

✠ 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 from a work adapted by St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain d. 1809

We all naturally wish, and are commanded to be perfect. The Lord commands, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

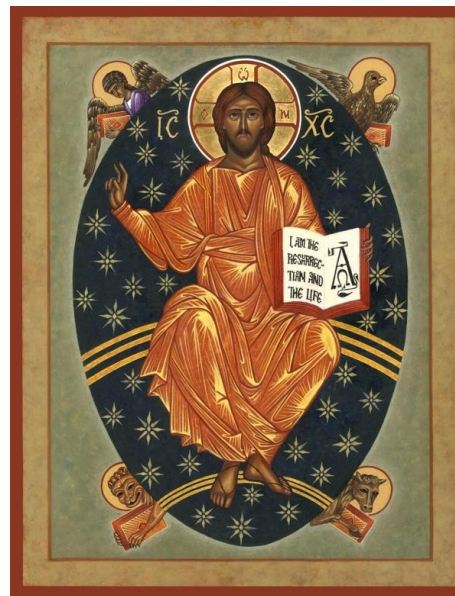
[Matt. 5:48] And St. Paul admonishes: *Stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.* [Col. 4:12]... We cannot fail to see that God demands from Christians the fullness of

perfection, that is, that we should be perfect in all virtues.

But if you wish to attain to such heights, you must first learn in what Christian perfection consists. For if you have not learnt this, you may turn off the right path and go in a totally different direction, while thinking that you make progress towards perfection.

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There are many who say that the perfection of Christian life consists in fasts, vigils, genuflexions, sleeping on bare earth and other similar austerities of the body. Others say that it consists in saying many prayers at home and in attending long services in Church. And there are others who think that our perfection consists entirely in mental prayer, solitude, seclusion and silence. But the majority limit perfection to a strict observance of all the rules and

practices laid down by the statutes, falling into no excess or deficiency, but preserving a golden moderation. Yet all these virtues do not by themselves constitute the Christian perfection we are seeking, but are only means and methods for acquiring it.

There is no doubt whatever that they do represent means and effective means for attaining perfection in Christian life. On the other hand, these same virtues may do more harm than their open omission to those who take them as the sole basis of their life and their hope...and when they pay attention only to the external practice of those virtues, and leave their heart to be moved by their own volitions and the volitions of the devil... Thinking of their external and pious works and deeming them good, they imagine that they have already reached perfection and, puffing themselves up, begin to judge others.

Having seen that spiritual life and perfection do not only consist in these visible virtues, you must learn that it consists in nothing but coming near to God and union with Him. With this is connected a heartfelt realization of the goodness and greatness of

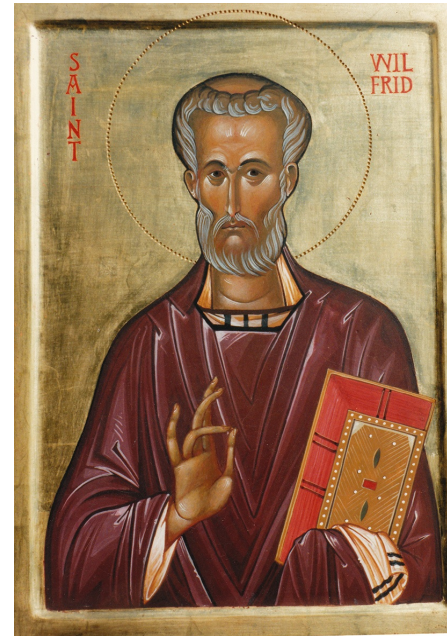
God, together with consciousness of our own nothingness and our proness to every evil;...renunciation of all will of our own and perfect obedience to the will of God; and moreover desire of all this and its practice with a pure heart to the glory of God, from sheer desire to please God and because we should so love Him and work for Him. This is the law of love, inscribed by the finger of God in the hearts of His true servants!

After learning what constitutes Christian perfection and realizing that to achieve it you must wage a constant cruel war with yourself, if you really desire to be victorious in this unseen warfare and be rewarded with a crown, you must plant in your heart the following four dispositions and spiritual activities, as it were arming yourself with invisible weapons, the most trustworthy and unconquerable of all, namely: a) never rely on yourself in anything; b) bear always in your heart a perfect and all-daring trust in God alone; c) strive without ceasing; and d) remain constantly in prayer.

St. Wilfrid, Bishop and Confessor *Feast Day ~ October 12*

Not every saint of the Church has been universally loved. Many have had enemies - even other Christians - who opposed them for some reason, who did not share their ideas for missionary work or monastic practices, or any number of other things. We have to remember that what is required of us is faithfulness to Christ and His teachings, not whether we are popular or successful.

St. Wilfrid of York is a prime example of a saint who was constantly in conflict with others - kings, monks, bishops - but who, through all of these conflicts, converted pagans, established monasteries, and did everything he could to build up the Christian faith in 7th century Britain.



Born around 634, Wilfrid came from an aristocratic Northumbrian family who may have given him high expectations for social prominence. Throughout his life, he was patronized by royalty, beginning with Queen Eanfled, wife of King Oswiu, at whose court Wilfrid sought acceptance after an argument with his step-father (probably his first conflict) caused him to leave home at the age of 14. The queen sent him to the monastery on Lindisfarne to study and later gave him letters of introduction to royal family

members at the court of Kent. There, Wilfrid met another young nobleman, Benedict Biscop, who would later establish and beautify the monasteries at Jarrow and Monkwearmouth. The two embarked on a pilgrimage to Rome in the year 652, the first such pilgrimage by Anglo-Saxons on record.

A stop along the way of this pilgrimage was Lyons in Gaul and Wilfrid chose to stay here for a year while Benedict traveled on to Rome. The Archbishop of Lyons encouraged Wilfrid to marry his niece and continue to live there in some official capacity, but Wilfrid chose to complete his pilgrimage, later returning to Lyons where he was tonsured or ordained to one of the minor orders by the archbishop.

In Rome, Wilfrid's views about religious matters were greatly broadened. At Lindisfarne, he had learned the Irish way of doing things - of church building (wood with thatch roofs), of liturgical celebration (simple and straightforward), and especially of the

calculation of the date of Easter (the first Sunday after the beginning of Passover). In Rome, he saw churches which were great stone architectural wonders, he experienced services filled with much pageantry, and he learned that the rest of Christendom (outside Ireland and the north of England) celebrated Easter on a date calculated differently and mandated by the Council of Nicea in 325. He, like Benedict Biscop, learned of the importance of venerating the relics of saints in the Church and he determined to return to his native land and implement there as much of what he had seen in Rome as possible.

Back in Northumbria, Alhfrith, son of King Oswiu and a sub-king under his father's direction, gave Wilfrid a monastery to oversee. This monastery, founded at Ripon with monks from the monastery of Melrose, was observing Irish customs in their manner of tonsure (hair shaved in the front of the head and long in the back, reminiscent of the Druid hairstyle), their liturgical style, and particularly the celebration of Easter. When the abbot, Eata, refused to change to the Roman observances at the order (no doubt not very diplomatic!) of Wilfrid, he was removed and Wilfrid, who was ordained priest shortly thereafter, became the abbot.

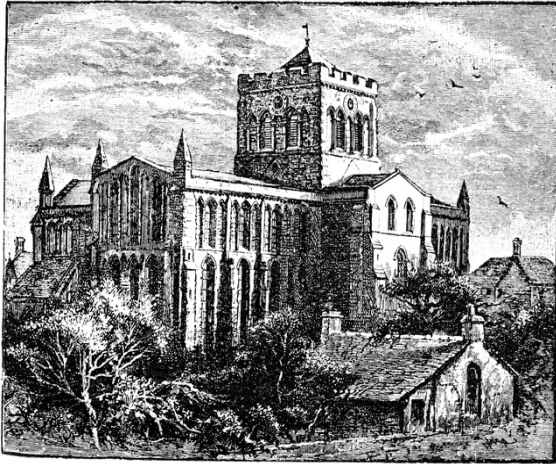
This was Wilfrid's second big conflict and it put him in a position to be involved in another. Six years later (in 664), King Oswiu called for a Synod at the monastery of Whitby to discuss and resolve the differences in the dating of Easter. Those supporting the Irish practice were the king himself, Abbess Hilda, Cedd (bishop of Northumbria) and Colman, the abbot of Lindisfarne. Wilfrid was appointed to speak for the Roman method. A powerful and persuasive speaker, Wilfrid was able to convince the king and others that this diversity of practice undermined the Christian unity which the Church should be showing for missionary efforts among the still largely pagan population. He spoke of the importance of Rome as the see of Peter, who was given the "keys to the kingdom" by our Lord himself.

As a result of the decisions at Whitby, some of those who could not bring themselves to give up their "Celtic" practices removed themselves to the monastery on Iona or went back to Ireland, and Wilfrid was appointed to be bishop of Northumbria, with the see city of York. He refused to be consecrated by any of the local bishops because of their dubious consecrations, so he returned to Gaul for his consecration.

Another conflict arose when Wilfrid's return was considerably delayed and Chad had been appointed bishop in his place, so Wilfrid went back to Ripon. In 669, Theodore, the Greek monk who was sent by Pope Vitalian to be the Archbishop of Canterbury, removed Chad because of his improper election and consecration and returned Wilfrid as the Bishop of Northumbria. Wilfrid performed his episcopal duties of visiting parishes, preaching and teaching with great energy, but he was criticized for dressing his household and servants in clothing fit for royalty and traveling with a retinue of warriors. The memory of the humble and much-loved Aidan, founder of the monastery on Lindisfarne, who had walked everywhere and who gave away all the gifts which he received beyond what was needed for subsistence, was still very strong.

During the next nine years, Wilfrid established more churches and founded a monastery at Hexham, recycling some of the stones from Hadrian's Wall and the Roman fort at Corbridge. He established the Rule of St. Benedict at the monasteries of Ripon and Hexham, and was possibly the first to introduce this Rule in Britain. He was also the first in Northumbria to make written records of the gifts given to the monasteries and to have these benefactions read out at the yearly dedication anniversary.

Remembering the grand liturgical celebrations which he had witnessed in Rome and Gaul, Wilfrid sent to Kent for a singing-master who had been trained in the proper style of singing chant. Eddius arrived to teach antiphonal singing between two



choirs of monks. The churches Wilfrid built had windows made by glassmakers brought from the continent and he commissioned gospel books and richly woven altar cloths. Both Ripon and Hexham had crypts built under the altars for the display of relics (probably

inspired by the catacombs which he had seen in Rome). A three-day festival surrounded the consecration of the church at Ripon.

In 677 or 678, Wilfrid was involved in yet another dispute and this time, he initiated another first - one which would be used again and again centuries later. He and King Ecgfrith quarreled and the king expelled him from his diocese. Archbishop Theodore took advantage of this situation to make changes in the division of territory into dioceses, making Wilfrid's smaller and creating new ones. Wilfrid went to Rome to appeal to the Pope against the king and the archbishop, the first Englishman to challenge a royal or ecclesiastical decision by petitioning the papacy.

When he returned to Northumbria in 680 with papal decrees in his favor in hand, Wilfrid was briefly imprisoned and then exiled by the king and took refuge in Sussex. Wilfrid spent the next five years preaching to, and converting the pagan inhabitants there, and he founded Selsey Abbey. St. Bede, in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, says that Wilfrid's success was due to the fact that there had been a three-year drought in Sussex which ended abruptly with his arrival; when he began teaching and baptizing, the rain began to fall! During this time in Sussex, Wilfrid and Archbishop Theodore were reconciled.

Bishop Wilfrid returned to York, but in 691, another dispute arose with the then King Aldfrith, and he went into exile in Mercia. In 700, Wilfrid again appealed to the Pope (Sergius I) who referred the whole issue back to a council in England. That council, convened in 702 by King Aldfrith, upheld Wilfrid's expulsion, confining his authority to the monastery at Ripon. After several more contentious years, Wilfrid was restored to both Ripon and Hexham in 706 but, having suffered several strokes, he declined to return to York as bishop.

St. Wilfrid ended his long, arduous earthly pilgrimage in 709, Shaving spent seventy-five years laboring to bring about conversions to Christianity, to build churches and to establish monasteries. His many conflicts were eclipsed by these good works and he very soon became venerated as a saint of the Church. Through the prayers of St. Wilfrid, may our good works outshine our many disputes and disagreements. Holy Wilfrid, pray for us.

Resources: *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* by St. Bede the Venerable; *Lives of the Fathers Martyrs and other Saints* by Rev. Alban Butler; *Cuthbert and the Northumbrian Saints* by Paul Frodsham; Wikipedia article.

Parish News

Our annual Parish Picnic will be held following Mass on Sunday, October 7, rain or shine. This is an opportunity for good food, fellowship, and fun with our parish family.

We welcomed Demetrius John Woolley into Christ's one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church in the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation on Sunday, September 2.

Fr. Nicholas has been appointed by Metropolitan JOSEPH and Bp. THOMAS, as the Dean for the DC, MD and VA clergy and parishes. Deans are "senior clergy" appointed to assist the bishops in administrative matters and to encourage local cooperation.

Pilgrimage

by Fr. Noah Bushelli

The Christian life has always been characterized by pilgrimage. This has been preserved robustly within holy Orthodoxy because of our strong sense of history, sanctity, and veneration, as well as our overwhelming desire to grow closer to God among the holy places and people that our church holds so dear. Indeed, we love God as our Father and the Church as our family and we want to be close to them, no matter the cost or effort.



The English word pilgrimage has as its Latin etymology “peregrinus”, meaning “wanderer”, whereas the Greek word “proskynima” means worship or venerate. We happily take both senses, a holy journey to a venerable destination, with us in our spiritual sojourns.

Our identity as pilgrims manifests itself in the pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the Holy Mountain, as well as monasteries and Relics throughout the world.

These geographic pilgrimages are all iconic of the great pilgrimage to Paradise. Indeed, we know that this world, as wonderful and beautiful as it is, is not our home. We are making our way through the valley of the shadow of death, climbing upwards towards the new Jerusalem on high in heaven. Our families, parishes, and diocese are places of rest, reorientation, and gathering the supplies and traveling companions necessary for the journey.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>October 2018</h1>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>
	1 St. Remigius of Rheims, BC, c. 530; St. Bavo, C, 659	2 Holy Guardian Angels	3	4	5 St. Placid & his Companions, Mm, 6th c.	6 St. Faith of Agen, VM, c. 303 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
7 Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Mark, PC, 336, Ss. Sergius & Bacchus, Mm, 303 <i>G</i>	8	9 Ss. Denys, BM, Rusticus, & Eleutherius, Mm, 3rd c.	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 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
14 Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Callistus, PM, c. 222 <i>G</i>	15 Our Lady of Walsingham	16 St. Gall, Ab., 646	17	18 St. Luke the Evangelist, 1st c.	19 St. Frideswide of Oxford, V, 735	20 St. Andrew of Crete, BC, 740 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
21 Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost; St. Hilarion of Gaza, Ab., c. 371; Ss. Ursula & comp., Mm, 453 <i>G</i>	22	23	24 St. Raphael the Archangel	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. <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
28 Christ the King; comm. Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost <i>W</i>	29 Ss. Simon & Jude, Apostles, 1st c. (tr. from 10/28)	30	31 Vigil of All Saints			

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

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