

✠ 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 Peter Chrysologos

*died c. 450AD
Feast Day ~
2 December*

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Today the blessed Evangelist as he tells us of the restoration to life through Christ of the only son of a widow who, lying clothed in funeral bands upon the bier of death, and with a multitude following, was on his way to the grave, touches our hearts, moves our souls, and fills our ears with fear and wonder. But let the unbelieving wonder, the Jews be astonished, and let the world fear. But as for us, why should we wonder: we who believe that the dead of every age shall at the voice of Christ rise again from their graves?

The dead, says Isaias, shall rise, and they that are in the tombs shall rise again [Is. 26:19]. And the words of the Lord are: *The hour will come when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live* [John 5:25]. To this the Apostle adds: *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise again incorruptible* [I Cor. 14:52].

What is this trumpet, which declares war against hell, rolls back the stone from the tomb, thunders forth life to the dead, and gives to all as they rise from their graves victory amid light everlasting? What is it? It is that to which the Lord referred above: *The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God*. Not this the trumpet that from a horn of wood or brass gives forth a mournful bellow, calling to war, but the Voice that comes from the heart of the Father, from the mouth of the Son, the call to life to those that are in heaven and in hell.

And, at the last trumpet. The trumpet that in the beginning called the world from nothing, the same on the last day shall recall the world from death; and that which in the beginning raised man from the slime, the same at the end shall recall him from the dust. Brethren, we believe this: that



the trumpet of the divine voice separated light from darkness, brought together this globe, purified the elements, divided the world, raised the firmament on high, made the earth appear, placed a boundary to the sea, submerged the deeps, set all things in order and harmony, and commanded their continuing obedience. And that this world might not be a horrid emptiness, He furnished it with inhabitants and established each in their various places. In the heavens He placed His angels, who live by the spirit only; on earth the varying kinds of living beings. He set winged creatures to fly in the air, and in the waters creatures both great and small, so that a multitude might dwell there. And in a wondrous way he so united the whole mass of these separate elements that there should be no confusion; yet so that the separateness of each thing might not sunder this unity.

Hence is it that the sequence of day and night is so ordered that labor follows rest and rest comes after labor. Hence also the sun and moon each in turn encompasses the limits of the world, so that the sun with its recurring light may give a greater brightness to the day and the moon with its pale light may not leave the night in total darkness. Hence too the stars in their courses vary in their hour of rising, to mark the time by night and guide the traveler. Hence the seasons that come and go, and begin again to be as they are about to end. Hence seeds put forth, bud, mature, grow old, fade, die and are buried again in the life-giving furrow, and dissolving through corruption, from their salutary death return to life again; from corruption perpetually recurring, their natures are again renewed.

And if brethren, the Voice of God, the trumpet of Christ, through the days, the months, the seasons, the years, calls and recalls, leads forth and leads back, bids to be and bids not to be, gives to death and restores to life, why shall He not do once in us that which he does without ceasing in all other things?...

If at the earthly tears of one widow Christ was so moved that He came to meet her on the way, to dry the tears of grief falling from her eyes, to strike again at death, to bring back a man, to raise a body, to bring back life, to change weeping into joy and change a sorrowful burial into a festival of birth, to give back living to his mother one already lying upon the bier of death, what will he not do, now glowing in His strength, in answer to the unceasing prayer of his Church, to the sweat of blood of His Spouse: For the Church pours forth her tears in unceasing supplication, and through her martyrs a sweat of blood, that Christ meeting her shall restore her only son, the Christian people, whom so many generations bear to death, from the bier of mortality to the everlasting joy of the Heavenly Mother.

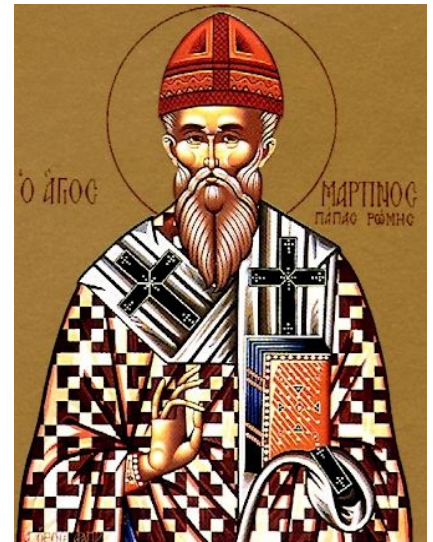
St. Martin I, Pope and Confessor *Feast Day ~ November 12*

Many of the saints of the Church have been martyrs for the faith. They have sacrificed their lives rather than deny Christ or compromise the teachings of the Church which have been revealed by God. Most of these saints became martyrs during Christianity's early years when the prevailing culture was threatened by the radical nature of Christian belief and actions and rulers ordered that those of this new faith be persecuted and executed. Christian "failure" in the eyes of the world became triumph for the faith and Christianity rapidly spread throughout the world.

We would not expect that Christian saints had become martyrs through the actions of other Christians but this is exactly what happened in the 7th century to a Patriarch of Rome, St. Martin I. Umbrian by birth, Martin devoted his life to service in the Church. He was respected for his learning and his virtuous living. For some time, he served as the Papal legate to Constantinople where deviations from the teachings of the Church were being promoted by some in positions of authority.

Questions regarding the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ had been discussed, debated, and decided by Ecumenical Councils beginning with the first meeting in Nicaea in 325 when it was declared that Christ was both human and divine. The Council of Chalcedon (451) which determined that Christ had two natures, divine and human, resulted in a schism between the majority of the Church and those who believed that Christ had only one nature, both human and divine (now called the "Oriental" Orthodox churches: Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian and Syrian Jacobite). Further debates through the next several centuries attempted to define how Christ's will (or wills) and energy (or energies) fit with his two natures in one person.

Debates about Christ and heresies which deviated from the decisions of the Church continued for several centuries, bringing dissension and unrest throughout the Empire. Emperor Heraclius (Emperor from 610-641) was battling conflicts on all sides of the Empire. These religious disputes resulted in unrest in Syria, Egypt, Armenia, in addition to the threats from outside the Empire that he faced. He and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius, attempted to come up with a compromise that all could accept. They issued a proclamation, called the *Echthesis*, in 638 which was *monothelite*, proclaiming Christ's one will, but with vague wording which they hoped would be acceptable by all sides.



St. Martin of Rome

They were successful in convincing many that Christ had one will, but there was always an objection from someone such as the Palestinian monk Sophronius, who later became Patriarch of Jerusalem.



St. Maximus the Confessor

Constans II, Heraclius’ grandson, became Emperor after his grandfather’s death in 641. He was 17 years old and not at all interested in what he considered to be “nit-picking” arguments over the natures and wills and energies of Jesus Christ. All he wanted was for the Empire to be unified and at peace. So he issued an edict, the *Type of Constans*, which forbade any discussion of these issues by anyone. Of course, this only made matters worse.

Pope Theodore I of Rome called for a council to respond to this edict but he died before it could be convened. Martin became his successor in July of 649 and he immediately summoned the Lateran Council. 105 bishops from Italy, Sardinia, Sicily and Africa attended and roundly condemned both the *Echthisis* and the *Type of Constans* as heretical. As a result, Emperor Constans (with the support of Paul, the successor to Sergius as Patriarch of Constantinople) ordered his exarch in Ravenna to arrest the pope and bring him to Constantinople.

By the providence of God, there were many delays in accomplishing this arrest. The first general who was sent to arrest the Pope sent one of his soldiers into the church to kill Martin rather than arrest him and that soldier was struck blind as he entered the church. Then the Saracens attacked Sicily and the general was called to war where he died. But in June of 653, Pope Martin was arrested, along with Maximus the Confessor, who was also an outspoken critic of the heresy.

In September, the pope arrived in Constantinople, where he was accused of treason and thrown into prison, fed very little, and suffered many hardships and much illness. Pope Martin wrote letters during this time which reveal how terrible his treatment was. He wrote that any provisions which were sent to him were confiscated by the guards, leaving him with only scraps of unsavory food to eat. In one letter, he said that “It is now 47 days since I have been permitted to wash myself in either cold or warm water.” After two years, he was exiled to Cherson (in modern-day Ukraine) where he died from his ill treatment. It is said that, when the heretical Patriarch Paul was on his deathbed, he confessed his great sin against Pope Martin and begged for forgiveness.

Just as the early martyrs of the Church gave their lives in defense of Jesus Christ, so St. Martin sacrificed his life rather than compromise the teachings of the Church regarding the person of Christ. We pray that the Church’s hierarchs will never again be

willing to compromise the faith and persecute others for the sake of political “unity” and “peace”. And we ask for the prayers of St. Martin that we may be steadfast in our defense of the faith. Holy Martin, pray for us.

Sources: *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Saints*, Rev. Alban Butler; online Wikipedia article; *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, David H. Farmer; *Prologue From Ochrid*, St. Nikolai Velimirovic.

Remembering and Honoring the Departed

Since the Resurrection, when our Lord conquered death and gave the promise of eternal life to those who follow Him, the Church has been teaching the truth concerning death. We know that the end to this earthly life is not final and that we will “fall asleep in the Lord” to await the final day of judgement and, as we say in the Creed, the resurrection of the body - our bodies.

Knowledge of this resurrection of the body has determined how we Christians treat our bodies while we live and the bodies of our loved ones when they die. In *Bodily Resurrection*, a pamphlet written by the Sisters of the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration (published by Conciliar Press), the teaching of the Church is explained:

The resurrection of the body, and its subsequent deification, is not an afterthought, the body being dragged along by a superior soul. The human person is created in the image and likeness of God. When we are baptized, it is not only the soul which becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit, but also the body. In chrismation, the body receives on itself the “seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.” When time after time throughout our lives we receive Holy Communion, we take the real Body and Blood of Christ into our bodies. In the sacrament of Holy Unction, it is our bodies which are anointed with the holy, healing oil.

How we bury the bodies of the dead and how we commemorate in liturgical services the passing of one from this life to the next is of utmost importance. “The Orthodox Church has traditionally rejected cremation because it is diametrically opposed to the expectation of the resurrection of the dead in Christ” (*Bodily Resurrection*, pg. 8). Rather, we are to honor our departed loved ones with prayers and psalms and hymns. “The Church has unequivocally taught since Christ’s crucifixion that the proper way to treat the dead is a reverent burying of the body in the ground, in the context of a proper Church funeral and prayers for those who have fallen asleep in the Lord.” (*Ibid.*, pg. 26)



While Christians grieve the death of their most loved family members and friends, our grief is to be tempered by our knowledge that this person will rise again at the last day. *Bodily Resurrection* tells of St. John Chrysostom's guidance:

St. John Chrysostom counsels us to give thanks to God no matter who dies: if it was your husband, then God Himself will become your protector. If it was your wife, perhaps God is calling you to continence, to a nobler field of conflict. Perhaps your child died - consider how many never received children at all. It may be that God foreknew that great trials awaited the child, and wished to spare both it and yourself the heartbreak. Even if our loved ones died with sins upon them, we are taught not to have excessive grief and tears, but rather we are to help them by prayers and almsgiving.

We are told that, in some way, our prayers for those who have died continue to help them as they await the resurrection of the body. For that reason, we mention the names of the recently departed in every Liturgy and the Church provides times in the liturgical year when we offer prayers for all who have died. In the Western Rite, All Saints Day (November 1) is the day we celebrate the triumph of all whom the Church designates as saints and on All Souls Day (November 2), we pray for the repose of our departed loved ones. (In the Eastern Rite, the souls of loved ones are commemorated on several Saturdays and the saints on the Sunday following Pentecost).

As we strive to lead holy lives, may we pray for a holy death to await the resurrection at the last day.

Parish News



On Saturday, November 2, All Souls Day, we will celebrate a Requiem Mass at 10:00 am (with Lauds of the Departed at 9:30). Please give Fr. Nicholas the names of those you would like to have remembered at the altar.

The Feast of All Saints will be observed on the Sunday within the octave, November 3. As is our custom, you are invited to talk about the life of a favorite saint (and to come in costume) at Coffee Hour.

Weekly Bible Study on St. Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians continues at the Alford home (9415 Wire Ave., Silver Spring, MD). These are held on Wednesday or Thursday evenings at 7:30pm. Please speak with Fr. Nicholas if you wish to attend. All are invited to join at any time.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2013</h1>						
<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>					1 All Saints Day	2 All Souls Day <i>Mass at 10am</i> B <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
3 Sunday in the Octave of All Saints; 19th Sunday after Pentecost; St. Silvia, Mother of St. Gregory, Ma, 592 W	4 of the Octave of All Saints; Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm, c. 304	5 of the Octave of All Saints; St. Elizabeth, Ma, 1st C.	6 of the Octave of All Saints; St. Leonard of Noblac, Ab, c. 559	7 of the Octave of All Saints; St. Wilibrord of Echternach, BC, 739	8 Patriarchs & Prophets of the Old Law; Octave Day of All Saints; Four Crowned Martyrs, c. 303	9 Dedication of the Basilica of the Holy Savior in Rome, 324; St. Benignus, BC, c. 468 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
10 20th Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Tryphon, Respicius & Nympha Mm, c. 250 G	11 St. Martin of Tours, BC, 397; St. Theodore the Studite, Ab, 826	12 St. Martin I, PC, 655	13 St. Britius of Tours, BC, 444	14 St. Gregory Palamas, BCD, 1359	15	16 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
17 21 st Sunday after Pentecost; St. Gregory the Wonder-worker BC, c. 270; St. Gregory of Tours, BC, 594 G	18 Dedication of Basilica of Ss. Peter & Paul in Rome 4 th c.	19 St. Pontianus, PM, 235	20 St. Edmund, KM, 870 W	21 Presentation of the BVM; St. Gelasius, PC, 496; St. Columbanus, Ab, c. 615	22 St. Cecilia, VM, c. 230	23 St. Clement, PM, 96; St. Felicity of Rome, M, 165 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
24 22 nd & Last Sunday after Pentecost; St. Chrysogonus of Apuleia, M., c. 304 G	25 St. Katherine of Alexandria VM, c. 4th c.	26 St. Peter of Alexandria, BM, 311	27	28 (Thanksgiving Day)	29 Vigil of St. Andrew; St. Saturninus, M, 309	30 St. Andrew the Apostle, 1st c. <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>

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

Coffee Hour follows Sunday Mass. Sunday School during coffee hour.