Akathist to Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki

November 14 (also the Second Sunday of Great Lent)

Kontakion 1. Chosen by God to proclaim the uncreated Light of Tabor and to defend the prayer of the heart, O holy Gregory, you taught that man is called to share in the very life of God. Accept our song of praise, and pray to Christ, the Light of the world, that we may be enlightened by His grace and cry to you:

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Ikos 1. You were born in Constantinople in 1296 to a noble family, and your father Constantine, a senator, was a friend of the emperor Andronicus II. Your father died when you were young, and the emperor cared for your education, and so we sing:

Rejoice, child of the imperial city;
Rejoice, son of the senator Constantine;
Rejoice, for your father loved prayer even at court;
Rejoice, for the emperor cared for your education;
Rejoice, for you learned the wisdom of the Greeks;
Rejoice, for you mastered the philosophy of Aristotle;
Rejoice, for God prepared you for great struggles;
Rejoice, flower of Constantinople;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 2. At twenty years of age, though the emperor offered you honors, you chose the monastic life, and you went to the Holy Mountain of Athos with your brothers. Your mother and sisters also entered monasteries, and your whole family sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 2. On Athos, you lived under the guidance of the elder Nicodemus at Vatopedi, and then at the Great Lavra, and you learned the prayer of the heart, calling on the name of Jesus with watchfulness. Seeing your love for prayer, we cry out:

Rejoice, for you renounced the honors of the world;
Rejoice, for your whole family consecrated itself to God;
Rejoice, monk of the Holy Mountain;
Rejoice, disciple of the elder Nicodemus;
Rejoice, for you lived at Vatopedi and the Great Lavra;
Rejoice, for you learned the prayer of the heart;
Rejoice, for you called on the name of Jesus;
Rejoice, lover of hesychia;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 3. The Theotokos appeared to you in a vision through St John the Theologian, promising her protection, and you lived in a hermitage at Glossia and then near Berroia, spending five days a week in silence. On Saturdays and Sundays, you joined the brethren for the Divine Liturgy, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 3. You were ordained priest at Thessaloniki, and you lived in prayer and fasting, and the Lord granted you the vision of His uncreated Light. Marveling at the grace given to you, we sing:

Rejoice, for the Theotokos promised you her protection;
Rejoice, hermit of Glossia and Berroia;
Rejoice, for you kept silence five days a week;

Rejoice, for you loved the Divine Liturgy;
Rejoice, priest of the Most High;
Rejoice, for you lived in prayer and fasting;
Rejoice, for you beheld the uncreated Light;
Rejoice, vessel of grace;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 4. The philosopher Barlaam of Calabria came to Constantinople and mocked the monks who prayed with the name of Jesus, saying that no one can see the Light of God, and that the Light of Tabor was created. Hearing this, you rose to defend the truth, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 4. You wrote the Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts, showing that God, unknowable in His essence, makes Himself truly known in His uncreated energies, and that the Light seen on Tabor is the glory of God Himself. Learning from your wisdom, we cry out:

Rejoice, for you defended the hesychasts;
Rejoice, for you answered the philosopher Barlaam;
Rejoice, author of the Triads;
Rejoice, for you taught that God is beyond knowing in His essence;
Rejoice, for you taught that He is known in His energies;
Rejoice, for the Light of Tabor is uncreated;
Rejoice, for the saints truly see the glory of God;
Rejoice, theologian of deification;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 5. In 1341, a council in Constantinople confirmed your teaching and condemned Barlaam, and the monks rejoiced that the prayer of the heart was defended. The faithful sang with joy: Alleluia!

Ikos 5. Yet new opponents arose, and in the troubles of the civil war, you were imprisoned for four years by Patriarch John Calecas. You endured prison with patience, continuing to write in defense of the truth, and so we sing:

Rejoice, for the council of 1341 confirmed your teaching;
Rejoice, for the prayer of the heart was defended;
Rejoice, for new opponents rose against you;
Rejoice, for you were imprisoned for the truth;
Rejoice, for you endured four years with patience;
Rejoice, for you continued to write in prison;
Rejoice, for you were not silenced;
Rejoice, confessor of Orthodoxy;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 6. In 1347, you were released and consecrated archbishop of Thessaloniki, but the Zealots who ruled the city would not receive you for three years. You waited with patience, praying for your flock, and you sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 6. When you entered Thessaloniki at last, you preached peace and reconciliation to a city torn by strife, and you cared for the poor and the suffering. Rejoicing in your pastoral love, we cry out:

Rejoice, archbishop of Thessaloniki;
Rejoice, for you waited three years with patience;
Rejoice, for you prayed for a divided city;
Rejoice, for you preached peace and reconciliation;

Rejoice, for you cared for the poor;
Rejoice, for your homilies fed your flock;
Rejoice, for you followed in the steps of Demetrius;
Rejoice, good shepherd of Thessaloniki;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 7. In 1351, a great council in Constantinople again confirmed your teaching on the divine energies, and the Church received it as her own. The faithful glorified God, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 7. Your teaching shows that salvation is not only forgiveness, but deification, the sharing of man in the life and glory of God, as the Apostle Peter wrote that we may become partakers of the divine nature. Rejoicing in this hope, we sing:

Rejoice, for the council of 1351 confirmed your teaching;
Rejoice, for the Church received your theology as her own;
Rejoice, for you taught deification by grace;
Rejoice, for we may become partakers of the divine nature;
Rejoice, for you showed that God is truly near;
Rejoice, for you united prayer and theology;
Rejoice, for you defended the experience of the saints;
Rejoice, teacher of the Church;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 8. In 1354, while traveling by sea to Constantinople, you were captured by the Turks and held captive in Asia Minor for a year. Even in captivity, you spoke of Christ to your captors, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 8. You spoke with Muslims about the faith with patience and respect, bearing witness to the Holy Trinity and to the Incarnation of the Word, until you were ransomed and returned to your flock. Marveling at your witness, we cry out:

Rejoice, for you were taken captive by the Turks;
Rejoice, for you bore your captivity with patience;
Rejoice, for you spoke of Christ to your captors;
Rejoice, for you witnessed to the Holy Trinity;
Rejoice, for you confessed the Incarnation of the Word;
Rejoice, for you spoke with respect and gentleness;
Rejoice, for you were ransomed and returned;
Rejoice, witness among the nations;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 9. On November 14, 1359, worn out by illness and labor, you gave your soul to God, saying, "To the heights, to the heights!" Your face shone with light, and the angels received you, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 9. Those present saw your face shining like the faces of the saints you had defended, and they knew that you had gone to the Light you had proclaimed. Rejoicing at your blessed end, we sing:

Rejoice, for you reposed on the feast of Philip;
Rejoice, for you said, "To the heights, to the heights!";
Rejoice, for your face shone with light;
Rejoice, for you went to the Light you proclaimed;
Rejoice, for the angels received your soul;
Rejoice, for you finished your labors in peace;
Rejoice, for your hope was fulfilled;

Rejoice, child of the Light;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 10. In 1368, Patriarch Philotheus glorified you among the saints, and your holy relics, resting in Thessaloniki, became a source of healing. The faithful sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 10. The Church remembers you not only on the day of your repose, but also on the Second Sunday of Great Lent, as a second Triumph of Orthodoxy. Rejoicing in this honor, we cry to you:

Rejoice, for you were glorified in 1368;
Rejoice, for your relics rest in Thessaloniki;
Rejoice, for healings flow at your tomb;
Rejoice, for we honor you on the Second Sunday of Lent;
Rejoice, for your feast is a second Triumph of Orthodoxy;
Rejoice, for you guide us through the fast;
Rejoice, for you lead us toward the Light of Pascha;
Rejoice, glory of Thessaloniki;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 11. Every hymn falls short of the Light you proclaimed, O holy Gregory, for it surpasses every word. Receive our song, offered with love, as we sing to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 11. You are a light for all who pray the Jesus Prayer, for all who seek God in silence, and for all who study theology, for you showed that true theology is born of prayer. Calling on your prayers, we sing:

Rejoice, guide of those who pray the Jesus Prayer;
Rejoice, friend of those who seek silence;
Rejoice, teacher of theologians;
Rejoice, for true theology is born of prayer;
Rejoice, for you teach us to keep watch over the heart;
Rejoice, for you call us to the vision of God;
Rejoice, for you encourage us in the struggle;
Rejoice, lamp of hesychasts;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 12. The grace of God works through your prayers, and many who pray in silence have found strength in your writings. Glorifying the Lord who shines in His saints, we sing: Alleluia!

Ikos 12. Singing of your wisdom, we praise Christ, who made you a monk, a theologian and a shepherd. We honor your memory and cry to you:

Rejoice, monk of Athos;
Rejoice, defender of hesychia;
Rejoice, preacher of the uncreated Light;
Rejoice, teacher of deification;
Rejoice, archbishop of Thessaloniki;
Rejoice, confessor in prison and captivity;
Rejoice, pillar of Orthodoxy;
Rejoice, luminary of the Church;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 13. O holy hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light, receive this our hymn of praise. Pray to Christ our God that He may purify our hearts, teach us to pray without ceasing, and grant us to behold His glory, so that we may sing with you forever: Alleluia!

This kontakion is said three times.

Ikos 1 (repeated). You were born in Constantinople in 1296 to a noble family, and your father Constantine, a senator, was a friend of the emperor Andronicus II. Your father died when you were young, and the emperor cared for your education, and so we sing:

Rejoice, child of the imperial city;
Rejoice, son of the senator Constantine;
Rejoice, for your father loved prayer even at court;
Rejoice, for the emperor cared for your education;
Rejoice, for you learned the wisdom of the Greeks;
Rejoice, for you mastered the philosophy of Aristotle;
Rejoice, for God prepared you for great struggles;
Rejoice, flower of Constantinople;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Kontakion 1 (repeated). Chosen by God to proclaim the uncreated Light of Tabor and to defend the prayer of the heart, O holy Gregory, you taught that man is called to share in the very life of God. Accept our song of praise, and pray to Christ, the Light of the world, that we may be enlightened by His grace and cry to you:

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Gregory, preacher of the uncreated Light!

Prayer

O holy hierarch Gregory, you who beheld the uncreated Light, who defended the prayer of the heart, and who taught that man is called to share in the life of God, we come to you with faith and ask your prayers.

Pray to Christ our God for all who pray the Jesus Prayer, that He may keep them in humility and watchfulness; for theologians and teachers, that He may unite their learning to prayer; and for the city of Thessaloniki and all the Churches, that He may keep them in peace. Help us, by your example, to seek God in silence, to bear injustice with patience, and to speak of Christ with respect to those who do not know Him.

Through your prayers, may the Lord grant us to be transfigured by His grace, so that with you we may glorify in the Light the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.