



Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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**The Second Sunday in Lent: *Notes on Saint Gregory Palamas*
March 16, 2025**

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory to Him forever!

- Did you ever consider that it is entirely possible to know someone and yet to not know them at all?
- I often wonder how people actually make it past the first date if they are looking for a spouse on an online dating app.
 - Increasingly, men and women are finding their life mates by going online.
 - They post facts and figures about themselves, and read facts and figures about someone they are seeking.
 - They have the best pictures of themselves possible.
 - What a shock when they actually meet.
 - And then, what a discovery when they find out what the person they have expressed interest in is really like.
- In like manner, it's possible to know a great deal about God, and not to know Him at all.
- Think about how we teach catechesis: We bring people to see the church, the icons, the wonderful Divine Liturgy. We cover the history of the Orthodox Faith. We teach this or that thing about the Sacraments, the clergy, the vestments, the layout of the altar. We introduce ascetical discipline, and so on.

- But what can people know of the One True God from these things? Only if they experience the love of Christ through the love and ministrations of others, will they ever become true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We see this problem today. Some so-called Christian groups say it is not necessary to help the poor, the immigrant, the downtrodden. Better to save money and let those who make a lot of it, spend it on themselves to stimulate the economy.
- This is not Christianity. This is not the Way of the Lord!
- The Saint we commemorate on this day knew this. One could perhaps think of him as the Orthodox Saint of the Presence of God. He stood up against the dry Italian theologians who had a great deal to say about God, but who did not really know Him.
- One can experience God, St. Gregory Palamas said, by looking in silence within, through the Prayer of the Heart, by the praying of the Jesus Prayer.
- But understand: whether we experience God within us or not, He is there – everywhere present and filling all things, as the Orthodox Prayer to the Holy Spirit says.
- God is everywhere present. And although we may know a great deal about God and about what He has done, and what things are possible, it is only possible to know Him by humbling ourselves and listening to that which is within us. Only when we open the “eyes of our hearts,” as St. Paul said, will we know Him.
- This is why we commemorate the great Saint from Mount Athos on this Sunday in Lent.
- This is our time, Brothers and Sisters, to hear, to listen, to look within, to practice repentance, and to experience the presence of God – the One Who abides in us, filling all things, to save our souls!

Fr. Elias

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