

✠ 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 Augustine of Hippo

died AD430

Feast Day ~ August 28

Inside:

<i>St. Nicholas of Alma Ata and Kazakhstan. . .</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>The Signs of our Worship.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Parish News.</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Calendar.</i>	<i>7</i>

Jesus saith unto his disciples: *These things I command you, that ye love one another.* [John 15:17] Love is itself the chief gift of him who chose us to be his own when as yet we were fruitless. It was not we that chose him, but he that chose us and ordained us, that we should go, and bring forth fruit, which same is that we love one another.

Charity, then, is the fruit which we should bring forth, like as the Apostle Paul saith: The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. And this is the charity wherewith we love our neighbor, namely, the charity wherewith we love God; for we do not truly love one another unless we love God. For everyone that loveth God also loveth his neighbor as himself. And he that loveth not God cannot even truly love himself. For on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. Love, then, is the fruit which we should bring forth. And when the Lord would give us a commandment concerning fruit, he saith: *These things I command you, that ye love one another.* Hence also the Apostle Paul, what time he commandeth the fruits of the Spirit as opposed to the works of the flesh putteth love first of all. *The fruit of the Spirit is love,* saith he. And from that as the beginning he draweth out a string of other fruits, as thence begotten and thereto bound, namely: joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance, chastity.

What man is truly joyful that loveth not the cause of his joy? Who can truly live in peace, one with another, unless the one love the other? Who is cheerful and persevering under long and hard toil in good works, unless he be fervent in love? Who is kind, unless he love the object of his tenderness? Who is good, unless by the persuasion of love? Who is truly faithful, unless by the faith which worketh

by love? Who is meek to any purpose, unless love move him? Who turneth away from baseness unless he love honor? Well then doth the good Master so often command us to love, as though that commandment were all-sufficient, for love is that gift without which all other good things avail nothing. Yea, love cannot be in us without bringing along every other good gift which maketh a man good.

St. Nicholas of Alma Ata and Kazakhstan

Feast Day ~ October 25



Christ warned his followers that they would experience hardships and persecutions for His sake: “...*they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten...You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake...when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand or premeditate what you will speak.*” [Mark 13:9, 10]. But even with these clear warnings in Holy Scripture, it would have been difficult for Theodosius Mogilevsky to imagine such a thing. He was born in 1877 into a loving family devoted to life in the Church. His father, a church chanter instilled a love for the hymns of the Church in his children; his grandfather was a priest; and his mother and grandmother told him stories of the saints of God. It seemed that serving God in his Church was a wonderful vocation for a young man. So in December of 1904, Theodosius was tonsured as a monk and given the name Nicholas.

Nicholas moved quickly through the ranks of Deacon and Hieromonk. After graduating from the Moscow Theological Academy at the Lavra of St. Sergius of Radonezh, he was elevated to the dignity of Archimandrite in 1911, a few short years from the dramatic changes that would occur with the Revolution of 1917.

With the Bolsheviks in power, Nicholas was consecrated Bishop of Staridub and 4 years later was appointed Bishop of Kashir. Here he found that the so-called “Renovated Church” (a movement used by the Soviet secret police to undermine the Russian Orthodox Church) had taken over most of the parishes. The bishop’s efforts to fight against this corruption of Christ’s Church contributed to his first arrest in 1925. He was imprisoned for two years and on his release was appointed Bishop of Orel until his next arrest in 1932. This time, he was told by the one investigating his “crimes” that he had been arrested for his popularity with the people and the need to isolate him until he was forgotten by them!

The prison where Bishop Nicholas was sent this time was a “corrective” labor camp built on the closed and looted monastery of Sarov. As he went around the camp, kissing the windows and walls where icons had been and praying in what had been the cell of St. Seraphim of Sarov, Bishop Nicholas felt that he was being protected by the saint.

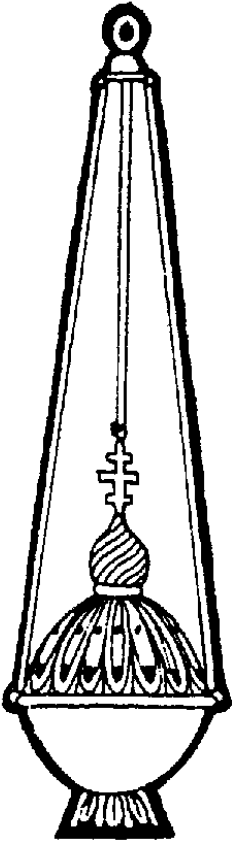
Some time after his release from this prison, Nicholas was elevated to the dignity of Archbishop just before the invasion of Russia by Germany in 1941. Almost immediately, the bishop was arrested again, imprisoned first in Saratov and then deported to Kazakhstan. After 3 months in prison in one town, he was taken by train to the town of Chelkar for “voluntary exile”. Here he was thrown off the train in the middle of the night, wearing only his underwear and a light jacket, and abandoned.

For the next seven or eight months, the 65-year-old archbishop lived as a beggar. His first nights were spent huddled at the train station, trying to keep warm. Some elderly women took pity on him and gave him some old clothes and he had to beg for money for food. Eventually - filthy and starving, covered with lice and skin sores - he lost consciousness. When he awoke, Archbishop Nicholas was in a hospital bed, being cared for by nurses and doctors who called him “granddad”. While they worked to bring the homeless man back to health and strength, the archbishop did everything he could to help the other patients, and no one ever knew his true identity.

The person who had brought Nicholas to the hospital was a complete stranger - a Tartar who was his “Good Samaritan”. This man sent regular packages of food to the hospital and, when it was time for Nicholas to be discharged from the hospital, he appeared to take him away so that he would not have to return to begging. Nicholas was able to ask him to contact one of his spiritual children, a woman who then came and took him in.

After making an appeal for release from his “voluntary exile”, the Archbishop was granted his freedom in May of 1945 and in July, the Holy Synod of Russia created the new diocese of Alma Ata and Kazakhstan with Archbishop Nicholas as its spiritual leader, serving first in a small church in the center of town which had just recently re-opened. For the remainder of his life, Nicholas led the austere but joyful life of a monk-bishop, faithfully keeping all the services of the Church, often weeping while singing through them. He was loving to everyone and this love was returned by all who met him. There were often more than a thousand people in the cathedral for a Sunday service, and the Archbishop greeted and blessed each one of them personally.





There are many stories of the effect that this holy man had on others. On one occasion, when he had to fly to Moscow for a meeting of the Holy Synod, he appeared at the airport in his cassock and was ridiculed by others who were boarding the plane. Smiling, he gave each one a blessing as they boarded, which brought about much more jeering and ridicule. But when one of the plane's engines died and the pilot announced that there would be an emergency landing, the people on the plane began to panic until they heard the Archbishop praying. In the midst of his prayers, Nicholas assured them that they would be all right and would only suffer getting a little dirty. When the plane landed in a shallow swamp and all aboard were safe but muddy, they thanked the Archbishop respectfully and asked his forgiveness. There was no more ridicule.

Although his health began to fail in his last years, Metropolitan Nicholas was usually in church for every service. As he felt the end approaching, he asked the other clergy and nuns to begin the funeral rites for a bishop and he passed from this life to the next on October 25, 1955. In 2000, the Holy Synod of the Church of Russia glorified St. Nicholas of Alma Ata and Kazakhstan as a confessor, wonderworker and intercessor.

Just as the young boy who lived in the security of a loving family and the young monk who began his life of prayer in the Church could not have envisioned the persecutions and trials that he later experienced as a faithful Christian, we do not know what we may have to endure as Christians. But we do know that God will be with us as he was with St. Nicholas and that the saints of God - particularly St. Nicholas of Alma Ata and Kazakhstan - will intercede for us in Heaven. Holy Nicholas, pray for us.

The Signs of our Worship

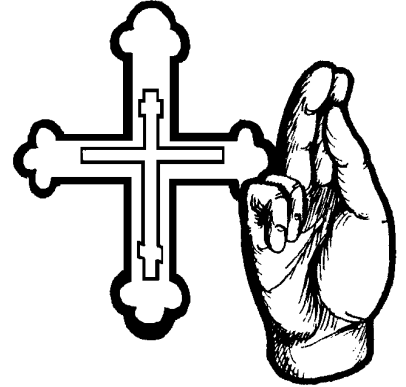
by Kh. Rebecca Alford

The Orthodox faith is concerned with body and soul, with the material and the spiritual: Bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. Incense touches our sense of smell and rises heavenward as do our prayers. The sounds of bells accompany our prayers and we fill the air with singing songs of praise. We venerate the relics of saints and we offer the finest materials that we can for vestments and the vessels we use.

Orthodox worship is, therefore, physical as well as spiritual, mental, and even emotional. In our services, there are gestures which give expression to our beliefs, and there are bodily

positions which represent our attitudes toward God and his saints. While these physical expressions are recommended rather than required, we should all be aware of these customs and practices and know that they have been of great spiritual benefit to Christians throughout the ages.

M*aking the sign of the Cross:* The outline of the Cross - the instrument of our Lord's sacrifice for our salvation - is the most important of all our signs. New Christians are signed with this symbol at their baptisms and should remind themselves daily of the One they are following by signing themselves with the Cross. We make this sign when we enter the church; when we venerate an icon; in the Creed, the *Gloria in excelsis* and the New Testament canticles at Matins and Vespers; at the blessing at the end of Liturgy; and numerous other times. Small crosses are signed on the forehead, the lips and the heart at the announcement of the Gospel reading. (The sign of the Cross is often made at any mention of "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit", although in the Western tradition, a solemn bow is more commonly made).



B*owing:* The custom of bowing the head at the name of Jesus, St. Mary and the saint of the day is an ancient Western custom preserved in the Orthodox Western Rite. Deeper bows are made before and after the Gospel reading, at the mention of the Holy Trinity (in Western tradition), at the Sanctus ("Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts") and when one passes in front of the altar when the Sacrament is not present.

G*enuflexion:* This action, which consists of kneeling briefly on the right knee, is another ancient Western tradition. A Genuflexion is made at "and was made man" in the Creed; at "and the Word was made flesh" in the Last Gospel; and to venerate the altar when the Sacrament is reserved there. A genuflexion (or deep bow) may be made at "and dwelt among us" in the Angelus.

K*neeling:* Kneeling on both knees is common in Western tradition and in Western Rite services it is customary to kneel for prayer and particularly for the Prayer of Consecration (the Canon). However, standing (particularly in Paschaltide) is also appropriate. Kneeling for the blessing at the end of Liturgy is customary. While it is often said that the Council of Nicaea forbade kneeling on Sundays, it is more accurate to say that prostrations were forbidden on Sundays.

P*rostration:* A prostration is made by kneeling and bowing the head to the floor (this is also called a "double genuflexion"). This is usually done only on Good Friday at the Veneration of the Cross. Full prostration - lying on the floor - is prescribed for the

clergy on Good Friday and for clergy and monastics at ordinations and the taking of monastic vows.



Standing: Just as proper etiquette traditionally required that a man stand when a woman entered or left a room or the dining table, so it is proper etiquette for us to stand at certain times in our services. We stand when the altar party enters and leaves the chapel; we stand to hear the Gospel reading; we stand to sing the Creed and to sing hymns. Standing for the Canon is also acceptable, particularly during the Easter season.

Kissing icons: This is another physical sign of reverence, a way of venerating the saint or the event in the life of our Lord and the Church which is pictured. It is always appropriate to kiss the icon as you enter the church or to kiss any other icon where you may wish to pray (the icon of the Raising of Lazarus is a particularly good place in our small church building).

These gestures and signs have been used by Christians since earliest times to express reverence, humility, respect, veneration. They often help the mind to put aside concerns for daily life and enter fully into worship. Although physical infirmity may prevent some people from using these physical expressions, we should guard against neglecting them out of “laziness” in our approach to worship.

We believe that as we enter the Chapel and come to the altar, we are joined by those in Heaven who worship closer to the Throne of God and we join with Christ who is the great High Priest. May we always approach worship with proper care, reverence, and prayerfulness, giving thanks to God for this meeting of Heaven and earth.

Parish News

Our annual parish picnic will be held on Saturday, October 4, at Rock Creek Park, where we will eat *al fresco*, play games, and enjoy each other’s company in a beautiful setting. The Parish Hall will be our “back-up” in case of rain.

The Our Lady of Walsingham service (originally scheduled for October 18) will not be held this year.

Fr. Nicholas and Fr. Raphael will be at Antiochian Village for the Clergy Retreat of the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic during the first week of this month. A Western Rite Liturgy will be offered Wednesday morning.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>October 2014</h1>						
<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>			1 St. Remigius of Rheims, BC, c. 530; St. Bavo, C, 659	2 Holy Guardian Angels	3	4 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
5 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Placid & his Companions, Mm, 6th c. <i>G</i>	6 St. Faith of Agen, VM, c. 303	7 St. Mark, PC, 336, Ss. Sergius & Bacchus, Mm, 303	8	9 Ss. Denys, BM, Rusticus, & Eleutherius, Mm, 3rd c.	10 St. Paulinus of York, BC, 644	11 St. Kenneth, Ab, 599 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
12 Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Wilfred of York, BC, 709; St. Edwin, KM, 633 <i>G</i>	13 St. Edward the Confessor, KC, 1066	14 St. Calistus, PM, c. 222	15 Our Lady of Walsingham	16 St. Gall, Ab., 646	17	18 St. Luke the Evangelist, 1st c. <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
19 Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Frideswide of Oxford, V, 735 <i>G</i>	20 St. Andrew of Crete, BC, 740	21 St. Hilariion of Gaza, Ab., c. 371	22 Ss. Ursula & comp., Mm, 453	23	24 St. Raphael the Archangel	25 Ss. Crisanthus & Daria, Mm, 283 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
26 Christ the King; 20th Sunday after Pentecost; St. Evaristus, PM, c. 197 <i>W</i>	27 Vigil of Ss. Simon & Jude; St. Frumentius of Ethiopia, BC, 4 th c.	28 Ss. Simon & Jude, Apostles, 1st c.	29	30	31 Vigil of All Saints	1 All Saints Day <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>

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

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