

✠ 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 Gregory Palamas

*died AD1359
feast day - November 14*

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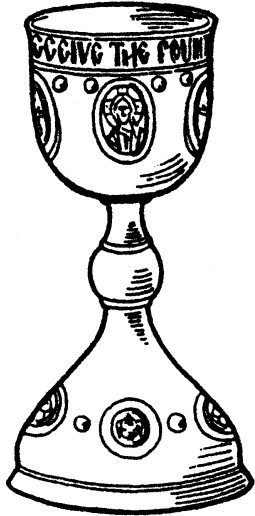
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When David considered and reckoned up the multitude and greatness of God's gifts to us, and the fact that nobody has anything worthy to give Him in exchange, he said, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all that he hath rendered unto me?" [Ps. 116:11]... [He] saw everything he had received, and everything given to those who went before him - for those gifts, too, were for his sake - he understood that the benefits bestowed by God are immeasurable and that, whereas these really are bounties from God for us, the things men offer to God are nothing in comparison. Then it was that he cried out, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all that he hath rendered unto me?"

As he could find nothing to offer to God except his acknowledgment of the favors he had already received and his request for those still to come, he went on to say, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord" [Ps. 116:12]. He is not rendering anything in return, rather he is taking, asking to receive, but giving nothing. Someone who has received a gift from a king and made obeisance, then requests a further gift, has not given anything in exchange for what he was given. The cup of salvation refers to the drink offerings made in gratitude to God for having been preserved. As a prophet, however, and speaking in the Spirit, he foresees what is to come. Making his own what belongs to grace, and regarding what is ours as his, since he is our forefather according to the faith, he says, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord", showing forth beforehand our sacred participation and communion in the sacramental Cup, our boldness towards God in this respect, and our salvation by this means.

If we have nothing to render to God for His benefits to us except to call upon Him once again, what reparation will we find to offer when we sin against Him and put ourselves in the

wrong? None at all. Any good we may do, we were obliged to do before we sinned, and even then we were incapable of repaying our debt. So the only way we have to remedy our wrongdoings is to glorify God's incomparable forbearance towards us and to invoke his divine mercies...



But why am I telling you this now? Because, although we have nothing to offer God, either for all the good we have experienced from Him or in respect of our offences against Him, we are also negligent about glorifying Him and making supplication. I observe that the church has a full congregation now, and I am filled with joy, but I recall the last few weeks. It was the season of the grape harvest - I am speaking to you about this now, not to reproach you but to help you to understand. It was the grape harvest, and the Church of God suffered a serious lack of worshipers and people to offer hymns and earnest entreaties to God.

When the season for enjoying and gathering in the fruit comes round, we ought to glorify God even more. We, however, acting wrongly and unjustly, cut down on His praises and neglect them at that time... I cannot begin to say how much this attitude damages our faith, our Christian conduct, and also the material aspect of our lives. Anyone who thinks that the time set aside for prayer to God is unproductive, despises it and devotes himself entirely to physical activities, does not believe the one who says, "Without me ye can do nothing" [John 15:5]; nor does he realize that the Lord has power over life and death, health and sickness, and that it was He who made us, so our being alive, our ability to act and our entire existence depend on Him... Do you see that it is impossible to have sure faith and genuine virtue without persisting wholeheartedly in hymns and supplications?

Daily converse with God through prayer and psalmody calms and transforms all attacks, repulses fleshly desires, blunts covetous thoughts, purges away conceit, destroys envy, educates anger, banishes remembrance of wrongs and, setting aside bitterness and contention, bestows every kind of peace, good order and comfort on towns, homes, souls and bodies, for married people as well as those who have embarked on the monastic life. Put simply, this is the foundation and assurance of everything good, driving away every evil and misfortune and redeeming us from it.

Parish News

In addition to our normal schedule of services, we will celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Walsingham on Saturday, October 20.

This celebration of a vision of the Theotokos by an English woman, the building of a shrine and the subsequent centuries of pilgrimage to this shrine has been observed by the Western Rite parishes of the Eastern region as an opportunity to come together for worship and fellowship. This year, St. Gregory's is the host parish, and we will welcome our brothers and sisters in Christ for Matins at 9:30AM, Mass at 10:00 (*subject to change!*) and a brunch following on that day. We will end our time together by singing a Litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP, has appointed His Grace, Bishop JOHN as the hierarchical overseer for the Western Rite; His Grace also serves as the auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of New England. He will make his first visit to St. Gregory's on Saturday, January 26th and Sunday, January 27th. Please mark your calendars for this important occasion.

On Christ's Dwelling in the Hearts of the Faithful by St. Nikolai of Ochrid

With faith, Christ comes into the heart, and with Christ comes love, and thus a man is rooted and grounded in love. First, then, faith; then, with faith, the presence of Christ in the heart. With the presence of Christ comes the presence of love and, with love, inexpressible good things. In a few words, the Apostle shows us all the steps to perfection. The beginning is faith and the end is love. Faith and love are conjoined in a living and undivided unity by the presence in the heart of the living Lord Jesus Christ.

By strengthening our faith, we overcome more and more the estrangement between ourselves and Christ the Lord, for firm faith draws us to Christ. Finally the heart is filled with Christ and cannot be separated from Him, as a lung cannot from the air. Then a man, with tears of joy, communes with Christ in his heart with the prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner", and the heart is imperceptibly filled with light and ardent love. Thus love unites with faith and hope and, when they are united, the boundaries between them fade away, and it is impossible for a man to distinguish the separate movements of faith, hope and love.

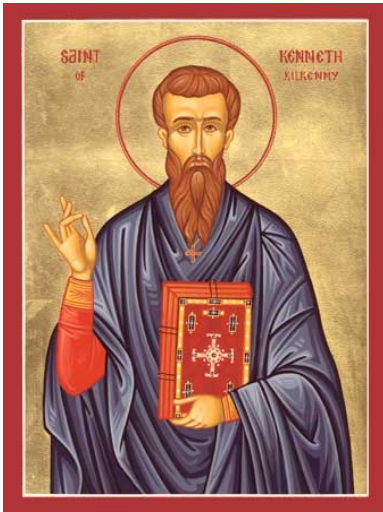
When the living Christ makes His abode in a man, he no longer sees faith, hope and love in his heart, naming and defining them, but sees and names only Christ; as a fruit-grower in autumn, looking at the ripe fruit on his trees, speaks no more of blossom and leaves but of fruit, ripe fruit.



Lord Jesus Christ, Thou highest peak of all our endeavour and goal of all our journeying: draw near to us and save us. To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

St. Kenneth (Cainnech)

Feast Day ~ October 11



The small nation of Ireland has produced numerous saints who enrich the Church with the examples of their holy lives and with their intercessions in Heaven. One of these saints, Kenneth, is known to us through the writings of Adomnan, a seventh century abbot of Iona as well as through many legends. An ethnic Pict, his given name was Cainnech moccu Dalann and he is called Cainnech or Canice in Ireland, but he is known as Kenneth in Scotland and America.

Born around the year 516, Kenneth was the son of Lughadh, a respected bard who became tutor to the son of a chieftain, and his wife Mella. Both were devout Christians who taught their son the faith. In his youth, Kenneth tended the sheep of the chieftain.

While still a young man, Kenneth became a student under St. Finian at the Abbey of Clonard, where he devoted himself to studying the holy Scriptures, to prayer and penance, striving to lead a holy life. At this abbey, he met and became friends with those who would become the most important Irish Christian leaders of that age. Kenneth - and such famous saints as Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, Brendan of Clonfert, Columba of Iona - are known as the "Twelve Apostles" of Ireland.

Kenneth became a monk at Clonard and in 544, he and his fellow monks, Ciaran and Comgall, continued their studies at Glasnevin. Shortly thereafter, the monks scattered because of a plague epidemic, so Kenneth traveled to Glamorganshire in Wales to the monastery of Llancarfan where St. Cadoc was his spiritual father. There he was ordained to the priesthood in 545.

Following the tradition of many Irish monks, Kenneth traveled frequently. He made the journey to Rome to receive the blessing of the Pope (the western Patriarch) and returned to Glasnevin in 550. Soon he visited St. Columba in Scotland and accompanied him on some of his missionary travels, serving as interpreter in his work among the Picts.

Kenneth founded monasteries in many places in Ireland and Scotland, with place names reflecting his influence. In Ossory (in County Laois today), King Colmann granted him land including a field which was called Aghaboe (meaning “the field of the ox”) where Kenneth built his principle monastery. It grew in importance in the following years and in the next century, St. Feargal was sent from here as a missionary to the city of Salzburg. The monastery was the bishop’s see until the 12th century.

Despite this energetic missionary activity, St. Kenneth periodically sought the isolated life of a hermit, living in quiet contemplation. As is typical of many hermit saints, he had an affinity for animals. The stories that are told of him (which may be in his father’s bardic tradition) include one that he expelled mice from his cell for chewing on his shoes and another that he stilled the birds from chattering on Sundays during the celebration of the Liturgy!

In the last years of his long life, St. Kenneth lived on an island, where he wrote a commentary on the Gospels known as the “Chain of Cainnech”. God called St. Kenneth to his eternal reward in his 84th year. We give thanks to God for the work of his faithful servant Kenneth and pray that we may follow his example in seeking to live holy lives through prayer and penance, to know the Scriptures, and to be zealous in our desire to bring others to knowledge of God.

Sources: *A Calendar of British Saints* (Orthodox Synaxarion), compiled by Fr. Benedict Haigh; *Irish Saints* by Peg Coghlan; *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, by David H. Farmer; *Saints of the British Isles* by Andrew Bond and Nicolas Mabin; online articles from Wikipedia



Visions of the Mother of God

From the earliest days of the Christian Church, men and women whose holy lives - or deaths as martyrs for the faith - have served as examples and inspiration for generations have been honored as saints. And from the earliest days of the Church, St. Mary has been recognized as the chief of all the saints. She is the intercessor for all mankind. We bring to her our most heartfelt concerns and ask for her prayers. Perhaps because of the special role that St. Mary has as our intercessor, there have been numerous occasions of visions and apparitions of our Lady throughout the world and through the centuries. Reports of these visions began as early as around the year 40, when she appeared to the Apostle James (the Greater) as he evangelized in Spain. This vision eventually led to the establishment

of the pilgrimage site of Compostella. Other places of pilgrimage have arisen following visions of our Lady: Guadalupe (Mexico, 1531), Lourdes (France, 1858), Fatima (Spain, 1917).

The Orthodox Church teaches that man is to seek communion with God and that God sometimes works in miraculous ways to bring man closer to him. Visions of our Lady and weeping or streaming icons are vehicles for getting our attention.



On the Western Rite calendar, we observe the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham on October 15, celebrating a vision of our Lady to a widow, Lady Richeldis de Faverches in the year 1061. (While this date is past the year 1054, which technically serves as the date for the “Great Schism,” the actions of the clergy in Constantinople were as yet unknown in Norfolk, England and were obviously being ignored by our Lady!) In the vision, St. Mary showed Richeldis the house in Nazareth where she had grown up and had received the visit of the Angel Gabriel, announcing her conception of the Son of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. She instructed Richeldis to build a similar house there in England to serve as a place where any who sought her could come to pray. So Lady Richeldis built a house for prayer near the town of Walsingham. She had a statue carved of our Lady as she appeared in the vision and set it up in the holy house. A spring with healing water was found there and soon, people began to make pilgrimages to ask for the intercessions of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

A church was built around the holy house and for 500 years, devout Christians traveled to this remote corner of the world to light candles and say prayers for loved ones and to drink of the healing water. But the divisions which had begun at the time of the “Great Schism” eventually led to more divisions, and the period of terrible iconoclasm which accompanied the English Reformation resulted in the destruction of the shrine and the burning of the statue (King Henry VIII had made 3 pilgrimages to Walsingham before he opened the floodgates which led to such destruction!)

The shrine lay in ruins until early in the 20th century, when an Anglican priest began the work of restoration. Walsingham has once again become a place of pilgrimage for Orthodox, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Christians. A small Orthodox chapel was established near the rebuilt holy house during the 1930's and there is an Orthodox Church in the town of Walsingham. (Our archdiocese has a parish dedicated to Our Lady of Walsingham in Mesquite, Texas, where Fr. Dan Keller is the pastor and where pilgrimages are held each year.) Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, the Mother of God hears the prayers of all who seek her intercessions.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>October 2012</h1>						
<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Solemn Mass at 9:30AM</i>	1 St. Remigius of Rheims, BC, c. 530; St. Bavo, C, 659	2 Holy Guardian Angels	3	4	5 St. Placid & his Companions, Mm, 6th C	6 St. Faith of Agen, VM, c. 303 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
7 Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Mark, PC, 336, Ss. Sergius & Bacchus, Mm, 303 <i>G</i>	8	9 Ss. Denys, BM, Rusticus, & Eleutherius, Mm, 3rd C.	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 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
14 Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Callistus, PM, c. 222 <i>G</i>	15 Our Lady of Walsingham	16 St. Gall, Ab., 646	17	18 St. Luke the Evangelist, 1st c.	19 St. Frideswide of Oxford, V, 735	20 St. Andrew of Crete, BC, 740 <i>OLW Mass at 10:00am W</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
21 Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Hilarion of Gaza, Ab., c. 371 <i>G</i>	22 Ss. Ursula & comp., Mm, 453	23	24 St. Raphael the Archangel	25 Ss. Crispianus & Daria, Mm, 283	26 St. Evaristus, PM, c. 197	27 Vigil of Ss. Simon & Jude; St. Frumentius of Ethiopia, BC, 4 th c. <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
28 Christ the King; comm. Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost <i>W</i>	29 Ss. Simon & Jude, Apostles, 1st c. (<i>transferred</i>)	30	31 Vigil of All Saints	1 All Saints Day <i>Mass at 7:30pm B</i>	2 All Souls Day	3 of the Octave of All Saints; St. Winifred, VM, 680; St. Silvia, Mother of St. Gregory, Ma, 592 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>

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

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