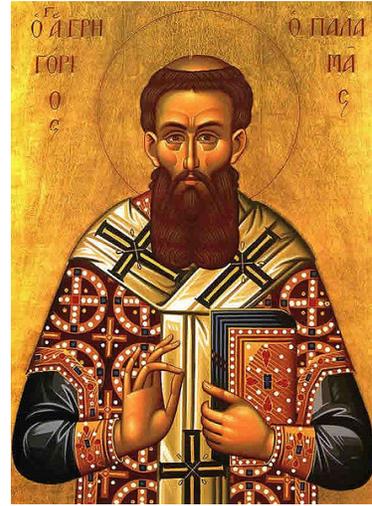


## *Second Sunday of the Great Fast*

### *St. Gregory of Palamas*

St. Gregory is known as one of the great defenders of Orthodoxy and is most well-known for his defense against the heresies of Barlaam. Gregory was asked to defend the monastic ways of the Holy Mountain from the charges of Barlaam, a monk of Calabria. Barlaam, influenced by the Latin Church, believed that philosophy and human thought were the way to know God. He stated the unknowability of God in an extreme form, having been influenced by a reductionist interpretation of the writings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite. Orthodoxy had always known, through the wisdom of the Holy Fathers, that prayer and fasting are the key to knowing God. Barlaam believed that the monks of Mount Athos were wasting their time in their prayers and fasting when they should be studying the great philosophers of mankind.



St. Gregory said that the Holy Fathers and the prophets had a greater knowledge of God, because they had actually seen or heard God Himself. He taught that modern ideas about human thought and reason had no place in the Church. When asked how it is possible to have knowledge of the unknowable God, he showed the difference between knowing God in His essence or person and knowing God in His energies or being. It became clear that one could not find God in the logic of this world. He taught the Orthodox knowledge that it remains impossible to know God in His essence or person. However, with sufficient prayer and fasting and turning oneself over to God, through purification of one's soul, anyone can come to know Him in His energies and being.

### **HESYCHASM**

***Hesychasm* means “quietude or prayerful stillness before God.”**

**It is prayer of the heart.**

***Hesychasm* is a gathering of thoughts and feelings in the presence of God by means of spiritual reading and prayer. It is a quiet time with God.**

Gospel Mark 2: 1-12

**What was Jesus doing when the paralyzed man was brought to Him?**

- . How was the man brought to Jesus?**
  
- . What did Jesus say to the man?**
  
- . How did Jesus prove that He had the authority to forgive sins?**
  
- . What are some things today that cause people to feel “paralyzed”?**

Check out these websites for more information:

[www.sspp.ca](http://www.sspp.ca) and check out the Our Faith Section

[www.skeparchy.org](http://www.skeparchy.org) go to Resources and check out the Growing in Faith Together to find out more.

<http://www.stgeorgeolympia.com/?p=5>

[www.royaldoors.net](http://www.royaldoors.net)