

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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

A Reading from a homily of St. Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople

*died. 447AD
feast day - 20 November*

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Glorious is our Paschal Festival; and truly splendid this great assembly of the Christian people. And within this holy mystery are contained things both old and new. The celebration, or rather its joyfulness, is shared by such a multitude, that not alone does man rejoice on earth, but even the powers of heaven are united with us in joyful celebration of Christ's Resurrection. For now the Angels, and the hosts of the Archangels, also keep holiday, and stand waiting for the triumphant return from this earth of Christ Our Lord, Who is King of heaven. And the multitude of the Blessed likewise rejoice, proclaiming the Christ Who was begotten before the day star rose. The earth rejoices, now washed by divine blood. The sea rejoices, honored as it was by His Feet upon its waters. And ever more let each soul rejoice, who is born again of water and the Holy Ghost, and at last set free from the ancient curse!

With such great joy does Christ fill our hearts by his Resurrection, not alone because He gives us the gladness of this day, but because He has also given us salvation through his Passion, immortality through His Death, healing for our wounds, and resurrection from our fall! And long ago, Beloved, this Paschal Mystery, begun in Egypt, was symbolically pointed out to us in the Old Law, in the sacrifice of the lamb. And now, in the Gospel, let us celebrate the Resurrection of the lamb: our Pasch.

Then a lamb of the flock was slain, as the Law laid down; Now Christ, the Lamb of God, is offered up. There a sheep from the sheepfold; here, in place of the sheep, the Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep. There the sprinkled blood upon the doorposts was a sign of deliverance for the people of God; here the precious Blood of Christ was poured out for the deliverance of the whole world that we might be forgiven our sins. There the firstborn of Egypt were slain; here the manifold children of sinners are made clean

confessing the Lamb. There Pharaoh and his fearful host were drowned in the sea; here the spiritual Pharaoh with all His people are immersed in the deep of baptism. There the children of the Hebrews, crossing over the Red Sea, sang their song of victory to their Deliverer, singing "Let us sing to the Lord; for he is gloriously magnified"; here those found worthy of baptism sing their song of victory, singing "One Holy, One Lord, Jesus Christ, in the glory of God the Father".



The prophet also sings, "The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty [Ps. 93:1]. The Hebrews, after the crossing of the Red Sea, ate manna in the desert; now, those who have come forth from the waters of baptism eat bread that came down from heaven. For his is the Voice that says "I am the living bread, which cometh down from heaven" [John 6:35].

Rightly then does Paul exclaim, "Now all these things happened to them in figure; and they are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come." [I Cor. 10:11] The Jews plainly erred in not recognizing the reality: For if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory [I Cor. 2:8]. But unhappy that they were, they did not understand that the figure served only till the reality came. For a sculptor preparing for the king a statue of gold or silver or bronze, first makes a model of his statue in clay. And he is careful to preserve his clay model, until he has completed the real statue, from gold or silver or perhaps bronze: it being of the utmost necessity to him as the artificer. The statue made, the clay model is broken up; as useless and unnecessary. So the Jews, before the reality came amongst men, rightly preserved the figures of what was to come. But after Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared, He Who said, "I am the light of the world; I am the truth and the life; I am the resurrection" [John 8:12; 14:6, 11:25], it is folly for them to cling to the figures; which no longer have even this value, that they are types and figures.

Let us then feast; but not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth [I Cor. 5:8], so that after our departure from this life, we may together with the Angels give praise to the Lord of glory, singing with them: The Lord hath reigned; he is clothed with beauty" [Ps. 93:1]. To him be Glory and Honor and Adoration for ever. Amen.

Parish News

We welcome the newly-illuminated handmaid of God, Sharon Green, into the holy Orthodox Church. Sharon was chrismated at the Paschal Vigil, with Deacon Raphael and

Catherine serving as her godparents. She has chosen St. Monica as her patron saint. We pray for her as she continues to grow in the faith and we also remember our catechumens, Michelle Green and Raven Bethea.

Thanks to all who helped to make our Holy Week and Paschal celebrations so beautiful: to all who served at the altar and sang in the choir; to all who prepared the linens and vestments and donated or bought and decorated with flowers; to all who made wonderful food and to all who joined us in our prayers. *Christ is risen! Indeed he is risen!*

On Thursday, May 5, we will celebrate a Mass in honor of the dedication of our church building. The Liturgy will be at 7:30PM (with Vespers at 7PM) followed by a pot-luck supper.

We will send Maria Roeber off to her missionary work in Tanzania with a special celebration on Sunday, May 22. Fr. David Rucker, the Associate Director of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center in St. Augustine, Florida, will join us for our Liturgy at St. Gregory's that morning. At that time, we will pray for Maria's work and bid her Godspeed. That evening at 5:00PM, there will be a Vespers service at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral during which Maria will be officially commissioned for her work. All are invited to the service and any who wish may stay for the OCMC Benefit Banquet following (reservations are due by May 15). Please see Fr. Nicholas for more information.

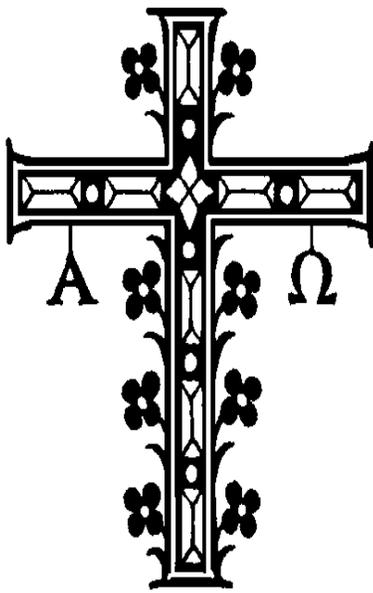


St. Theodotus and Companions, Martyrs Feast Day ~ May 18

Most of the earliest saints of the Church were martyrs, and for many of those saints, we have few historical details other than their names and the fact that they faced death rather than deny their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. But a detailed report was written and preserved for future generations of Christians by Nilus, an eye-witness to the martyrdom of St. Theodotus, who suffered in the persecutions of Emperor Diocletian.

When Diocletian sent out his orders in 303 to arrest the followers of Christ and make them pay homage to the pagan Roman gods (through torture if necessary) or be killed, local officials were anxious to ingratiate themselves to the Emperor. The governor of Galatia promised to remove the Christian religion from his area entirely.

When the Christians of the capital city Ancyra (modern Ankara, Turkey) heard that the governor was on his way to their city, many of them fled to the mountains or remote rural areas to avoid the coming confrontations. But Theodotus remained in the city. He was an innkeeper, a respectable family man highly regarded in the community and a friendly merchant who served good wine to his customers and provided excellent accommodations for travelers. He knew that he would not immediately be suspect and that he could do much good for his fellow Christians in this time of persecution.



The atrocities began even before the governor's arrival. Pagan citizens of Ancyra broke into the homes of their Christian neighbors who had fled, stole their belongings and damaged their property, and dragged children or other family members who had remained behind through the streets. But, as Nilus recorded, the situation became much worse when the governor arrived.

The order was given that any products which were bought or sold had to be given first as offerings to the pagan gods before use. Theodotus must have heard of this tactic being used in other places because he had carefully built up a stock of food and wine that he could secretly make available to his fellow Christians so they would not starve or have to compromise their beliefs. Many were put into prison and tortured for their faith and many were killed. At great risk to himself, Theodotus gave encouragement to those who were suffering and helped to retrieve and bury the bodies of the dead. The inn of Theodotus became a refuge for Christians, a place where they could hide and a place of worship.

The governor had not had much success in causing the Ancyran Christians to recant their beliefs. He thought he would have better luck with a group of seven elderly maiden ladies. He arrested them and then turned them over to a gang of young "hoodlum" men who were to rape and beat the women. But the tearful entreaties of the women and the appeal of one seventy-year-old to the honor of their mothers caused them to be sorry for what they had planned and to leave the women unharmed.

In desperation, the governor thought of another novel idea. He would have the women participate in a pagan ceremony honoring the goddess Diana which was to take place at a nearby pond. He placed the women - naked - into a chariot and they were paraded through the city where they were derided by the onlookers. At the pond, they were given white robes for the ceremony of placing offerings before the statue of Diana. Meanwhile, Theodotus and other Christians were in a nearby church building, praying for strength and perseverance for their friends. They later learned that the women had refused to accept the robes and participate in the

ceremony and had strongly rebuked the priestesses of Diana for worshiping an idol. The governor had then placed heavy stones around their necks and had them thrown into the pond to their deaths.

The weather turned that night, with violent storms and much rain, but Theodotus and some others went out to try to retrieve the bodies of the martyred women so they could receive a Christian burial. Despite the weather conditions, they were successful, and the next day, the news had spread to all the city. As a result, the furious governor increased the arrests and torture of Christians. Theodotus decided to turn himself in so as to spare more pain for others, but the remaining Christians would not allow him to do it. They told him that his work was too important to end now. Polychronius, one of his friends who had helped find the bodies of the women, volunteered to be a spy. He dressed like a peasant woman and went to the market at the center of the city to try to learn what news was being talked about. But there, his true identity was discovered, and when he was taken to the governor and tortured, his resolve was too weak and he reported Theodotus' activities.



The truth about the friendly inn-keeper was now made known to the governor. Theodotus was subjected to the most cruel tortures but he endured them all by constant prayer. Even his prayers incensed the governor, who ordered the soldiers to break the jawbones of the saint so that he could no longer utter verbal prayer. Finally, the order was given to behead Theodotus and to burn his body so that it could not be buried by Christians and his relics venerated by them. But when the pyre was made ready for burning, a strange light emanated from it and the soldiers were afraid to take any action. It was now dusk, so the governor placed two guards at the site and said that they should resume their work in the morning.

That same evening, a Christian priest from a neighboring town rode into Ancyra on his donkey. He had heard about some of the troubles in Ancyra and was anxious to talk with his friend Theodotus and see what he could do to help there. He had brought a bottle of wine which he made from his own grapes as a gift for Theodotus. When they reached the pile of wood being guarded by soldiers, the donkey lay down as if to sleep. Fronto, the priest, asked the guards what was going on and he heard the whole story of the persecutions, the murder of the seven women, and the eventual martyrdom of his friend. Fronto offered the guards some of his wine and as the story unfolded, he refilled their cups many times. When the soldiers finally fell into a deep sleep aided by the wine, Fronto took the body of Theodotus and returned to his home

where he buried the martyr with all the rites and ceremonies afforded such a brave and devout Christian.

In our own day, there are persecutions of Christians in numerous places in the world, and every day, there are some who receive the crown of martyrdom. We ask that St. Theodotus and all the holy martyrs pray for them that they will be courageous and steadfast in their faith.

Light in Darkness

by St. Nikolai of Ochrid



I*am the light of the world.* From the beginning of the world and the beginning of time, no man born has dared to utter these words. There have been men who have said: “I bring the light”, but no-one has ever dared to say: “I am the Light!” The Lord Jesus alone has been able to pronounce these words with daring and confidence. His brief life on earth and His long history of close on 2,000 years have fully justified these words. He is the light of truth, of righteousness and of life.

He is the light of truth, for He revealed in Himself the truth of the real nature of God and of the real nature of man, of the relationship of man with man, of man with God and of God with man. Heaven and earth will pass away, but His words will not pass away, for heaven and earth were brought into being by his word, and His word is of Him and with Him for ever, and will not pass away.

He is the light of righteousness, for He has shown the strength of righteousness and the powerlessness of unrighteousness. He has revealed it in the things He said, in the things He did, in the things He experienced among the unrighteous. He has also revealed it through His church, during the twenty centuries down to this day, through numberless righteous saints and martyrs for righteousness. Righteousness is of God and, through the long thread of history, it can never be overcome. Unrighteousness is of powerless beings; it quickly rushes to the ramparts with its triumphal banner, but equally quickly falls down into the grave.

He is the light of life. His words illumine life. His works illumine life, His victory illumines life; His Resurrection, like the most brilliant sun, illumines life with its strong light and banishes death as a weak shadow.

O Lord Jesus, Thou most brilliant light, Thou true Sun, Thou Sun of righteousness and Sun of life; illumine us worthless sinners! To thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>May 2011</h1>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, High Mass at 9:30AM</i>
1 Low Sunday: First Sunday after Easter <i>W</i>	2 St. George, Patron of the Antiochian Archdiocese, M, 303, trans.; St. Athanasius, BCD, 373	3 Finding of the Holy Cross; Ss. Alexander, Eventius, Theodulus, Mm, c. 115 & Juvenalis, BC, 4 th c	4 Ss. Philip & James, Apostles, trans.	5 St. Mark the Evangelist, trans. <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> <i>W</i>	6 Dedication of St. Gregory's; St. John before the Latin Gate, 95	7 of the Octave of Dedication; St. Alexis Toth, PrC, 1909; St. John of Beverly, BC, 721 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
8 Second Sunday after Easter; comm. octave of the Dedication; Apparition of St. Michael <i>W</i>	9 of the Octave of Dedication; St. Gregory Nazianzen, BCD, 389	10 of the Octave of Dedication; Ss. Gordian, 362 & Epimachus, 250, Mm	11 of the Octave of Dedication	12 of the Octave of Dedication; St. Epiphanius, BC, c. 403; SS. Nereus & Achilles (98), Domitilla & Pancras (304), MM	13 Octave Day of the Dedication	14 St. Boniface of Tarsus, M, 290 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
15 Third Sunday after Easter; St. Pachomius, Ab, 346 <i>W</i>	16 St. Brendan the Navigator, 577, Ab	17	18 St. Venantius, M, 250; St. Theodotus & comp., Mm, c. 303	19 St. Pudentiana, V, c. 160; St. Dunstan of Canterbury, BC, 988	20	21 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
22 Fourth Sunday after Easter <i>W</i>	23	24 St. Vincent of Lerins, C, 450	25 St. Urban, PM, 230; St. Aldhelm, BC, 709	26 St. Augustine of Canterbury, BCD, 605; St. Eleutherius, PM, c. 189	27 St. Bede CD, 735; St. John I, PM, 526	28 St. Germanus of Paris, BC, 576 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
29 Fifth Sunday after Easter <i>W</i>	30 Rogation Monday; St. Felix I, PM, 274	31 Rogation Tuesday; St. Petronilla, VM, c. 100	1 Vigil of the Ascension <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> <i>W</i>	2 Ascension Day	3 of the Octave of Ascension; St. Kevin of Glendalough, Ab, c. 618	4 of the Octave of Ascension; St. Petroc, C, 564 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>

Confessions are heard during the Psalms at Matins, following Vespers, and by appointment.

Coffee Hour follows Sunday Liturgy. Sunday School during coffee hour