

✠ 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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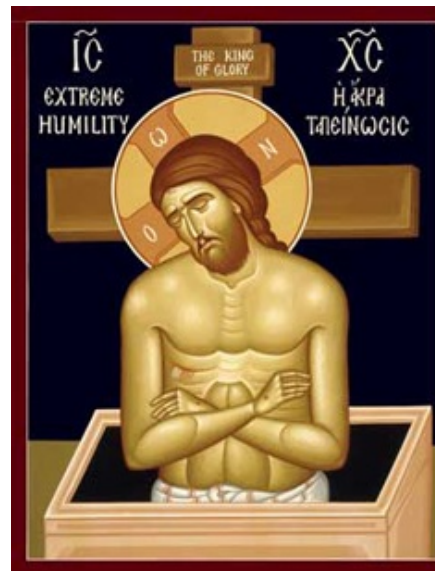
An excerpt from a Discourse by St. Dorotheos of Gaza d. 565

Consider well, brothers, how great is the power of humility. Consider how great is the spiritual energy behind saying, “Pardon me”. Why is the devil called not only “enemy”, but also “adversary”? He is called “enemy” because he is a hater of men, one who hates what is good, a traitor; an “adversary”, because he always puts obstacles in the way of good. If someone wants to pray he puts

obstacles in the way through evil suspicions, shameful thoughts, and spiritual torpor. If a man wants to give alms he obstructs it through avarice or procrastination. If a man wants to keep vigil he obstructs it with hesitations or laziness. In every single thing he is against us when we desire to do good. This is why he is called the enemy and the adversary and

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why, by lowliness, all his attacks and devices are brought to nothing. Lowliness is really a great thing, for every kind of good is advanced by lowliness, and by working at it we cut short our journey, as it says, *See my humility and my toil, and take away all my sins* [Ps. 25:18]...

Now, there are two kinds of humility, just as there are two kinds of pride. The first kind of pride is when a man despises his brother, considers

him worth little or nothing, while he puts a much greater value on himself. Such a man, unless he speedily repents and takes great care, will come in a short time to that second kind of pride by which he lifts himself up against God, and ascribes what he does right not to God, but to himself... Therefore, we ought, my brothers, to take up the fight against the first kind of pride, lest little by little we fall into this absolute pride.

The first kind of humility is to hold my brother to be wiser than myself, and in all things to rate him higher than myself, and simply, to put oneself below everyone. The second kind is to attribute to God all virtuous actions. This is the perfect humility of the saints. It is generated naturally in the soul by the performance of the commandments.

The humble man, the God-fearing man, knows perfectly well that nothing good, nothing straight and sure, happens in the soul without the help and the supervision of God, and therefore he does not stop praying unceasingly that God may act mercifully towards him. A man standing in need of everything from God is

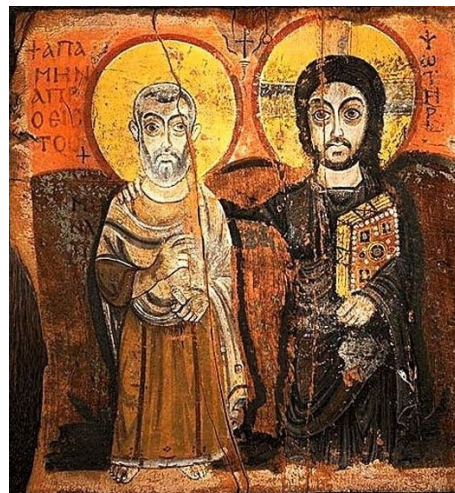
ready to make progress; he knows how he will make progress, and cannot be puffed up. He does not rely on his own abilities but attributes to God everything he does right and always gives thanks to him... Through his act of humility he prays, and through his prayer he is made humble. In as much as he is always making progress in virtue, he is always growing in humility. The more humble he is, the more help he gets from God, and so he advances in the spiritual life through this virtue of humility.

Saints Protus and Hyacinth, Martyrs

Feast Day ~ September 11

The *Roman Martyrology*, which contains the names of countless martyrs and other saints who gave their lives in witness to Christ and His Church, shows us that the path to sainthood is not always straightforward. The lives of some whom we revere as saints went through many twists and turns before that state of sanctity was achieved and often, a person received the crown of martyrdom because of association with another martyr. Had it not been for the persistent desire of their mistress, St. Eugenia, Saints Protus and Hyacinth might never have become Christians or been named as saints of the Church.

Protus and Hyacinth, who were probably brothers, were servants and sometime bodyguards for Eugenia, the daughter of the Roman prefect (governor) of Egypt, Philip. Christians were banned from the city of Alexandria, but Eugenia had learned of the letters of St. Paul and was determined to know more about the faith he wrote about. She devised a scheme to accomplish her investigation into Christianity which involved first receiving her parents' permission to spend some time at one of their estates in the country outside the city, and then dressing in a man's clothing to travel there, accompanied by her servants.



On the way, the three stopped at a monastery where, after receiving instruction and much prayer, they were all baptized by Bishop Elias. Perhaps in order to protect the anonymity of the Prefect's daughter, the bishop allowed Eugenia to continue posing as "Eugene" and remain at the monastery, and she and her servants never returned to her parents' home.

They did, however, return to Alexandria. Eugenia became known for her gift for healing and was caught in an unfortunate incident because of her appearance as a man and a false accusation by a young woman. She was arrested and ordered to appear before the Prefect in Alexandria, her father.

Eugenia and Protus and Hyacinth were now forced to reveal their true identities and face the possible consequences of their conversion. Contrary to what they had feared, Philip was overjoyed to see his daughter again and was ready to become a Christian himself, along with the remaining members of the family and household. He resigned from his position and, while his daughter and her servants continued monastic life, he was eventually chosen to serve as a bishop. The Prefect who had been appointed in his place waited until an opportune time and then had the new bishop murdered while he was praying. St. Philip is venerated in the list of martyrs on September 13.

After this, Eugenia, her mother, and Protus and Hyacinth went to Rome where they established a hostel for travelers and cared for the poor. But another unfortunate incident brought about another arrest. This time it involved a young woman who

converted to Christianity and her jealous fiancée who reported the Christians to the authorities.

Saints Protus and Hyacinth were dragged into a pagan temple where they were to offer sacrifice to the idols, but before they could even refuse, the temple began to collapse around them, so the brothers were beheaded on September 11 around the year 259. In the *Depositio Martyrum*, the earliest known calendar of martyrs celebrated in Rome, which dates to the year 354, Saints Protus and Hyacinth are included with the place of their burial listed as the cemetery of Basilla. This grave was re-discovered in the 19th century. St. Eugenia survived many tortures and was eventually killed with the sword on December 25.

In this new age of anti-Christian sentiment and even persecution, there will be many new martyrs. Some will literally lose their lives for being faithful to Christ and many others will lose their livelihoods, their reputations, their security. Some will lead the way in the forefront of this battle as St. Eugenia did, and others will suffer because of their associations and the examples of those they follow as did Saints Protus and Hyacinth. May these holy martyrs pray for us that we will have strength for the battle.

Parish News

We rejoice with Candace and Patrick Woolley on the birth of the son, Demetrius John, on August 17. *Lo, children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord.* [Ps. 127:4]

On September 9, Sunday School students and teachers, public and parochial school students and teachers, and those who are engaged in home-schooling will receive a blessing for the beginning of the school year at the end of the Liturgy.



There are several important feast days in the month of September. We will celebrate the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday, September 8, with Mass at 10AM, preceded by Matins at 9:30 and followed by a pot-luck brunch. The Exaltation of the Holy Cross will be celebrated with Vespers at 7PM, Liturgy at 7:30 and pot-luck supper on the Eve, Thursday, September 13. The Dedication of St. Michael the Archangel will be observed on Saturday, September 29 with Matins (9:30AM), Mass (10AM), and pot-luck brunch. It

is important that the life of every Orthodox Christian revolve around the cycle of feasts and fasts and the great events in the earthly life of our Lord, his Mother, the Apostles and other saints. Even if you are unable to attend church for these feast days, please remember them in your prayers.

Holy Archangel Michael

by Kh. Rebecca Alford

On the feast day that we celebrate on September 29, we remember the story of a vision of the Archangel Michael, the chief of all the angels, and the unusual experience of a herdsman in Italy in the year 492. A steer wandered away from the man's herd and was discovered lying before the entrance to a hitherto unknown cave on Mt. Gargano. The errant steer would not budge

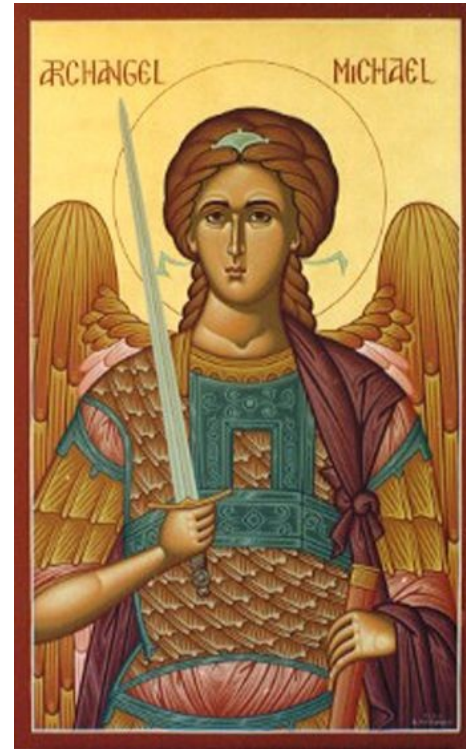
so the herdsman took out his bow and shot an arrow over it and into the cave, hoping to rouse the animal. But instead, the arrow came whizzing back out of the cave. This was such an unexpected and unusual event that, out of fear of something supernatural, the herdsman went to the bishop to ask for help.

As is still the practice in the Church when an event occurs which may have spiritual significance, the bishop called for prayer and fasting to ask for God's help in discerning the meaning of the event. He then had a vision of St. Michael who indicated that a church was to be built on the site of the cave and dedicated to him.

The bishop and all the people formed a procession to the cave and when the bishop entered it, he discovered that the interior was shaped like a church and had probably been used secretly by Christians during the age of persecution. A beautiful church was erected here, incorporating the cave, and dedicated to St. Michael and all his angels.

This was not the first church dedicated to St. Michael, who had been considered the prince of the angels at least since the time of Daniel's vision as described in the Old Testament. Perhaps the oldest, the Michaelion, was built at Chalcedon by the Emperor Constantine in 324. In this church, a painting of the Archangel slaying a dragon became one of the principle ways of depicting St. Michael in iconography.

The mid-fifth century martyrology of St. Jerome lists September 29 as the day of dedication of a basilica in honor of St. Michael on the Via Salaria outside Rome. This date became the day on which all celebrations of St. Michael were held in the West and is mentioned again in the Leonine and Gelasian Sacramentaries of the 6th and 7th centuries. The church whose dedication began this celebration was lost, however, until 1996 when a construction



project revealed the foundations and several decorative items (a Chi-rho symbol and a mosaic fragment). Archaeologists dated the building to around 380-400. The last mention of this church before its probable abandonment during a time of civil unrest was toward the end of the 8th century.

Another vision of St. Michael was experienced by our patron, St. Gregory the Great, at a crucial time for the citizens of Rome in 590, the first year of his pontificate. An outbreak of plague had

devastated the city, with a large portion of the population dying suddenly. St. Gregory called for a procession through the city streets, with the singing of a litany with petitions for the intercessions of all the saints. As the procession neared the site of Hadrian's tomb, St. Gregory had a vision of St. Michael sheathing his sword, indicating to him that the plague was at an end. And so it was. A chapel was also built here to commemorate this event.

Churches and monasteries dedicated to St. Michael have often been built on hills or mountains as these early churches were. Mont St-Michel in Normandy and Skellig Michael in Ireland are two famous examples, now considered World Heritage sites.

Like these ancestors of ours in the faith, may our 21st century skepticism not prevent us from seeing signs of heavenly aid and sometimes intervention in the affairs of our lives. May we

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remember that the holy angels of God have been given to us for our protection and guidance.

Holy Michael Archangel, defend us in the day of battle, be our protector against the malice and snares of the enemy. We humbly beseech God to rebuke him, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the divine power thrust Satan into hell and with him all wicked spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

O God, who didst ordain and constitute the services of Angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant, that they, who always stand before thee and do thee service in heaven, may likewise succour and defend our life on earth. Through Jesus Christ thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Sources: B. Blackburn & L. Holford-Strevens: *The Oxford Companion to the Year*; A. Butler: *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Saints*; Online articles from catholicarboroffaithandmorals.com; Magnificat Website; Salvemariaregina website; Wikipedia.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>September 2018</h1>					<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>	1 St. Giles, Ab, 708; Twelve Holy Brothers, Mm, c. 303 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
2 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Stephen of Hungary, KC, 1038 G	3 Consecration of St. Gregory the Great, 590 <i>(Labor Day)</i>	4 St. Gorazde of Prague, BM, 1942	5	6	7 St. Cloud, C, 560; St. Sergius I, PC, 701	8 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary <i>Mass at 10am</i> W <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
9 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Gorgonius, M, 304 G	10	11 Ss. Protus & Hyacinth, Mm, c. 257; St. Paph- nutius, BC, 4th c.	12	13 <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> R	14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross	15 St. Nicomedes, M, 4th c. <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
16 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Cor- nelius, PM, 254 & Cyprian, BM 258; St. Ninian, BC, 5 th c. G	17 St. Lambert, BM, 705	18	19 Ember Wednesday; St. Theodore of Canterbury, BC, 690; Ss. Januarius & comp., Mm, c. 305	20 Ss. Eustace & comp., Mm, c. 118	21 St. Matthew, Evangelist & Apostle, 1st c.; Ember Friday	22 Ember Saturday; St. Maurice & Comp., Mm, 3rd c.; St. Lioba of Mainz, V, 781 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
23 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Thecla of Iconium, VM, 1st c.; St. Linus, PM, c. 80 G	24 Ss. Juvenaly, PrM, 1796 & Peter the Aleut, M, 1815	25	26 Ss. Cyprian, BM & Justina, VM, c. 303	27 Ss. Cosmas & Damian, Mm, c. 303	28 St. Wenceslas, M, 938	29 Dedication of St. Michael the Archangel <i>Mass at 10am</i> W <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
30 Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Jerome PrCD, 420; St. Gregory the Illumin- ator, BC, c. 323 G						

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

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