

on the quality of high poetry, as Paul proclaims the great Mystery of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (1:27). This epistle is a rich contemplation of our life in union with Christ, which is life in the “kingdom of the Son of his (the Father’s) love” (1:13). We, like our brethren of 1st century Colossae, must know our faith, and must “continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast. . . not moved away from the hope of the gospel” (vs. 23).

THIS IS THE ACCEPTABLE TIME, LET US REPENT! (AFTER ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM)

Fr. John Parker

If anyone be devout and love God,
Let him commence this radiant fast with joy!
If anyone be a wise servant,
Let him, rejoicing, enter into the school of repentance.
We who have wallowed long in sin,
Let us now begin our return.
If anyone has strayed from the first hour,
Let him today repent with zeal.
If anyone has sinned from the third hour,
Let him with gratitude embrace the fast.
If anyone has fled God from the sixth hour,
Let him have no misgivings about his prompt return;
Because he shall in nowise be turned away therefore.
If anyone has indulged the flesh since the ninth hour,
Let him draw near, fearing God alone and trusting in His mercy.
And if anyone has turned away only at the eleventh hour, Let him also not
hesitate to turn back with haste.
For the Lord, who is longsuffering and full of compassion and mercy, will accept the last even as the first.
He restores him who repents at the first hour,
As He does him who turns back at the eleventh.
And He shows mercy upon the last,
And cares for the first;
And to the one He gives,
And upon the other He bestows gifts.
And He both accepts the confession,
And welcomes the intention,
And honors the contrite heart and rejoices in the return.
Wherefore, enter all of you into the holiness of your Lord;
Offer your repentance,
Both the last, and likewise the first.
You rich and poor together, repent, for today we stand outside the closed gates
of paradise.
You sober and you heedless, prostrate yourselves before your King!



Return to the Lord today, both you who have sinned with knowledge and those
who have done so in ignorance.
Your pantries are full; empty them to the hungry.
The belly enslaves us, let no one be dominated thereby.
Enter all of you into the Great Fast;
Stripped of heavenly wealth by sin, all draw near to God’s rich loving-kindness!
Let no one despair in his sinfulness,
For the Bridegroom comes at midnight.
Weep all of you for your iniquities,
And draw near to the life-giving Cross of our Lord.
Let no one put confidence in the flesh,
For the Devil has deceived us all thereby, and therewith enslaves us to sin.
By turning from God, we are made captives.
We have called good evil and evil good, and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.
And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry:
Woe to those who put darkness for light, and light for darkness!
We are embittered, for we are banned from Eden.
We are embittered, but it is we who have mocked God.
We are embittered, for now we shall surely die.
We are embittered, for we have succumbed to the serpent.
We are embittered, for we are fettered in chains.
We partook of a fruit, and met the deceiver.
We were entrusted with paradise, but we chose Hell.
Our eyes were opened to see the nakedness of sin.
Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver us!
O Lord, make haste to help us!
This is the acceptable time, let us repent!
This is the day of salvation, let us crucify the passions!
The end is at hand and destruction hangs over us!
The end draws nigh, let us come again to our senses!
The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, what first-fruit shall we offer?
Let us delay not, lest we remain dead in the grave, sold under sin!
For God desires not the death of the sinner, but that he should turn from his
wickedness and live!
So, let us choose life, and live, for the mercy of God endures forever!
To Him be glory and dominion
Unto ages of ages. Amen.

<http://www.pravmir.com/this-is-the-acceptable-time-let-us-repent/>

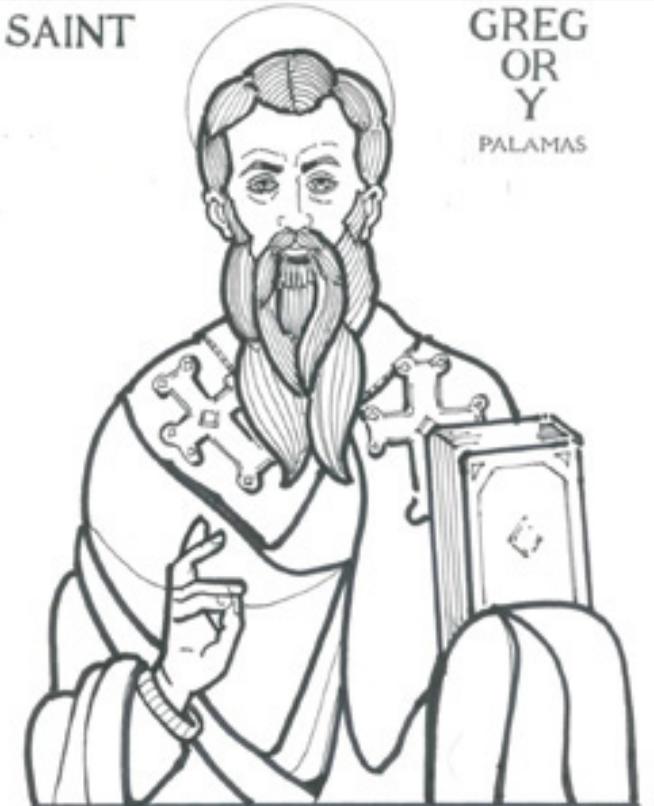


SS. Constantine and Elena Orthodox Church

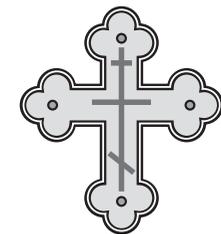
March 12, 2017

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ST. GREGORY PALAMAS SUNDAY



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PARISH LIFE

SECOND SUNDAY IN GREAT LENT

**SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 2017: ST. GREGORY PALAMAS SUNDAY
(TONE 5, MATINS GOSPEL 5)**

8:40 am Matins
10:00 am Divine Liturgy
5:00 pm Combined Vespers, hosted by our parish (see announcement)

WEDNESDAY MARCH 15:

6:30 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts & Lenten Pitch-in Meal

THURSDAY MARCH 16:

9:00 am Special Presanctified Liturgy for St. Patrick of Ireland
(with the Academy)

FRIDAY MARCH 17:

[No Presanctified Liturgy today]
6:30 pm Akathist to the Mother of God

SATURDAY MARCH 18:

1:00 pm Romanian Confessions (with Fr. Silviu Bunta)
4:15 pm Church School (in the Church Hall)
6:00 pm Great Vespers (followed by confessions)

PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND OF OUR PARISH:

Victor Cosgarea, Denise Halman, Jay Hanko, Jan Isham, Brian McDonald, Zachary Waltz, P'sa. Janene Wey and Margaret Wey.

LOOKING AHEAD...

Next Sunday's readings (Sunday of the Cross) Hebrews 4:14-5:6; Mark 8:34-9:1.

Sunday, March 19 – Holy Cross Sunday

9:45 am Service of the veneration of the Cross at the end of Matins,
just before Liturgy – plan to come early!

Friday March 24

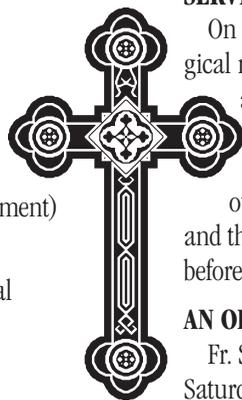
6:30 pm Vigil for the Annunciation to the Mother of God

Saturday March 25 – Feast of the Annunciation

9:00 am Divine Liturgy
10:30 am Fish Pitch-in Brunch and talk by Hieromonk Seraphim (Aldea)

WE HOST THE LENTEN VESPERS TONIGHT!

This year we have been given the privilege of hosting our fellow Orthodox faithful for the combined Lenten Vespers this evening. Please plan to attend, to help welcome our brethren. We will need to provide lenten refreshments as part of our hospitality to our guests. We also need help with set up, serving and clean up afterward..



SERVICE OF THE HOLY CROSS – NEXT SUNDAY

On the third Sunday of Lent, we celebrate the Holy Cross, with special liturgical moments of veneration. In particular, the Cross is brought out from the altar at the end of Sunday Matins (before Divine Liturgy), adorned with flowers on a tray. We sing the solemn hymn, “Before Your Cross” and together make prostrations before it, worshipping him who stretched out his hands upon it for our salvation. Matins begins early (8:30 am), and the veneration service takes place around 9:45. Make extra effort to arrive before that time, to be present for this profound moment in our life in Christ.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CONFESSION IN ROMANIAN

Fr. Silviu Bunta has graciously offered to come to the parish on this coming Saturday afternoon, March 18, to hear the confessions of those that would like to make their confession in Romanian. This opportunity is intended especially for the older folks who are visiting family in our country (grandparents, etc.).

Thus, we need to hear right away if anyone is interested and able to come on that day. Based on the number of respondents, we will work up a schedule to try and fit everyone in before vespers begins at 6 pm. If you can provide a preferred time period – for instance, “earlier,” “later,” “1 pm-2 pm” and so forth – that would be very helpful. There are still a few openings, so let Fr. David know as soon as possible.

VISIT BY FR. SERAFIM ALDEA

This year during the Lenten season, we will have a special visitor to our area: Hieromonk Serafim Aldea, the founder of the Monastery of All Celtic Saints on Mull Island off the west coast of Scotland – the first Orthodox monastery in Scotland in over a thousand years. (Fr. David and P'sa. Janene had the opportunity to visit the monastery grounds last summer.) Fr. Serafim will speak at the Sunday Lenten Vespers on March 19 at St. John the Forerunner Church; then we plan to host him in our own parish on the following weekend, including his concelebrating the Great Feast of the Annunciation with us. After the Divine Liturgy on the Feast (Saturday), we will have a fish pitch-in and an opportunity to hear Fr. Serafim and offer support for his courageous work. Mark the day, and plan to be present.

PRESBYTERS COUNCIL WEBSITE: ORTHODOXINDY.ORG

The Presbyters of our Central Indiana Orthodox Churches work together on many fronts to foster interaction and growth in the Faith. One important tool in this work is the website for the churches, found at orthodoxindy.org. Currently, the site features a video recording of Bp. Paul's excellent address, “Being Living Icons In Today's World,” given last week at the Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers. Visit the site soon and keep informed about what's going on in Orthodoxy around Central Indiana.



ANNUAL LENTEN RETREAT AT HOLY TRINITY

The women's organizations of Holy Trinity and St. George Churches offer this year's retreat on March 18, featuring Khouria Stephanie Yazge speaking on the theme, “Which Way are You Going?” The schedule for the retreat is as follows: 9:30 am, Registration and coffee; 10:00 am Third Hour; 10:30 am, Session I and Q&A; 12:00 pm, Lunch; 1:00 pm, Session II and Q&A. A freewill offering will be taken. See the flyer on our bulletin board.

LENTEN VESPERS SCHEDULE

Date	Location	Homilist
Tonight	Sts. Constantine and Elena 3237 W 16th St, Indpls 46222	Fr. Alexis Miller
March 19	St John the Forerunner 1421 S Blaine, Indpls 46221	Hieromonk Seraphim (Aldea)
March 26	Saint George, Terre Haute 1900 S 4th St, TH 47802	Fr. Lucas Christensen
April 2	Saint Stephen Indianapolis 1435 N Medford, Indpls, 46222	Fr. Paul Fuller

A SUGGESTION FOR A “COMMUNITY READ”

Fr. David is suggesting a common task for our community during this year's Fast: reading through the epistle of Colossians together, and discuss it as opportunity arises – for instance, at the coffee hour and at the shared meal after Wednesday Presanctified Liturgy. This is an epistle rich with insight into our shared life in Christ. As there are four chapters in the book, it is suggested that one reads (and rereads) one chapter for each of the next four weeks, prayerfully listening for what “the Spirit says to the Church.” This would be the second week of reading, chapter 2.

REFLECTIONS ON COLOSSIANS

As a background for our reading of this rich Epistle of St. Paul, the following thoughts are offered. Colossae was a small town in the Lycus Valley, near Laodicia, which had been evangelized by Paul's convert and friend, Epaphras (mentioned in chapter 1). The region was under heavy influence of a form of Gnosticism, which taught that the only way to salvation was through “secret knowledge” that involved a complex system of ascending deities (called “aeons”), in which Christ was seen to be way down the line of many gods, lower than the angelic orders.

Paul writes to confront this teaching by showing that our Lord Jesus Christ is eternal God with his Father, and (with the Father and the Spirit) is the maker of all that is: he is “the firstborn of all creation,” while also being “the image (ikon) of the invisible God,” (1:15) and thus uncreated and eternal.

This gives the apostle an occasion for expressing the true faith, the gospel being proclaimed throughout the world (cf. 1:3-8); and this expression takes

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