

Feast Day of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery

On the second Sunday of the Great Fast, March 14, 2016 (Old Style), the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery in Etna, California, headquarters of the Diocese of Etna and Portland, celebrated its Feast Day. After Vespers and appointed services on Saturday afternoon and evening, Matins and an Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were served on Sunday morning, followed by a procession around the monastery Chapel with the Icon of the Saint. Presiding at the Divine Liturgy was His Grace, Bishop Auxentios of Etna and Portland, aided (from among the monastery clergy) by Archimandrite Father Akakios, Abbot of the monastery, Archimandrite Father Gregory, who was celebrating his Nameday, Hierodeacon Father Photii, and Subdeacon Father Chrysanthos. The service was chanted primarily in Greek by the monastery choir, and petitions and readings were done in English and Slavonic.

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Chrysostomos, emeritus Metropolitan of Etna, who did not serve but was in prayerful attendance and communed, delivered the sermon. He spoke of the universal significance of St. Gregory Palamas for all Orthodox, the historical significance of his theology, and the centrality of his teachings on Hesychasm to the Church's mystical teachings. He also referred to the primacy and singularity of Hesychasm as a "Theory of Everything" in Christian anthropology and cosmology," calling it "a virtual recapitulation of Scriptural teaching and the Patristic consensus about man's salvation, enlightenment, salvation, and deification by union with God in Grace."

Following the Divine Liturgy, those in attendance, which included not only the monastery brotherhood but the sisterhood of the Convent of St. Elizabeth the Grand Duchess of Russia (also located in Etna) and the small lay community and the clergy of the nearby parish of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, were served refreshments and traditional Greek sweets. Among the many gifts given to the monastery on its Feast Day was a beautiful Icon from the Icon Studio of the Convent of St. Elizabeth, depicting the patron Saints of each of the monastics (two of whom share the same patron).



Above, the monastery Chapel, located within the walled compound and gardens of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery. At right, the Icon gift painted at the Icon Studio of the Convent of St. Elizabeth the Grand Duchess of Russia.

