

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

December, 2014 - Volume XIX, Issue 11

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

From a Homily of Saint Leo

*died AD461
Feast Day ~ April 11*

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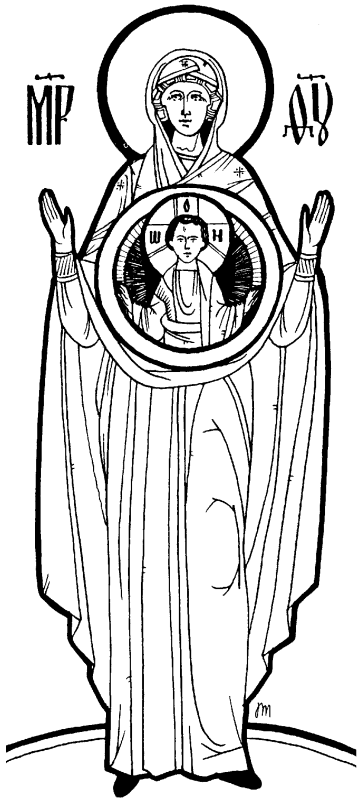
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Deearly beloved, a true worshiper, and devout observer of this day's Festival, is one whose mind has not been defiled with any false belief regarding the incarnation of the Lord, nor with anything unbecoming concerning the Godhead. The sin is of equal gravity, whether it be denied, that He truly possesses our nature, or, that He is equal to the Father in glory. Coming together, therefore, to raise our minds to the mystery of the Birth of Christ, this day born of a Virgin Mother, let us put aside all shadow of earthly reasoning, and let the smoke of earthly wisdom move away from eyes that are lit by faith; for divine is the authority in which we believe, divine the faith we profess.

Since, whether we incline the ears of our soul to the Witness of the Law, or to the sayings of the Prophets, or to the sound of the evangelical trumpet, this is the truth, which John, being filled with the Holy Ghost, intoned: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without Him was made nothing.* And true also is that which the same preacher has added: *And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the Only-Begotten of the Father.*

In each nature is the same Son of God, taking ours, yet not giving up His Own; restoring man, in Man; continuing Himself without change. For the Godhead, which is common to him with the Father, undergoes no diminution of Its Omnipotence; nor has *the form of a servant* profaned the Image of God; because the Supreme and Eternal Nature, which has lowered Itself for mens' salvation, has lifted us to Its own glory. Yet what It was, It ceaseth not to be. When therefore the Only-Begotten Son of God confesses that He is less than the Father [John 14:28], to Whom He has said that

He is equal [John 10:30], he is pointing to the reality of both natures in Himself; that He may show that subordination relates to His human nature, equality to the Divine.



Corporal birth, therefore, has subtracted nothing from the majesty of the Son of God, and bestows nothing; because that unchangeable substance can neither be lessened, nor increased. That *the Word was made flesh* does not mean this, that the nature of god was changed into flesh, but that flesh was received by the Word into the oneness of his Person; in Whose Name the whole man is received, with whom the Word of God was so inseparably united within the womb of the Virgin, made fruitful by the Holy Ghost, without loss of her virginity, that He who was, before time, Begotten of the Essence of the Father, the Same, in time, is born from the womb of the Virgin. For in no other way could we be freed from the claims of eternal death, save through his becoming lowly in our nature, Who abides Omnipotent in His own.

Being then born truly man, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who never ceases to be True God, made in Himself the beginning of a new creature, and in the manner of His Birth has given man a spiritual foundation, so that to wipe out the infection of his carnal birth, the birth of the regenerated might be without the seed of sin, and of these is it said: *Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

What mind can comprehend this mystery? What tongue describe this wondrous grace? Iniquity returns to the ways of innocence, old age to newness of life. Strangers are received into adoption as sons, and they without claim enter upon an inheritance. The evil-living begin to live as righteous, the parsimonious become bountiful, the incontinent chaste, and the earthly heaven minded. What is this transformation unless the witness of the hand of God? Since the Son of man came that He might destroy the works of the devil, and has so joined Himself to us and us to him, that the descent of God to what was human, has brought about the raising of man to what is divine.

St. Grigol Peradze

Feast Day ~ December 6

This is the seventh in our series of lives of those in modern times whose holiness has brought them the designation "saint" by the Church - a reminder to us that, even in our day, we are called to strive for holiness.

St. Grigol (Gregory) Peradze was an academic, a scholar, a researcher of ancient manuscripts, a gifted linguist, a pastor and a monk - but above all, he is a saint of the Church.

Throughout his life, his humility and willingness to seek the will of God and, at the end, his willingness to sacrifice his own life for another make him worthy of that title and an example for all of us.

Grigol was born into a family with many generations of priests. The boy expected to follow in the footsteps of his father and earlier ancestors and he graduated from the Theological School in Tbilisi in 1918. The upheavals of World War I and the Russian Revolution caused Grigol to shift the focus of his further studies from theology to philology. He already knew Georgian, Russian and Church Slavonic and now he undertook to expand his knowledge of languages. He would eventually be able to do research in Hebrew, Syrian, Arabic, Coptic, Armenian, Greek, Latin, German, English, French and Danish.

In 1921, under the auspices of the Georgian Church, Grigol's study of theology and language was continued when he was sent to Germany. His PhD dissertation topic, *A History of Georgian Monasticism from its Creation until 1064*, showed the direction of the young man's studies. Traveling to England in 1927, Grigol studied the patristic manuscripts in the collections at the British Museum and the Bodleian Library in Oxford and he returned to Germany to teach Georgian and Armenian literature at the University of Bonn. After recovering from a serious illness in 1931, Grigol wrote a poem whose phrases, in retrospect, were prophetic; "become a bridge to heaven" and "fire is your fate". Grigol took monastic vows and was soon ordained to the priesthood. He was, by then, traveling throughout Europe, delivering lectures on theology and Georgian history and literature. In Paris, he helped with the founding of a parish for Georgians living in that city and was later named its pastor.

In 1932, Grigol was invited by the Metropolitan of Poland to teach at the University of Warsaw. During this time, he also continued his search for old manuscripts pertaining to Georgian history and liturgy, traveling in the Holy Land, Syria, and Italy in 1936-8. The now-Archimandrite Grigol knew that precious Georgian manuscripts had been removed at the time of the Soviet occupation of Georgia in the 1920s. They had been taken to Paris for safe-keeping and the monk was able to take possession of some of these in 1940, convincing the Nazis that they had no real value except to Georgians.

During this time of teaching, traveling, and serving Liturgy, Fr. Grigol was always concerned for those in need. He took special notice of poor students and Jews. He hid money for Jews

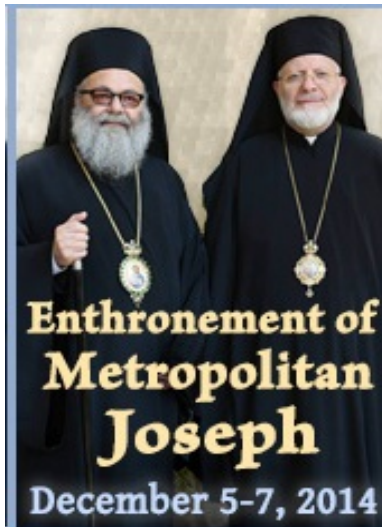


who rightly feared that all their possessions would be confiscated by the Nazis.

On May 5, 1942, Fr. Grigol was arrested by the Gestapo for sheltering and aiding Jews and was taken to a prison in Warsaw. The manuscripts which he had been able to rescue disappeared from his apartment at this time. In November of that year, he was deported to Auschwitz. In that notorious concentration camp, one of the inmates killed a German officer. In retaliation, and seeking a confession from the guilty person, the soldiers ordered all the men in the barracks out into below freezing weather naked. According to the testimony of prisoners who survived Auschwitz, St. Grigol claimed responsibility for the murder to spare his fellow inmates. The guards sent dogs to attack the saint and then poured gasoline over him and lit him on fire.

Grigol Peradze was glorified as a martyr saint by the Georgian Orthodox Church in 1995. A faithful servant of the Church, a tireless worker for the study of the faith, a friend of the friendless and helpless, may St. Grigol pray for us.

Parish News



There will be two events in Advent to help us prepare for celebrating the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The first is a time of reflecting for the women of the parish on Saturday, December 6 beginning at 3:30PM. Presbytera Catherine will lead a discussion of the book *The One Thing Needful: Meditations for the Busy Orthodox Woman* by Colette Jonopulos. The second will be our annual service of Lessons and Carols on Saturday, December 20 at 6PM (in lieu of our normal Vespers service). We will hear readings from the Prophets foretelling the birth of Christ and sing Advent hymns and carols.

The enthronement of Metropolitan JOSEPH will be held on Saturday, December 6, at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Brooklyn. The ceremonies will be broadcast live and can be viewed on www.ancientfaith.com. The enthronement will begin at 4:30PM on Saturday. On Sunday, the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy beginning with Orthros will be at 9:30AM.

We will not have Vespers at St. Gregory's on Saturday, December 11, as His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X and His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH will be at Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Potomac, MD for a Vespers service at 5:30PM. All are encouraged to attend this service and pray with these hierarchs of our Antiochian Orthodox Patriarchate.

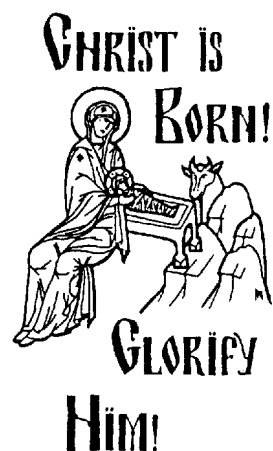
Our collection of canned goods for the Archdiocesan Food for the Hungry program, which we donate to Martha's Table, a feeding program in our neighborhood, will continue through Advent until Epiphany. As we prepare our Christmas feasts, remember those who are hungry and in need of our help.

Parish Growth

Father Ken DeVoie, one of the Archdiocesan representatives for the Department of Missions and Evangelism, visited St. Gregory's on Saturday and Sunday, November 16 and 17, to discuss with both the parish and the parish council how we can most effectively continue and expand our ministry. Father Ken said he's impressed with our current worship space, our congregation, and our interest in growth. The challenges posed by our current location to the expansion of our ministry, in his view, are positives - we've filled our space, we need to grow, and additional space will allow us to do just that.

Father Ken encouraged us to be flexible and open-minded, to look for "out of the box" solutions, and to be prayerful as we seek our path forward. The Parish Council intends to continue to explore all reasonable options that support our growth, to keep the parish informed of our efforts, and to remain engaged with Father Ken as those efforts proceed. We ask all of you for your prayers and support.

Brian Green, Parish Council Chairman



The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

In contemplating this mystery, we must honor our God and Redeemer, exulting with holy joy, and paying to him the just homages of adoration, praise, and love. The angel calls this wonderful mystery a subject of great joy to all the people. Indeed, our hearts must be insensible to all spiritual things if they do not overflow with holy joy at the consideration of so glorious a mercy, in which is displayed such an excess of the divine goodness, and by which such inestimable benefits and so high an honor accrue to us.

The very thought and foreknowledge of this mystery comforted Adam in his banishment from Paradise. The promise of it sweetened the laborious pilgrimage of Abraham. The same

encouraged Jacob to dread no adversity, and Moses to brave all dangers and conquer all difficulties in delivering the Israelites from the Egyptian slavery. All the prophets saw it in spirit with Abraham, and they rejoiced. If the expectation of it gave the patriarchs such joy, how much ought the accomplishment to create in us! Joy is defined the delight of a rational creature arising from the possession of a desired object. It must then be proportioned to the nature of the possession; consequently, it ought to be as much greater in us as the fruition of a good surpasses the promise, possession the hope, or fruit the blossom.



This St. Peter Chrysologus illustrates with regard to this difference of the Old and New Law as follows: *The letter of a friend, says he, is comfortable, but his presence is much more welcome; a bond is useful, but the payment more so; blossoms are pleasing, but only till the fruit appears. The ancient fathers received God's letters, we enjoy his presence; they had the promise, we the accomplishment; they the bond, we the payment.* How would those ancient saints have exulted to have beheld, with Simeon, the completion of this great mercy for which they never ceased ardently to sigh, weep, and pray...

To sanctify this feast we ought to consecrate it to devotion, and principally to the exercises of adoration, praise, and love. This is the tribute we must offer to our new-born Savior, when we visit him in spirit with the good shepherds. With them we must enter the stable, and contemplate this mystery with a lively faith, by which, under the veils of this infant body, we discover the infinite majesty of our God; and in this mystery we shall discern a prodigy of omnipotence to excite our praise, and a prodigy of love to kindle in our souls the affections of ardent love of God.

[from *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Saints* by Rev. Alban Butler]

Christmas Services

Our Christmas celebrations begin on Wednesday, December 24. Confessions may be made between 8:30 and 9:30PM, we will sing carols at 9:30, and the First Mass of Christmas will be at 10PM. On Sunday, December 28, we will observe the Feast of the Holy Innocents and commemorate the First Sunday of Christmas. The Circumcision of Our Lord will be observed on Thursday, January 1 with Matins at 9:30AM, Mass at 10, and a pot-luck brunch following. Sunday, January 4 is the Second Sunday in the Christmas season which ends with Epiphany on January 6. Saturday Vespers on December 27 and January 3 will be at 6PM.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>December 2014</h1>						
<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>	1 St. Eligius of Tournai, BC, 660	2 St. Peter Chryso-logus, BCD, c. 450	3 St. Bibiana of Rome, VM, 363	4 St. Barbara, VM, c. 306; St. Cle-ment of Alexandria, CD, c. 210	5 St. Sabbas of Palestine, Ab, 532	6 St. Nicholas of Myra, BC, c. 342 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
7 Second Sunday of Advent; St. Ambrose of Milan, BCD, 397 <i>V</i>	8 Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	9	10 St. Mel-chiades, PM, 314	11 St. Dam-asus, PC, 384	12 St. Spi-ridon, BC, 348	13 St. Lucy, VM, 304; St. Herman of Alaska, C, 1837 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
14 Third Sunday of Advent <i>V</i>	15 St. Mau-rus, Ab, 6th c.	16 St. Euse-bius of Vercelli, BM, 371 <i>O Sapientia</i>	17 Ember Wednesday; St. Lazarus of Bethany, BC, 1st c. <i>O Adonny</i>	18 <i>O Radix Jesse</i>	19 Ember Friday <i>O Clavis David</i>	20 Ember Saturday; St. John of Kronstadt, C, 1908 <i>Lessons & Carols at 6pm</i> <i>O Oriens</i>
21 Fourth Sunday of Advent <i>O Rex gentium</i> <i>V</i>	22 St. Thomas, Apostle, 1 st c. (trans.) <i>O Emmanuel</i>	23 <i>O Virgo virginum</i>	24 Vigil of the Nativity <i>Mass at 10pm</i> <i>W</i>	25 The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ; St. Anastasia, VM., c. 304	26 St. Stephen, Proto-martyr, 1st c.; of the Octave of the Nativity	27 St. John, Evangelist & Apostle, 1st c.; of the Octave of the Nativity <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
28 Holy Innocents, Mm, 1st c.; Sun. within the Octave of the Nativity <i>W</i>	29	30	31 St. Syl-vester, PC, 335; of the Octave of the Nativity	1 The Cir-cumcision of Our Lord and Octave of the Nativity <i>Mass at 10am</i> <i>W</i>	2 Octave Day of St. Stephen; St. Fulgentius, BC, 533	3 Octave Day of St. John, Ap. Ev.; St. Genevieve, V, 512 <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.