

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church
A Western Rite Congregation of the Antiochian Archdiocese
13407 Roxbury Rd., Silver Spring, MD - stgregoryoc.org

*From a Homily
by St. Nikolai
of Ochrid
d. 1956*

Our God is almighty, and His power is without limit and beyond description. By His Word, He created all that was created: *By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made* [Ps. 33:6]. It is by His Word that he makes men's bodies. By the Word of the Lord, lifeless earth is changed into the bodies of men, of animals and of plants. By the Word of the Lord, running water is turned into vapour, and vapour into ice and snow. By this same Word, the water in the vine is changed to wine, *wine that maketh glad the heart of man*. Is it, then, strange that the Word of God, incarnate as Christ our Lord, turned water into wine at Cana? For us men, darkened by sin, it is a great wonder; for our nature, weakened by sin, it is an unattainable marvel. But is not the working of wonders a normal activity for the Creator? When the servants had filled the great water-pots with water, the Lord Christ said to them: "Draw out,



now, and bear unto the governor of the feast." He did not say: "Let the water become wine" - He only thought it, and the thought of God had the same power as his Word.

Why is it that this was the "beginning of miracles", when the Lord had apparently worked many other wonders before this? Because, my brethren, the turning of water into wine was a fundamental miracle - the essence of all His miracles. Human nature was diluted, and needed to be turned into wine. The divine spark in man had been extinguished, and needed to be re-kindled. Sickness is like water; health is like wine. Impurity through evil spirits is like water; purity is like wine. Death is like water; life is like wine. Whenever the Lord healed the sick, cleansed the unclean, raised the dead or enlightened those in error, He turned water into wine.

Lord our God, Thou wonderful turner of water into wine, bring Thy divine flame to our extinguished fire. Turn the water of our being into divine wine, that we may be like to Thee; and, being so, may live in Thine immortal Kingdom with Thy glorious angels. To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

Parish News

We begin the calendar year with the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord on Tuesday, January 1. Liturgy will be

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celebrated at 10:00am, preceded by Matins at 9:30 and followed by a pot-luck brunch and our parish tradition of games for all.

Since Epiphany falls on Sunday this year, we will have the Blessing of Water at Vespers on Saturday, January 5. Remember that house blessings will take place all during the season of Epiphany - until Saturday, February 23 - so please speak to Fr. Nicholas or Fr. Raphael to schedule yours.

Bible study on the Gospel of Mark will resume on January 2 and continue each Wednesday evening at 7:30pm. We conclude the evening with the service of Compline.

St. Sulpicius Severus, Confessor

Feast Day ~ January 29

He had everything a young man could wish for: wealth, social prominence, an excellent education, a lucrative position as a lawyer, a beautiful wife from one of the best families. What more could Sulpicius Severus have asked for?

It is especially true for someone who “has it all” that one event can change his life forever, and that is what happened to this young man. His wife, who had yet to bear them a child, died suddenly and left Sulpicius, now a widower, to examine his life more closely. Was his wealth, his profession, his social status really so important? Our circumstances may not be the same as that of Sulpicius, we may not experience a life-changing tragedy, but there is much that we can learn from his response that we can apply to our own lives.

Sulpicius now rejected the importance of material things in favor of living a simple life of prayer. He moved to a small cottage in a village in Aquitain and changed his diet to one without meat. He



freed the slaves which he had owned, he sold much of his estate and gave the money for the poor, and kept some property to use the rental proceeds to help others in need. *Can we do without luxuries and share more of our wealth with the poor?*

Sulpicius' father was furious with his son for giving up the good life and most of his friends abandoned him when he began a semi-monastic life. *Can we resist the influence of those around us who would condemn us for our faith?*

All this happened around the year 390, about seventy years after Christianity had been made the official religion of the Roman Empire. As memories of the persecutions before Emperor (St.) Constantine had faded somewhat, some people had become Christians out of a sense of “civic duty”. Sulpicius wanted to live his faith in a more deliberate, committed, way and he also wanted to give to God and his Church the best that he could offer. After the dispersal of his wealth, the best that he could offer was his knowledge and abilities as a scholar and writer. He took on the task of writing a sacred history of the world, recounting all the events in the Old Testament, omitting those of the Gospels as having already been told perfectly from eye-witness accounts, and telling the story of the Church up until his own time, the year 400. *Do we offer to God whatever it is that we do best? Do we use our talents and abilities in service to God and his Church?*

Sulpicius was a friend of Paulinus, the bishop of the city of Nola. Letters written between the two are extant and reveal the way in which each encouraged the other in their spiritual pursuits. Some of Sulpicius' correspondence with his sister, Claudia, also still exist, which show his love and concern for her spiritual welfare as

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well as that of his friend Bishop Paulinus. *Do we show our love and concern for our fellow Christians and do we seek their support and encouragement in our lives?*

Perhaps the greatest influence on Sulpicius was that of someone who was a living saint in his time, St. Martin of Tours. That great bishop and monk served as an example of holy living for the young man, who visited St. Martin several times before his death. He listened to the saint's teachings and tried to follow his counsels. He wrote the story of Martin's life and spent several years in the saint's cell in Marmoutier (near his see city of Tours) following his death. *Do we look for examples of holiness and counsel for our lives to the saints of the Church and to those still living whose lives are worthy to emulate?*

St. Sulpicius Severus spent the remainder of his life in a monastery in Marseilles, which had been founded by St. John Cassian in 407 while much of Gaul was being invaded by the Vandals and other barbarians. Marseilles was the seat of government from 407 to 410, thus providing safety from these attacks. *When we feel threatened by the violence and chaos of the world around us, do we seek the safety of the Church and rely on the ordered life of worship, prayer, study, fasting, and penance which the Church provides?*

St. Sulpicius Severus passed from this life to the next on January 29, around the year 420 and is named a Confessor of the faith. He did not work miracles and did not have to fight against heresies; he was not martyred for being a Christian, but was one of those very "ordinary" saints whose example we can easily follow. May we, like St. Sulpicius, give of our wealth for the poor, resist the influence of those who reject the Christian way of life, offer our talents to God, share support and encouragement with our fellow Christians, strive to emulate those who have led holy lives, and maintain the orderly life which the Church provides. Holy Sulpicius Severus, pray for us.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2019</h1>						
<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Mass at 9:30AM</i>		1 The Circumcision of Our Lord and Octave Day of the Nativity <i>Mass at 10am W</i>	2 Octave Day of St. Stephen; St. Fulgentius, BC, 533	3 Octave Day of St. John, Ap. Ev.; St. Genevieve, V, 512	4 Octave Day of the Holy Innocents, Mm; St. Titus, BC, c. 96	5 Vigil of the Epiphany of Our Lord; St. Simeon Stylites, C, 460 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
6 The Epiphany of Our Lord <i>W</i>	7 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Cedd, BC, 664	8 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Lucius & comp., Mm, c. 290; St. Severinus, Ab, 482	9 of the Octave of Epiphany	10 of the Oct. of Epiphany; St. Paul the First Hermit, C., c. 345	11 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Hyginus, PM, c. 142; St. Theodosius, Ab, c. 529	12 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Benedict Biscop, Ab, 690 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
13 First Sunday after Epiphany; Octave Day of Epiphany; St. Kentigern, BC, 603 <i>W</i>	14 St. Hilary, BCD, 367; St. Nina, V, 335	15 St. Maurus, Ab, 584	16 St. Marcellus, PM, 309, St. Honoratus, BC, 429	17 St. Anthony, Ab, 356	18 Chair of St. Peter in Rome; St. Prisca, VM, c. 270	19 St. Mark of Ephesus, BC, 1445 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
20 Second Sunday after Epiphany; Ss. Fabian, BM & Sebastian, M, 3rd c. <i>W</i>	21 St. Agnes, VM, 304	22 St. Vincent, M, 304; St. Anastasius, M, 628	23 St. Emerentiana, VM, c. 304; St. John the Almoner, BC, c. 619	24 St. Timothy, BM, 97	25 Conversion of St. Paul	26 St. Polycarp, BM, 156 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
27 Third Sunday after Epiphany; St. John Chrysostom, BCD, 407 <i>G</i>	28 The Second Feast of St. Agnes, VM	29	30 St. Martina, VM, 228; St. Bathildes, QMa, 680	31		

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

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