

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church
971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905
Rev. Presbyterian Dragan Vukovic
(814) 244-4063

The Second Sunday of Great Lent
(03.16.2025.)

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 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 inspiring 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

CHRIST'S MATH

Pashka's stories



“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again,” Pashka announced instead of “Good evening!” And without further ado, he marched towards the kitchen unpacking some sweets along the way. Gingerbread. I think, Serbian ones.

“Just think of it!” I said to myself. “Solomon himself came knocking!”

In anticipation of another dose of wisdom, I went after him. He sat there, gawking at the teapot—definitely nothing regal in his looks, but we’ve learned to put up with it.

“Sooo...” I prompted.

“Mmm...yes,” he mumbled. “So, I put God into debt and then got it hot and strong. Hot and red up to the roots of my hair.”

Then he shared his story:

“Man’s a weak character. Some time ago, after some ugly situation, I began to feel a dreadful hostility towards our neighbors, the Finns. In Helsinki, at some café, I came across some local fascists who got nasty with me, so I began to think that all Finns are alike; and I sort of transferred my disgust for Nazism over to the whole nation. And that despite the fact I knew quite well that there are some really worthy people, even [disciples of St. Paisios](#)—but at the time, blind malice was more powerful than common sense. I’d turn away from them anytime I chanced upon them, snorting angrily: Why should I, an Orthodox Christian, deal with *these people*? Recently, God put me in my place.”

“You know, I have to travel a lot because of work, it’s a fact. So, I happened to be in Belgrade on business. I was in my hotel, suited and booted, so to speak. It was early morning. Next, a guy shows up there in the hallway, totally bashed up. His head in wraps, blood stains on his sleeves, like, after a nice walk around the city, man. I told him to go and wash himself up to at least rinse off the blood, and then made him sit down at my table just to keep him from freaking out anyone else who might see him. So he sat with me, trying to hold a cup of coffee steady in his shaky hands. Then, he began to wail:

“ ‘A-a-a-a... Yesterday I went for a walk around town and happened to wander into a rough section.’

“ ‘I see you weren’t received too graciously’ .”

“I was robbed, beaten up, they took everything. I was lying half-conscious for half the night—and after I regained consciousness I shuffled off back to the hotel. Policemen stopped me twice on my way back, they kept asking what happened, but I don’t know the language to a-a-a-nsver them! And what can I tell them? That I took a wrong turn and got beaten up?”

They were speaking in English, but Pashka caught a slight accent. Sure enough, Finnish.

“Aren’t you,” he asked, “from Finland by any chance? Maybe from my beloved Helsingfors?”

“Uh-huh! From Helsink-i-i-i!”

Beaten up and mugged, a guy who’s got no money, thousands of kilometers away from home—it was a pitiful sight!

“There is justice in this world,” my friend was just about to think, but then he came to his senses; gloating over the misfortunes of others is a disgrace through and through! A beaten up and

mugged guy with no money, thousands of kilometers away from home—it was a pitiful sight! He suggested a solution to him:

“Why don’t you call home for money, poor guy. Use your phone. While you’re waiting for it to arrive, here’s fifty euros for you (this made me feel sad for a moment—those lousy sanctions also apply in Serbia!) for medicine, food and all that. Belgrade is not on the cheap side, I know it!”

Then he thought: Fifty euros converts to about five thousand rubles. Oh, never mind, I’ll survive today without lunch, a tour and supper, and I’ll walk to my business meeting. I’ll manage. “Next, for good measure, a selfish thought popped up—why don’t I have God owe me a debt? I was so good today, I didn’t retaliate, I’m just remarkable!”

The beaten man bent double accepted the banknote with gratitude and trepidation, called home, described his sticky situation, asked them send him money, and then went to find a first-aid station and pharmacy.

Pashka sat self-righteously in the hotel café and humbly observed the sinful reality of life around him. God is now indebted to him!

His phone beeped. A message announced the arrival of fifty thousand on his bank card, marked, “Donation.” Pashka’s eyes open large as saucers to the point that an obliging “konobar” (waiter) began to get concerned—they had had enough trouble with one unconventional visitor that morning, and now this one has lost it. He asked him if he needed anything.

“Water,” Pashka breathed. “And, um, where is the nearest church?”

In the church nearest to his Belgrade hotel, Pashka reread letter by letter the Parable of the Good Samaritan, understanding all too well that he was light years away from that kind fellow. Deeply distressed, he even forgave all Finns together. He thought of the [disciples of St. Paisios](#). “Christ has some interesting math, doesn’t He?” he says. “Even when we do our miserly, sinful acts of mercy, spiced with a good dose of vanity, He answers in such measure—good, pressed down, shaken together, and running over (cf. Luke 6:38). True, there are also the terms of the contract: *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you* (Lk 6:37). Hard, eh? Sometimes you have to travel a couple thousand kilometers just to get it. But it’s worth it.”

Peter Davydov

Translation by Liubov Ambrose

Services this Week

- **Saturday (03.22.2025.)**
 - **The Holy 40 Martyred Youth of Sebaste; Holy 42 Martyrs of Momishich (After the Divine Liturgy, Sacrament of Confession)**
 - **Divine Liturgy starts at 09:30 AM.**
- **3rd Sunday of Lent – Veneration of the Cross (03.23.2025.)**
 - **Martyr Quadratus of Corinth**
 - ***Divine Liturgy starts at 10:00 AM.***

Donations March 9, 2025

Offering - \$1,860.00 Candles - \$53.00

Donations

**“Thank You Carole McAllister” from Eli Cvijannovich to the
Sunday School for \$25**

Large Candles

IMO Jeffrey Smith - 42 years of marriage from wife, Mariam Smith

IMO Shawn Novatny from Joe & Rose Novatny

IMO Shawn Novatny from Mike & Lindy Bakos

IMO Shawn Novatny from Tom & Carole McAllister

IMO Natalie Ofsanko from Olga Bulich

IMO Linda Palmer from Olga Bulich

**Nut, Apricot, and Poppyseed Rolls are available!
(Also Pumpkin Rolls - \$10)**

**Thanks to all our WONDERFUL volunteers at the Fish Fry
A special Shut-out to the best workers
Meara Gleason, Eli Rabaric, Millie Ribaric and
Petar Vukovic (We love you!)**

Please see Suzette to sign up for your Fish Fry Slot

Sarma Sale!!!!

**Please fill-out the order form located in the church hall
or see Suzette for more information.**

\$15/ 1/2 dozen - \$30/ dozen

Flowers for Pascha

Please see attached order form!!

ORDERS DUE NO LATER THAN MARCH 31st

UPCOMING EVENTS

Lenten Fish Fries

Friday, March 7th to Friday April 11, 2025

Lenten Vespers

5th Sunday of Lent – St. Mary of Egypt

Sunday, April 6, 2025 – 5:00 PM

*** Palm Sunday – Sunday, April 13, 2025**

*** PASCHA! – Sunday, April 20, 2025**

*** St. Nicholas Anniversary Celebration–**

Sunday, May 18, 2025

*** Polka Fest – May 30, – June 1, 2025**

*** Band of Brothers – July 2025**

*** Taste of Serbia – Saturday, August 9, 2025**

*** Johnstown Slavic Festival –**

September 19–20, 2025



FLOWERS FOR PASCHA



Provided by SEADS Garden Center

No.		Price	Total \$
	4 ½" - Bluebells	\$6	
	4 ½" - Mini Daffodils	\$7	
	5" - Gerber Daisy	\$7	
	6½" - Daffodils	\$11	
	6 ½ " - Hyacinths	\$11	
	6 ½ " - Tulips	\$11	
	6 ½ " - Martha Washington Geraniums	\$12	
	6 ½ " - Mums	\$14	
	6 ½ " - White Lily Single Stem	\$15.50	
	8 ½ " - Lily Double	\$29	
	8 ½ " - Hydrangea	\$25	
		Total	
		=	

Name: _____

In Memory of: _____

Paid _____ Check # _____

Please return to Suzette Gardenhour no later than Sunday, March 31st. If you are out of town - payment and completed form can be mailed to:

St. Nicholas Church
1001 St. Clair Road, Johnstown PA 15905

Or contact Suzette at 814-421-1276 or shliva16@gmail.com