

# ✠ 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 Jerome*

*died AD420  
Feast Day ~ September  
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**T**ime and again, we have averred that Christians always suffer persecution. This world is in the power of the evil one. Our adversary, the devil, rules in the world, and do we think that we shall escape persecution? Besides, what is there that is not a source of persecution to the Christian? Everything that is of the world holds endless torment for him. Is it any wonder that others persecute us if we have determined to serve Christ? Even our parents do. Everyone who does not share our beliefs, harasses and hates us. Should we be surprised if we are the object of universal malevolence? Our own body constantly afflicts us. Even if I eat ever so little, but my miserable body becomes robust, its very vigor cruelly tempts my soul. Wherever I turn, there is persecution. If I look at a woman, my eye tortures me; it craves for the destruction of my soul. If I look at riches, at gold, at silver, at possessions, whatever I see and covet, that is an attack on my soul.

**L**et us not imagine that the shedding of blood is the only form of martyrdom; there is martyrdom in everything. Passion persecutes youth; passion wants to pour out the blood of the soul. When your soul is in peril, gathering, as it were, all its forces for the contest, then, Jesus stands at the right side of the Father and fights for His young warrior. Be assured, moreover, if there is martyrdom in time of peace, there is also betrayal. Let no one say, there is no martyrdom. There is martyrdom and there is betrayal. If I, who today seem to be a monk, should abandon my state of life, I have rejected Christ. If in times of peace, I deny Him, what would I do in time of trial? I am not being tortured nor set on fire, yet I deny Christ. If I were being stretched on the rack, were burning at the stake, what would I do?

**T**he traitor under persecution is pardonable; his stripes plead in his behalf. What is his plea? I wanted to fight;

my flesh failed me in the death struggle; it was not my soul that yielded, but my body; my mind intended one thing; my body was forced to utter another. Yet, he really has no excuse, for there is no force that ought to overthrow the love of Christ. What does Christ say to you? You were burning in flames; you were suspended on the wooden rack; you were tortured for Me; and do you say, “I was not able to endure the torments?” How, then did Peter endure; Paul? The rest of the martyrs? They had bodies just as you have... You who shirk fasting, do you think you would not shun fire? You have before you the road to death and the road to life; the choice is yours.

## *St. Nectarios of Pentapolis*

### *Feast Day ~ November 9*

*This is the sixth in our series of saints who lived closer to our own times - a reminder that the age of sainthood is not over and that there are holy followers of Christ in every time and place.*



The lives of the saints are not usually tales of happy days, good deeds, reverence by all, and peaceful death. More often, the lives of the saints have been filled with conflict and difficulties of all sorts in which the saint has had to rise above adversities. But these stories are not the “rags to riches” success stories of the world either. Rather, they reveal the true purpose of life: to follow Christ wherever it leads and in whatever circumstances we find ourselves so that, at the end, we may joyfully hear our Lord say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” This is certainly true of the life of St. Nectarios of Pentapolis.

Anastasios Cephalas was born in 1846 in Thrace (now in Turkey) to pious but very poor parents. They gave their son the most important gift - an example of strong faith and the tradition of Christian prayer and attendance at church. The boy was obedient and helpful to his parents growing up, working at any job he could find to contribute to the family’s finances. But he also hungered for learning and his village only offered elementary school instruction. So at age 14, Anastasios went to Constantinople for further study, working in a store and at various other jobs to pay for his living and send aid to his family.

After six years of study there, the young man went to the island of Chios for a teaching position. Seven years later, he entered a monastery and was tonsured as a monk, taking the name Nectarios. By the time Nectarios was ordained Deacon, his gifts

for teaching, preaching and writing had become apparent. A wealthy patron took interest in him and paid for him to continue his education at the University of Athens. The patron then advised Deacon Nectarios to travel to Alexandria to meet Patriarch Sophronius IV. More study resulted from this meeting, as the Patriarch recognized the intellectual and spiritual gifts of Nectarios. He sent him to the School of Theology in Athens where he finally received a degree at the age of 39.

**R**eturning to Egypt, Nectarios was ordained a priest and assigned to a parish in Cairo where his abilities as a preacher, teacher, and administrator made him well-loved and respected. The Patriarch consecrated him as Bishop of Pentapolis. It appeared that Bishop Nectarios was leading a charmed life: he was successful in everything he did; he was loved by many people; he had been freed from the poverty of his youth by a wealthy patron; he was in a position of authority. But “charmed” lives do not usually lead to sainthood.

**T**he envy and jealousy of other clergy in the Patriarchate of Alexandria grew to such a degree that they went to Patriarch Sophronius with false allegations against Bishop Nectarios. The Patriarch believed these lies and ordered Nectarios to leave Egypt in disgrace. The bishop was not given a trial or any opportunity to defend himself against his accusers. So he returned to Athens where he became a teacher in the Rizarios Ecclesiastical School for the training of priests. Here Nectarios’ abilities as a writer flourished as he wrote many books about the Orthodox faith.

**I**n 1904, a group of nuns approached Nectarios and asked his help in establishing a monastery. His help in creating the Holy Trinity Monastery on the island of Aegina was tremendous. He used his own funds to finance the building projects and even carried stones and added his efforts to the manual labor involved. He also tended the gardens that were established on the monastery grounds.

**F**our years later, St. Nectarios left his teaching position and went to live at the monastery where he remained for the rest of his life. He was able to continue preaching, teaching, and writing, and people came from great distances to be near this great man. His humility was obvious to everyone and his spiritual gift of healing resulted in many miracles. When St. Nectarios was hospitalized with prostate cancer and was dying, a nurse accidentally placed his shirt on the bed of another patient, a man who was paralyzed. Suddenly, the man was healed of his paralysis, leaving no doubt that Nectarios was a saint. At his repose in 1920, St. Nectarios surely heard our Lord’s voice



saying: “Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” [Matt. 25:34]

**S**t. Nectarios, whose body remained incorrupt like so many of the saints, was glorified by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1961. In 1998, the Patriarchate of Alexandria issued a public statement of apology and asked for the forgiveness of the saint for the treatment he received in Egypt. St. Nectarios’ intercessions are particularly sought by those suffering from cancer, heart disease, arthritis and epilepsy, and miracles continue to be attributed to his intercessions.

**M**ay St. Nectarios pray for us - for healing of our infirmities, for resisting the temptation to envy, for meeting every adversity with humility and the love of Christ. Holy Nectarios, pray for us.

*Sources: Recently Canonized Orthodox Saints: Their Lives and Icons by Dr. Jane M. DeVyver; online articles from OrthodoxWiki and the website of St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox church, Charlotte, NC*

## *The Saints of God*

by Fr. John of Kronstadt

(From *Spiritual Counsels: Select Passages from My Life in Christ*)



**H**ow the Creator and Provider of all has honored and adorned our nature! The saints shine with his light, they are hallowed by his grace, having conquered sin and washed away every sinful impurity of body and spirit; they are glorious with his glory, they are incorruptible through his incorruptibility. Glory to God, who has so honored, enlightened, and exalted our nature!

**W**hat does the daily invocation of the saints signify - of different ones each day, during the whole year, and during our whole life? It signifies that God’s saints, as our brethren - but perfect - live, and are near us, ever ready to help us, by the grace of God. We live together with them in the home of our Heavenly Father, only in different parts of it. We live in the earthly, they in the heavenly half; but we can converse with them, and they with us...

**W**e ought to have the most lively spiritual union with the dwellers in heaven, the apostles, prophets, martyrs, saintly bishops, confessors, with all the saints, as they are all members of

the one body, the Church of Christ, to which we sinners also belong, and the living Head of which is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. This is why we call upon them in prayer, converse with them, thank and praise them. It is urgently necessary for every Christian to be in union with them if he desires to make Christian progress; for the saints are our friends, our guides to salvation, who pray and intercede for us...

**A**t the end of your morning and evening prayers call upon the saints, so that seeing every virtue realized in them, you may yourself imitate every virtue. Learn from the patriarchs childlike faith and obedience to the Lord, from the prophets and apostles zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men, from the holy bishops zeal to preach the word of God, from the martyrs and confessors firmness before the infidel and godless, from the ascetics to crucify your own flesh and its lusts, and from the unmercenary ones not to love profit, and freely to help the needy.

**T**rust in the intercession of the Mother of God, and of the angels and saints, is a form of Christian hope. Their intercession for us is powerful, both by the grace of Christ, and as a consequence of their own virtues. It is not in vain that we pray to them: through their prayers we trust to obtain mercy, the forgiveness of sins, and salvation, as well as temporal blessings...

**G**od and the saints hear us when we pray just as men hear each other when talking among themselves, or as people in church hear the preacher, or soldiers the voice of their commander, with this difference, that God and the saints hear our prayers incomparably better and more perfectly, because, when we hear the words of an ordinary man, we do not know what is in his heart and thoughts, and it may happen that he says one thing when he has quite another in his heart...

**W**hen your faith in the Lord, whether in health or in sickness, in prosperity or poverty, whether at any time during this life, or at the moment of leaving it, grows dim, from worldly vanity or from illness and the terrors and darkness of death, then look with the eyes of your heart and mind upon the companies of the saints. See how, both during their earthly life and at the time of their departure from it, they looked unceasingly to God, and died in the hope of the resurrection unto life eternal - and strive to imitate them. These living examples, so numerous, can strengthen the wavering faith in the Lord and the future life of each and every Christian.



# Parish News

We begin the month of November with the celebration of an important feast on the calendar of the Western Rite - the Feast of All Saints. The actual feast day is November 1, but we will observe the Sunday in the Octave of the Feast. At the end of Liturgy that day, as we have given thanks for and sung the praises of the saints, we will offer for veneration the relics of the saints which are kept on the altar at St. Gregory's - those of St. Gregory, our patron, St. Nicholas, St. Lucy, and St. Sebastian.

All Souls Day, when we pray particularly for our departed loved ones, follows All Saints Day and will be observed on Monday evening, November 3 with a Requiem Mass at 7:30 (preceded by Vespers of the Departed at 7:10pm). Please remember to give Fr. Nicholas the names of those you wish to be remembered at the altar in that Mass.

Another feast day Liturgy during this month is that of the Presentation of the Theotokos in the Temple, which we will celebrate on the Eve, November 20, with Vespers at 7pm and the Mass at 7:30. A pot-luck supper will follow the service.

We end the month of November with the beginning of the liturgical year on the Western Rite calendar. November 30 is the First Sunday of Advent and the beginning of the fast and other preparations for the celebration of our Lord's Nativity.

Please mark your calendars now for the weekend of November 15 and 16. St. Gregory's will host the visit of Fr. Ken DeVoie from the Archdiocesan Department of Missions and Evangelism. Fr. Ken will meet with members of the Parish Council on Saturday to talk about the vision of St. Gregory's, evangelism, and our mission. This discussion will continue with the entire parish family on Sunday. Coffee Hour will be a pot-luck lunch so that we can all stay at church for this important conversation.

Catechism classes continue on designated Sundays following coffee hour. Any who are interested in a refresher course on the basics of the faith are invited to attend. Continuing education for the whole parish continues with "Ask Abouna" at coffee hour and Sunday School for the children of the parish.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2014</h1>					<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>	<b>1</b> All Saints Day  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>2</b> Sunday in the Octave of All Saints; 21 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  <i>G</i>	<b>3</b> All Souls Day (trans.); St. Silvia, Mother of St. Gregory, Ma, 592  <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i>	<b>4</b> Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm, c. 304	<b>5</b> St. Elizabeth, Ma, 1st C.	<b>6</b> St. Leonard of Noblac, Ab, c. 559	<b>7</b> St. Wilibrord of Echternach, BC, 739	<b>8</b> Patriarchs & Prophets of the Old Law; Octave Day of All Saints; IV crowned Martyrs, c. 303  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>9</b> 22nd Sunday after Pentecost; Ded. of the Basilica of St. Savior in Rome, 324; St. Benignus, BC, c. 468  <i>G</i>	<b>10</b> Ss. Tryphon, Respicius & Nympha Mm, c. 250	<b>11</b> St. Martin of Tours, BC, 397; St. Theodore the Studite, Ab, 826	<b>12</b> St. Martin I, PC, 655	<b>13</b> St. Britius of Tours, BC, 444	<b>14</b> St. Gregory Palamas, BCD, 1359	<b>15</b>  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>16</b> 23rd Sunday after Pentecost  <i>G</i>	<b>17</b> St. Gregory the Wonderworker, BC, c. 270; St. Gregory of Tours, BC, 594	<b>18</b> Dedication of the Basilica of Ss. Peter & Paul in Rome 4 <sup>th</sup> c.	<b>19</b> St. Pontianus, PM, 235	<b>20</b> St. Edmund, KM, 870  <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> <i>W</i>	<b>21</b> Presentation of the BVM; St. Gelasius, PC, 496; St. Columbanus, Ab, c. 615	<b>22</b> St. Cecilia, VM, c. 230  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>23</b> 24th & Last Sunday after Pentecost; St. Clement, PM, 96; St. Felicity of Rome, M, 165  <i>G</i>	<b>24</b> St. Chrysogonus of Apuileia, M., c. 304	<b>25</b> St. Katherine of Alexandria VM, c. 4th c.	<b>26</b> St. Peter of Alexandria, BM, 311	<b>27</b>  (Thanksgiving Day)	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Vigil of St. Andrew; St. Saturninus, M, 309  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>30</b> First Sunday of Advent; St. Andrew the Apostle, 1st c.  <i>V</i>						

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

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