

# ✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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

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## *From a Homily of Saint Gregory Palamas*

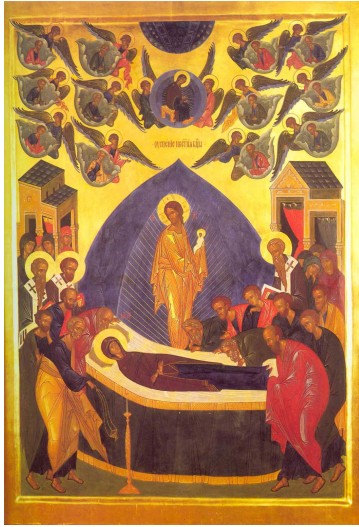
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Feast Day ~ November  
14*

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Today she has moved from earth to heaven, and now has heaven too as a fitting dwelling-place, a palace meet for her. She has stood on the right hand of the King of all, clothed in vesture wrought with gold, and arrayed in diverse colors, as the psalmist and prophet says of her [Ps. 45:9]; and you should take this garment interwoven with gold to mean her divinely radiant body, adorned with every type of virtue. For at present she is the only one who has a place in heaven with her divinely glorified body in the company of her Son. Earth, the grave and death could not ultimately detain her life-giving body, which has held God and been a more beloved habitation for Him than heaven and the heaven of heavens. For if a soul which has the grace of God dwelling within it goes up to heaven when released from this world, as we believe and is evident on many accounts, how can that body which not only received within it the pre-eternal, only-begotten Son of God, the ever-flowing fount of grace, but was also plainly seen to bear Him, fail to be taken up from earth to heaven?

It was right, therefore, that the body which brought forth the Son should be glorified with Him in divine glory, and that the ark of Christ's holiness should arise with him who rose on the third day, as the prophet sang [Ps. 132:8]. The linen cloths and winding sheets left behind in the tomb, which were all that those who came to look for her found there, proved to the disciples that she too had risen from the dead, just as was earlier the case with her Son and Lord [see Luke 24:12, John 20:5-7] It was not, however, necessary for her, as it was for her Son and God, to stay for a while longer on earth, so she was taken up directly from the grave to the heavenly realm, whence she sends bright shafts of holy light and grace down to earth, illuminating all the space around the world, and is venerated, admired, and hymned by all the faithful.



It is as though God wanted to set up an icon of everything good and, in so doing, to display His own image clearly to angels and men, and thus He made her so truly beautiful. Bringing together all the various means He had used to adorn all creation, He made her a world of everything good, both visible and invisible. Or rather, He revealed her as the synthesis of divine, angelic and human loveliness, a nobler beauty to embellish both worlds, originating from the earth but reaching up, through her ascension now from the tomb to heaven, to the heavens and beyond. She united things below with things above, and embraces the whole of creation with the wonders surrounding her. The fact that she tasted death, which meant she was a little lower than the angels, increases the universal excellence of the Mother of God. That is why all things rightly join together to rejoice at the celebration today of this event.

## *St. Maria of Paris and Companions* *Feast Day ~ July 20*

It would seem that Christianity has come full circle. For the first three centuries following the death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, Christians were frequently persecuted - either blatantly and openly or through more subtle forms - and sometimes tortured or even executed, simply because they were followers of Christ or because they would not violate their faith by expressing “devotion” to another religion or to the State. St. Constantine, in his Edict of Milan, changed that situation so that for the next 1600 years, Christians were increasingly free to worship the Triune God openly. Christianity even became the official religion of the Roman Empire and for a while, becoming Christian was the expedient thing to do. Through the centuries, revolutions and wars made some forms of Christianity unacceptable to others, but it was not until the twentieth century that Christians began to face the same trials and dangers that their ancestors in the faith had known.

Today, being a Christian can simply bring about ridicule or incredulity from some circles, it can mean having to make difficult choices in the workplace - or it can mean being sentenced to death for “apostasy.” Our Lord warned about these things and once again, we must heed his warnings and pray for courage and perseverance. Those who hold fast will receive eternal life and many of those will be considered saints by the Church.

World War II was the crucible for a number of saints, among them Mother Maria (Skobtsova), her son Yuri (George), Fr.

Dimitri (Kelpnin), and Elie (Fondaminsky), all of whom followed Christ's command to help those in need and met their deaths at the hands of the Nazis.

Many Russians who were able to escape at the time of the Revolution went to France, where a large Russian Orthodox community grew. Parishes were established and Orthodox life was resumed in this new setting. Paris became the center of Orthodox activity, including theological education for priests. When Germany entered France during World War II, those Orthodox Christians who became aware of what was happening to their Jewish neighbors had to act to help them as Christ commanded.

Mother Maria had begun life as Elizaveta, a privileged member of a wealthy family. As an adolescent, she became an atheist, and at the time of her marriage to a Bolshevik, she was writing poetry and had published her first book. When her marriage ended in divorce, she began to study Christianity and, through an emphasis on the humanity of Christ, was able to accept the faith. After the Bolshevik Revolution, she became the deputy mayor, and later the mayor, of her town. When the White Army came into control there, she was put on trial for being a Bolshevik but was acquitted by the judge. She eventually married the judge and because of the changing political situation, the family left Russia, first going to Georgia, where a son was born, and then to Yugoslavia where Maria gave birth to a daughter. They finally settled in Paris in 1923.

After the death of their youngest daughter, the parents divorced and Elizaveta began devoting her time to working with the poor and needy of the city. Her bishop suggested that she take vows as a nun and this was done - with the permission of her ex-husband and with the assurance that she would not be confined in a monastery away from the world. Now called Mother Maria, she rented a house which became a refuge for anyone in need and also a center for theological discussions.

Fr. Dimitri Kelpinin was assigned by the bishop to be the chaplain of Mother Maria's house of charity and he was soon involved in the work of providing food and shelter as well as spiritual guidance. His family had also left Russia at the time of the Revolution and traveled through several countries before settling in Paris. Although the family had been Orthodox, it was only after his mother's death that Dimitri became fully committed to Christ and His Church. He received his theological education at the St. Sergius Institute in Paris and after his marriage and ordination to the priesthood, he was assigned to serve the Protection of the Mother of God Church, the parish church for Mother Maria's shelter.





With the Nazi occupation, a new challenge was presented to those working with Mother Maria. Jews began to appear, asking for help, primarily in the form of false baptismal certificates. Was it wrong for a priest to lie about the faith of another person? Was it a sin to declare that someone was a Christian when he definitely was not? Was it wrong if this simple act would save the person from certain death at the hands of those who were making a mockery of the name “Christian”? The attempted extermination of the Jewish race by the Nazis presented theological quandaries that Mother Maria and Fr. Dimitri had not considered before.

Fr. Dimitri did provide baptismal certificates and Mother Maria did hide Jews, especially children, and for this, they were sent to camps like many of the Jews they tried to help. On Holy Saturday in 1945, Mother Maria was sent to the gas chamber in Camp Ravensbruck, Germany and entered eternal life. Some say that she took the place of a Jewish woman who had been selected for death that day. When a letter in Yuri’s pocket revealed to a Nazi policeman the requests for baptismal certificates, both he and Fr. Dimitri were sent to a camp called Compiègne. There, they created a chapel adorned with whatever they could find among the furnishings of the camp and which Fr. Dimitri’s wife could manage to send. Here, the Liturgy was celebrated daily, confessions were heard and study of the faith took place. Fr. Dimitri began to prepare Yuri for ordination and a Jewish prisoner, Elie, was baptized. Roman Catholics were also given use of the chapel for their services.

Less than a year later, the prisoners were sent to the infamous Dora work camp where conditions were considerably worse. It was not long before their health had so deteriorated that death was inevitable. Fr. Dimitri died of pneumonia and his body was burned in the crematorium at Buchenwald. Yuri contracted an illness which caused his body to be covered with boils and he and Elie were also killed by the Nazis.

In 2004, these Christians, who followed the commandments of Christ in the most difficult circumstances, were glorified as saints of the Church. Their feast day is July 20. May they intercede for those who now face persecution and death because of their faith and may we follow their examples of courage and perseverance.

*[Editor’s note: There are two books in our parish lending library about these new saints of the church. Silent as a Stone, by Jim Forest, is the true story of a dramatic way in which Mother Maria and her companions were able to save Jewish children; and Dimitri’s Cross by*

*Helen Klepinin Arjokovsky, is a review of St. Dimitri's life as his daughter (who was only a young child when her father was taken away) was able to view it through letters and eye witness accounts.]*

## *News from the Parish and Beyond*

Summer is a time for church conferences: the Parish Life Conference for the Eastern Region will be held for the first time at Antiochian Village from July 2-6. Fr. Nicholas, Kh. Becky, and Reader Simon (Karl Tsuji) will attend and participate in Western Rite Vespers, which will be offered by the four Western Rite parishes of our region on July 3. Fr. Nicholas will also attend the Clergy Symposium from July 14-19. A Western Rite Conference is scheduled for August 5-8 at Ss. Cyril & Methodius Roman Catholic Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan.

Several of our bishops and representatives of the Archdiocese have been at Balamand Seminary in Lebanon for a conference on Antiochian Unity at the end of June. This conference will be followed by the meeting of the Holy Synod of Antioch (made up of all the Antiochian Metropolitans from around the world) during the first week in July. A new Metropolitan for North America may be chosen at this meeting. We continue to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we await the decision of the Holy Synod.

We will celebrate two major feast days in the church calendar during the month of August. The Feast of the Transfiguration will be observed on the Eve, August 5, with Vespers at 7:00PM, Liturgy at 7:30 and a pot-luck supper following. The Assumption (or Dormition) of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be celebrated with the same schedule on Thursday, August 14. Weekly Vespers will continue throughout the summer months at 6:00PM on Saturdays.



## *O Light of Light*

O Light of light, by love inclined, Jesu, Redeemer of mankind: more bright than day thy face did show, thy raiment whiter than the snow.

Two prophets, who had faith to see, with thine elect found company; the heav'ns above thy glory named, thy Father's voice his Son proclaimed.

May all who seek thy praise aright, through purer lives show forth thy light. To thee, the King of glory now all faithful hearts adoring bow. Amen.

*O nata lux de lumine*  
10<sup>th</sup> c. Morning Office Hymn for the  
Feast of the Transfiguration

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>July 2014</h1>					<i>Parish Life Conference at Antiochian Village July 2-6</i>	
<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>		<b>1</b> of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul	<b>2</b> Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary; of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul; St. John Maximovitch BC, 1966	<b>3</b> of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul; St. Leo II, PC, 683	<b>4</b> of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul  <i>(Independence Day)</i>	<b>5</b> of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>6</b> Fourth Sunday after Pentecost; of the Octave Day of Ss. Peter & Paul  <i>G</i>	<b>7</b> Ss. Cyril & Methodius, Bb CC, 9th c.	<b>8</b> St. Kilian of Wurzburg, BM, 689	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Seven Holy Brothers, Mm, c. 165; St. Joseph of Damascus, 1860	<b>11</b> Solemnity of St. Benedict, Ab, c. 540; St. Pius I, PM, c. 154	<b>12</b> Ss. Nabor & Felix, Mm, 303  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>13</b> Fifth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Anacletus, PM, 1st c.  <i>G</i>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> St. Vladimir of Kiev, KC, 1015; St. Henry, C, 1024	<b>16</b> Our Lady of Einsiedeln	<b>17</b> St. Alexis, C, 5th c.	<b>18</b> St. Sergius, Ab, 1392; Ss. Symphorosa & her Seven Sons, Mm, c. 138	<b>19</b> St. Seraphim of Sarov, PrC, 1833  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>20</b> Sixth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Elias the Prophet, 9th c. BC; St. Margaret of Antioch, VM, 304  <i>G</i>	<b>21</b> St. Praxedes of Rome, V, 2nd c.	<b>22</b> St. Mary Magdalene, Penitent Ma, 1st c.	<b>23</b> St. John Cassian, Ab, 433; St. Appollinaris, BM, 1st c.; St. Liborius, BC, 397	<b>24</b> Vigil of St. James; St. Christina, VM; St. Romanus & David, Mm, 1015	<b>25</b> St. James the Greater, Apostle, 44; St. Christopher, C, 251	<b>26</b> Ss. Joachim & Anne, Parents of the BVM, 1st c.; St. Jacob Netsvetov, PrC, 1864  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>27</b> Seventh Sunday after Pentecost; St. Panteleimon, c. 305  <i>G</i>	<b>28</b> Ss. Nazarius, Celsus Mm, St. Victor, PM & Innocent PC, 5th c	<b>29</b> St. Martha of Bethany, V, 1st c.	<b>30</b> Ss. Abdon & Sennen, Mm, c. 303	<b>31</b> St. Germanus of Auxerre, BC, 448		

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

*Coffee Hour follows Mass; Sunday School is during Coffee Hour.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>August 2014</h1>					<b>1</b> St. Peter's Chains; Holy Maccabees, Mm, c. 160 BC; St. Ethelwold, BC, 984	<b>2</b> St. Stephen I, PM, 257  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>3</b> Eighth Sunday after Pentecost; Finding of St. Stephen the Protomartyr, 415; St. Nicodemus, M, 1 <sup>st</sup> . c. <b>G</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Our Lady of the Snows (435); St. Oswald, KM, 642  <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> <b>W</b>	<b>6</b> Transfiguration of Our Lord; Ss. Sixtus II PM, Felicissimus, 285	<b>7</b> St. Donatus of Arezzo, BM, 362	<b>8</b> Ss. Cyriacus, Largus & Smaragdus, Mm, 304	<b>9</b> Vigil of St. Laurence; St. Romanus, M, 258  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>10</b> Ninth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Laurence, Deacon M, 258 <b>G</b>	<b>11</b> Ss. Tiburtius & Susanna, Mm, 3 <sup>rd</sup> c.; St. Philomena, VM, c. 304	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> St. Maximus the Confessor, CD, 662; Ss. Hippolytus & comp., Mm, 235	<b>14</b> Vigil of the Assumption; St. Eusebius, PrC, c. 300  <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> <b>W</b>	<b>15</b> Assumption (Dormition) of the Blessed Virgin Mary	<b>16</b> of the Octave of the Assumption  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>17</b> Tenth Sunday after Pentecost; of the Octave of the Assumption <b>G</b>	<b>18</b> St. Helena, 330; of the Octave of the Assumption; St. Agapitus, M, 272	<b>19</b> of the Octave of the Assumption; St. Constantine, C, 337	<b>20</b> of the Octave of the Assumption	<b>21</b> of the Octave of the Assumption	<b>22</b> Octave Day Assumption; Ss. Timothy, M, Hippolytus, BM & Symphorian, M, 3 <sup>rd</sup> c.	<b>23</b> Vigil of St. Bartholomew  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>24</b> St. Bartholomew, Apostle, 1st c.; Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost <b>R</b>	<b>25</b> St. Hilda, V, 680	<b>26</b> St. Zephyrinus, PM, 219	<b>27</b> St. Caesarius of Arles, BC, 542	<b>28</b> St. Augustine of Hippo, BCD, 430; St. Moses the Black, C, 405	<b>29</b> Beheading of St. John the Baptist; St. Sabina, M, c. 125	<b>30</b> Ss. Felix & Adactus, Mm, 304; St. Fiacre the Hermit, C, 670  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>31</b> Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Aidan of Lindisfarne, BC, 651 <b>G</b>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>