

# ✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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

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## *An excerpt from a Homily of St. Gregory the Great d. 603*

**T**he Magi come bearing gold, incense and myrrh. Gold is offered in tribute to a King, incense is offered in sacrifice to God, with myrrh the bodies of the dead are embalmed. The Magi therefore proclaim also by their mystic gifts, Who it is they adore:

with gold they proclaim Him King, with incense that He is God, by myrrh He is mortal.

**T**here are heretics who believe that He is God, but they do not believe that He reigns everywhere. These indeed offer incense, but refuse to offer Him gold. There are others who believe He is a King, but deny He is God. These offer gold, but deny Him incense. And there are others who confess He is both God and King, but deny that He assumed a mortal body. Such as these offer him gold and incense, but refuse the myrrh of his assumed mortality.

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as we believe He was impassible in His divinity, let us also believe that in our flesh He was mortal.

**T**he gold, incense and myrrh we may interpret in yet another way. For by gold wisdom is also symbolized... To the newborn King we offer Gold, if we shine before Him in the brightness of heavenly wisdom. We offer Him incense, if we consume the thoughts of the flesh upon the altar of our heart, so that in our heavenly desires we send up to God an odor of sweetness. We offer Him myrrh, when we mortify through abstinence the vices of our flesh.

**I**n that they return to their own land by another way, the Magi intimate to us something of great importance. In doing that which they were bidden to do, they convey to us what we must do. It is paradise that is our true country, to which, having come to know Jesus, we are forbidden to return by the way we came...

**L**et us return then to our own country by another way, and since we cut ourselves off from the joys of heaven because of earthly delights, let us recover them again through penance. ..

**I**f we are truly celebrating a solemnity of God, let us fear exceedingly the commandments of God. And a sacrifice that is

pleasing to God is sorrow because of sin, as the psalmist bears witness: *A sacrifice to God is a troubled spirit* [Ps. 51:17]. When we received baptism our past sins were wiped away; we have committed many since then, but we cannot again be washed in the waters of baptism. Since, therefore, after our baptism we have again stained our soul, let us cleanse our conscience with tears, thus returning to our own land by another way; we who, delighting in the good things of the world, have departed from it, let us, embittered of its evils, hasten to return to it, by the help and grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth world without end. Amen.

## *St. Honoratus*

*Feast Day ~ January 16*

The two sons in a Roman senatorial family living in northern Gaul led a typical life, receiving a good education and enjoying the privileges of society to which they were entitled by their class. But when, at age 18, Honoratus converted to Christianity, followed soon by his brother, Venantius, the ‘good life’ no longer had the same appeal.

The brothers decided to embark on a pilgrimage to Palestine to visit the holy places associated with events in the life of our Lord. Their doting father, who had not become a Christian, did everything he could to discourage such a dangerous and foolish journey, but his sons were determined. Taking with them an older Christian named Caprasius, who was to act as their guide, they soon left home for the Holy Land.

The planned itinerary also included places in Egypt, perhaps associated with St. Anthony, who 100 years earlier had begun the movement known as monasticism. Leading a life of silence and



prayer in a desert or wilderness was very appealing to the brothers and they determined to find a place where they might do the same.

But all their plans were abandoned when the young men became ill in the province of Achaia (in Greece) and Venantius died. Honoratus and Caprasius returned home, stopping briefly in Rome. Honoratus was now more determined than ever to pursue the solitary life. With the encouragement of a bishop in Provence, he went to the island of Lerins, which was very much a wilderness, to begin this life of prayer and spiritual struggle.

As so often happened in the early days of monasticism, word soon spread that a hermit was living a life of prayer on the island and Honoratus was joined by others seeking the same sort of life. Thus, the Monastery of Lerins - which would become one of the most famous in the Western world - was founded. Many of those whose names fill the lists of saints of the Church (including St. Vincent of Lerins, St. Caesarius of Arles, and perhaps St. Patrick) received their spiritual formation in this monastery. The Rule of Life in the monastery was patterned after that of St. Pachomius.

In 426, the bishop of Arles was assassinated and Abbot Honoratus was elected to take his place. The abbot reluctantly accepted this responsibility while managing to continue oversight of the monastery. The Arian and Manichaean heresies had become a threat to the Church in Arles, but Bishop Honoratus was able to re-establish Orthodoxy.

St. Honoratus fell asleep in the Lord in the year 429, having devoted his life to prayer, to the spiritual nourishing of his monks and the protection of the true faith in his diocese. His writings, which are attested to by others of his time, have not survived but the monastery which he founded continued to thrive and produce saints through centuries.

However, in 732, a Saracen attack resulted in the massacre of the abbot and many of the monks. Attacks in later centuries by the Spanish and Genoese who were fighting for ownership of the island resulted in the expulsion of the monks until the French retook the island. The French Revolution, which saw the dissolution of the monastery and the sale of the property to a famous actress, might have been the end of St. Honoratus' legacy, but the property was bought in 1859, by the Bishop of Frejus who founded a community of Cistercian monks which remains there today.

May we, like St. Honoratus, seek God in silence and prayer; may we answer God's call to service; and may we persevere in our concern for preserving Orthodox Christianity against the influences of the world. Holy Honoratus, pray for us.

## *Holy Solitude*

by Rev. Alban Butler (from *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs & Other Saints*)

There is no saint who was not a lover of retirement and penance. Shall we not learn from them to shun the tumult of the world, as much as our circumstances will allow, and give ourselves up to the exercises of holy solitude, prayer and pious reading.

Holy solitude is the school of heavenly doctrine, where fervent souls study a divine science, which is learned by experience,

not by the discourses of others. Here they learn to know God and themselves; they disengage their affections from the world, and burn and reduce to ashes all that can fasten their hearts to it. Here they give earthly things for those of heaven, and goods of small value for those of inestimable price.

In blessed solitude, a man repairs in his soul the image of his Creator, which was effaced by sin and, by the victory which he gains over his passions, is in some degree freed from the corruption of his nature, and restored in some measure to the state of its integrity and innocence by the ruin of vice, and the establishment of all virtues in his affections; so that, by a wonderful change wrought in his soul he becomes a new creature, and a terrestrial angel.

His sweet repose and his employments are also angelical, being of the same nature with those of the blessed in heaven. By the earnest occupation of the powers of his will, he is continually employed in a manner infinitely more excellent and more noble than he could be in governing all the empires of the world; and in a manner which is far preferable to all the vain occupations of the greatest men of the world during the whole course of their lives.

## *Silence Today*

by Mother Raphaela (Excerpts from an essay in *Living in Christ*)

Friends working with young people in parish or school situations often share with us their observations that young people seem to have an inability to handle even short periods of silence... It seems that most people today have encountered silence only as a negative quality - the inability or unwillingness to communicate, or a weapon used to withhold the Word of love, trust, and forgiveness that Christians are called to offer to one another...



Much of the thought that has come down to us in literature, including the works of classical philosophers, the theologians and ascetic fathers of the Church, not to mention the Bible, is deliberately “incomplete” or “open.” The liturgical services of the Church are also in this category, most especially the Divine Liturgy. Like the education offered by a good teacher, everything that is needed is provided. Yet in order to learn, the student is forced to think to draw out the meaning,

forced to develop the conclusions on his own, forced to develop his capacity for responding: for responsible and creative thinking. Such books and services, like good teachers, do what no television or visual-aid program can do: they provide a listening atmosphere. They call forth the response that is hidden within. One might say that there is, in effect, a creative mode of silence built into such literature, worship and education.

One cannot truly come to know persons, or the situations and objects around one, without listening to them and allowing them to reveal themselves. Any knowledge gained without this kind of listening is based more on one’s prejudices than on the reality around us...

Yet the person each of us is most responsible for getting to know, the only person for whose life we are ultimately responsible before God, is our self... If we are going to learn the best techniques for loving others, we must use only the best techniques for learning to love ourselves. We must begin with the silence that is necessary in order to listen - to ourselves. Self-

knowledge has always been looked upon as the “hard and narrow way;” how much more is this true now for those who have been conditioned in many ways from earliest childhood to be unable to cope with silence?

Those who reach the point of beginning to listen to themselves in silence find that, paradoxically, they are not alone. In silence, what even non-believers today have come to call their “higher power,” reveals Himself as a vital presence. Blessed are those who have the resources of Orthodox teaching to know that this presence is that of their Creator, who loves them to the point of dying for them on the Cross.

Let us who call ourselves Christians...begin to enter into this fellowship of our God. In silence and prayer, let us come to know Him, ourselves, one another, and the whole of creation, as we exist together in the Trinity.

## *Parish News*

We begin the new year with the observance of Our Lord’s Circumcision on Sunday, January 1. The celebration of the Epiphany of Our Lord will be on the Eve, Thursday, January 5, with the Blessing of Water at 7PM, Liturgy at 7:30 and a pot-luck supper following. Our Annual Parish Meeting will be held after Liturgy on Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The one-year memorial for Subdeacon Jerome (Jerry) Chiles will be observed with a Requiem Mass on Saturday, January 7, at 10AM (preceded by Lauds for the Departed at 9:40).

In Orthodox tradition, homes are blessed during the season of Epiphany. Please speak to Fr. Nicholas or Fr. Raphael to schedule yours sometime between January 6 and February 11.



**F**ood for the Hungry contributions should be brought to church as soon as possible. The canned goods will be weighed for the Archdiocesan records and donated to Manna Food Bank in Gaithersburg.

**W**e rejoice with Sister Michele, who has progressed to the next level of her life as a nun at Holy Transfiguration Monastery (in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania),

receiving the *Apostlenik* (black veil) as a sign of this advancement. As the veil was placed on her head, the priest prayed that she would be granted the grace to “lead this angelic life”. We continue to pray for her, knowing that she always prays for our parish.

**W**e now have a parking lot at our new property and the inside work is essentially complete! Furniture has been placed in the new church. Outside work continues on storm water management. While the final work on paving and planting must wait until Spring and warmer weather for completion, we hope that the final inspections leading to our Use and Occupancy permit may happen in the first week of January. We are very grateful to our friends at The Woods Academy for their hospitality during this past year.

**A**s we begin to have services in our new church we should return to the custom of maintaining silence in Church before and after services. It is certainly appropriate to welcome visitors and ask that they join us for coffee hour, but other conversations and greetings can wait so that we do not disturb those who choose to pray before and after the liturgies or make their confessions.

**St. Gregory Orthodox Church**  
c/o 9415 Wire Avenue  
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*Address Correction Requested*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2017</h1>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>
<b>1</b> The Circumcision of Our Lord and Octave Day of the Nativity  <i>Mass at 9:30am W</i>	<b>2</b> Octave Day of St. Stephen; St. Fulgentius, BC, 533	<b>3</b> Octave Day of St. John, Ap. Ev.; St. Genevieve, V, 512	<b>4</b> Octave Day of the Holy Innocents, Mm; St. Titus, BC, c. 96	<b>5</b> Vigil of the Epiphany of Our Lord; St. Simeon Stylites, C, 460  <i>Mass at 7:30pm W</i>	<b>6</b> The Epiphany of Our Lord	<b>7</b> of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Cedd, BC, 664 <i>Requiem Mass at 10am Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>8</b> First Sunday after Epiphany; St. Lucius & comp., Mm, c. 290; St. Severinus, Ab, 482  <i>W</i>	<b>9</b> of the Octave of Epiphany	<b>10</b> of the Oct. of Epiphany; St. Paul the First Hermit, C., c. 345	<b>11</b> of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Hyginus, PM, c. 142; St. Theodosius, Ab, c. 529	<b>12</b> of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Benedict Biscop, Ab, 690	<b>13</b> Octave Day of Epiphany; St. Kentigern, BC, 603	<b>14</b> St. Hilary, BCD, 367; St. Felix of Nola, PrM, 255; St. Nina, V, 335  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>15</b> Second Sunday after Epiphany; St. Maurus, Ab, 584  <i>W</i>	<b>16</b> St. Marcellus, PM, 309, St. Honoratus, BC, 429	<b>17</b> St. Anthony, Ab, 356	<b>18</b> Chair of St. Peter in Rome; St. Prisca, VM, c. 270	<b>19</b> St. Mark of Ephesus, BC, 1445	<b>20</b> Ss. Fabian, BM & Sebastian, M, 3rd c.	<b>21</b> St. Agnes, VM, 304  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>22</b> Third Sunday after Epiphany St. Vincent, M, 304 <i>Annual Parish Meeting</i>  <i>G</i>	<b>23</b> St. Emerentiana, VM, c. 304; St. John the Almoner, BC, c. 619	<b>24</b> St. Timothy, BM, 97	<b>25</b> Conversion of St. Paul	<b>26</b> St. Polycarp, BM, 156	<b>27</b> St. John Chrysostom, BCD, 407  <i>(March for Life)</i>	<b>28</b> The Second Feast of St. Agnes, VM  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>29</b> Fourth Sunday after Epiphany  <i>G</i>	<b>30</b> St. Martina, VM, 228; St. Bathildes, QMa, 680	<b>31</b>				

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

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