

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church - A Western Rite Congregation of the Antiochian Archdiocese

A Reading from a homily of St. Simeon the New Theologian

*died. 1022AD
feast day - 12 March*

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Let us follow on the way of Christ's precepts which lead us up to heaven and to God. Even though the word [Scripture] describes to us different paths, their intrinsic nature is the same; they are spoken of as though branching off into several paths according to each person's ability and disposition. We begin from many and varied works and actions, just as travelers depart from different places and many cities; the destination we are anxious to reach is one, the kingdom of heaven. The actions and ways of godly men must be understood as spiritual virtues. Those who begin to walk in them must run toward one goal, just as those who come from various countries and places come together, as we have said, to one city, the kingdom of heaven. There together they become worthy to reign with Christ and become subjects of one King, our God and Father. By this city, which is one, not many, you will understand the holy and undivided trinity of virtues.

Above all it is that virtue which comes before the others but is also mentioned as the last of them, since it is the goal of all good things and greater than them all - charity. All faith comes from it and is built on its foundation; on it hope is based. Apart from love nothing whatever has existed, nor ever will. Its names and actions are many. More numerous still are its distinctive marks; divine and innumerable are its properties. Yet it is one in nature, wholly beyond utterance whether on the part of angels or men or any other creatures, even such as are unknown to us. Reason cannot comprehend it; its glory is inaccessible, its counsels unsearchable. It is eternal because it is beyond time, invisible because thought cannot comprehend it, though it may perceive it. Many are the beauties of this holy Sion not made with hands! He who has begun to see it no longer delights in sensible objects; he ceases to be attached to the glory of this world.



I entreat you to pursue [love] with all your strength and turn after it with faith so that you may lay hold on it. You will by no means be disappointed of your hopes! However great your zeal and many the efforts of your asceticism, they are all in vain and without useful result unless they attain to love in a broken spirit [Psalm 51:19]. By no other virtue, by no other fulfillment of the Lord's commandment, can anyone be known as a disciple of Christ, for He says, "By this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" [John 13:55]. It is for this reason that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" [John 1:14]. For this reason he was incarnate; He willingly endured His life-giving sufferings, in order that He might deliver man, His own creature, from the bonds of hell, and restore him and lead him up to heaven.

Moved by love the apostles ran that unceasing race and cast on the whole world the fishhook and net of the word to drag it up from the deep of idolatry and bring it safe into the port of the kingdom of heaven. Moved by love the martyrs shed their blood that they might not lose Christ. Moved by it our God-bearing Fathers and teachers of the world eagerly laid down their own lives for the Catholic and Apostolic Church. My dear brethren in Christ, let us then be eager to employ all means, including mutual love, to serve God.

The Holy Martyrs

Ss. Faith, Sergius, Bacchus, & Evaristus

The earliest of the saints of the Church were the martyrs who gave up their earthly lives rather than deny Christ or pay homage to false gods. The early Martyrologies, or lists of saints' days as they were celebrated in the Church year, are filled with the names of innumerable men, women and children who were venerated by Christians in these first centuries. The month of October includes many of these early martyrs.

Faith was a young girl who had embraced the Christian faith despite her parents' disapproval. When the Emperor Diocletian began the violent persecution of Christians, she was taken before Dacian, the procurator in Agen (France). No amount of pleading from Faith's parents could dissuade the girl in her steadfast defense of her belief in Christ. She was tortured with a red-hot brazier, which resulted in her death on October 6, the day of her heavenly birthday. The story of St. Faith should remind us that we are to have the faith of a child and to heed our Lord's words: "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

On October 7, we celebrate the feast day of two Roman soldiers who received the crown of martyrdom in the Diocletian persecutions. According to traditional accounts, both Sergius and Bacchus were officers serving on the frontier of the empire and were highly regarded for their bravery. However, when their Christian faith was discovered, they were tortured in order to bring them back into line with the expectations of members of the army. Christianity presented a competing allegiance that could not be tolerated. Bacchus was beaten so badly that he died from his wounds. Even after being made to run eighteen miles in shoes bearing sharp nails on the soles, Sergius still survived and so was beheaded. There are many today who find that their professions come in conflict with their Christian faith: medical practitioners who work in hospitals which perform abortions; school music directors who are not allowed to have their choirs sing religious Christmas music; office workers who may not wear crosses or have icons on their desks. May the prayers of Ss. Sergius and Bacchus aid them in their distress.



Pope Evaristus (or Aristus), who died about the year 107, was the successor to St. Clement as the Bishop of Rome. He is said to have been the son of Hellenistic Jews from Bethlehem who had fled to Antioch after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70. Nothing more is certain about his life except that he gave it up for his faith during persecutions under Emperor Trajan and was buried near the tomb of St. Peter. His feast day is celebrated on October 26. *And some there be who have no memorial... but these were merciful men whose righteousness hath not been forgotten. [Ecc. 44:9, 10]*

There are several reasons for venerating the saints of the Church. One is that their lives and even deaths provide us with wonderful examples to emulate. We learn from them what a courageous Christian witness, no matter the consequences, is like. We learn of bravery in the face of persecution. We learn that upholding the Truth is more important than living a comfortable, respectable life on earth.

Another reason for the veneration of saints is that their relics are often the vehicle for miraculous healing. Even in our skeptical, rational world, we are aware that a part of a saint's body or a material object which belonged to him can convey a spirit of that saint's holiness to such a degree that it can bring about healing in the body or spirit of a believer. In our country since September 11, 2001, we have witnessed a spontaneous patriotic expression of this concern for relics. The places where those who died merely for being American are considered "sacred ground", and remnants of the buildings and personal belongings of people killed are being honored in museums. This gives us a glimpse of how the relics of

the early Christian martyrs and those who have followed are to be venerated as conveying the holiness of the saint.

We also believe that the saints pray for those of us who are still on our earthly pilgrimage. We ask for their prayers in the certain knowledge that they will intercede for us to the Father. Blessed Faith, Sergius, Bacchus, and Evaristus, pray for us.

Parish News

It is with joy that we announce that the Archdiocesan Ordination Review Board, with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, has approved the ordination to the priesthood of Deacon Raphael Garcia. We do not yet know where or when this will take place, but we look forward to this joyful event.

Many thanks to all those who participated in the parish work day. Through painting, cleaning, and organizing, much was accomplished to further beautify our church. The new entrance doors and the newly-paved rear patio are also great improvements. We are grateful to Subdeacon Jerome for keeping the parish garden looking beautiful and welcoming.

Thanks to those who baked cookies for college students at Howard University and the University of Maryland; and to those who prepared a care package for our missionary, Maria Roeber. These are important signs of our ministry of Christian hospitality.

We are invited to join with our Western Rite brothers and sisters of this region to celebrate the vision of the Theotokos at Walsingham, England in the year 1061. The celebration of Our Lady of Walsingham will take place this year at St. Patrick's parish in Warrenton, VA. Mass will begin at 8:45AM.

Some questions have arisen about devotional practices, postures and church etiquette. Remembering that none of these things is *required*, here are some general rules: The sign of the Cross, the symbol of our salvation, is made as we enter the church, at the end of the Creed, at the beginning of the canticles at the Daily Office, and after receiving Communion. We make small crosses on our forehead, lips and heart at the announcement of the Gospel. We also make the sign of the Cross or bow the head at the name of the Holy Trinity and we bow the head at the name of Jesus. We genuflect as we pass by the altar when the reserved Sacrament is



present (indicated by the burning lamp over the altar), and we genuflect at the *Incarnatus* in the Creed and at “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” in the Last Gospel. We sit for the Epistle (and lessons at Matins and Vespers) and the homily, but sitting is not an appropriate posture for prayer unless it is necessary because of a physical infirmity. In Western tradition, it is equally proper to kneel or stand for prayers, especially the Prayer of Consecration at the Mass. We kiss the icon as we enter the church and bless ourselves with holy water as we leave. These gestures are a sign of our reverence and devotion and provide us with an opportunity to worship with our whole bodies as well as our hearts and minds.

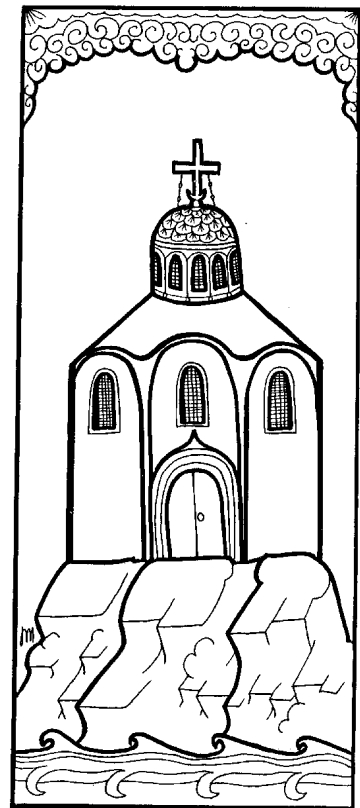
The Zeal of Thine House

by St. Nikolai of Ochrid

The zeal of Thine house hath even eaten me, and the rebukes of them that rebuked Thee are fallen upon me. [Ps. 6:9]

The heavens are the house of God. The Church of God is the house of God. The bodies of the faithful are the house of God. Where God is, there is the house of God; a holy place. Men desecrate the holy things of God, and the royal prophet is wrathful and burns with zeal. He takes all insults to the holy things of God on himself, and they fall on him like a fire that inflames him with yet greater zeal. Men desecrate the heavens when they do not believe, and deny that which God Himself has revealed to men for their salvation. When men oppose the truth, or when they pervert it in a heretical way, or when they make judgements in self-will with their bodily understanding about Christ the Lord, or when they doubt the existence of the angels and the saints, or the Judgement and the immortal Kingdom of Christ and the eternal punishment of unrepentant sinners - in all these and similar cases, men fall as robbers upon the house of God and desecrate the holy things within. Then zeal rises up in the heart of the righteous against such opposition to, and blasphemy against, God.

In the same way, men fall upon the house of the holy things of God when they bear themselves unworthily towards the Church's rules, lazily towards the Church's laws and wickedly towards the Church's ministers. Then zeal for the holy things of the house of God flares up in the hearts of the righteous and devout. Finally, the abasing of the human body, the giving over of oneself to the passions, the service of sin, rape, murder, brutality, drunkenness and other wicked works; all this is a falling on the holy things of the house of God, it is all blasphemy against God and man. Again,



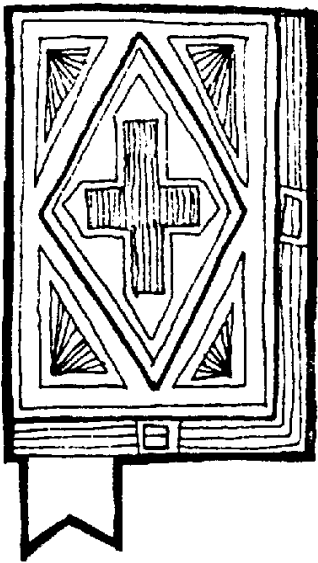
the zeal of him who is zealous for the things of God rises up and shines before men as a heavenly fire.

Oh, my brethren, let us look at Christ's zeal for the holy things of the house of God [John 2:17], and at the zeal of the Apostles and our holy Orthodox Fathers of the Church. Let us be more zealous for our salvation than the devil is day and night for our ruin.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou model of zeal for holy things, give us a spark of Thy zeal, that we may be like Thee in zeal and saved by Thee. To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

A Bible for All Ages

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the publishing of the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible - the King James Version. This is the translation which has been approved for liturgical use in the Western Rite Vicariate of our archdiocese.



In Washington, we are accustomed to the work of committees, but we rarely see the results of such work become so universally recognized and loved as the words of this beloved translation of the Bible. King James I of England convened a group of 47 scholars (all but one who were clergy), divided into six committees, to begin the work. Taking into account earlier English translations (the *Great Bible* and the *Bishops' Bible*), the scholars were to limit the influence of the Puritans and refrain from making marginal comments. Their completed work was published in 1611.

At a time when the English language was at its most poetic, when Shakespeare was writing his immortal plays, this translation of the Bible took its place in history - a place which it has never lost despite many newer, more modern translations in the next four centuries. Our own *Orthodox Study Bible* is a revision of the King James translation, changing some archaic words and assuring agreement with the Septuagint version of the Old Testament.

In Washington politics, we often hear phrases which owe their origin to the King James translation of the Bible: "clear as crystal" [Rev. 21:11]; "far be it from me" [Gen. 44:17]; "powers that be" [Romans 13:1]; "put words in his mouth" [Ex. 4:15]; "signs of the times" [Matt. 16:3]; "wit's end" [Ps. 107:27].

May God's word, in the King James translation or any other, give us guidance for leading godly lives.

The Folger Shakespeare Library currently has an exhibit on the King James Bible, displaying early editions.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>October 2011</h1>					<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>	1 St. Remigius of Rheims, BC, c. 530; St. Bavo, C, 659 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
2 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Holy Guardian Angels <i>G</i>	3	4	5 St. Placid & his Companions, Mm, 6th C	6 St. Faith of Agen, VM, c. 303	7 St. Mark, PC, 336, Ss. Sergius & Bacchus, Marcellus & Apuleius, Mm, 303	8 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
9 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Denys, BM, Rusticus, & Eleutherius, Mm, 3rd C. <i>G</i>	10 St. Paulinus of York, BC, 644	11 St. Kenneth, Ab, 599	12 St. Wilfred of York, BC, 709; St. Edwin, KM, 633	13 St. Edward the Confessor, KC, 1066	14 St. Callistus, PM, c. 222	15 Our Lady of Walsingham <i>Mass at St. Patrick's, Warrenton at 8:45am</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
16 Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Gall, Ab., 646 <i>G</i>	17	18 St. Luke the Evangelist, 1st c.	19 St. Frideswide of Oxford, V, 735	20 St. Andrew of Crete, BC, 740	21 St. Hilarion of Gaza, Ab., c. 371; Ss. Ursula & comp., Mm, 453	22 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
23 Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>G</i>	24 St. Raphael the Archangel	25 Ss. Crisanthus & Daria, Mm, 283	26 St. Evaristus, PM, c. 197	27 Vigil of Ss. Simon & Jude; St. Frumentius of Ethiopia, BC, 4 th c.	28 Ss. Simon & Jude, Apostles, 1st c.	29 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
30 Christ the King; Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost <i>W</i>	31 Vigil of All Saints	1 The Feast of All Saints	2 All Souls <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i>	3 Within the Octave of All Saints; St. Winifred, VM, 680	4 Within the Octave of All Saints; Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm, c. 304	5 Within the Octave of All Saints; St. Elizabeth, Ma, 1 st c. <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>