

# ✠ 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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*An excerpt by  
St. Theophan  
the Recluse from  
the Works of  
St. Ephraim  
the Syrian -  
d. 373*

**W**e confess one and the same individual as perfect God and perfect Man. He is God the Word which was flesh.

**F**or if He was not flesh, why was Mary chosen? And if He is not God, whom does Gabriel call Lord?

**I**f he was not flesh, who was laid in a manger? And if He is not

God, whom did the angels who came down from heaven glorify? If He was not flesh, who was wrapped in swaddling clothes? And if He is not God, in whose honor did the star appear?

**I**f He was not flesh, whom did Simeon hold in his arms? And if He is not God to whom did Simeon say: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace?

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**I**f He was not flesh, whom did Joseph take when he fled into Egypt? And if He is not God, who fulfilled the prophesy: *Out of Egypt have I called my Son?*

**I**f He was not flesh, whom did John baptize? And if He is not God to whom did the Father say: *This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased?*

**I**f He was not flesh, who hungered in the desert? And if He is not God, unto whom

did the angels come and minister?

**I**f He was not flesh, who was invited to the marriage in Cana of Galilee? And if He is not God, who turned the water into wine?

**I**f He was not flesh, who took the loaves in the desert? And if He is not God, who fed the five thousand men and their women and children with five loaves and two fish?

**I**f He was not flesh, with whom did Simon the Pharisee sit at meat? And if He is not God, who forgave the sins of the harlot?

**I**f He was not flesh, who spat on the ground and made clay? And if He is not God, who gave sight to the eyes of the blind man with that clay?

**I**f He was not flesh, who wept at Lazarus' grave? And if He is not God, who commanded him to come forth out of the grave four days after his death?

If He was not flesh, whom did the Jews arrest in the garden? And if He is not God, who cast them to the ground with the words: *I am He?*

If He was not flesh, who was judged before Pilate? And if He is not God, who frightened Pilate's wife in a dream?

If He was not flesh, whose garments were stripped from Him and parted by the soldiers? And if He is not God, why was the sun darkened upon His crucifixion?

If He was not flesh, who was crucified on the cross? And if He is not God, who shook the foundation of the earth?

If He was not flesh, whose hands and feet were nailed to the cross? And if He is not God, how did it happen that the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened?

If He was not flesh, who hung on the cross between the two thieves? And if He is not God, how could He say to the thief: Today thou shalt be with me in paradise?

If He was not flesh, who cried out and gave up the ghost? And if He is not God, whose cry caused many bodies of the saints which slept to arise?

If He was not flesh, whom did the women see laid in the grave? And if He is not God, about whom did the angel say to them: *He has arisen, He is not here?*

If He was not flesh, whom did Thomas touch when he put his hands into the prints of the nails? And if He is not God, who entered through the doors that were shut?

If He was not flesh, whom did the apostles see carried up into heaven? And if He is not God, who ascended to the joyful cries

of the angels, and to whom did the Father proclaim: *sit at My right hand?*

*From A Spiritual Psalter or Reflections on God excerpted by Saint Theophan the Recluse from the works of our Holy Father Ephraim the Syrian*

## *We Welcome our Chief Bishop*



We will be privileged to have Metropolitan JOSEPH with us at St. Gregory's for our Good Friday service. He will be in the Washington DC area for Holy Week and has asked to visit as many of the Antiochian parishes during that time as possible.

Because the Good Friday Liturgy is the most solemn of all our services, this will be unlike a "normal" visit from one of our bishops. The liturgical greeting of the Bishop by the clergy and acolytes, while we sing "*O Priest and Bishop*" will be shortened so that the Liturgy may begin in silence.

We will also not have a banquet, as would be normal for the visit of a bishop, and there will be little opportunity for meeting and talking with the Metropolitan as he will be leaving us to go to another parish for an evening service. But we hope that this will not be his only visit to St. Gregory's and we will look forward to welcoming him again in the future!

## *Holy Week at St. Gregory's*

In this most holy week, we will walk the way of the Cross with our Savior, experiencing again the events of the last week of His earthly life before the Resurrection. The crosses will be veiled and *Gloria Patri* will not be sung in the *Venite* at Matins, in the Prayers of Preparation and in the Introit of the Mass.

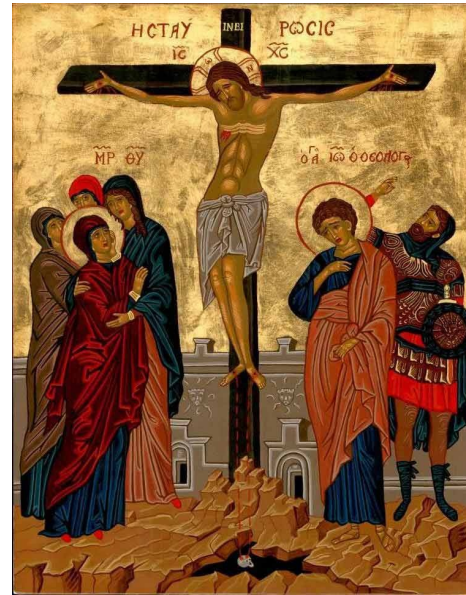
**Palm Sunday, April 1:** After 9AM Matins, we will go outside (weather permitting) for the blessing and distribution of palms, the reading of the Palm Sunday Gospel story, and the procession. Continuing inside the Chapel, we will hear the Passion Gospel of St. Matthew sung in dialogue fashion.

**Monday and Tuesday, April 2 and 3:** The Passion Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke will be sung at the 7:30PM Masses. Vespers will precede Mass at 7PM and pot-luck Lenten suppers will follow.

**Wednesday, April 4:** The Unction Mass will be celebrated this evening (at 7:30 following 7PM Vespers), as the oils for catechumens and for the sick are blessed and the people receive anointing.

**Maundy Thursday, April 5:** After 7PM Vespers, the Liturgy for this day, which celebrates the institution of the Eucharist by our Lord at the Last Supper, includes the ceremony of the foot-washing, the procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar of Repose (in the Parish Hall), and ends with the stripping of the Altar. After a light pot-luck supper, the service of Tenebrae will be offered.

**Good Friday, April 6:** The Liturgy begins at noon in silence with full prostrations by the clergy. The Passion Gospel of St. John will be sung in dialogue, the Solemn Collects for the Church and those outside it will be sung. A cross will be unveiled and held for



reproaches as the Reproaches are sung and the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified will be offered. All depart in silence. Confessions will be heard after this service.

**Holy Saturday, April 7:** Confessions will be heard beginning at 7:30PM and the ancient Paschal Vigil will begin outside at 9PM. The Paschal candle will be blessed and we will carry candles in procession into the dark church singing “*The light of*

*Christ! Thanks be to God*”. The Exultet will be sung, readings telling the story of our salvation will be heard, water will be blessed, the Litany will be sung and then, as all the lights are turned on and the use of the organ resumes, the long-anticipated celebration of the Resurrection will begin. We will end our celebrations with the Paschal feast in the parish hall.

**Easter Day, April 8:** Mass at 10:00AM.

*English:* Christ is Risen! Indeed He is risen!

*Arabic:* El Messieh kahm! Hakken kahm!

*Greek:* Christos anesti! Alithos anesti!

*Russian:* Khristos voskrese! Voistinu voskrese!

## *St. Hermenegild, Martyr*

*Feast Day ~ April 13*

As the Psalmist says, *How good and pleasant a thing it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity.* [Ps. 133:1] But how bad

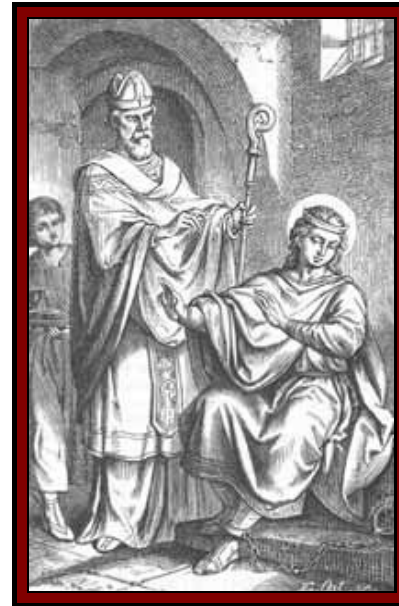
and unpleasant - indeed sinful - it is when those who should be brethren fight and even kill each other in the name of Christ. St. Hermenegild, whose feast day is April 13, was one who was caught in just such a crisis of family and faith.

**H**ermenegild was born into a divisive family. His father, Liuvigild, King of the Visigoths, embraced the version of Christianity which held the Arian view that our Lord was human only, and not both human and divine. However, his mother, Princess Theodosia, was an Orthodox Christian. The Ecumenical Council of Nicea (325) had rejected the heresy of Arius and proclaimed that Christ had been revealed to man as both God and man. In this divided household, Hermenegild and his brother, Reccared, were brought up as Arians and this was more firmly upheld when King Liuvigild married Goiswinda, another Arian, after the death of his first wife.

**T**he two sons were made co-regents with their father and given parts of the Visigothic kingdom to rule on his behalf. When Hermenegild moved to the southern part of the kingdom, he came into contact with St. Leander of Seville. Through the bishop's influence and that of his wife, the Frankish princess Ingund, who was also an Orthodox Christian, Hermenegild began to see the error of Arian beliefs and was brought into the fold of the Orthodox Church through Chrismation.

**W**hen he heard of this, Liuvigild was furious and demanded that his son return home so that he could be reprimanded and stripped of his royal duties. Hermenegild refused and now the family descended into further sin. Hermenegild waged war against his father, seeking assistance first from the Emperor in Constantinople (who was at the time defending his armies against the Persians) and then from Roman soldiers who agreed but then betrayed him to his pursuers. Hermenegild was forced to flee to several cities before claiming sanctuary in a church. King Liuvigild would not violate the protection which the church provided his son

but instead, sent his younger son, Reccared to offer peace. Trusting in his father's honesty and mercy, Hermenegild left the church and was immediately taken to prison in the tower in Seville.



**K**ing Liuvigild made one last effort at drawing his eldest son away from the Catholic faith. Before Easter, he sent an Arian bishop to the prison, who offered to give Hermenegild Communion with the promise of his freedom if he would receive the Sacrament from him. Hermenegild had spent much time in this prison thinking clearly about the teachings of the Church and he knew that he could not deny Truth in exchange for his release. He sent the heretical bishop away and the king ordered his son to be

beheaded on Easter Eve, April 13 in the year 585.

**T**here is much that is bad, unpleasant, and sinful about this story. Historians have determined that King Liuvigild used religion as a weapon in a political battle with his son, compounding his sin in holding heretical beliefs and of having his own son killed.

**I**n his *Dialogues*, St. Gregory the Great says that the martyrdom of St. Hermenegild was like the grain of wheat which our Lord said must fall into the ground and die and then yield rich fruit. All the Orthodox catholic Christians in the Visigothic kingdom who had been severely persecuted now had a faithful witness to the true faith. When Recarrred's reign began, he reversed his father's policies of persecution and, eventually, the entire Visigothic kingdom gave up the Arian heresy and became Orthodox.

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*Address Correction Requested*

May St. Hermenegild intercede for all those who are born into families of unbelievers or those who hold false beliefs. On Good Friday, we will join him in our prayers as we pray for deliverance from error for the heretics and schismatics. May we strive to know the faith and be able to articulate it to others. St. Hermenegild, pray for us.

*Resources: Rev. Alban Butler, Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Saints; St. Gregory the Great, Dialogues; St. Gregory of Tours, History of the Franks; Wikipedia article.*

## *The Paschal Sequence Hymn*

At the Easter Day Liturgy, we will sing one of the several Sequence hymns appointed for special feast days. Both the text and melody of this hymn about the Resurrection, “Christians, to the Paschal Victim” (*Victimae paschali laudes*, #105 in the *St. Ambrose Hymnal*) were written in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century by Wipo of Burgundy, who died in 1048.

The theory of music historians is that Sequence hymns all began with the *Alleluia*, chanted before the Gospel (except during Lent). Somewhere, at some time, chanters began to elaborate on the last syllable of the last alleluia until that “a” had become a long melismatic phrase. Others took up the practice and, although these melodies were improvised at first, it became desirable to preserve some of them for future use (and perhaps to restrain extravagant performances by individual singers!). To remember them, the long phrases were filled in with more words. Eventually these became distinct compositions in themselves and were separated from the Alleluia to form the Sequence hymn.

May we remember those ecstatic chanters of long ago and echo their joy as we sing our Alleluias and the Paschal Sequence.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>April 2018</h1>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>
<b>1</b> Palm Sunday <i>(omit St. Melito of Sardis, BC, 177)</i>  <i>R/V</i>	<b>2</b> Monday in Holy Week; St. Mary of Egypt, Penitent, c. 421  <i>Mass at 7:30pm V</i>	<b>3</b> Tuesday in Holy Week; St. Sixtus I, PM, 127  <i>Mass at 7:30pm V</i>	<b>4</b> Wednesday in Holy Week; St. Isidore of Seville, BCD, 636  <i>Mass at 7:30pm W</i>	<b>5</b> Maundy Thursday  <i>Mass at 7:30pm W</i>	<b>6</b> Good Friday <i>(omit St. Notker, C, 912)</i>  <i>Liturgy at noon B</i>	<b>7</b> Holy Saturday  <i>Vigil at 9pm V/W</i>
<b>8</b> Pascha: The Resurrection of Our Lord  <i>Mass at 10am W</i>	<b>9</b> Monday in the Octave of Easter	<b>10</b> Tuesday in the Octave of Easter	<b>11</b> Wednesday in the Octave of Easter; St. Leo the Great, PCD, 461	<b>12</b> Thursday in the Octave of Easter	<b>13</b> Friday in the Octave of Easter; St. Herme- negild, C, 583	<b>14</b> Saturday in the Octave of Easter; St. Justin, M, 167  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>15</b> Low Sunday: First Sunday after Easter  <i>W</i>	<b>16</b> St. Tikhon of Moscow, BC, Patron of the Western Rite, 1925 <i>(tr. from 4/7)</i>	<b>17</b> St. Anicetus, PM, c. 168	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> St. Alphege of Canterbury, BM, 1012	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>22</b> Second Sunday after Easter; Ss. Soter, & Caius, Bb, Mm  <i>W</i>	<b>23</b> St. George, M, 303	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> St. Mark the Evangelist, 1st c.	<b>26</b> Ss. Cletus, BM, 89 & Marcellinus, BM, 304	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> St. Vitalis, M, 3 <sup>rd</sup> c.  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>29</b> Third Sunday after Easter  <i>W</i>	<b>30</b>					

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

*Coffee Hour follows Sunday Liturgy.  
Christian Education for all is offered during Coffee Hour.*