



SUNDAY OF SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS SECOND TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

March 31



Did you know Saint Gregory Palamas's defense of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer is a second "Triumph" of Orthodoxy?

Saint Gregory's feast day is November 14, and he is also commemorated on the Second Sunday of Great Lent to celebrate his theological victory of hesychasm (prayer of the heart) over rationalism in the 14th Century as a second "Triumph" of Orthodoxy.

Hesychasm (from the Greek word ησυχία) is the art of being still and knowing God (Psalm 45:11/46:10). The Jesus Prayer (Greek: η ευχή) is the primary way we can use to grow in this stillness and knowledge in order to be in communion with Christ. It is not only a prayer but also a profession of faith and a way of life — praying without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). When we live the prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.") we confess that God is our Creator ("Lord") who became man ("Jesus") to save us ("Christ") and we are asking for His mercy ("have mercy") to be given to us ("on me"). The word "me" includes ourselves, others, and all of creation.

Saint Gregory defended the Orthodox Church's distinction between the "essence" of God (the way God relates to Himself) and the "energies" of God (the relational activities of God to man). His opponents taught that man seeks God through intellectual reasoning ("scholasticism") — thus making God personally unknowable — and not through prayer of the heart (hesychasm). They taught that grace was not God but a creation of God — thus making man spiritually incurable. But through the Jesus Prayer, we receive healing, peace, and joy.

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