

✠ 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 by
St. Peter Chrysologus
d. 450

When cautious physicians skillfully prepare a remedy of salutary juices against deadly diseases, and if the patient

rashly takes it differently from the directions, or in amount not conducive to healing, or with improper timing, that which was planned to bring health becomes a cause of danger. So, too, if the hearer rashly tries to understand the word of God without the teaching authority, and learning, and the doctrine of the faith, that which is the nutrition of life becomes an occasion of perdition. We must strive, brethren, that what has been divinely written for our progress may not turn out, through our lack of skill in hearing, to be something detrimental to our souls.

Do you think that the Evangelist taught that the Chaldaean watchers of the stars, the Magi journeying with the aid of the stars, studying the affairs of the heavens in the darkness of

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the nights, attributing the causes of birth and death to the movements of the stars, asserting that good or evil comes to men through the decision of these luminous bodies - do you think that the Evangelist taught that it was by the mere natural guidance of a star that they today discovered the birth of the Christ hidden from the ages?

Let no one have such a thought! That is what the world thinks, what the pagans understand, what the reading yields at first blush. But the Gospel text speaks matters not human, but divine; matters not ordinary, but new; matters not deceptive through cleverness, but based upon truth; matters not illusory to the eyes, but rooted in hearts; matters not fluid through conjectures, but firmly established by authority; matters coming from God, not fate; matters not gathered by reckonings, but acquired by the practice of virtues...

When would a Magus have sought God save by God's command? When would a star-gazer have found the King of heaven, save by God's revelation? When would a Chaldaean, who served as many gods as there were stars in the sky, have adored the one God without God's aid? The Magi themselves are more of a heavenly sign than the star, for a Magus recognized the King of Judaea and the Author of the Law, while the Judean does not; Chaldaea pays deference while Judaea does not; Jerusalem turns away and plays apostate, Syria follows and adores.

Behold there came Magi from the East to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is the newly born king of the Jews? We have seen his

star. ' [Matt. 2:1,2] And what is that which is see? Truly, what the Apostle said: *Being rich, he became poor.* [2 Cor. 8:9] When He was rich in his divinity, He became a poor man in our flesh; He who made, owns, and sustains all creation began to have one star.

Where is the newly born king of the Jews? This is tantamount to saying: Why does the king of the Jews lie in a manger, and not repose in the Temple? Why is He not resplendent in purple, rather than poorly clad in rags? Why does He lie hidden in a cave, and not on display in the Sanctuary? The beasts have received in a manger Him whom you have disdained to receive in His house. As it has been written: *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.* [Isaiah 1:3] But you, O Israel, have not sought out your Master.

We have seen his star. The star appeared not of itself, but by command; not because of the gravitation of heaven, but by an impulse of God; not because of the law of the stars, but of the novelty of signs; not because of any clear climate in the sky, but because of the power of Him being born; not from art, but from God; not because of an astrologer's knowledge, but the Creator's foreknowledge; not by an arithmetical reckoning, but by a divine decree; through heavenly care, not Chaldaean curiosity; not through art of magic, but because of Jewish prophecy.

Thus, when the Magus saw that human cares had come to naught, that his own arts had failed, that the labors of worldly wisdom had been exhausted, that the perspiration of all the sects had congealed and the treasures of all philosophy had been emptied out, that the night of paganism had fled and the clouds of opinions dissolved, that the very shadows of the devils had skulked into hiding, that the star was not, like a comet with its surrounding tail, hiding what it was announcing, covering up what was shining - when the Magus saw all this, he spoke: "It is a new ray, a significant light, and a steady splendor, and there - above the law

of the universe, above the arrangement of flesh, above the nature of men - there pointing out the King now born."

With his error thus dispelled, he follows, he runs, he arrives, he finds, he rejoices, he falls prostrate, he adores. For, not through the star, not through his skill, but through the help of God has he found in astonishment, God in human flesh.

Well done, thou good & faithful servant!

These words of Jesus in a parable recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel certainly apply to Subdeacon Jerome (Jerry) Chiles, who fell asleep in the Lord on January 5. Jerry gave so much of himself in so many ways in service to Christ and His Church.



Jerry was a founding member of St. Gregory's and was ordained as subdeacon in December of 1998 by Bishop ANTOUN. From the beginning, Jerry helped to establish a concern for beauty in the Liturgy as one of utmost importance for our parish. He took on the responsibility for training acolytes and served at the altar for most services, rarely missing Vespers, Matins or Mass. He initiated the work of our bread bakers, who make the hosts and *antidoron*; he polished brass and ironed linens and frontals; he laid out vestments for every service. For many years, Jerry's beautiful voice sang the words of our Lord in the Passion Gospels for Palm Sunday and Good Friday.

Jerry's concern for beauty also extended to the exterior of the church. When we acquired our building on Euclid Street, he became our parish gardener - planting, watering, pruning, mowing - so that our church was adorned with a beautiful garden. Since he frequently worked outside in the garden, he was the face of St. Gregory's to the neighborhood, always smiling and chatting with our neighbors.

Even as his health began to deteriorate, Jerry continued to make his contributions in whatever way he could. We will miss him very much but will always be grateful for his presence and the contributions he made to the life of St. Gregory's.

Rest eternal, grant unto him, O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.

St. Cedd, Bishop

Feast Day ~ January 7

Since the time when the Apostles met in Jerusalem to decide whether Gentile converts should first become Jews, the Church has met in council to make decisions regarding theology and church discipline and practice under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Church has declared the great theological truths of our faith in the Seven Ecumenical Councils and has regulated Church life in many smaller, local councils throughout the ages. St. Cedd of Northumbria is an example of one who made a lasting contribution in a council of the Church.

Most of what we know about St. Cedd comes to us from the writings of St. Bede. He tells us that Cedd was the oldest of four brothers - Chad, Cynibil and Caelin as well as Cedd - who grew up in a devout family in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria in 7th century Britain. The brothers were sent to the

monastery at Lindisfarne, where St. Aidan had brought the practices of Irish Christianity to Northumbria, for their religious instruction. Cedd remained in the monastery, serving under Bishop (St.) Finan, St. Aidan's successor, became steeped in the ascetical practices of his mentor, and was eventually ordained to the priesthood.



Cedd was sent out on several missionary endeavors to convert some of the various tribal inhabitants of Northumbria and Mercia. Most of these missions had political implications, as they were requested by local kings (such as when a marriage between a Christian king's daughter and a pagan king's son stipulated conversion to Christianity as a requirement). Another mission was to the East Saxon kingdom, which had been Christianized by St. Augustine

and the monks sent by St. Gregory the Great. Christianity had faltered in later years, depending on the preferences of the local king. So the priest Cedd was sent to bring the faith back to these people and after some success, he was consecrated to be the bishop for the East Saxons. Bishop Cedd was fearless in his presentation of Christianity and the personal commitment that it requires and he did not hesitate to chastise the powerful for their sins.

Bishop Cedd founded many churches and several monasteries, including one at Lastingham in his native Northumbria. He served as abbot at Lastingham and used it as his base, traveling far to fulfil his duties as bishop (and sometimes on diplomatic

missions for kings). This was consistent with the Irish tradition of monastic and missionary bishops.

These missionary efforts in a still largely pagan area would be enough reason for us to venerate Cedd as a saint of the Church. But a diplomatic effort in a local church council may have been an act of even greater importance in the spread of Christianity in this part of the world. The differing practices of the Celtic Christians from those who had come from Rome had caused great confusion in the efforts at conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. Fairly small differences - such as the style of the monks' tonsure - might have been ironed out eventually through compromise, but larger issues - especially the dating of Easter - had to be settled once and for all if Christianity was to thrive in this land. A synod was called at the monastery in Whitby to argue and decide which way would be followed.

Bishop Cedd was a participant in this synod and it quickly became apparent that one of the stumbling blocks for decision making would be the various languages spoken by those in attendance and the inability for some to understand others in order to comprehend the theological arguments. Bishop Cedd had an affinity for languages and through his travels and missionary activities had learned many local dialects. So he presented himself as an interpreter - making the arguments for both sides - in such languages as Gaelic, Old English, Frankish, Early Welsh, and Latin. St. Bede tells us that this was interpreted as a sign of the Holy Spirit reversing the effects of the tower of Babel.

The participants in the synod of Whitby voted to follow the Roman - the Orthodox - way of calculating the date of Easter, choosing to celebrate this Feast of Feasts with all Christians throughout the world. St. Cedd accepted this decision and all the others regarding church discipline and returned to his monastery. Soon after, he became ill with plague and passed from this world into the next.

May we ask for the intercessions of St. Cedd as preparations are being made for the "great and holy Council" which has been proposed for later this year. We pray that his holiness of life, his zeal for the spread of the Gospel, and his desire to be a diplomat for the Church in its deliberations will serve as an example for our Orthodox bishops who seek to speak with one voice. *Holy Cedd, pray for us!*

Parish News

As our beloved brother Subdeacon Jerome prepared to depart this life, so many of you visited him in the hospital, talked with him on the phone, and prayed for him. He certainly knew that he was loved and that was a great comfort to him in his last days. His funeral Mass will be at St. George's Church on 16th Street on Saturday, January 9. The body will be received at the church at 10am and a time of visitation will follow as Lauds for the Departed is sung. Requiem Mass will follow at 10:30. Thanks to all who are preparing to serve and sing and help with the meal afterward.



We began this month with two important feast days in the liturgical year: January 1, the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord, and Epiphany, January 6, which began a season which is very long this year because of the late date of Pascha. Water was blessed at this service for use in blessing homes during this season. Please speak with Fr. Nicholas or Fr. Raphael about scheduling your house blessing.

St. Gregory Orthodox Church
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Address Correction Requested

We are grateful to The Woods Academy for making their chapel available for our services while we await permits for remodeling work at our new property. Thanks to all who are helping during this time of transition. Since all liturgical items for services, including vestments, have to be brought to the chapel by the clergy for each service it is greatly appreciated if others can arrive early to help with setting up the icons, putting out books, re-arranging chairs, and assembling bulletins. We are grateful to Sharon Green for taking responsibility for setting up for coffee hours and making sure that we have paper products. Please remember that coffee hours should be kept simple (food must be already prepared and ready to serve; serving dishes and utensils must be brought from home).

Our annual Parish Meeting will take place at coffee hour following Mass on Sunday, January 17. We will hear reports from the Parish Council on building plans, from Karl, our treasurer on parish finances, and from Fr. Nicholas on the “state of the parish”. Please make every effort to remain after church that day.

Bishop JOHN will be with us the following Sunday, January 24. He will be in Washington for the *March for Life* on Friday, January 22, and will remain to make his visitation with us. *Details to be announced.*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2016</h1>					1 The Circumcision of Our Lord and Octave Day of the Nativity <i>Mass at 10am</i> <i>W</i>	2 Octave Day of St. Stephen; St. Fulgentius, BC, 533 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
3 The Second Sunday after Christmas; Octave Day of St. John, Ap. Ev.; St. Genevieve, V, 512 <i>W</i>	4 Octave Day of the Holy Innocents, Mm; St. Titus, BC, c. 96	5 Vigil of the Epiphany of Our Lord; St. Simeon Stylites, C, 460 <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> <i>W</i>	6 The Epiphany of Our Lord	7 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Cedd, BC, 664	8 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Lucius & comp., Mm, c. 290; St. Severinus, Ab, 482	9 of the Octave of Epiphany <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
10 First Sunday after Epiphany; of the Oct. of Epiphany; St. Paul the First Hermit, C., c. 345 <i>W</i>	11 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Hyginus, PM, c. 142; St. Theodosius, Ab, c. 529	12 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Benedict Biscop, Ab, 690	13 Octave Day of Epiphany; St. Kentigern, BC, 603	14 St. Hilary, BCD, 367; St. Felix of Nola, PrM, 255; St. Nina, V, 335	15 St. Maurus, Ab, 584	16 St. Marcellus, PM, 309, St. Honoratus, BC, 429 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
17 Second Sunday after Epiphany; St. Anthony, Ab, 356 <i>W</i>	18 Chair of St. Peter in Rome; St. Prisca, VM, c. 270	19 St. Mark of Ephesus, BC, 1445	20 Ss. Fabian, BM & Sebastian, M, 3rd c.	21 St. Agnes, VM, 304	22 St. Vincent, M, 304; St. Anastasius, M, 628	23 St. Emerentiana, VM, c. 304; St. John the Almoner, BC, c. 619 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
24 Third Sunday after Epiphany; St. Timothy, BM, 97 <i>G</i>	25 Conversion of St. Paul	26 St. Polycarp, BM, 156	27 St. John Chrysostom, BCD, 407	28 The Second Feast of St. Agnes, VM	29	30 St. Martina, VM, 228; St. Bathildes, QMa, 680 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
31 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany <i>G</i>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>

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

Coffee Hour follows Sunday Mass.