

# ✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

January, 2013 - Volume XVIII, Issue 1

---

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

---

## *From the Writings of Theologian Fr. Georges Florovsky*

*died 1979*

*Essay reprinted by St.  
Vladimir's Seminary*

*Inside:*

<i>St. Severinus.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Antiochian Theology. ....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Parish News.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Calendar. ....</i>	<i>7</i>

**T**hat we begin our reckoning of time with Christ's birth is a fact which has long been but a mere convention for many. Seldom does one recall and recognize the great event from which we count time. So do we betray our ignorance and insensitivity. In ancient days, time was computed from the Incarnation of God the word. It signifies that we live in a world which has been renewed and redeemed already, that even now we live in the realm of grace and already reckon the years of the new creature. Time itself has been illumined by the light which the darkness cannot consume. In a new and higher sense God is with us from that mysterious day forward, from that mysterious night in Bethlehem. *God was manifest in the flesh.* [I Tim. 3:16]. Since then we worship God who came down from heaven.

**I**n the fullness of time God sent into the world his Son born of a woman. The Son of God became the Son of the Virgin. Here is the assurance and the beginning of salvation, the guarantee and source of eternal life. This is the reason for both those on earth and those in heaven to rejoice - the mystery of Godmanhood, the glory of the divine Incarnation. The kingdom of God then began and was truly revealed in history itself; in the meekness and humility of a simple life. The star of the eternal covenant stopped and shone over the cavern in Bethlehem. The humiliation of the cavern testifies that the kingdom then revealed is not of this world.

**A**lthough it happened then, in the days of King Herod, in the city of Bethlehem, this "then" is, in the true sense of the word, an everlasting "now." It was truly a beginning, the beginning of something new - of the Gospel history: it was then the New Covenant was revealed. The prophecies came true.



The divine descent is not only divine condescension, but at the same time it is the revelation of glory. Then was human nature healed through the ineffable divine assumption, and was reintroduced into communion with everlasting life. The action of grace reentered the world where it had been stopped by human sin. *Christ is born and earth and heaven are united: today God came down to earth, and man ascended into heaven.* From now on human nature is inseparably united with the Godhead in the indivisible unity of the hypostasis [=Person] of the Incarnate Word. Everything became new.

Thus was accomplished the pre-eternal mystery and council of love divine. *He, who established the being of every creature, visible and invisible, by a sole act of will, before all ages and before the existence of the creaturely world, determined ineffably that He himself should truly become united with human nature in the true unity of his hypostasis [=Person], thus making man god through union with him.* So spoke St. Maximus the Confessor about the pre-eternal council of God. God creates the world and reveals himself in order to become a man in this world. Man is created in order that God may become man and it is by this union that man is deified. Or as St. Irenaeus of Lyons expressed it: *the Son of God became the Son of man in order that man would become the Son of God.* This purpose was realized in the mystery of Christ's birth, when the foundation of the Church was already prefigured.

But the road from Bethlehem to Zion is long, and is leading us through Gethsemane and Golgotha. Already in Bethlehem the newborn Godchild is presented with funeral offerings by the Wise Men from the East. *Today God leads the wise Men to worship through the star, prefiguring His three-day burial in gold, frankincense, and myrrh.* The very doors of the Bethlehem cavern are nearly stained with the innocent blood of the children who were killed for Christ's sake. The way of the Cross is mysteriously foreshown. The Lord is born for this very hour of the Cross. *For this cause came I unto this hour.* [John 12:27] The Lord is born for death and crucifixion: *He had a body that he might take death upon Himself.* So wrote St. Athanasius the Great. Through the voluntary passion and death is the Christmas joy transfigured into Resurrection joy. This is the second and higher victory of life. In the very birth of Christ the order of nature is potentially overcome. It is not so much that the natural birth is sanctified as that the higher is prefigured and revealed. *The tongue cannot tell the mystery of Thy birth.*

## *St. Severinus of Austria, Abbot* *Feast Day ~ January 8*

Many disasters have occurred in the world in recent years, both natural ones: earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, tsunamis; and man-made ones: wars, uprisings which displace families, shootings of innocent victims by mentally disturbed people. After each of these disasters, there is always a great outpouring of sympathy for the victims and many good people come forward to help in whatever way is needed. Fire fighters and rescue workers provide help in escaping danger, Red Cross and other agency workers provide food and shelter, nurses and doctors provide medical care, and ordinary people give money and time to help those in need. Those who help do so selflessly and often anonymously.

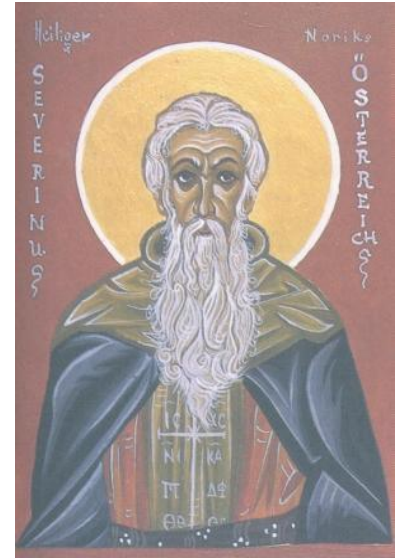
In Christianity's two-thousand years of history, many of the saints of God have performed this kind of service in times of disaster when the need was great. St. Severinus of Austria was such a hero.

Almost nothing is known of Severinus in the first 40 years of his life. He is thought to have been born around 410, perhaps in Carthage in North Africa. There is evidence that he knew St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, and that he had knowledge of the ascetic practices of St. Anthony the Great, the father of monasticism.

The monk Severinus apparently appeared suddenly and anonymously in what is now Austria around the year 453. He settled as a hermit near the city of Vienna, giving no account of his background, but his name and manner indicated the status of an educated Roman aristocrat.

Severinus came with the intent of providing aid to those who had been devastated by the attacks of Attila and his army. That fierce leader of the Hun Empire had moved through Europe, plundering everything in his path. His soldiers were feared throughout the land because of their ruthless violence. When Attila died in 453 (the year that St. Severinus arrived in Austria), his leaderless army still proved to be a threat to peace. Those who had survived the attacks were left without food and shelter, demoralized and without hope for the future. They needed a hero and St. Severinus was God's answer to that need.

As he helped to ransom captives and find food for those who were starving, the monk also preached about the love of Christ.



His practice of fasting and spending much time in prayer was one which these people who had lost everything admired. His humility brought respect and admiration. Many people listened to his teaching and believed.



Among those who came to respect St. Severinus was the pagan Gothic chieftain, Odoacer. A large man, he came to visit the monk in his cell but balked at the very low entrance. When St. Severinus told him to stoop low, Odoacer complied and was able to enter and seek his counsel.

As he worked among the people along the Danube River, Severinus founded monasteries which attracted others who desired the ascetic life. As with many other saints, Severinus was torn between his desire for solitude and the great need he saw around him which required an active life among the people. Severinus obediently answered God's call.

When the danger of violent attacks finally appeared to be over, St. Severinus was able to retire to his cell in peace. The monks around him heard him singing Psalm 150 as he lay dying (around the year 476): "Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord."

Six years later, violence threatened again and the monks fled to Italy with his relics, which were eventually placed in a Benedictine Monastery near Naples, renamed the Abbey of San Severino in his honor.

May St. Severinus intercede for those who labor today as rescue workers and may we, like him, obey the call of God to do whatever we can to help in times of disaster. Holy Severinus, pray for us.

## *Antiochian Theology*

*by His Beatitude, John X, Patriarch of Antioch*

Antioch, a bride beholding the face of Christ: She recognized Him as her Savior and Redeemer, as the One who loved his creation and condescended to save it, and to bring it back to its splendor. So she loved Him and took Him as her Bridegroom.

Antioch admitted that the Lord Jesus Christ is the *Mystery*, which was kept secret since the world began [Romans 16:25],

that in the fullness of time he revealed himself to save all, and that *His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness...whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature* [2 Peter 1:3-4]. For this, she joyfully chanted: *Today is disclosed the mystery before the ages; and the Son of God shall become the Son of Man, that by His adoption of the lowest He may grant me the highest. Of old, Adam failed to become a god as he desired, so God became man so that Adam might become a god.* [Doxastikon of Ainos, by Theophanis, Feast of the Annunciation]

Antioch realized that she is the life-giving Body of Christ embracing all the faithful through the Holy Spirit working in her, and that by the Divine Word and the Holy Mysteries she transforms the faithful into true children of God. He brings them into himself and into His Body, the Church, so that they grow in grace and stature to be perfected *unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, a glorious church, not having spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing.* [Ephesians 4:13, 5:27]

Antioch acknowledged that her Master came *to open the way for Us to Heaven* [Hermos of the First Ode in the Christmas Canon by John the Hermit]. She knew that the Way is Christ Himself: *I am the Way and the Truth and the Life* [John 14:6]. No one may walk this Way unless he converts from slavery or enmity to friendship with god. Upon this conversion, one seeks the face of the Beloved. Thus the Word of God becomes not human gossip, but Christ Himself, lifting one up, seizing one to Paradise to hear unspeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter. [See 2 Cor. 12:2-6]

Antioch understood that the friendship of man with God shall be completed when man, by God's grace, participates in the mystery of the Cross, in the death and the Resurrection of Christ. For the Christian, to take up the Cross is not simply to carry the problems and difficulties of this life, but to die to the old things and become a new man. The Cross is a voluntary and ceaseless struggle to liberate us from the slavery of sin by keeping the commandments and obeying the will of God until death: *I say unto you, except a corn of what fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it dies, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life in the world shall keep it unto life eternal.* [John 12:24-25] This means that the Cross is the purged, illuminated and sanctified power of God.

Therefore, Theology, as understood by Antioch, is not a philosophical discourse or some theoretical and mental dialectic. It is rather a "Theology of incarnation," touching upon all aspects of human life and being, stirring it towards its divine beauty. For this reason, Antioch enlisted theology on the list of practical sciences



*Patriarch JOHN X  
of Antioch*

(such as physics and chemistry). It was not ranked with the theoretical sciences, because theology is a divine science based on the knowledge of God: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life; For the life was manifest, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*[I John 1:1-4]

*This is an excerpt from an address given at the Clergy Symposium of the Archdiocese, 2006*

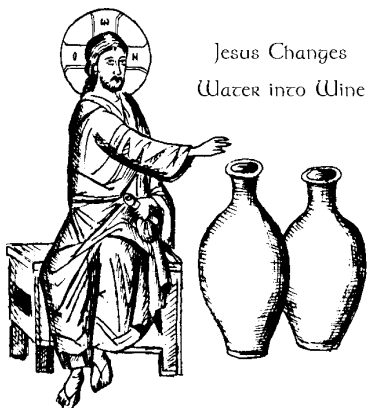
## Parish News

Thank you to all who made our Christmas services so beautiful: acolytes, choir singers, those who decorated, those who cooked, and all who came to worship the newborn Babe, our Savior Jesus Christ.

The new calendar year begins with the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord. We will have Matins at 9:30 and Mass at 10:00am on January 1, followed by a pot-luck brunch. The Feast of the Epiphany falls on Sunday this year, so we will bless water at Vespers on Saturday, January 5, at 6:00pm. This water will be used throughout the season of Epiphany for the blessing of houses. Please speak to Fr. Nicholas or Fr. Raphael to schedule your house blessing.

Our annual Parish Meeting, in which we elect new members of the Parish Council and hear reports on various aspects of parish life, will be on Sunday, January 20. Please plan to bring food to share and to stay for this important gathering of our church family.

We will be blessed to receive Bishop JOHN (Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Worcester and New England) on the weekend of January 26-27. This will be his first visitation to St. Gregory's since his appointment by the Metropolitan as the episcopal overseer for the Western Rite parishes. He will be with us for Vespers on Saturday and Matins and Liturgy on Sunday and will have many opportunities to get to know all of us.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2013</h1>						
<p><i>Sunday Services:</i> <i>Matins at 9AM,</i> <i>Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i></p>		<p><b>1</b> The Circumcision of Our Lord and Octave of the Nativity</p> <p><i>Mass at 10am</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>W</i></p>	<p><b>2</b> Octave Day of St. Stephen; St. Fulgentius, BC, 533</p>	<p><b>3</b> Octave Day of St. John, Ap. Ev.; St. Genevieve, V, 512</p>	<p><b>4</b> Octave Day of the Holy Innocents, Mm; St. Titus, BC, c. 96</p>	<p><b>5</b> Vigil of the Epiphany; St. Telesphorus, PM, 136</p> <p><i>Vespers at 6pm</i></p>
<p><b>6</b> The Epiphany of Our Lord</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>W</i></p>	<p><b>7</b> of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Cedd, BC, 664</p>	<p><b>8</b> of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Lucius &amp; comp., Mm, c. 290; St. Severinus, Ab, 482</p>	<p><b>9</b> of the Octave of Epiphany</p>	<p><b>10</b> of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Paul the First Hermit, C., c. 345</p>	<p><b>11</b> of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Hyginus, PM, c. 142; St. Theodosius, Ab, c. 529</p>	<p><b>12</b> of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Benedict Biscop, Ab, 690</p> <p><i>Vespers at 6pm</i></p>
<p><b>13</b> Octave Day of Epiphany; St. Kentigern, BC, 603</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>W</i></p>	<p><b>14</b> St. Hilary, BCD, 367; St. Felix of Nola, PrM, 255; St. Nina, V, 335</p>	<p><b>15</b> St. Maurus, Ab, 584</p>	<p><b>16</b> St. Marcellus, PM, 309, St. Honoratus, BC, 429</p>	<p><b>17</b> St. Anthony, Ab, 356</p>	<p><b>18</b> St. Prisca, VM, c. 270</p>	<p><b>19</b> St. Mark of Ephesus, BC, 1445; St. Marius &amp; comp. Mm, 270</p> <p><i>Vespers at 6pm</i></p>
<p><b>20</b> Second Sunday after Epiphany; Ss. Fabian, BM &amp; Sebastian, M, 3rd c.</p> <p><i>Annual Parish Meeting</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>W</i></p>	<p><b>21</b> St. Agnes, VM, 304</p>	<p><b>22</b> St. Vincent, M, 304; St. Anastasius, M, 628</p>	<p><b>23</b> St. Emerentiana VM, c. 304; St. John the Almoner, BC, c. 619</p>	<p><b>24</b> St. Timothy, BM, 97</p>	<p><b>25</b> Conversion of St. Paul</p>	<p><b>26</b> St. Polycarp, BM, 156</p> <p><i>Vespers at 6pm</i></p>
<p><b>27</b> Third Sunday after Epiphany; St. John Chrysostom, BCD, 407</p> <p><i>Bp. John's visit</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>G</i></p>	<p><b>28</b> The Second Feast of St. Agnes, VM</p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>30</b> St. Martina, VM, 228; St. Bathildes, QMa, 680</p>	<p><b>31</b></p>		

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.