

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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

**From a Homily of
Saint Ambrose
Bishop of Milan
died AD 397
Feast Day ~ December 7**

In the teaching of our Lord which preceded this Gospel reading (Luke 15:1-10) you learned that we are to put away all carelessness, to avoid conceit, to begin to be

earnest in religion, not to be held fast to the things of this world, or to place fleeting things before those that endure for ever. But though human frailty finds it hard to maintain a firm foothold in this so uncertain world, the Merciful Judge does not withhold the hope of his forgiveness, and has as a Good Physician made known to you the remedies even against going astray.

And so it was not without design that the holy Luke places in order before us three parables; that of the sheep that strayed and was found, that of the silver piece that was lost and also was found, that of the son who was dead (through sin) and who

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returned to life; so that sustained by this threefold cure we may seek to cure our own wounds: for a triple rope does not break.



Who are these three persons: the shepherd, the woman, the father? Is not Christ the Shepherd, the Church the woman, and God the Father? Christ Who took upon Himself your sin bears you upon His own Body; the Church searches for you; the Father receives you back. As a shepherd He brings us back, as a mother He looks for us, as a father He clothes us. First, mercy, second, intercession, third, reconciliation; each to each; the Redeemer comes to our aid, the Church intercedes for us, the Creator restores us to Himself. It is the same divine mercy in each operation; but grace varies according to our merits.

The sheep that strayed is brought back by the Shepherd. The silver piece that was lost is found. The son turns back fully repentant from his sinful wanderings, and retraces his footsteps to his father...

Let us therefore rejoice because that sheep which had fallen by the way in Adam is uplifted in Christ. The shoulders of Christ are the arms of his Cross. There have I laid down my sin; upon the neck of that sublime yoke of torment have I found rest. This sheep is one in kind, but not one in outward appearance. For we are all one body, but many members; and so it was written: *Now you are the body of Christ and members of member* [I Cor.22:27]. So therefore *the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost* [Lk. 19:10]; that is, all men; for *as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive* [I Cor. 15:22].

Rich then is that Shepherd of whose portion all we are but a hundredth part. For He has besides the innumerable flocks of the Archangels, of the Dominations, of the Powers, of the Thrones and all the rest whom He left upon the mountains. And since they are rational flocks, they not unfittingly rejoice because of the redemption of men. Let this also incite us to a just and upright life, that each one shall believe that his own conversion to God is pleasing to the angelic choirs, whose protection he should seek, and whose good will he should fear to lose. Be ye therefore a joy to the angels; let them have cause for rejoicing in your own return.

Neither is it without significance that the woman rejoices because of the silver piece that was found. For this is no ordinary piece of silver, upon which is the figure of the Prince. And because of this, the Image of the King is the wealth of the Church. We are His sheep; let us pray that He will place us amid *the waters of his refreshment* [Ps. 22:2]. We are, I say, his sheep; let us seek of Him a place of pasture. We are pieces of silver; let us jealously cherish our value. We are children; let us hasten to our Father, Who with the Son and Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth world without end. Amen.

The Feast of the Most Holy Trinity

God revealed himself to man as Trinity - three Persons in one Essence - and when our Lord Jesus Christ issued the Great Commission to his Apostles, he told them to “go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” [Matt. 28:19].

Through the controversies surrounding the Nature of Christ stirred up by Arius and others, the Orthodox Church

maintained this understanding of God. The Councils of Nicea in 325 and Constantinople in 381 formulated the creed which we use in Church today and which leaves no doubt that Christians believe in the Holy Trinity.



Since most of the feasts of the Church commemorate events in the life of Christ (Nativity, Easter) or the saints, or in the life of the Church (Pentecost), a feast day for the celebration of the Holy Trinity was only gradually established. It is believed that the first liturgical service to honor the Holy Trinity was a votive Mass composed by the monk Alcuin (possibly at the suggestion of St. Boniface) in the late eighth century. This Mass, probably intended for use in monasteries, was eventually approved for use in all churches in Germany at a local council in 1022. In the previous century (in 920), the bishop of Liège instituted a similar service for his parishes.

These votive masses for the Holy Trinity were not celebrated on any one particular day but on any “open” day in the Church calendar at the discretion of the clergy. But in England, in 1162, Thomas Becket, the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury, established such a service for use on the first Sunday after Pentecost. Since the Ember Saturday following the Feast of Pentecost was primarily a day for ordinations (the Archbishop’s consecration had taken place then) and these often lasted through the night and into the next day (Sunday), there had previously been no specific Mass for that day.

In the eleventh century Pope Alexander II had declared that the Church always honors the Holy Trinity by the unceasing

repetition of the Doxology and so had not instituted this festival in Rome. But by the fourteenth century, a Mass of the Holy Trinity was being celebrated throughout the West in monasteries, cathedrals, and parish churches. Sometimes the day of the feast was celebrated on the first Sunday following Pentecost and sometimes on the last Sunday of that season. So in the year 1334, Pope John XXII issued a decree allowing the celebration in all churches under his jurisdiction on the Sunday following Pentecost.

As a long-established feast day honoring an essential doctrine of the Orthodox Church, Antiochian Western Rite parishes have the privilege of keeping this festival (in the Eastern Rite, Pentecost is also called Trinity Sunday). We will celebrate this great feast on Sunday, June 7, and will sing many of the beautiful hymns written in early centuries to express our belief in the Triune God.

Sources: The Church of the Ancient Councils by Archbishop Peter L'Huillier; The Anglican Breviary, published by the Frank Gavin Foundaton; The Liturgical Year by Abbot Guéranger.

St. Justin Popovich

Feast Day ~ June 1

It is one of the great wonders of the Church that anyone can become a saint. The Church honors those who have done great deeds or led holy, self-sacrificial lives, or died for the faith; she numbers among her saints some who have first been great sinners and others who have been pure from their youth. There are saints who were severe ascetics, some who were actively involved in the tribulations of the world; some were simple, uneducated holy people and others intellectuals with advanced education. Whatever our situation in life, no matter what our background has been or our current circumstances are - we should all strive to become closer to God, to be like him, to become holy.

One of our more recently glorified saints who led the life of a theologian, a teacher, and a writer was St. Justin Popovich, whose feast day, June 1, is also the feast day for St. Justin the Martyr (or Philosopher), whose name he took when he entered the monastic life.

St. Justin was born on the Feast of the Annunciation in 1894 into a long line of priests (Popovich is Serbian for “priest’s family”). At the age of eleven, he began studies at the Theological Faculty of St. Sava in Belgrade from which he graduated in 1914. There he met his life-long mentor, Hieromonk (later Bishop and Saint) Nikolai Velimirović, who encouraged the bright young man to further his education.

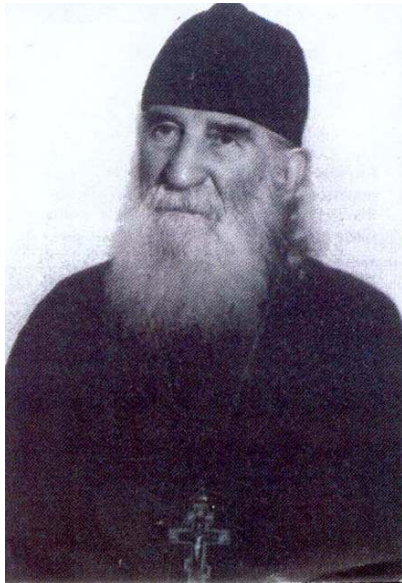
World War I stood in the way. When the war began, at first Justin served as a student nurse, but he contracted Typhus and spent some time in a hospital recovering. He returned to the duties of a soldier during a devastating time for the Serbian army and a year later, in January of 1916, he left the army and entered the monastery at the cathedral in Skadar.

Soon Justin was able to pursue both his life as a monk and his life as a student. He and several others were sent to the Orthodox seminary in Petrograd, Russia, where they learned about the great Russian saints while leading a disciplined monastic life. Then, at the encouragement of Fr. (St.) Nikolai, he entered the theological school of Oxford University in England, where he remained from 1916-19. Unfortunately, the University did not accept his doctoral dissertation on “The Philosophy and Religion of Dostoevsky”, but when he became an editor of the periodical *The Christian Life*, he was able to publish it there.

The doctorate denied him by Oxford University was finally received at the University of Athens in 1926, where his dissertation on the subject, “Personality and Cognition According to St. Macarius of Egypt”, was accepted. During his studies there,

Justin translated many of the lives of the saints from Greek, Syriac, and Slavonic into Serbian, and also homilies by St. John Chrysostom, St. Macarius and St. Isaac of Syria.

Teaching opportunities which followed during 1930-45 were at the Theological Academy of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Prizren; the Theological Faculty of St. Sava in Belgrade and at the University of Belgrade. During this time, he also assisted in helping to return to Orthodoxy those Carpatho-Russians who had been taken into the Uniate church in Czechoslovakia. A prolific writer, many of St. Justin's books and articles are available in English translation.



The aftermath of World War II changed everything again. The educational work of Archimandrite Justin came to an end when Serbia came under the control of the Communists. Christians were forced out of their positions of prominence in all institution. So the monk Justin returned to full monastic life at the Monastery of Ćelije and spent the remainder of his life saying his prayers under the surveillance of the Communist police. St. Justin's life came full circle when he reposed on his birthday - the Feast of the Annunciation - March 25, 1979 (April 7 new calendar).

St. Justin is particularly revered by the Serbian people for defending the Church against those who would accommodate it to the secular world. Having devoted his entire life to studying and teaching the word of God and about his saints, and living the life of

prayer that so many saints before him had led, St. Justin Popovich was formally declared a saint by the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church in 2010. Holy Justin, pray for us, that we may become more like God whatever our circumstances in life.

Two Excerpts from the Writings of St. Justin Popovich

The Trinitization of Man

For He is present in every commandment through His grace-filled power ("The Lord is hidden in His commandments," writes St. Mark the Ascetic), and He helps every struggler to keep the commandments. At the same time, the evangelic principle of theanthropic cooperation is kept; the God-man collaborates with man, while man remains an independent person, even though his entire being is in the Lord Christ, even though he dwelleth in Him. In the same way, the Lord Christ dwelleth in man, and does not lose the fullness of His person. ... This means the Christian is never alone; he is the dwelling place and workshop of the Thrice-Holy Godhead. Everything leads to this. Keeping the commandments Trinitizes man, because this Christianizes and Spiritualizes him. A Christian's life is one unceasing *podvig* (spiritual struggle) of Christianization, Spiritualization, Divinization – i.e. Trinitization. The entire Christian life is one unceasing, and indivisible struggle to become like Christ, to establish the Spirit in man: theosis = establishing the Trinity within oneself. [Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian]

On Love, Hate, and the Origin of Man

If a man hates someone, he in reality hates him because he does not see him as a divine creation. He does not recognize him as a

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being in the image of God; he has not found the path to his soul because he does not have the true light, which would illumine the soul of his brother, whom he hates, and would show him his eternal and immortal side. In this darkness, in this ignorance about man, lives everyone who reduces man to a mortal being, or just to a body or to a descendant of an animal or just a plain animal.

According to the holy Theologian, the commandment of Paradise, the proto-commandment, the commandment *ap' arche* (from the beginning) is mutual love. This love indicates that man is of God, that mankind is of God, in origin and by his new, spiritual rebirth. If the love of man is lacking, then the real, ontological, and true origin of man cannot be known; and man then wanders in the dark and seeks his origin among animals, elements, and in other things of this world. [Commentary on 1st John]

Parish News

A parish work day has been scheduled for Saturday, June 6, to clean and make much-needed repairs around our building. Please come and lend a hand.

Congratulations to Benjamin Green, who has just graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Well done, Ben!

We bid farewell to the Borthwick family, as they move to the Atlanta, Georgia area for Stephen's new teaching position.

We are all invited to attend the dedication service for the new building of St. Patrick's parish in Warrenton (Bealton), Virginia. Both Bishop THOMAS and Bishop JOHN will be in attendance. The service will be at 10:00AM on Saturday, June 27.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>June 2015</h1>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>
	1 Monday after Pentecost	2 Tuesday after Pentecost; Ss. Marcellinus, Peter and Erasmus, Mm, 304	3 Ember Wednesday in the Octave of Pentecost; St. Kevin of Glendalough, Ab, c. 618	4 Thursday after Pentecost; St. Petroc, C, 564	5 Ember Friday in the Octave of Pentecost; St. Boniface, BM, 754	6 Ember Saturday in the Octave of Pentecost <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
7 Trinity Sunday; First Sunday after Pentecost <i>W</i>	8	9 St. Columba of Iona, Ab, 597	10 St. Margaret of Scotland, QW, 1092	11 Corpus Christi	12 of the Octave of Corpus Christi; Ss. Basilides, late 3 rd c., Cyrinus, Nabor & Nazarius, c. 303, Mm	13 of the Octave of Corpus Christi <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
14 Sunday in the Oct. of Corpus Christi; comm. 2nd Sunday after Pentecost; St. Basil the Great, BCD, 379 <i>W</i>	15 of the Octave of Corpus Christi; Ss. Vitus, Modestus & Crescentia, Mm, c. 303	16 of the Octave of Corpus Christi	17 of the Octave of Corpus Christi	18 St. Ephrem the Syrian, DnCD, 373; Octave Day of Corpus Christi	19 Ss. Gervase & Protase, Mm, 2nd. c	20 St. Silverius, PM, 538; Translation of St. Edward, KM, 980 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
21 Third Sunday after Pentecost <i>G</i>	22 St. Alban, Proto-martyr of England, 209 and St. Paulinus, BC, 431	23 St. Etheldreda, QV, 679	24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist	25	26 Ss. John & Paul, Mm, c. 362	27 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
28 Fourth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Irenaeus of Lyons, BM, 202 <i>G</i>	29 Ss. Peter & Paul, Apostles, 1st c.	30 Commemoration of St. Paul the Apostle; of the Oct. of Ss. Peter & Paul	1 of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul <i>The Parish Life Conference will be held in Levittown, NY, July 1-5</i>	2 Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary; of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul; St. John Maximovitch BC, 1966	3 of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul; St. Leo II, PC, 683	4 of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul <i>(Independence Day) Vespers at 6pm</i>

Confessions may be made during the Psalms at Matins, following Vespers, and by appointment.

Coffee Hour follows Sunday Liturgy. Sunday School for children is during Coffee Hour.