



~::~ GREGORY THE WONDERWORKER ~::~

Gregory the Wonderworker is often referred to as a "Second Moses." Born in the city of Pontus of wealthy and eminent parents in 203 A.D. Gregory, whose given name was Theodore, grew up receiving the best of educations. He was extremely interested in philosophy, but somehow felt the Greek and Egyptian thought of his time was not complete or fulfilling for his intellectual needs. He went off to study in Alexandria, where he fell under the influence of Origen and other Christian teachers. The young scholar soon embraced Christianity and was baptized into the faith, taking the name of Gregory.

By the time Gregory returned to his home region of Neocaesarea, he had but one goal to fulfill: winning souls for Christ. A gathering of fellow Christians found that they were only 17 in number! Indeed, Gregory had his work cut out for him. A lesser man would have been discouraged, but Gregory was not a lesser man! He was consecrated bishop and soon his tiny flock began to grow. It is said that Gregory had the power to drive away evil spirits and to heal illnesses and diseases. When a plague hit Asia Minor in 253 A.D., Gregory tirelessly ministered to those suffering its effects. His inspiring example led to the conversion of thousands of pagans.

Gregory fell asleep in the Lord in 270 A.D. At the time of his death, the spiritual environment of his city had been completely reversed. Now there were only 17 pagans to be found in what this "Second Moses" had molded into a vibrant Christian community.

St. Mary's Orthodox Church
217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218-1602
Phone.....570-645-2772
OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic
Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky
Reader Hours: Gloria Bench

Sunday, November 19, 2023
Choir Director: Wash King
Reader Epistle: Edward Pierson

24th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Tone 7. Prophet Obadiah Martyr Barlaam of Caesarea

Tone 7 Troparion (Resurrection)

By Your Cross You destroyed death. To the thief You opened Paradise. For the Myrrhbearers
You changed weeping into joy. And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God, to
proclaim that You are risen, // granting the world great mercy.

Tone 7 Kontakion (Resurrection)

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, for Christ descended, shattering and
destroying its powers. Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry: "The Savior has come to
those in faith; // enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!"

We welcome all our visitors today! We want to let you know that we are so glad you came to pray with us.
Please come again; join us after the Divine Liturgy in the parish hall for fellowship. If you do not have a
home church, we invite you to become a part of our parish family. Only those Orthodox Christians who
have properly prepared themselves may approach the Chalice and receive Holy Communion.

SERVICES:

Sunday, Nov. 19	9:30 AM – Annual Parish Meeting after Divine Liturgy
Monday, Nov. 20	4:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions
Tuesday, Nov. 21	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple
Thursday, Nov. 23	11:00 AM – Molieben of Thanksgiving; Noon Thanksgiving Meal
Saturday, Nov. 25	4:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sunday, Nov. 26	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Church School & Fellowship
Saturday, Dec. 2	4:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sunday, Dec. 3	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Church School & Fellowship

Prayer List*:

Fr. Michael Evans, Fr. James Weremedic, Sbdn. James Weremedic
Stephanie Chmel, Ilene Devine, Julia Forte, Michael & Julia Harahus, Karen & Rose Harkins, Nancy King, Olga Kushnir,
Anna Marie Mantey, Dorothy & Joseph Macenka, Anna Pierson, Melissa Schmitt, Helen Sheers, Olga Sidoriak, Martha
Stafiniak, Elizabeth Warcholak, Victoria Weremedic, Marie Yurchak

* Names will cycle off approximately every 30 days. You may request to have your name or
the name of a loved one placed back on the list at any time by contacting Fr. James directly.

On November 23, 2023, we will give 'Thanks to God' with a molieben at 11:00 am and a free
Thanksgiving Meal for parishioners of St. Mary's at noon. Donations are welcome. **Please sign-up
for an accurate head count. Eat in only.** Shut-In meals are available.

On December 24, 2023, we will have our first parish 'Holy Supper' in our church hall with traditional strict fasting foods. Celebrating as a family of St. Mary's is important to prepare for the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ!

If anyone is in need of a priest, please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772.

Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory. Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency.

Candles (November 19)

7-day Vigils-Altar... In health of **Liz Oshura** offered by Millie Oshura
Altar Candles... In memory of **Mary & Andrew Yelsh** offered by William Yelsh
Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & MaryJo Danchak
7-day Vigils-Tetrapod... In memory **Lillian Yelsh** offered by William Yelsh
Decorated Candles... In memory & health of **Andrew, Mary Bybel & family** offered by family members
Vigil Crosses... In memory of **Mary Lutash** offered by Raymond & MaryJo Danchak

November Birthdays: 1- Nicholas Teno, Jr., 2- Justin Babinetz, 4- Lena Marie Berezniak, 11- Nancy King, 17- Irene Puschak, Victoria Weremedic, 18- Amelia Buchanan, 26- Barbara Birosik, Helen King, 27- Chris King, Walter Rosahac

November Anniversaries: 13- Walter & Louise Rosahac, 14- Simon & Mary Herbert

Financials 11/12/2023: Operating Acct: Weekly Envelopes \$341, Non-envelope \$20, Holy Day \$37, Altar Candles \$30, Candles \$60, Donation \$220, Local Charity \$5

Fellowship Hour Hosts:

November 19 Russell King November 26 Helen King December 3 John Evetushick
December 10 Michael Tutusko December 17 OPEN

St. Mary's Youth Group

St. Mary's youth group will be collecting items to deliver to our shut-ins during the month of December. A collection bin is located in the back of the church. If you are unable to shop and wish to make a monetary donation, please see Barbara Birosik or Mat. Lisa. They will take a child shopping for the items of your choice. Suggested items include:

neck pillows
lap blankets
slipper socks
gloves

baby wipes
hand cream
tissues
hand sanitizer

all occasion card
note cards
puzzle books
adult coloring books

flashlights
thick pens
stamps
grocery gift cards

24th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Tone 7. Prophet Obadiah. Martyr Barlaam of Cæsarea in Cappadocia. Ven. Varlaam, Abbot of the Kiev Caves. Finding of the relics of Monastic Martyr Adrian of Poshekhónsk. Martyr Azes of Isauria and 150 soldiers with him. Martyr Heliodorus in Pamphylia. Ven. Hilarion the Wonderworker, Monk of Thessalonica. Repose of St. Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow. Saints Barlaam the monk and Prince Ioasaph of India.

Tone 4 Troparion (St. Barlaam)

Armed with youthful fervor, you endured martyrdom in old age and glorified Christ. You offered Him your right hand as a whole burnt offering and your holy soul as a blameless sacrifice. // Intercede that all that be granted forgiveness, Great-martyr Barlaam

Tone 3 Kontakion (St. Barlaam)

Though weak with old age you vanquished the Evil One in your mighty contest, O Barlaam. You endured the rack like one without a body, and steadfastly endured the burning of your hand. // Therefore, God the Word has crowned you with a crown of glory.

Ephesians 2:14-22 (Epistle)

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Silent Prayer before the Gospel:

Illuminate our hearts, O Master Who lovest mankind, with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Thy gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Thy blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto Thee. For Thou art the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thy Father, Who is from everlasting, and Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Luke 12:16-21 (Gospel)

Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" **But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'**"

Homily on the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God

Saint Vladimir Seminary September 8, 2023

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today's feast is a harvest festival, a festival of holy fruit sprung from barren ground, the withered and parched ground of our common nature. Since Adam sinned by eating the fruit of knowledge out of season and was banished to bring forth food from the land by the sweat of his brow, our entire human nature, formed of the soil, had become barren, 'a dry and trackless land where no water is,' in the words of the Psalmist. Nevertheless, Adam and many of his descendants did husband the soil of our nature with the sweat of their effort, bringing forth virtues before the Law and in accordance with the Law. We know the names of these virtuous laborers, and we honor them to this day as part of the Church: Seth, Enosh, Noah, Shem, Japheth, Eber, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David, Zerubbabel.

The efforts of our forefathers were praiseworthy in the sight of men and God, and earned them a merited reward. As Saint Paul states and Saint John Chrysostom affirms, works indeed have their reward

which is due them: 'Now to one who works, his wages are not reckoned as a gift but as his due.' This reward was friendship with God in the present age and falling asleep in hope of something better to come. But no matter how any of these great saints of old worked, they could only bring forth individual virtues; they could not overcome our nature's fundamental barrenness, the reality that we were sold under sin, given up to death, slaves to corruption, change, mortality, time. The forefathers died and were buried and took their rest in the darkness of Sheol, waiting for the Lord to act.

Only God could make the hard earth of humanity once more to bear good and lasting fruit. As David said, prophesying in his Psalms: 'Thou makest springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills.' And again: 'He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water. And there he lets the hungry dwell, and they establish a city to live in.'

God desired to unite mankind once more to himself, to take away the flaming sword, to tear down the dividing wall. Thus he sent his Son into the world to unite humanity and divinity in his very person, making God present, incarnate, in the fallen world in order to save that world. But in order for God to dwell among men, he required a house, a tent, a temple. To this end, he made fruitful the barren womb a righteous woman and brought forth a pure, perfect, and unblemished ark in which he might rest, a chariot-throne upon which he might roam and rule. This was the most pure and ever-virgin Mary, God's free gift to mankind, and mankind's perfect gift to God.

In becoming the dwelling-place of God, the most holy Theotokos also became a dwelling-place, a city of refuge for all Orthodox Christians. 'Lo,' says the prophet, 'we heard of' the house of God 'in Ephratah,' Bethlehem-Ephratah, and the Theotokos is the true Bethlehem, the true house of Bread where the hungry dwell. And this Bread, the flesh of the Lord, is not the product of our sweat, but of the dewy divine overshadowing of the All-holy Spirit and the complete purity of the divine Maiden.

Thus, today, we celebrate the entrance of God's gateway, the descent of the heavenly ladder, the building of the city of God—the birth of the Virgin—and we celebrate the saving God who will enter time and space and embrace mortality through her at the time of his own conception and birth. Today, barren mankind gives birth to a baby girl whose beauty is worthy of God himself, whose purity shall cause the cracked furrows of our life to run with springs of grace, whose holiness will cause Christ to send down rains of righteousness to make our deserted hearts into pools of divine love. The birth of the Virgin, in other words, brings us back into the fertile land bounded by four rivers, back to the garden of Eden, back to paradise.

And as citizens of the divine garden-city, as inhabitants of paradise, as gardeners like Adam was in the beginning, it is our responsibility to cultivate and care for the garden. True, we no longer rely on the sweat of our brow to bring forth the virtues; we rely on the boundless merits and mercies of Jesus Christ. But Christ, in his love, wants us to contribute to the upkeep of paradise, and we can do so by following the way of his Mother, by making ourselves receptive to God, and this receptivity is exemplified by the practice of humility. The word 'humility'—like the word 'human'—comes from the Latin word *humus*, meaning soil. Human beings are creatures of the soil, and humility means being close to the soil—in other words, acknowledging our origin and status as creatures of earth, whose pride and joy and meaning is to do the will of the Creator. We are reminded of the delightful story of Abba John the Dwarf, who at his elder's insistence watered a twig every day until it blossomed. Through humility, we must constantly make ourselves receptive to God's will, not our own, and put ourselves at the wholehearted service of our brethren—not only our superiors, but our inferiors as well.

Then we, too, might become, by the waters of Christ's grace, blossoming twigs in the renewed land of humanity. By humbling ourselves, acknowledging ourselves to be only dust and ash, we make way for God to water that dryness and desolation and bring forth good fruit in its season. Through the prayers of the most holy Theotokos, may we all grow in a humility like hers, an earthiness, a faithful receptivity. Then might we bring forth fruit in advance of the final harvest, the end of the age, when the righteous will make their eternal entrance into the courts of God, a walled garden where rivers flow and trees flourish unto eternity, where all the elect will delight in the grace and refreshment God the Savior, the torrents of delight that cascade from the house of the Lord, partaking abundantly of the fruit of Christ's victory. To him, the Son of Mary, true Lord and God eternal, is due all glory, with his Father and the Most Holy Spirit, unto never-ending ages. Amen. Most holy Theotokos, save us!