

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

February, 2011 - Volume XVI, Issue 2

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

A Homily by St. Gregory the Great

*died 604AD
feast day - March 12*

The kingdom of heaven is like a man, a householder, who hires laborers to cultivate his vineyard. Who more truly resembles the householder than Our Creator, Who rules the world He has made, and governs His elect in this world, as a master cares for the subjects of his household? He too possesses a vineyard, namely, the Universal Church, which, from the time of just Abel until the last of the elect that shall be born at the end of the world, has brought forth as many saints, as it has sent forth shoots.

This householder therefore, in the morning early, at the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh, hires laborers to till His Vineyard; because from the beginning of this world until the end he ceases not to gather together preachers to instruct the multitude of the faithful. For the morning of the world was from Adam to Noah; the third hour, from Noah to Abraham; the sixth from Abraham to Moses; the ninth from Moses till the Coming of the Lord; the eleventh from the Lord's Coming till the end of the world. In which last hour the holy Apostles were sent as preachers, who, though they came late, yet received the full wage.

At no time therefore has the Lord failed to send workers to cultivate His Vineyard, which is to say, they instruct his people; as from the beginning by means of the Patriarchs, then the Doctors of the Law and the Prophets, and lastly by means of the Apostles, He has attended to the care of his vineyard, when as it were by His laborers He has formed worthy dispositions in His people. The workers of the early morning, and of the third hour, the sixth, and the ninth, signify the ancient Jewish people, who, in their elect have from the beginning of the world endeavored to serve God in true belief, and have not as it were ceased to labor in the cultivation of the Vineyard. But at the eleventh hour the Gentiles were called, and it is to them it was said, *why stand you here all the day idle?*

Inside:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| <i>St. Benedict of Aniane. . . .</i> | <i>2</i> |
| <i>Parish News.</i> | <i>3</i> |
| <i>A Psalm of Thanksgiving. .</i> | <i>4</i> |
| <i>Calendar.</i> | <i>5</i> |

They who during so long a period of time had neglected to labor for their true life, have been standing all the day idle. But consider what they answered when questioned: *They say to him because no man hath hired us*; since no Patriarch had come to them, and no Prophet... How many Fathers were there before the Law, how many lived under the Law, and yet without any delay they entered the Kingdom who were called at the Coming of the Lord. They received who came at the eleventh hour that same wage which they desired with all their hearts who had labored from the first; because they who came to the Lord at the end of the world received the wage of eternal life equally with those who were called from the beginning of the world.

St. Benedict of Aniane

Feast Day ~ February 11



Witiza, the son of Count Aigulf of Maguelonne, a Visigoth, was born around the year 747. As a boy, Witiza was sent to the court of the Frankish king, Pepin, for education and training as a courtier. The boy did well at court, serving as cup-bearer to Pepin and Charlemagne, and participating in military action. In 773, while on campaign in Italy with Charlemagne, Witiza nearly drowned while rescuing his brother from the Ticino River. Such a dramatic event became a turning point in the life of the young man.

Leaving the service of the Emperor, Witiza entered the monastery of St. Sequanus (Saint-Seine) near Dijon and embarked on an extremely zealous effort at ascetic living. He went about barefoot, slept on the ground, and ate nothing but bread and water. Here he took the name Benedict and made that saintly monastic his spiritual patron.

In 779, the monk Benedict returned to family land on the Aniane River with the intention of being a hermit. Soon several others joined him and the Aniane Monastery was established. Perhaps Benedict's extreme practices were too much, for the community did not last long. In 782, he re-founded the monastery, this time following the Rule of his patron saint. As this community grew, Benedict founded other monasteries and was eventually considered the abbot of most of the monasteries in Charlemagne's empire.

Before this time, the Frankish monasteries (like their English counterparts) had suffered greatly during the Viking invasions and had lost much of their former discipline. They had also often been "owned" by the laymen who had provided land for their foundation. Benedict took it upon himself to reform the monasteries,

and he was aided in his efforts by Louis the Pious, who had succeeded as emperor.

Using the Rule of St. Benedict as his guide, Abbot Benedict made prayer, study, and manual labor a part of every monk's day. This orderly pattern of life soon resulted in stronger, more disciplined monasteries - the "powerhouses of prayer" which was (and is) so needed by the rest of the Church.

When the heresy of "adoptionism" - which said that Christ was a man only adopted by God as his son - was proposed by a bishop, Abbot Benedict opposed it vigorously in his writings and assisted at the 794 Synod of Frankfurt where it was condemned. He headed a council of abbots at a Synod of Aachen in 817, who compiled new rules for monasteries. Once again, based on the Rule of St. Benedict, these regulations required a full liturgical life with the celebration of daily Mass and Divine Office; they stressed poverty and chastity for each monk; and they gave special emphasis to teaching and the copying of manuscripts.

St. Benedict died on February 11, 821, after nearly fifty years of serving God as a monastic. We give thanks to God for the work of St. Benedict and we ask for his intercessions that we, too, may lead orderly, prayerful lives.

Parish News

The part of the liturgical year which is centered around the Nativity of our Lord ends with the feast of Candlemas, or the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple (also called the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary) on February 2. We will celebrate this feast day on the eve, Tuesday, February 1. The service begins with the blessing of candles for use throughout the year (hence the name, Candlemas) and includes a procession around the church while we sing the *Nunc dimittis*, the song of Simeon at Christ's presentation in the Temple ("Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace..."). The St. Blaise blessing (for throats) will be given at the end of the Liturgy and we will have a pot-luck supper afterward.

The last Sunday of the season of Epiphany occurs on February 13, when we will "bury" the Alleluia, which will not be sung again until the great feast of Pascha. The three "gesima" Sundays (Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima) then provide a gradual transition to the penitential season of Lent and our more intense spiritual preparations for the celebration of the Resurrection.



Thanks to our altar servers who have been working hard to make our celebrations of Solemn High Mass more beautiful. Our first duty as Christians is to worship God in his holy temple and it is important that we offer our best in this worship.

Subdeacon Jerome has scheduled a class for those who would like to help make bread for church - both antidoron (the blessed bread which is given in Christian hospitality) and the hosts which are used for Communion. The class will be held in the parish hall on Saturday, February 6, beginning at noon. There remains a need for volunteers to help with laundering altar linens. Please speak to Jerry if you would like to help with these important ministries.

A Psalm of Thanksgiving

Sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving [Ps. 98:6b]. Christianity received its first songbook from Jewish worship and this wonderful collection of hymns, the book of Psalms, has now been a vital part of our Christian liturgical life for two millennia.



The Psalms have become for the Church, as for ancient Israel, a book of prayer and praise. All reach their fulfillment in Christ, the Son of God. Not only do the Psalms predict specific events of Christ's life, but in them He himself intercedes for and with his people before the Father. The Psalms could also be seen as a dialogue between the church, the body of Christ, and Christ her Head. [from the introduction to the Psalter in the *Orthodox Study Bible*]

St. Ambrose, who is credited with introducing the antiphonal method of Psalm-singing in the West, said: *A Psalm is the blessing of the people, the praise of God, the commendation of the multitude, the applause of all, the speech of every man, the voice of the Church, the sonorous profession of faith, devotion full of authority, the joy of liberty, the noise of good cheer, and the echo of gladness. It softens anger, it gives release from anxiety, it alleviates sorrow; it is protection at night, instruction by day, a shield in time of fear, a feast of holiness...*

In the Western Rite, in addition to full Psalms at Matins and Vespers, the Mass is filled with verses from the Psalms. As St. Paul instructed the Colossians, we continue "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in [our] hearts to the Lord."

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| <h1>February 2011</h1> | | | | | | |
| <i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i> | | 1 St. Ignatius of Antioch, BM, c. 107; St. Bridgid, V, 523 <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> | 2 Presentation of Our Lord: Candlemas | 3 St. Blaise, BM, c. 316; St. Anskar of Hamburg, BC, 865 | 4 New Martyrs of Russia, 1917 and following; St. Joseph of Aleppo, M, 1686 | 5 St. Agatha, VM, c. 250 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> |
| 6 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany; St. Photius, BCD, 891; St. Dorothy, VM c. 313 | 7 St. Romuald, Ab, 1027 | 8 | 9 St. Cyril of Alexandria, BCD, 444; St. Apollonia, VM, c. 248 | 10 St. Scholastica, V, 543 | 11 St. Gregory II, PM; St. Benedict of Aniane, Ab, 821; St. Theodora, Empress Ma, 860 | 12 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> |
| 13 Sixth Sunday after Epiphany | 14 St. Valentine, PrM, 3rd C | 15 Ss. Faustinus & Jovita, Mm, 120 | 16 St. Nicholas of Japan, BC, 1912 | 17 | 18 St. Simeon of Jerusalem, BM, 1st C.; St. Colman, BC, 675 | 19 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> |
| 20 Septuagesima | 21 | 22 Chair of St. Peter at Antioch; St. Joseph of Arimethea, C, 1st c. | 23 Vigil of St. Matthias | 24 St. Matthias, Apostle, 1st c.; | 25 St. Walburga, of Heidenheim, V, 779 | 26 St. Porphyrius of Gaza, BC, 420; St. Ethelbert, KC, 616 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> |
| 27 Sexagesima; St. Raphael of Brooklyn, BC, 1915; St. Alexander, BC, 326; St. Leander, BC, 600 | 28 St. Oswald of Worcester, BC, 992 | 1 St. David of Wales, BC, 544 | 2 St. Chad, BC, 672 | 3 | 4 | 5 St. Lucius, PM, 254 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> |

Confessions may be made following Vespers, during the Psalms at Matins, and by appointment.

Coffee Hour follows Sunday Liturgy. Sunday School for children is during Coffee Hour