

✠ 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 Treatise by St. Cyprian of Carthage

Beloved brethren, he who serves as a soldier of God, who, being stationed in the camp of heaven, already hopes for the divine things, ought to recognize himself, so that we should have no fear, no dread at the storms and whirlwinds of the world, since the Lord predicted that these things would come through the exhortation of his provident voice, instructing and teaching and preparing and strengthening the people of His church to all endurance of things to come. He foretold and prophesied that wars and famine and earthquakes and pestilence would arise in the various places, and, that as unexpected and new fear of destructive agencies might not shake us, He forewarned that adversity would increase more and more in the last times.

Inside:

<i>St. Columbanus, Abbot.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Parish News.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The Presentation of the Virgin Mary.....</i>	<i>10</i>



Behold the things which were spoken of are coming to pass, and since the things which were foretold are coming to pass, there will follow also whatsoever were promised, as the Lord Himself promises, saying: *When you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand.* [Luke 21:31]

The kingdom of God, beloved brethren, has begun to be at hand; the reward of life and the joy of eternal salvation and perpetual happiness and the possession of paradise once lost are now coming with the passing of the world; now the things of heaven are succeeding those of earth, and great things small, and eternal things, transitory. What place is there here for anxiety and worry? Who in the midst of these things is fearful and sad save he who lacks hope and faith? For it is for him to fear death who is unwilling to go to Christ. It is for him to be unwilling to go to Christ who does not believe that he is beginning to reign with Christ...

When our sorrow will come to joy, our Lord Himself again tells us, saying: *I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you.* [John 16:22] Since to see Christ is to rejoice, and since none of us can have joy unless he shall see Christ, what blindness or what madness it is to love the afflictions and punishments and tears of the world and not rather to hurry to the joy which can never be taken from us.

We're Moving!

The Parish Council has accepted a financial offer from the buyers of the Euclid Street property to vacate early, so our last day in our current home will likely be Sunday, December 6, the Second Sunday in Advent. We are working with Montgomery County authorities to seek permits for temporary use of our new property on Roxbury Road in Silver Spring, and also working to find an interim place for worship if that becomes necessary.

St. Columbanus

Feast Day ~ November 21

The Irishman, Columbanus, born in 543, was intellectually gifted, and his education in grammar, rhetoric, geometry and Holy Scripture could have prepared him for any number of important positions. But instead of other possibilities, he chose to dedicate himself to Christ in the monastic life. If he thought that by choosing this life he would enjoy solitude and tranquility as he prayed and fasted, he was very wrong.

The first years were relatively tranquil. After initial study with the Abbot Sinell of Cluaninis Monastery (during which time Columbanus wrote a commentary on the Psalms), the young monk moved to Bangor Abbey where he received the spiritual guidance of Abbot (St.) Comgall.

At the age of forty, Columbanus received Comgall's blessing to move to the continent to found a monastery in Gaul with the possibility of pursuing missionary work in a land where Christianity was only nominally practiced. Twelve other monks, who would form the basis for a new monastery, traveled with Columbanus.



The monks were fortunate in receiving a favorable welcome from King Gontram of Burgundy and they first established a monastery in an abandoned Roman fortress. News of the piety of the monks brought many men to seek the same life and it was soon necessary to found another monastic community, this time in a castle in what is now Luxeuil-les-Bains. Before long, a third monastery, at Fontaine-lès-Luxeuil was founded. Abbot Columbanus

maintained authority over the three monasteries, where he established a demanding Rule of life in the Celtic tradition: strict fasting, poverty, obedience to the elders, and emphasizing private confession to a priest. The monasteries provided hospitality for many pilgrims and in order to find solitude amidst all his responsibilities, Columbanus frequently retired to a nearby cave.

The first sign of trouble was in contacts with French bishops, who criticized Columbanus and his monks for celebrating Easter in the Celtic manner and for wearing the Celtic tonsure. This was nearly seventy years before these issues were finally resolved at the English Synod of Whitby (664) and at this time, Abbot Columbanus argued fiercely for maintaining the tradition as it had been taught to him. He even appealed to Pope Gregory I, writing three letters asking for his approval. If there were replies from the Pope, who died in 604, they have been lost.

The next troublesome matters had to do with the moral laxity of the royal family. The new king, Theuderic II, was under the direct control of his grandmother, Brunhilda. A great wielder of power, this woman did not wish for her grandson to follow

Christian ways and to have a legitimate marriage. She approved when he took a mistress, with whom he had several illegitimate children. Abbot Columbanus did not approve. He was very vocal in his criticism of this manner of living and he received the full force of Brunhilda's anger.

Abbot Columbanus was soon forced to leave this kingdom and told to return to Ireland. God had a different plan for the abbot, however, because the ship he and his fellow Irish monks were sailing in was forced back to shore by a severe storm. The captain of the ship refused to have these passengers on his ship when the storm subsided.

So the monks traveled up the Rhine River, preaching to the local people, strengthening the faith of those Christians they met. Columbanus determined to travel on into Italy, but his companion, Gallus, decided to remain behind in Frankish territory, causing friction between the two monks. Arriving in Milan in 612, Columbanus was welcomed by the Lombard King Agilulf and Queen Theodelinda. She was a devout Orthodox Christian but the Lombard Christians followed the Arian heresy. After being given land at Bobbio (between Milan and Genoa), St. Columbanus' next struggles were in defending Nicene Christianity against the Arians and bringing the pagan Lombards to the Christian faith..

Once again, Abbot Columbanus found a cave for solitary prayer. He made an oratory, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, in his cave and it was here that he fell asleep in the Lord on November 21, 615. Knowing that death was approaching, he sent his abbot's staff to the monk Gallus, as a sign that he had forgiven him and wished to be forgiven for his part in their earlier dispute.

Columbanus was considered a saint by all who knew him for his tireless work in bringing many to Christianity, for his leadership in establishing monasteries, for his courage in combating both heresy and royal anger, for his love of Christ and

His Church. He had a special bond with animals, and there are numerous miracles attributed to him, especially ones of healing. An account of his life, which tells of the saint's sometimes headstrong behavior as well as his virtues, was written by Jonas, a monk of the Bobbio abbey (where the saint's relics are preserved), about twenty-five years after his death.

May we remember - as St. Columbanus learned - that leading a faithful Christian life may not bring peace and tranquility; our Lord himself warned us about the difficulties we might face for His sake [Mark 13]. Despite trials and tribulations, may we remain faithful and may St. Columbanus pray for us.

Sources: A Calendar of British Saints (Orthodox Synaxarion) compiled by Fr. Benedict Haigh; Celtic Saints by Martin Wallace; On-line Wikipedia article; Saints of the British Isles by Andrew Bond and Nicolas Mabin.

Parish News



Thanks to all who have participated in the work days at our new property, clearing leaves and dead tree branches and other yard work.

The month of November brings a wonderful collection of feast days in the liturgical year, beginning with All Saints Day on Sunday, November 1. At the end of Mass that day, we will sing the Litany of Saints as we venerate the relics of those saints we have at St. Gregory's: Saints Gregory, Nicholas, and Lucy. As has been our custom, we will continue the celebration of the lives

of the saints at coffee hour following Mass. All are invited to give a brief description of a patron or favorite saint.

On All Souls Day, Monday, November 2, Lauds of the Departed will be sung at 7pm, Requiem Mass at 7:30, and a pot-luck supper will follow. Please give the names of loved ones you wish to include in the prayers for the departed at that service to Fr. Nicholas.

We will share in the joyful celebration of Holy Matrimony of Candace Archer and Patrick Woolley on Saturday, November 7, at 11:30am at St. George's Church on 16th Street.

On Sunday, November 8, we celebrate the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Law, a feast day which honors those Old Testament luminaries who prepared the way for the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.

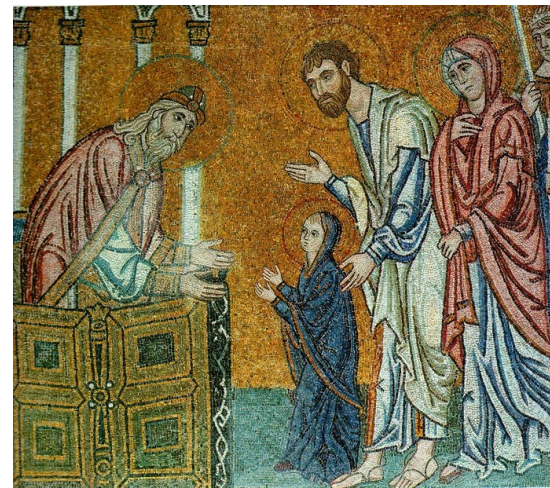
The Feast of the Presentation of the Theotokos in the Temple will be celebrated on Saturday, November 21, with Mass at 10am (Matins at 9:30), followed by a pot-luck brunch.

After coffee hour on Sunday, November 22 - the feast day of St. Cecilia, who is the patron saint of church musicians - Fr. Nicholas and Kh. Becky will give a brief demonstration of our parish's pipe organ, as it will soon be dismantled and put into storage.

We begin a new Church year on Sunday, November 29, the First Sunday of Advent. In this season, we prepare ourselves to greet our Lord Jesus Christ in His human form at Christmas and we prepare ourselves for His coming again in the last days.

The Presentation of the Virgin Mary

Reprinted from *Orthodox Saints* by George Poulos



It stands to reason that Almighty God's selection of the Virgin Mary to be the Mother of God was not a random selection. In his wisdom, God selected not from the nobility but the humble, thoroughly devout daughter of equally devout parents whose names were Joachim and Anna.

Tradition has it that Anna, childless for many years, reached a point in her life when, just short of despair, she prayed in earnest that God grant her a child with a promise that should her wish be fulfilled she would pledge the child to his holy Temple. It did not matter to Anna that the child granted her by God was a girl and, faithful to her word, she presented her daughter, given the name of Mary, to the holy Temple at the age of three, on the 21st of November. She remained in the house of God for twelve years, emerging at the age of fifteen with a purity and wholesomeness found in no other creature of God.

By the time she had been released to her parents, the saintly Mary was not only a flawless maiden but in her twelve years had acquired the lore and religion of the deepest scholars,

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something usually denied a female child of those days. So much has been written of the Lord's mother that the concern here is for a glimpse into her life as a human being...

The beginnings of Christianity were not the scattered remnants that somehow merged into a smattering of ideologies. By divine intent the great religion of Christ stemmed from a tight circle which spread itself out as the greatest of human experiences. To begin with, the high priest entrusted with the care of Mary was Zachariah, who in turn was the father of St. John the Baptist, referred to as the prefiguration of the Messiah and the man who was to baptize Jesus Christ.

While still in her teens the Virgin Mary, in a story that cannot be told often enough, was visited by the Archangel Gabriel, sent by the Almighty himself to be told that she, a wisp of a girl, mortal but blessed, was to become the mother of the Son of God. There is every reason to believe that, as electrifying as the news was, she received it with both joy and complete serenity. A girl can get excited by being elected "Queen of the May" but to be "Queen of the Universe" must have been an anticipation not of excitement but the sublimest of joy, human or otherwise...

Among the Holy Land's most sacred shrines is the one at the base of the Garden of Gethsemane, the site of the agony of Christ. This shrine is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and her parents. After a descent down a cement stairway of about fifty steps, the tomb of Joachim is on the left and on the right is the tomb of his wife Anna. Some fifty steps below this is the empty tomb of the Virgin Mary since, like the Son of God, she ascended into heaven. Stories abound about the Virgin Mary, but the truthful one that clings and shall do so forever is that in being the mother of the Son of God, she is the mother of the world.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2015</h1>					<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>	<i>The Diocesan Clergy Retreat will be at Antiochian Village, November 3-6</i>
1 All Saints Day; comm. 22nd Sunday after Pentecost <i>W</i>	2 All Souls Day <i>Mass at 7:30pm B</i>	3 St. Silvia, Mother of St. Gregory, Ma, 592	4 Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm, c. 304	5 St. Elizabeth, Ma, 1st C.	6 St. Leonard of Noblac, Ab, c. 559	7 St. Wilibrord of Echternach, BC, 739 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
8 Patriarchs & Prophets of the Old Law; Octave Day of All Saints 23rd Sunday after Pentecost <i>W</i>	9 Ded. of the Basilica of St. Savior in Rome, 324; St. Benignus, BC, c. 468	10 Ss. Tryphon, Respicius & Nympha Mm, c. 250	11 St. Martin of Tours, BC, 397; St. Theodore the Studite, Ab, 826	12 St. Martin I, PC, 655	13 St. Britius of Tours, BC, 444	14 St. Gregory Palamas, BCD, 1359 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
15 24th Sunday after Pentecost <i>G</i>	16	17 St. Gregory the Wonder- worker, BC, c. 270; St. Gregory of Tours, BC, 594	18 Dedication of Basilica of Ss. Peter & Paul in Rome 4 th c.	19 St. Pontianus, PM, 235	20 St. Edmund, KM, 870	21 Presentation of the BVM; St. Gelasius, PC, 496; St. Columbanus, Ab, c. 615. <i>Mass at 10am W</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
22 25th & Last Sunday after Pentecost; St. Cecilia, VM, c. 230 <i>G</i>	23 St. Clement, PM, 96; St. Felicity of Rome, M, 165	24 St. Chryso- gonus of Apuleia, M., c. 304	25 St. Katherine of Alexandria VM, c. 4th c.	26 St. Peter of Alexandria, BM, 311 (Thanksgiving Day)	27	28 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
29 First Sunday of Advent; St. Saturninus, M, 309 <i>V</i>	30 St. Andrew the Apostle, 1st c.					

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

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