

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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

From a homily of Saint Caesarius of Arles

*died AD 542AD
feast day - August 27*

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When the Gospel was read just now, we heard our Lord and Savior say: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* [Matt. 5:7] Sweet is the word mercy, dearly beloved; and if the mere name, how much more so the reality? Although all men desire to possess it, what is worse, not all live in such a way as to deserve it, for all want to receive it but few are willing to grant it. O man, with what feelings do you want to find what you neglect to give? If a man desires to obtain mercy in heaven, he should bestow it in this world. Therefore, since all want mercy, dearly beloved, let us make her our patron in this life so that she may free us in the life to come.

Mercy abides in heaven, but it is reached by the exercise of it on earth. Thus the Scriptures tell us: *O Lord, thy mercy is in heaven.* [Ps. 35:6] There is, then, both an earthly and a heavenly mercy, the one human and the other divine. What is human mercy? It is to care for the miseries of the poor. And what is divine mercy? Doubtless, it is that which grants forgiveness of sins. Whatever human mercy gives on the way, divine mercy repays in the heavenly country.

In this world God is cold and hungry in the person of all his poor, for He said: *As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.* [Matt. 25:40, 42] Therefore, God who deigns to give from heaven wants to receive on earth. What kind of creatures are we if we want to take when God gives, but are unwilling to give when He asks it? If a poor man hungers, Christ is in need, as he Himself said: *I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat.* [Luke 6:38] Do not, then, despise the miseries of the poor, if you want to hope for the forgiveness of your sins without anxiety. Christ hungers now, brethren, for in the person of all the poor He Himself deigns to hunger and thirst; moreover, he repays in heaven whatever he receives on earth.

•THE GOOD SAMARITAN•



Ask you, brethren, what do you desire or seek when you come to church? What, except mercy? Therefore, grant earthly mercy and you will receive the heavenly. The poor man asks something of you, and you ask of God; he seeks a mouthful, you want eternal life. Give to the poor, in order that you may merit to receive from Christ; listen to Him say: *Give, and it shall be given to you.* [Luke 6:38] I do not know with what feelings you want to receive what you are unwilling to give.

Therefore, when you come to church offer alms of some kind to the poor in proportion to your means. One who can should bring silver; if he cannot, let him give wine. If a man does not even possess this, he might give a mouthful to the hungry; if he has not the whole, some little portion. ..

Then we may be able to say with assurance on judgment day: Give, O Lord, because we have given; we have done what you commanded, do You fulfill what you promised. May he deign to grant this, who, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns world without end. Amen.

St. Cloud, Confessor *Feast Day ~ September 7*

Violence seems to be ever-present in our world today - we see news reports every day of revolution and war in the Middle East, of the bloodshed in border towns where drugs are smuggled, on the streets of our cities where gangs battle each other, and in public places where disturbed individuals senselessly kill innocent people. This real violence is reflected in movies, television dramas, and video games.

But those of us who lament this violence have only to read St. Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks* to be reminded that, throughout history, fallen man has always had a penchant for bloody violence. Even the pages of Holy Scripture are filled with stories of murder, revenge, and hatred.

How can faithful Christians survive in this atmosphere? What should the Christian response be to terrible violence? The Church shows us that it is possible for saints to be made in the midst of such violence and St. Cloud gives us an example of how we should respond to it.

In St. Gregory of Tours' account, we read of the children of Chlodomer, one of the four sons of Clovis, the first king of the Frankish people to become a Christian. The competitive greed for power that had been typical of these people did not end with Clovis' conversion, but continued with his sons, who divided his kingdom and perpetuated their murderous actions. When the three sons of Chlodomer were orphaned, they were taken in by their grandmother, Clovis' widow (St.) Clothide, so that she could prepare them for ruling their father's lands when they reached the proper age.

But their uncles Childebert, ruler of Paris, and Clotaire, king of Soissons, were intent on having that land for themselves, so they plotted to capture and kill the boys while they were still young. They succeeded in murdering Theobald and Gontaire, but eight-year-old Clodoald (whose name is more commonly called "Cloud") escaped with the help of his grandmother.

With this horrible bloodshed and the terror of his narrow escape from the violence of his own close relatives embedded in his memory, Cloud determined at this young age to remove himself from the kind of life which his royal position would bring. He cut his hair as a sign that he was renouncing his inheritance and that he would dedicate himself to God instead.

After leaving the care of his grandmother, Cloud went to live a hermit's life, where he spent his days in contemplation and prayer which enabled him to resist the worldly passions and the desire for power and riches. He conquered the urge for revenge against those who had so cruelly perpetrated violence. Cloud eventually placed himself under the direction of St. Severinus who helped him develop the disciplined life of a monastic.

Moving to Provence for further solitude, the monk Cloud found that his virtue attracted many followers and the miracles that were reported only brought more people to seek his counsel. So he returned to Paris, where Bishop Eusebius ordained him to the priesthood in 551 and he served in the church there for some years.

But Cloud was uncomfortable with public life, even serving as a priest, so he once again retired to a more remote area - Nogent on the River Seine - where he founded a monastery and spent his remaining years. Here he was able to experience monastic silence, but he also instructed the monks in his care, he ministered to the people around the monastery, preaching to those who had not yet become Christians, and distributed food to the poor.

St. Cloud fell asleep in the Lord on September 7 in the year 560. His thirty-eight years of life had been dedicated to overcoming the violence which characterized his family and the age in which he



lived. By the grace of God, he had renounced violent behavior and acts of revenge, and had instead perfected the Christian virtues of love and forgiveness. May St. Cloud pray for us that we may do the same in the midst of a violent world.

Sources: Rev. Alban Butler, *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Saints*; Omer Englebert, *Lives of the Saints*; Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*; Rev. Clifford Stevens, *The One year Book of Saints*; website, *Saints & Angels*.

Parish News



The month of September includes a number of holy days, beginning with the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God on Saturday, September 8, which we will celebrate with Matins at 9:30AM and Mass at 10:00. The secondary feast of our patron, St. Gregory the Great (September 3, the day of his consecration), will be celebrated on the Sunday within the Octave, September 9. On the eve of the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, September 13, we will sing Vespers at 7PM, Mass at 7:30 and enjoy a pot-luck supper afterward. And on Saturday, September 29, the Feast of St. Michael, we will have brunch following 9:30AM Matins at 10:00 Mass. Saturday Vespers services will resume on September 1 at 6PM.

A parish picnic has been scheduled for Saturday, September 8, following the Liturgy, at Grove 13 of Rock Creek Park. There will be grills for cooking, games to play, room for kids to run, and lots of good fellowship. Thanks to Joana Tasi for making all the arrangements.

Sunday School classes for children will resume on September 9 following the Liturgy (and after a brief time at coffee hour). Younger children will meet with Jennifer Caldwell and older ones with several teachers on a rotating schedule.

Fr. Nicholas will attend the Clergy Retreat of the Eastern Dioceses from September 18-21 at Antiochian Village. The pastors of our four Western Rite parishes have been offering Western Rite Vespers or Compline at this retreat for several years, and this year there will be a Western Rite Mass for the first time.

As many of our parishioners have moved recently, a new parish directory will soon be prepared and placed on the parish e-mail list.

In Memoriam

Carol Hannah Lackman
July 16, 1946 - June 9, 2012

Our sister in Christ, Carol Hannah Lackman, fell asleep in the Lord on June 9, after an arduous second battle with cancer. Carol had a special devotion to the Celtic saints (St. Cuthbert being her favorite) and had been on pilgrimage to the Island of Iona in Scotland, so it is fitting that she passed away on the feast day of St. Columba of Iona.

Carol was a founding member of St. Gregory's parish. It was through her efforts that the first exploratory meeting regarding a Western Rite Orthodox presence in the Washington area took place. That meeting paved the way for inquirer's classes which began soon after on Sunday evenings and the establishment of St. Gregory's as a mission in March of 1996.

Carol was always concerned with the beauty of worship and the care which the vessels of worship were given. She served as our first altar guild member and trained others to carry on this work.

God gave Carol time to prepare for her death in many ways - by making her confession and receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, by giving thanks to God and her family and friends for the joys experienced in this life, and by passing on things acquired in this life to others for their use.

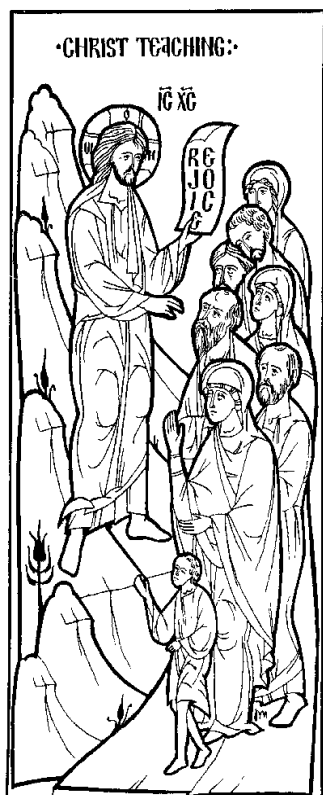
St. Gregory's was given Carol's 18th Century Russian icon of the Raising of Lazarus and this will soon be placed in our chapel for veneration near the stairs to the parish hall. Our parish library (as well as the personal libraries of many parishioners) has been expanded by many of the books from Carol's library; one family will be able to enjoy the healthy exertion afforded by Carol's exercise equipment; one little girl will be able to practice for piano lessons on Carol's piano - and the list goes on and on. Carol will be remembered in many ways, not the least of which will be her generosity at the time of death.

May Carol's soul and the souls of all the faithful, through the Mercy of God, rest in peace and may light perpetual shine upon them. *The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God.*
[Wisdom 3;1]



The Beatitudes of St. Ephraim the Syrian

Blessed is he who has illumined the eyes of his heart, and always sees the Lord in himself as in a mirror. Such a man will be relieved of passions and evil thoughts.



Blessed is he who loves good and beautiful speech but hates words that are shameful and corrupting, for he will not be taken captive by the evil one.

Blessed is he who instructs his neighbor in the fear of God and does not seduce his soul, for he is ever wary of the great Pastor's iron staff.

Blessed is he who is obedient to his neighbor in accordance with God's will and gratefully suffers offence, for such a man will be crowned as a confessor of the Lord.

Blessed is he who loves abstinence in accordance with God's will and is not subject to condemnation as a corrupt sensualist on account of his belly, for such a man will be magnified in the Lord.

Blessed is he who does not intoxicate himself with wine, but is ever glad in remembrance of the Lord, in Whom all the saints rejoice unceasingly.

Blessed is he who manages his possessions in accordance with God's will, and does not lay himself open to condemnation from the Savior as a miser lacking compassion for his neighbor.

Blessed is he who is vigilant in prayer, reading and good works; he will be enlightened and will not fall asleep unto death.

Blessed is he who has become a marvelous spiritual net and caught many for the good Master; greatly will he be praised in the Lord.

Blessed is he who has become a marvelous example for his neighbor and has not injured the conscience of his fellow servants with indecent acts; he will be blessed in the Lord.

Reprinted from A Spiritual Psalter or Reflections on God excerpted by Bishop Theophan the Recluse from the works of St. Ephraim; published by St. John of Kronstadt Press.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>September 2012</h1>					<i>Sunday Services:</i> <i>Matins at 9AM, Sung</i> <i>Mass at 9:30AM</i>	1 St. Giles, Ab, 708; Twelve Holy Brothers, Mm, c. 303 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
2 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Stephen of Hungary, KC, 1038 <i>G</i>	3 Consecration of St. Gregory the Great, 590 (Labor Day)	4 of the Octave of St. Gregory; St. Gorazde of Prague, BM, 1942	5 of the Octave of St. Gregory;	6 of the Octave of St. Gregory;	7 of the Octave of St. Gregory; St. Cloud, C, 560; St. Sergius I, PC, 701	8 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary; of the Octave of St. Gregory <i>Mass at 10am W</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
9 Sunday in the Oct. of St. Gregory; comm. of the 14 th Sunday after Pentecost <i>W</i>	10	11 Ss. Protus & Hyacinth, Mm, c. 257; St. Paphnutius, BC, 4th C	12	13 <i>Mass at 7:30pm W</i>	14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross	15 St. Nicomedes, M, 4th c. <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
16 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Cornelius, PM, 254 & Cyprian, BM 258; St. Ninian, BC, 5 th c. <i>G</i>	17 St. Lambert, BM, 705	18	19 St. Theodore of Canterbury, BC, 690; Ss. Januarius & comp., Mm, Ember Wednesday	20 Vigil of St. Matthew; Ss. Eustace & comp., Mm, c. 118	21 St. Matthew, Evangelist & Apostle, 1st c.; Ember Friday	22 St. Maurice & Companions, Mm, 3rd c.; St. Lioba of Mainz, V, 781; Ember Saturday <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
23 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Thecla of Iconium, VM, 1st c.; St. Linus, PM, c. 80 <i>G</i>	24 Conception St. John Baptist; SS. Juvenaly, 1796 & Peter the Aleut, MM	25	26 Ss. Cyprian, BM & Justina, VM, c. 303	27 Ss. Cosmas & Damian, Mm, c. 303	28 St. Wenceslas, M, 938	29 Dedication of St. Michael the Archangel <i>Mass at 10am W</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
30 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Jerome PrCD, 420; St. Gregory the Illuminator, BC, c. 323 <i>G</i>					<i>Confessions may be made during the Psalms at Matins, following Vespers, and by appointment.</i>	<i>Coffee Hour follows Sunday Liturgy.</i>