



# St. Elias Melkite Church

Serving San Jose & South Bay Area, CA  
14263 Mulberry Dr., Los Gatos, CA 95032  
steliasmelkite.org • (408) 785-1212 • steliasmelkite@gmail.com

## Sunday, March 12, 2017: Holy Relics and Gregory Palamas

### Divine Liturgy

Sundays: 11am

Feastdays: See website Calendar

### Confession Times

Wednesdays: 5-6 pm

Sundays: 10-11 am

### Vespers, Bible Study, and Social

Wednesdays of Fast: 6pm

### Presanctified Liturgy

Fridays of Fast: 7:30pm

### Sunday School: After liturgy

### Contact the Pastor

Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo

Phone: (831) 229-8350

[SebastianCarnazzo@gmail.com](mailto:SebastianCarnazzo@gmail.com)

### Qurban and Socials

- This Sunday, 3/12  
Qurban: Carnazzo  
Social: Bishop's Lunch
- Next Sunday, 3/19  
Qurban: Gamoney  
Social: Gamoney

### Pray for Servants of God

The priest Paul Theophan

Gamoney Family

Judy Sramcik

Holly Handal

Kayla Marie Handal

Hania Dabit

Juan Mendoza

Khoury family

Kalil family

Hynes family

Connelly family

Shea family

Hurlbert family

### Asleep in the Lord

The Priest Edmund Idranyi

Camille Veronica Pagnini

Elizabeth Valdez

Fuad & Renee Kalil

Alfina & Sebastiano Carnazzo

Sheila Carnazzo

Ernest & Marion Young

Sheila Carnazzo

Robert & Alice Robertson

### PRAYER

O Lord, our God, You have granted the holy martyrs that their relics would be spread throughout the world, including this church, to bring forth the grace of healing from diseases. Make us worthy, through the intercession of your Saints, to offer You the Spiritual Sacrifice and guide us on the way of Salvation. For You are Good and the Lover of mankind and to You we render glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever.

### HYMNS

**Resurrectional Troparion (2<sup>nd</sup> Tone):** When You descended to death, O immortal Life, \* You destroyed Hades by the splendor of Your divinity.\* And when You raised the dead from below the earth, \* all the heavenly powers cried out to you: \* "O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!"

**Troparion of the Holy Relics (2<sup>nd</sup> Tone):** Victorious witnesses of the Lord, blessed is the earth that received your blood, and holy are the heavenly places that opened to your souls. You have vanquished the enemy in battle and proclaimed Christ with courage. We beg you to intercede with Him who is all good, that He may save our souls.

**Troparion of our Holy Father Gregory Palamas (8<sup>th</sup> Tone):** O Gregory the Wonderworker, light of Orthodoxy, support and teacher of the Church, glory of monks and invincible protector of theologians, pride of Thessaloniki and preacher of grace: Pray without ceasing for the salvation of us all.

**Kondakion of the Annunciation:** Triumphant leader to you belongs our prize of victory! And since you saved us from adversity we offer you our thanks. We are your people O mother of God! So as you have that invincible power, continue to deliver us from danger that we may cry out to you Hail, O Virgin and bride ever pure.

### READINGS

**Hebrews: 1: 10-14; 2: 1-4** You in the beginning, O Lord, did found the earth, and the heavens are works of your hands. They shall perish, but you shall continue; and they shall all grow old as does a garment, and as clothing shall you change them, and they shall be changed. But you are the same, and your years shall not fail (Ps. 101: 26-28). Now, to which of the angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool at your feet" (Ps. 109: 1)? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent for service, for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation? That is why we should all the more earnestly observe the things we have heard, lest perhaps we drift away. For if the word spoken by angels proved to be valid, and every transgression and disobedience received a just punishment, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? For it was first announced by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard it.

**Mark 2:1-12** At that time Jesus entered Capernaum, and it was reported that he was at home. And immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even around the door. And he spoke the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four. And since they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was, and, having made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the Paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." Now some of the Scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this man blaspheme in this way? Who can forgive sins, beside God?" And at once Jesus, knowing in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, said to them, "Why are you arguing these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, and take up your pallet, and walk'? But that you may know the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the paralytic — "I say to you, arise, take up your pallet, and go to your house," And immediately he arose and, taking up his pallet, went forth in the sight of all, so that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, "Never did we see anything like this!"

**Irmos:** In you, O full of grace, all creation exults, the hierarchy of angels together with the race of men: in you, sanctified Temple, spiritual Paradise, Glory of virgins of whom God took flesh from whom our God who exists before the world, became a child! For He has made your womb his throne, making it more spacious than the heavens. In you, O Woman full of grace, all creation exults: glory to you!

## FROM THE DIOCESE

**IN MANY PARISHES** THE GREAT FAST MEANS AN INCREASE IN ACTIVITY: ADDED SERVICES, LENTEN DINNERS, MISSIONS AND OTHER PROGRAMS. IT IS IRONIC THAT WE CELEBRATE TODAY A SAINT IDENTIFIED WITH THE SPIRITUALITY OF STILLNESS. ST GREGORY PALAMAS' MAIN CONTRIBUTION TO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH IS HIS ARTICULATE AND DEFINITIVE PRESENTATION OF HESYCHASM, WHAT HE CALLED "SACRED QUIETUDE," THE MONASTIC IDEAL OF WITHDRAWAL AND SILENCE IN ORDER TO FOCUS ON UNION WITH GOD.

**WHO IS ST GREGORY PALAMAS?** THIS FUTURE SAINT WAS BORN IN CONSTANTINOPLE IN 1296 INTO A FAMILY OF SOME STANDING AT THE IMPERIAL COURT. DESPITE THE EMPEROR'S ATTEMPT TO GROOM HIM FOR IMPERIAL SERVICE, GREGORY WENT TO MOUNT ATHOS AND BECAME A MONK. AFTER SPENDING TEN YEARS ON THE HOLY MOUNTAIN, GREGORY AND THE OTHER MONKS OF HIS SKETE WITHDREW TO THESSALONIKI, BECAUSE OF THE THREAT OF TURKISH INVASION. HE CONTINUED IN HIS MONASTIC CALLING THERE AND IN BEREIA BEFORE RETURNING TO ATHOS IN THE 1330S. IT WAS UPON HIS RETURN TO MOUNT ATHOS THAT GREGORY FIRST ENCOUNTERED BARLAAM OF CALABRIA, AN ITALO-GREEK MONK AND HUMANIST WHO WAS HEAD OF THE MONASTERY OF OUR SAVIOR IN CONSTANTINOPLE. BARLAAM WAS INVOLVED IN SEVERAL DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS FOR THE EMPEROR AS WELL AS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEGATES OF POPE JOHN XXII AIMED AT THE REUNION OF THE GREEK AND LATIN CHURCHES. BARLAAM HAD WRITTEN 21 TREATISES CRITICAL OF LATIN THEOLOGY, PARTICULARLY THE FILIOQUE AND THE DOCTRINE OF PAPAL PRIMACY WHICH CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF GREGORY PALAMAS. WHILE BARLAAM HAD UPHELD THE TRADITIONAL BYZANTINE THINKING ON THESE ISSUES, PALAMAS CRITICIZED HIM FOR TEACHING THAT THE FILIOQUE WAS WRONG BECAUSE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE FROM WHOM THE HOLY SPIRIT PROCEEDS, SINCE GOD IS ULTIMATELY UNKNOWABLE. THUS BEGAN A RIVALRY THAT WOULD AFFECT THE CHURCH IN BOTH EAST AND WEST UNTIL OUR OWN DAY.

**WHAT IS HESYCHASM?** THE FILIOQUE CONTROVERSY WAS SIMPLY THE PRELIMINARY. THE "MAIN EVENT" CONCERNED THE PRACTICE OF HESYCHASM, A STYLE OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER OBSERVED IN MANY GREEK MONASTERIES OF THE DAY. INSPIRED BY THE LORD'S WORDS, "WHEN YOU PRAY, GO INTO YOUR ROOM AND SHUT THE DOOR AND PRAY TO YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN SECRET; AND YOUR FATHER WHO SEES IN SECRET WILL REWARD YOU" (MT 6:6), EASTERN MONASTICS HAD LONG SEEN THE HEART AS THE "INNER CHAMBER" TO WHICH WE MUST GO FOR PRAYER. COMMUNION WITH GOD BECOMES POSSIBLE WHEN THE MIND, WITH ITS MEMORIES, CONCERNS AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE, IS SUBJECTED TO THE HEART THAT LOVES GOD ABOVE ALL. THE JESUS PRAYER HAD BECOME THE MEANS FOR SILENCING THE MIND AND THUS ENTERING THIS INNER CHAMBER OF THE HEART. TO THIS THE HESYCHASTS ADDED CERTAIN PSYCHOPHYSICAL TECHNIQUES SUCH AS RHYTHMIC BREATHING AND A PARTICULAR WAY OF SITTING. BARLAAM OBJECTED TO THESE METHODS, CALLING THE HESYCHAST MONKS HE MET "NAVEL GAZERS." THE HEADS OF THE ATHONITE MONASTERIES ASKED GREGORY PALAMAS TO RESPOND TO BARLAAM'S CRITIQUE, WHICH HE DID IN A SERIES OF TREATISES.

THE CONTROVERSY SOON CENTERED ON THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF HESYCHASM, THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPERIENCING THE UNCREATED LIGHT OF GOD AS THE APOSTLES DID AT THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST. HESYCHASTS BELIEVED THAT THROUGH EVER DEEPENING PRAYER THE MONK COULD EXPERIENCE THIS LIGHT WHICH THEY BELIEVED TO BE A DIVINE ENERGY. BARLAAM, AN INTELLECTUAL TRAINED IN ARISTOTELIAN SCHOLASTICISM, ATTACKED THIS TEACHING AS HERETICAL AND THE ENTIRE HESYCHAST METHOD AS ANTI-INTELLECTUAL, HOLDING THAT PHILOSOPHY WAS THE TRUE MEANS OF ATTAINING THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. THE CONTROVERSY SO AFFECTED THE BYZANTINE CHURCH THAT SEVERAL LOCAL COUNCILS WERE HELD IN CONSTANTINOPLE BETWEEN 1341 AND 1351 TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES RAISED BY BARLAAM AND GREGORY. THEY ULTIMATELY AFFIRMED THE TEACHINGS OF ST GREGORY PALAMAS, NAMELY THAT: 1. THE LIGHT WHICH SHONE AT TABOR, DURING THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE SAVIOR, IS DECLARED TO BE NEITHER A CREATURE NOR THE ESSENCE OF GOD, BUT HIS ENERGY: THE UNCREATED AND NATURAL GRACE SPRINGING ETERNALLY FROM THE DIVINE ESSENCE ITSELF; 2. THERE ARE IN GOD TWO INSEPARABLE THINGS: HIS ESSENCE AND THE NATURAL AND SUBSTANTIAL ENERGIES FLOWING FROM HIS ESSENCE IN LINE WITH THE RELATIONSHIP OF CAUSE AND EFFECT. WE CANNOT ENTER INTO HIS ESSENCE BUT WE CAN PARTICIPATE IN HIS ENERGIES. BOTH THE ONE AND THE OTHER ARE UNCREATED AND ETERNAL; 3. THIS REAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN ESSENCE AND ENERGIES OR OPERATIONS DOES NOT DESTROY THE SIMPLICITY OF GOD...; 4. THE WORD ΘΕΟΤΗΣ (GODLY) DOES NOT APPLY SOLELY TO THE DIVINE ESSENCE, BUT IS SAID ALSO OF ITS OPERATION...; 5. THE LIGHT OF TABOR IS THE INEFFABLE AND ETERNAL GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD, THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN PROMISED TO THE SAINTS, THE SPLENDOR IN WHICH HE SHALL APPEAR ON THE LAST DAY TO JUDGE ALL MANKIND.

**AFTER THE COUNCILS** THE PATRIARCHS OF CONSTANTINOPLE SPENT THE REST OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY SHARING THIS TEACHING WITH THE OTHER PATRIARCHS AND LOCAL CHURCHES, SECURING THEIR ASSENT. GREGORY PALAMAS BECAME ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONIKA WHERE HE DIED IN 1359. HE WAS GLORIFIED AS A SAINT IN 1368 BY PATRIARCH PHILOTHEOS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, WHO COMPOSED THE SERVICE FOR HIS FEAST. BARLAAM LEFT CONSTANTINOPLE IN 1341 AFTER THE COUNCIL WHICH CONDEMNED HIS TEACHING. HE WAS RECEIVED BY THE POPE OF ROME AT AVIGNON AND WAS CONSECRATED BISHOP OF GERACE, A GREEK DIOCESE IN CALABRIA. HE DIED IN 1348.

**HESYCHASM AND THE WEST** PALAMAS' TEACHING WAS LONG CONSIDERED SUSPECT, IF NOT HERETICAL, IN THE WEST, WHICH HAD EMBRACED ARISTOTELIAN SCHOLASTICISM AS ADAPTED BY ST THOMAS AQUINAS AS ITS OFFICIAL THEOLOGY. IT WAS ONLY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY THAT ST GREGORY'S TEACHING WAS SEEN POSITIVELY BY WESTERN CATHOLIC THEOLOGIAN SUCH AS HENRI DE LUBAC, JEAN DANIELOU AND LOUIS BOUYER. IN THE 1930S DANIELOU WROTE HOW EXCITED HE WAS TO READ OF PALAMAS'

"VISION OF HUMANITY TRANSFIGURED BY THE DIVINE ENERGIES". IN 1996 POPE JOHN PAUL II COMMENTED POSITIVELY ABOUT THE UNDERLYING DOCTRINE BEHIND HESYCHASM: THE POSSIBILITY OF THEOSIS. HE WROTE, "IN THE EAST, HESYCHASM MEANS A METHOD OF PRAYER CHARACTERIZED BY A DEEP TRANQUILITY OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS ENGAGED IN CONSTANT CONTEMPLATION OF GOD BY INVOKING THE NAME OF JESUS. THERE WAS NO LACK OF TENSION WITH THE CATHOLIC VIEWPOINT ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THIS PRACTICE. HOWEVER, WE SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THE GOOD INTENTIONS WHICH GUIDED THE DEFENSE OF THIS SPIRITUAL METHOD, THAT IS, TO EMPHASIZE THE CONCRETE POSSIBILITY THAT MAN IS GIVEN TO UNITE HIMSELF WITH THE TRIUNE GOD IN THE INTIMACY OF HIS HEART, IN THAT DEEP UNION OF GRACE WHICH EASTERN THEOLOGY LIKES TO DESCRIBE WITH THE PARTICULARLY POWERFUL TERM OF 'THEOSIS' ('DIVINIZATION'). "PRECISELY IN THIS REGARD EASTERN SPIRITUALITY HAS AMASSED A VERY RICH EXPERIENCE WHICH WAS VIGOROUSLY PRESENTED IN THE FAMOUS COLLECTION OF TEXTS SIGNIFICANTLY ENTITLED PHILOKALIA ('LOVE OF BEAUTY') AND GATHERED BY NICODEMUS THE HAGIORITE AT THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY. ... "HOW MANY THINGS WE HAVE IN COMMON! IT IS TIME FOR CATHOLICS AND ORTHODOX TO MAKE AN EXTRA EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER BETTER AND TO RECOGNIZE WITH THE RENEWED WONDER OF BROTHERHOOD WHAT THE SPIRIT IS ACCOMPLISHING IN THEIR RESPECTIVE TRADITIONS TOWARDS A NEW CHRISTIAN SPRINGTIME" (JOHN PAUL II, EASTERN THEOLOGY HAS ENRICHED THE WHOLE CHURCH).