

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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An Excerpt from a Work by St. Gregory Palamas d. 1359

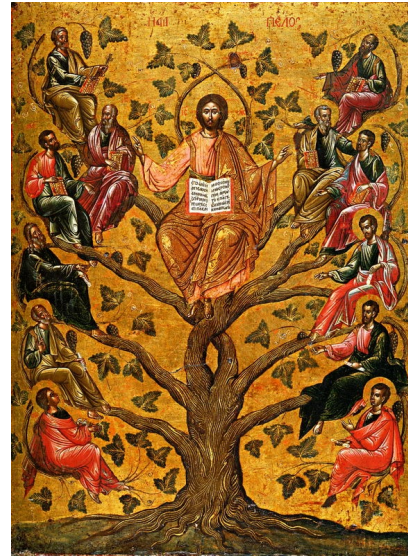
In the same way that each of us has a house, family, land, and perhaps a vineyard, as well as animals, money and various possessions, so God in His love for mankind has us in

place of all these things. We are God's house, says the apostle, if we hold fast the confession and pride in our hope firm to the end [*cf.* Heb. 3:6, I Pet 4:17], showing our piety through confessing our faith, and our godly way of life through speaking without shame of our hope.

Similarly, God said through the prophet, *Ye shall be holy, for I am holy* [Lev. 11:45], and John, Christ's beloved disciple, told us, *It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure* [*cf.* I John 3:2-3]. We are, and always shall be, the

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dwelling of Him who said, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God* [2 Cor. 6:16, *cf.* Lev. 26-11-12, Ezek. 37:27], provided our piety is accompanied by a pure life. If, on the other hand, we live wrongly and do not repent, we shall hear Him say, *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate* [Matt. 23:38], and we shall be abandoned, to quote Scripture again, *as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers* [Isa. 1:8], which, once the season when it is needed has passed, has no further use.

The Lord himself tell us that He sees us as his family, saying, *Whoever will do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother* [Matt.12:50]. Notice what procures this sublime kinship for us: it is living virtuously in a way pleasing to God, and acting according to His commandments, for that is the will of the Father above. But anyone who does not do the heavenly Father's will, far from having any relationship with Him, is a descendant of the enemy. That is why the Lord told the Jews, *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do* [John 8:44]. And when they said they were children of Abraham, He replied, *If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham* [John 8:39].

According to Isaiah, "the house of Israel", meaning all who accept true piety, are "the vineyard of the Lord of hosts" [Isa. 5:7]. When this vineyard bears fruit pleasing to God, He takes care of it and tends it. If, however, instead of grapes it produces thorns, the deadly barbs of sins, it is left neglected, set before the wild beasts, that is, the evil demons, to be trodden underfoot, and

delivered up to the fire to be burnt. For this reason, when the Lord said to his disciples, *I am the vine, ye are the branches: my Father is the husbandman* [John 15:5, 1], He continued, *Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit: and every one that beareth not fruit is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.* [cf. John 15:2, 6] The fact that our Creator also regards us as His flock is clear from His words to the leader of the pre-eminent company of the apostles: *Peter, lovest thou me? Tend my lambs, tend my sheep* [cf. John 21:15-17]. For *all we like sheep have gone astray* [Isa. 53:6], and have been lost like a silver coin fallen from the master's hand [cf. Luke 15:8-10]. But the Good Shepherd came [John 10:11], our natural Master; He sought, found and saved us, and united us to Himself in a way surpassing words.

Brethren, let us follow Christ, the Good Shepherd, who leads us into the pastures and folds of eternal life. Let us retain His image and likeness through living virtuously, that we may not fall from His life-giving hand. By means of good works let us bear fruit for Him, that we may be the Lord of hosts' vineyard, newly-planted and beloved. Let us do the *good, acceptable, and perfect, will of God* [Rom. 12:2], that we may have Him as our Father. Let us cleanse ourselves *from all defilement of flesh and spirit* [2 Cor. 7:1], that we may be called the house of God...

The Followers of the Apostles

How, in the first three centuries *Anno Domino*, did Christianity spread? How did the knowledge of Jesus Christ pass from twelve of His followers and their families and friends to people all around the Mediterranean and beyond? How - despite sporadic and then systematic persecution - did an estimated 10% of the population of the vast Roman Empire become Christian in those three centuries? Who were the people who made this happen?

This is a question we should be asking in our post-Christian day and we should seek diligently for the answer so that we may once again make use of whatever ways were effective in first-century Palestine or 2nd to 4th century Gaul and Britain.

The Apostles of our Lord had been the “giants” of the faith. They had heard Jesus' teachings first-hand and witnessed his miracles, they had suffered through his Crucifixion, rejoiced at his Resurrection, and then received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. They were the “front-line soldiers” who carried the Good News out into the world. They taught and inspired others to follow their examples and it is those followers of *The Way* who continued to change the world.

The *Roman Martyrology*, which lists numerous saints who witnessed to the truth of Christianity in ages past, provides the names of those whose work resulted in this phenomenal growth. At Vespers each Saturday evening, the list for the following day is read at St. Gregory's so that we hear something about the life and death (often a martyr's death) of these pioneers of the faith. Very little is known about many of these early saints - sometimes only their names, “written in the Book of Life” [Phil. 4:3] - but the fledgling Church, in some part of the world or other, revered that person as one who embodied the love of Christ and who shared it with others, using whatever skills and circumstances available to them. In the Martyrology readings for the month of October, we encounter a number of saints who belonged to that generation which carried the Church forward after the passing of the Apostles.

On *October 4*, Ss. Crispus and Caius: In I Corinthians [1:14], we learn that St. Paul baptized Ss. Crispus and Caius, and in the Book of Acts [18:8] that Crispus had been the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth. Caius provided hospitality for St. Paul at his home in Corinth where St. Paul wrote his letter to the Romans [16:23]. This is also the feast day of St. Hierotheus, a lawyer in



Corinth who was baptized by St. Paul around the year 53 and who may have become a bishop, using his rhetorical skills as a lawyer for evangelization before dying a martyr's death.

On October 6, St. Sagar: All we know of him is that he was a disciple of St. Paul who became the Bishop of Laodicea (in modern-day Turkey) and that he was martyred.

On October 8, Ss. Marcellus and Apuleius: As seekers for the truth, these men were first followers of Simon the Magician, who performed "miracles" in the public square and sought fame. (The story of the magus is told in Acts 8.) When the two heard the teaching of St. Peter, they recognized what they had been seeking and became converts to Christianity; they were later martyred for their faith.

On October 11, Ss Zenais and Philomilla: These sisters are identified as relatives of St Paul living in his hometown of Tarsus, but nothing else is known of their lives. Like so many others, they were brought into the Church by one of their kinfolk and continued to tell others about Christ.

On October 12, St. Carpus: Carpus was one of the Seventy, a group sent out by our Lord (in pairs) to precede Him on his journeys and to help prepare people for the Savior. St. Luke records Christ's admonition to potential followers: "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the



kingdom of God." [Luke 9:62] The Seventy were followers who never looked back but made a full and complete commitment to their Lord. St. Carpus is mentioned by St. Paul in his second letter to Timothy [4:13] because Paul had left a cloak (or a liturgical vestment) and some books at his home in Troas (Macedonia) and asked Timothy to bring them to him.

On October 22, St. Mary Salome: Salome was one of the women who brought myrrh and other spices to the tomb for anointing the body of Jesus and discovered the empty tomb. Holy Tradition identifies her as the daughter of Joseph and his first wife, who married Zebedee and whose sons were James and John, Apostles of the Lord. Salome had been closely involved in Christ's ministry, no doubt helping behind the scenes with domestic necessities. Even when most of the Apostles ran away in fear at the time of the Crucifixion, she and the other women remained keeping watch and providing comfort to the Theotokos.

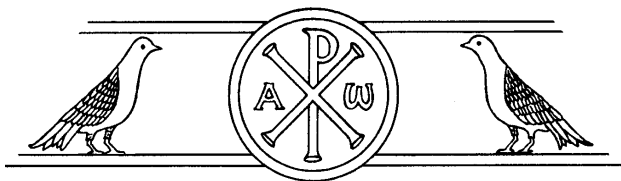
On October 25, St. Fronto: This saint's life is not recorded in Holy Scripture but the Tradition of the Church is that he was baptized by St. Peter and accompanied him to the Christian communities at Antioch and Rome. He was later ordained by St. Peter to be the first Bishop of Perigueux, an ancient city in Gaul and to work for the conversion of the local people.

On October 31, Ss. Ampliatus, Urban, Narcissus and Stachys: These saints were also among the Seventy, appointed by

Christ himself. They were obviously active in the missionary work of the Apostles. St. Paul calls Ampliatius “my beloved in the Lord,” Urban “our fellow worker in Christ”, he says that Narcissus’ household is “in the Lord” and calls Stachys “my beloved” [Romans 16:8-11]. According to Tradition, St. Stachys was ordained by St. Andrew the Apostle to be the first Bishop of Byzantium, Ampliatius as Bishop of Lydda, and Urban Bishop of Macedonia. Narcissus was ordained to be Bishop of Athens by the Apostle Philip.

Could we do what these people did? Could we leave behind the cares of this world and follow Christ completely? Could we even face death rather than deny Christ? These people did not begin life as saints. But they heard the Truth from those who had been closest to Jesus, they determined to lead Christ-like lives - and they “put their hands to the plow” and never looked back. In doing so, they changed the world.

These saints did not write Gospels and they did not help to articulate the great theological questions, but they changed the world. Many continued to live and work in the world as they had before, but they resisted the immorality prevalent in the society around them. They offered the love and kindness of God to those around them, even when ridiculed and criticized. When given the opportunity, they offered the life-changing teachings of Christ and those who accepted the responsibility of the priesthood and episcopate offered the life-giving sacraments to those who would follow Christ. Whatever their stations in life and the talents and skills they possessed, they worked to increase the Church. May God help us to do the same, and may all the saints pray for us.



On Love

Selections of the sayings of St. Isaac the Syrian



The tree of life is the love of God from which Adam fell away. Thereafter he met with joy no longer, but toiled and wearied himself in the land of thorns. Until we find love, our labor is in that land of thorns: amidst thorns we both sow and reap, even if our seed is the seed of righteousness. We are pricked all the time, and however much we render ourselves righteous, we live by the sweat of our brow.

But once we have found love, we partake of the heavenly bread, being nourished without labor and fatigue. The person who has found love eats Christ at all times, and from then on he becomes immortal. “Whoever eats this bread”, he says, “shall never taste death” [John 6:58]. Blessed is the person who has eaten of the bread of love, which is Jesus.

Whoever is sustained on love is sustained by Christ who is God over all. Jesus testifies to this, saying, “God is love,” [John 4:16] This is the air in which the righteous find delight at the resurrection. Love is the Kingdom in which the Lord mystically promised that his disciples should eat and drink.

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Love which stems from created things is like a small lamp whose light is sustained by being fed with olive-oil. Again, it is like a river fed by rainfall; once the supply that feeds it fails, the

surge of its flow abates. But love whose cause is God is like a spring welling up from the depths: its flow never abates, for God alone is that spring of love whose supply never fails.

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The scourges that result from love - that is, the scourges of those who have become aware that they have sinned against love - are harder and more bitter than the torments which result from fear. The pain which gnaws the heart as the result of sinning against love is sharper than all other torments that there are.

The power of love works in two ways: it torments those who have sinned just as happens among friends here on earth, but to those who have observed its duties, love gives delight.

So it is in Gehenna [Hell]: the contrition that comes from love is the harsh torment; but in the case of the sons of heaven, delight in this love inebriates their souls.

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From stillness a person can gain possession of the three causes of tears: love of God, awestruck wonder at his mysteries, and humility of heart. Without these it is unthinkable that anyone should be accounted worthy to taste of the wellspring of flaming compunction from the love of God.

There is no passion so fervent as the love of God. *O Lord, deem me worthy to taste of this wellspring!*

Therefore, if a person does not have stillness he will not be acquainted with even one of these, though he perform many virtuous deeds. He cannot know what the love of God is, not spiritual knowledge, nor can he possess true humility of heart. He will not know these three virtues, or rather, these three glorious gifts.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>October 2016</h1>						1 St. Remigius of Rheims, BC, c. 530; St. Bavo, C, 659 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
2 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Holy Guardian Angels G	3	4	5 St. Placid & his Companions, Mm, 6th c.	6 St. Faith of Agen, VM, c. 303	7 St. Mark, PC, 336, Ss. Sergius & Bacchus, Mm, 303	8 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
9 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Denys, BM, Rusticus, & Eleutherius, Mm, 3rd c. G	10 St. Paulinus of York, BC, 644	11 St. Kenneth, Ab, 599	12 St. Wilfred of York, BC, 709; St. Edwin, KM, 633	13 St. Edward the Confessor, KC, 1066	14 St. Callistus, PM, c. 222	15 Our Lady of Walsingham <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
16 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Gall, Ab., 646 G	17	18 St. Luke the Evangelist, 1st c.	19 St. Frideswide of Oxford, V, 735	20 St. Andrew of Crete, BC, 740	21 St. Hilarion of Gaza, Ab., c. 371	22 Ss. Ursula & comp., Mm, 453 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
23 Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost G	24 St. Raphael the Archangel; Ss. Ursula & comp., Mm, 453	25 Ss. Crysanthus & Daria, Mm, 283	26 St. Evaristus, PM, c. 197	27 Vigil of Ss. Simon & Jude; St. Frumentius of Ethiopia, BC, 4 th c.	28 Ss. Simon & Jude, Apostles, 1st c.	29 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
30 Christ the King; comm. Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>(Location TBA)</i> W	31 Vigil of All Saints					<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>

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

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