

# ✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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## *From a homily of St. Gregory Palamas*

*died 1359AD  
Feast Day ~  
14 November*

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**W**hen the Lord spoke openly beforehand of his passion and death on the Cross, Peter could not bear to hear. Knowing the Lord's power, he entreated Him, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee* [Matt. 16:22]. The Lord reprimanded him because in this respect his thinking was human not divine. *And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his soul shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his soul for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it* [Mark 8:34-35; Luke 9:23; Matt. 16:24-25].

**H**e also invited the people together with his disciples, and then announced and proclaimed these great and marvelous thoughts which are obviously from God not from men. This was to make it clear that such things were not demanded solely of his chosen disciples, but of everyone who believes in Him. To follow Christ means to live according to His Gospel and to give proof of every virtue and true piety. The fact that anyone wishing to follow Him must deny himself and take up his cross means he must not spare himself when the moment comes, but be ready to die a dishonorable death for the sake of virtue and the truth of holy doctrines.

**T**hough it be a great and marvelous thing for someone to deny himself and surrender himself to extreme dishonor and death, it is not contrary to reason. When earthly kings go to war, they do not let people follow them who are not prepared to die for them. So it is not surprising that the King of heaven, who came to live on earth according to His promise, should seek such people as His followers in His attack upon the common enemy of the human race. Earthly kings can neither revive those killed in war, nor reward them

fittingly for bearing the brunt of the battle. What could someone who is no longer alive receive from them? But in the Lord there is hope even for those who have died, if their death was in defense of what is sacred. To His followers who were daring in battle the Lord gives the reward of eternal life.



Whereas earthly kings require those who follow them to be prepared to die for them, the Lord gave himself over to death for our sake and commands us to be ready to die not for His sake, but for ours. To make it clear that it is for our own sake, he adds, *For whosoever will save his soul shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his soul for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it* [Mark 8:35].

What does this mean, that anyone who wants to save it shall lose it, and anyone who loses it shall save it? Man is twofold, consisting of our outward man, the body, and our inward man, the soul. When our outward man gives himself over to death, he loses his soul, being separated from it. But when someone loses his soul for Christ and the Gospel, he clearly saves and gains it, because he has procured for it eternal life in heaven. In the resurrection he will recover it, and by means of it he will become, even in his body I say, just as heavenly and eternal as it is. Anyone, by contrast, who clings to life is not prepared to lose his soul in this way, because he loves this fleeting age and everything to do with it. He will inflict loss on his soul, depriving it of true life, and he will lose it, surrendering it along with himself, alas, to eternal punishment. The all-merciful Lord mourned for such people and indicated how great a disaster was theirs by saying, *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* [Mark 8:36-37]. For neither his glory nor any of the other deceptive honors and delights of this present age, chosen by him in preference to a death which brings salvation, will go down with him. How could any of these things be given in exchange for a human soul, which is worth more than the whole world?

Even if a man could gain the whole world, brethren, it would be of no benefit to him because he would have lost his own soul. In reality, each person can only acquire an infinitely small share of this world. What a disaster, then, if someone loses his soul in his efforts to acquire this tiny share, rather than choosing to take up the sign and word of the Cross and to follow the giver of life.

*Excerpt reprinted from the translation of the homilies of St. Gregory Palamas by Christopher Veniamin, published by Mount Thabor Publishing, 2009.*

# St. Maurice

## Feast Day ~ September 22

**W**e are once again living in dangerous times. In so many parts of this world, persecution - and even death - are the fate of those who call themselves Christians. Our Lord warned us of these times: *..you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved [ Matt. 10:22]; ...they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and Kings for my sake... [Mark13:9]; ..the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. John 16:2]*

**I**n the early centuries of Christianity, when persecution of the followers of Christ was carried out by Emperors, governors and local officials, being in a position of service to the Empire did not exempt a Christian from experiencing persecution. In fact, Christians were more vulnerable if they served in some official capacity and members of the army were in the front lines of this battle. A revered saint of the Church who shows us courage in the face of death is St. Maurice, who with his companion soldiers, received the crown of martyrdom around 286-7.

**M**aurice was born in 250 in the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes. As soon as he came of age, he joined the Roman army, beginning a career path as common in that time and place as it is now. Through loyal and valiant service, Maurice received promotions in rank until he became the leader of the Theban Legion, a company of more than 6,000 soldiers.

**R**aised in the land which had received the Christian faith from St. Mark, Maurice was a Christian and it happened that most of his fellow soldiers were also Christians. Their faith had sustained them in their defense of the Empire and had not been a source of trouble until the Legion was called up by Emperor Maximian to help put down a revolt in Gaul. When the troops rested on their march across the Alps, the Emperor announced that the soldiers would all join in a formal sacrifice to the Roman gods in anticipation of their success. This, along with the knowledge that Gallican Christians would be among those who suffered in this military operation, led the Theban Legion to retreat and encamp at an area somewhat away from that of the other companies of soldiers.

**B**ut Maximian was suspicious of this action and ordered the soldiers to return to the camp. Several times, they refused, through their leader, Maurice, and then they received the shocking



news: if the Legion did not obey the Emperor's order, it would be decimated - every tenth man would be executed. This extreme punishment was reserved for extreme cases such as that of treason. But in Maximian's mind, these soldiers were traitors for having forsaken the Roman gods in favor of allegiance to Christ. The soldiers' courage did not fail them. They declared themselves as Christians, held fast and encouraged each other as the order for decimation was carried out and repeated several times until no one was left standing. The place where this martyrdom occurred was called Agaunum, but is now called St. Maruice-en-Valais in honor of the courageous saint, and an abbey was built on the site in 515.

In the centuries following, knowledge of the martyrdom of St. Maurice and his companions spread around the world, largely through a letter of Bishop Eucherius of Lyons (c 434-450) so that veneration of this saint became widespread. St. Maurice became the patron saint of the Holy Roman Emperors, and he is particularly venerated in the Egyptian Coptic Church.

May St. Maurice plead in heaven for the safety of Egyptian Christians at this time and may he intercede for all in military service. Holy Maurice, pray for us.

Sources: Rev. Alban Butler, *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Saints*; on-line articles from Wikipedia and OrthodoxWiki

## Parish News



There are three major holy days in this month which we celebrate in the Orthodox Western Rite: the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (September 8), the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14), and the feast of St. Michael and All Angels (September 29). Since the first and last of these holy days fall on Sundays this year, we will set aside those Sundays after Pentecost in order to celebrate the feast days.

On Saturday, September 14, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, we will celebrate with Matins at 9:30AM and Mass at 10:00AM. Following this, all are invited to the home of Fr. Nicholas and Khourya Rebecca for our annual Parish Picnic. Their new home will be blessed at this time as well. (The blessing of a new home is in a slightly different form than the blessing of homes at Epiphany.)

# Saint Mary

*Reprinted from The Orthodox Study Bible*

*For behold, all generations will call me blessed [Luke 1:48]*

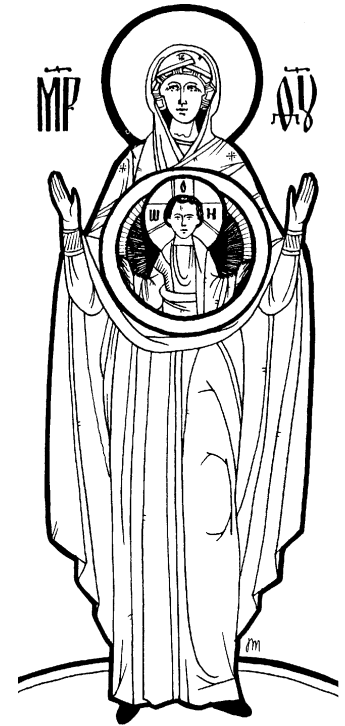
**F**or two thousand years the Church has preserved the memory of the virgin Mary as the prototype of all Christians - the model of what we are to become in Christ. Mary was truly pure and unconditionally obedient to God. The tradition of the Church holds that Mary remained a virgin all her life. While lifelong celibacy is not a model for all Christians to follow, Mary's spiritual purity, her wholehearted devotion to God, is certainly to be emulated.

**M**ary is also our model in that she was the first person to receive Jesus Christ. As Mary bore Christ in her womb physically, all Christians now have the privilege of bearing God within them spiritually. By God's grace and mercy we are purified and empowered to become like Him.

**T**he honor we give to Mary also signifies our view of who Jesus is. From early times the Church has called her Mother of God, a title which implies that her Son is both fully man and fully God. As His mother, Mary was the source of Jesus' human nature; yet, the One she bore in her womb was also the eternal God.

**T**herefore, because of her character and especially because of her role in God's plan of salvation, Christians appropriately honor Mary as the first among the saints. The archangel Gabriel initiated this honor in his address to her: "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" [Luke 1:28] This salutation clearly indicates that God Himself had chosen to honor Mary. Her favored status was confirmed when she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was then six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Elizabeth greeted Mary with these words: "Blessed you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" And Mary herself, by the inspiration of the Holy spirit, predicted the honor that would be paid her throughout history: "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed" [Luke 1:48]

**I**n obedience to God's clear intention, therefore, the Orthodox Church honors Mary in icons, hymns, and special feast days. We entreat her, as the human being who was most intimate with Christ on earth, to intercede with her Son on our behalf. We ask her, as the first believer and the mother of the Church, for guidance and



protection. We venerate her - but we do not worship her, for worship belongs to God alone.

## *St. Michael the Archangel*



The feast of St. Michael the Archangel, which we celebrate on September 29, was established at the time of the dedication of a church in his honor in Rome on this day in the year 610. That dedication was made in honor of a vision of St. Michael which had occurred on this day in the fifth century on Mt. Gargano in Italy. Very quickly, the celebration of the feast began to spread throughout the West. Similar visions and dedications of churches to St. Michael occurred in the East. This festival is usually broadened to include a celebration of the existence of all angels who are the ministers and messengers of God. Mother Alexandra, in her book, *The Holy Angels*, says that

Angels and archangels, although spirit, are not supernatural. God alone is supernatural, for he alone is uncreated. Like us, the holy angels are created, natural beings, as much a part of our world as we ourselves. *Yes, in him all created things took their being, heavenly and earthly, visible and invisible...* [Col. 1:16]

Angels are of a superiority all but incomprehensible to us, but they are a part of our lives: by God's boundless mercy, they are destined, in the great moments of history, to be the heralds of the Most High to man below; they are, as well, our guides, guardians, mentors, protectors, and comforters from birth to the grave...

The holy angels stand in the presence of God beholding the face of the Lord... Their being is sustained by God's goodness, and they participate in his might, wisdom, and love. They are uplifted by their perpetual praise and thanksgiving. Uplifted Godwards, from their beginning it has been the angels' greatest joy to choose freely for God and to give him their undaunted flow of life in unending love and worship.

As we celebrate his festival, may we join with St. Michael the Archangel and all the angels in offering our praise to God: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>September 2013</h1>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>
<b>1</b> Tenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Giles, Ab, 708; Twelve Holy Brothers, Mm, c. 303 <i>G</i>	<b>2</b> St. Stephen of Hungary, KC, 1038  (Labor Day)	<b>3</b> Consecration of St. Gregory the Great, 590	<b>4</b> St. Gorazde of Prague, BM, 1942	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> St. Cloud, C, 560; St. Sergius I, PC, 701  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>8</b> Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost  <i>W</i>	<b>9</b> St. Gorgonius, M, 304	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Ss. Protus & Hyacinth, Mm, c. 257; St. Paphnutius, BC, 4th C	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Exaltation of the Holy Cross  <i>Mass at 10am</i>  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> <i>R</i>
<b>15</b> Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Nicomedes, M, 4th c.  <i>G</i>	<b>16</b> Ss. Cornelius, PM, 254 & Cyprian, BM 258; St. Ninian, BC, 5 <sup>th</sup> c.	<b>17</b> St. Lambert, BM, 705	<b>18</b> Ember Wednesday	<b>19</b> St. Theodore of Canterbury, BC, 690; Ss. Januarius & comp., Mm	<b>20</b> Ember Friday; Ss. Eustace & comp., Mm, c. 118	<b>21</b> St. Matthew, Evangelist & Apostle, 1st c.; Ember Saturday  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>22</b> Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Maurice & Comp., Mm, 3rd c.; St. Lioba, V, 781  <i>G</i>	<b>23</b> St. Thecla of Iconium, VM, 1st c.; St. Linus, PM, c. 80	<b>24</b> Conception St. John Baptist; SS. Juvenaly, 1796 & Peter the Aleut, MM	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Ss. Cyprian, BM & Justina, VM, c. 303	<b>27</b> Ss. Cosmas & Damian, Mm, c. 303	<b>28</b> St. Wenceslas, M, 938  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>29</b> Dedication of St. Michael the Archangel; Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost  <i>W</i>	<b>30</b> St. Jerome PrCD, 420; St. Gregory the Illuminator, BC, c. 323	<b>1</b> St. Remigius of Rheims, BC, c. 530; St. Bavo, C, 659	<b>2</b> Holy Guardian Angels	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> St. Placid & his Companions, Mm, 6th C  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>

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

*Coffee Hour follows Sunday Mass.*