"For what price did Philemon sell you to Christ?"  
"The Lord Christ gave His blood for me."  
"Tell me: Do you honor the idols of the state?"  
"I do not see gods but only statues—  
Various animals, all dead statues;  
I see an ox being offered as a sacrifice to an ox.  
Thus, a ram to rams, birds to owls,  
Living animals to dead beasts,  
The living to the dead, the stronger to the weaker.  
No, to such gods I do not bow down!  
Only to the Living Lord, my Master

And Creator—mine and yours, O Tertulus.”  
Tertulus mocked the man of God,  
And he ordered that by the sword he be beheaded!  
He who had power over the body severed his head,  
But neither his soul nor his glory did he cut off.  
The glorious name of Onesimus remained,  
So that heaven and earth would praise it.

## **REFLECTION**

Peace of soul is precious for every man. For those who have attained peace of soul, the body can be in constant motion—in work or in pain—but their souls, affixed to God, always remain in unwavering peace. St. Seraphim of Sarov teaches: “It is necessary by all means to preserve peace of soul and not be disturbed by the insults of others. That is why it is necessary, at all costs, to restrain oneself from anger, and through vigilance over oneself to preserve the mind and heart from indecent movements. To preserve peace of soul, it is also necessary to avoid judging others. By not judging and by silence, peace of soul is preserved. When a man is in such a state of mind, he receives divine revelations. In order for a man to be preserved from judging others, he must be vigilant over himself, he must not receive ungodly thoughts from anyone, and he should be dead toward everything worldly. We must tirelessly guard the heart from indecent thoughts and influences. *With closest custody, guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life* (Proverbs 4:23). From constant vigilance over the heart, purity is born, in which the Lord is seen, in accordance with the words of eternal truth: *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God* (Matthew 5:8).”

## **IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

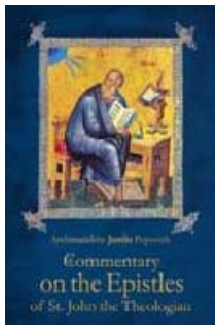
### **Clergy Confession & Retreat**

Tuesday & Wednesday, March 2 & 3, 2010  
St. Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church  
Saratoga, California

### **Annual Woman’s Lenten Retreat**

Friday & Saturday, March 19 & 20, 2010  
St. Sava Mission, Jackson, CA

### **FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:**

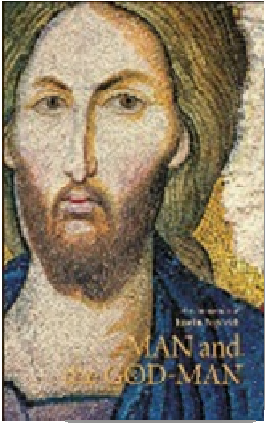


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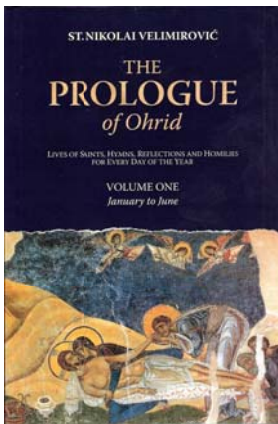
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