

# ✠ 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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*From a  
Treatise by  
St. Basil the  
Great  
d. 379*

**W**hen we speak of the plan of salvation for men, accomplished in God's goodness by our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who would deny that it was all made possible through the grace of the Spirit? Whether you wish to examine the Old Testament - the blessings of the patriarchs, the help

given through the law, the types, the prophecies, the victories in battle, the miracles performed through righteous men - or everything that happened since the Lord's coming in the flesh, it all comes to pass through the Spirit.

**I**n the first place, the Lord was anointed with the Holy Spirit, who would henceforth be inseparably united to his very flesh, as it is written, *He on whom you see the spirit descend and remain, this is he who.. is my beloved Son* [John 1:33; Mt.3:17] and *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit* [Acts 10:30] After His baptism, the Holy Spirit was present in

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every action He performed. He was there when the Lord was tempted by the devil; *Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted.* [Mt. 4:1] The Spirit was united with Jesus when He performed miracles: *But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons...* [Mt. 12:28] Nor did the Spirit leave Him after His resurrection from the dead. When the Lord renewed mankind by breathing into His Apostles' faces, (thus

restoring the grace which Adam had lost, which God breathed into him in the beginning) what did He say? *Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.* [Jn. 20:22-23]

**I**s it not indisputably clear that the Church is set in order by the Holy Spirit? "God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kind of tongues." [I Cor. 12:28] This order is established according to the different gifts distributed by the Spirit.

**A**ny intelligent man realizes that the work of the Holy Spirit will not cease, as some imagine when the Lord makes His long-awaited return from heaven. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit will be present with Him on the day of His revelation, when He will judge the universe in righteousness as its only Ruler. Who is so ignorant of the good things which God has prepared for those who are worthy that he does not understand that the crown of the righteous man is precisely the grace of the Spirit? On that Day spiritual glory shall be distributed in perfect abundance as each receives a share proportionate to his uprightness.

## *St. Meriadoc, Bishop & Confessor*

### *Feast Day ~ June 7*

**B**e sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith. [1 Peter 5:8, 9a]

**E**very Christian is in constant danger from the temptations of the devil. Just when a Christian has begun to pray fervently, the devil begins to distract with irrelevant thoughts; just when a Christian has made a good choice for his life, the devil throws up doubts and alternative choices; just when a Christian has performed a good deed, the devil steps in to tempt with pride in having done something good. The saints have faced these same temptations and their resistance to them has given them the name “saint.” May we listen to their stories and ask for their intercessions as we resist the wiles of the devil.

**S**t. Meriadoc (or Meriasek) was the son of a prominent Welsh family born in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century. Even as a child, he was very devout and spent much of his time in prayer and fasting. Knowing that he needed to escape the doting attention bestowed on him by his family, he entered a monastery as soon as he was old enough and removed himself from the world.

**A**s a monk, Meriadoc led an extremely austere life, surviving on little food and much prayer and study of Holy Scripture. It was said that he made a thousand prostrations a day in his prayers. As people from the surrounding area heard of his sanctity and the good advice he gave, they began to flock to him for his counsel. Perhaps to avoid taking pride in such recognition, Meriadoc decided to undertake a missionary journey to Cornwall, where many of the inhabitants had not yet heard the Gospel.



**A**rriving in Camborne, where a church already existed, the monk was able to heal a number of sick people at a well which sprang up in his presence. His reputation as a holy healer and one who cared for the poor eventually led the pagan chieftain, Teudar, to send his soldiers to evict Meriadoc from the area. From there, he traveled to Brittany.

**L**iving as a hermit in poverty and wearing only rags, Meriadoc once again became well known for his sanctity. His relatives even came to try to convince him to return to the family lands and life in the world, but he refused and was soon brought out of his hermitage - against his will - by another way. He was, by popular acclaim, elected bishop of the city of Vannes and was consecrated in the year 659.

**A**fter a life of resisting the temptations to pride which the devil placed before him, St. Meriadoc passed from this world to life in the next. His memory has lived on and his relics have been kept for veneration, especially by those suffering from migraines and deafness. A late-Medieval miracle play about him in the Cornish language still exists.

**T**he devil is roaring about us, too. Through the prayers of St. Meriadoc may we, too, resist his temptations. Holy Meriadoc, pray for us.

*Resources: A Calendar of British Saints (Orthodox Synaxarion) compiled by Fr. Benedict Haigh; Online article on Celtic and Old English Saints by Ambrose Mooney. Saints of the British Isles by Andrew Bond and Nicolas Mabin; The Saints of Cornwall by William John Ferrar.*

## The Eucharist & the Dove

Christ our God took bread and wine and said “This is my Body... This is my Blood.” From that time forward, the Church has understood these words, not in a metaphorical sense, but to express a deep and mysterious reality. The bread and wine which we offer become Christ’s Body and Blood as nourishment for our journey through life. God has chosen to share His life with us in many ways, but most clearly as medicine for our souls, and as food to strengthen and sustain us to live godly lives, for life in the Kingdom. As we accept and receive that great gift, the only appropriate response is to give God our thanks and praise, by our worship and by the way we live.



The consecrated bread, or Host (from the Latin *Hostia* or *Victim*) is kept, or reserved, in the pyx and tabernacle, following the distribution of communion. The primary reason for this reservation is that the Sacrament may be taken to the sick, the shut-in, and those who are nearing death; Saints Justin Martyr, Cyprian, and Basil all speak

of this practice from earliest times. Knowing that God is with us under the form of bread and wine, and that this Presence is housed in the tabernacle, has also led the faithful through the centuries, to pray before the tabernacle and the altar. Such prayer and adoration became more common in the West, in opposition to false teachings which arose during the Middle Ages, denying that the bread and wine of the Eucharist truly become the Body and Blood of Christ.

Throughout both Scripture and the life of the Church, the image of a dove is used to indicate the presence of God. In Genesis, chapter one, we are told that God created by His Word and by His Spirit. The Holy Spirit moved or hovered over the face of the waters; the *Talmud* states that the Spirit hovered as a dove over her children. In the story of Noah, following the flood, a dove showed when it was safe to leave the ark, as a sign of God’s favor. When offering sacrifice for atonement, of all birds, only doves or young pigeons were said to be pure enough to offer to God (Lev. 1:14), and doves were the accepted offering by those too poor to offer a lamb (Lev. 12:8), as we find when Mary and Joseph presented the child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:24).

The most notable appearance of the image of the dove in the New Testament is at the Baptism of our Lord. Matthew 3:16 tells us, “Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.” Here the image of a dove is used to describe a *Theophany*, a showing of the presence of God. While the Acts of the Apostles



states that the Holy Spirit descended as tongues of fire upon the Apostles (Acts 2:3), both Orthodox iconography and later Western art often use the image of the Holy Spirit descending as a dove upon the Church at Pentecost, and occasionally show the Holy Spirit descending upon the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Annunciation as a dove, in like manner.

The symbol of the dove carrying an olive branch became a sign of enduring peace, and early Christians used this image in association with both baptism and burial. Many saints, including

our own St. Gregory, are depicted in icons with doves, representing the Holy Spirit, speaking in their ears. The dove also became a symbol of the presence of God within the elements of the Eucharist, and containers to hold the Host (or consecrated bread) were often fashioned in the form of a dove, called *peristerium* or *columba*. In every Divine Liturgy, the celebrant prays that the Holy Spirit will descend upon the offerings, making the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, an action portrayed by the dove hovering over the altar. Tertullian spoke of the Church as the “*columbae domus*”, the house of the dove, leading some to say that dove-shaped Eucharistic vessels may have been in use by the third century. In the life of St. Basil the Great (d. 379) we read that the saint “commissioned a goldsmith to fashion a dove of pure gold, as an image of what took place at the Baptism of Christ, when John the Baptist bore witness, saying, ‘I have beheld the Spirit descending out of heaven as a dove, and He abode upon Him’. He then suspended it above the holy table as a receptacle in which to



store the Mysteries.” A hanging dove, made of silver in Syria and dating from the sixth or seventh century is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. During the Middle Ages many such Eucharistic doves were made of precious metals, with enamel decoration, notably in the city of Limoges in

France, one of which may now be seen at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.

The word *Pyx* is commonly used in the West to speak of the actual box which holds the reserved Sacrament, and it was a common practice to place the Pyx within the back of the dove. The *Custumal* of the great French monastery of Cluny in the eleventh

century speaks of the "deacon taking the golden pyx out of the dove (*columba*) which hangs permanently above the altar". While many churches reserved the Sacrament in a “hanging Pyx” in the form of a dove, others had ornate boxes covered with veils suspended above the altar. The lives of St. Sylvester and St. Innocent (fourth and fifth centuries) however, both make mention of towers of precious metal to house Eucharistic doves, rather than suspending the doves above the altar, a practice which may have led to the later development of the tabernacle to house the reserved Sacrament, which eventually became the more common practice, both in the East and in the West.

At St. Gregory’s we have reserved the Sacrament in a Pyx placed inside a small tabernacle made in Greece (actually intended to house the consecrated Host, or *Lamb*, for the pre-Sanctified Liturgy). A generous donor has commissioned a Eucharistic dove for St. Gregory’s and it will be blessed during the visitation of His Grace, Bishop JOHN. Our dove has been carved of English Basswood, covered with gold-leaf, and decorated with enamel accents by Massachusetts marine artist and wood-carver, Paul Garnett. It will be suspended above the altar where our sanctuary lamp has been, and a new sanctuary lamp will be hung on the wall nearby (a candle burns in this lamp, indicating the presence of the reserved Sacrament).



Our new Eucharistic Dove will serve as a continual reminder of the Presence of God in our midst, of the favor of God for His people, and of the Holy Spirit working to feed, strengthen, guide and sanctify the people of God, that we may share the Good News of Christ, and serve in His Name.

## Parish News

We begin the month of June with the episcopal visit of Bishop JOHN on the weekend of June 1 and 2. Sayedna JOHN is the Bishop for the Antiochian Western Rite parishes but also serves as the Bishop of Worcester and as the editor of *the Word* magazine. He will be with us for Vespers at 6PM on Saturday, June 1, at which time he will bless the Eucharistic Dove which has been given to St. Gregory's and he will tonsure Patrick Woolley to the rank of Reader. Dinner will be served after the service. On Sunday morning, June 2, at the end of High Mass, we will anticipate the Rogation processions by singing the Litany of the Saints as we process around the grounds (weather permitting).

Ascension Day will be celebrated on the Eve, Wednesday, June 5, with Vespers at 7PM, Mass at 7:30, and a pot-luck supper following. The Paschal Candle, which has been burning since the Easter Vigil, representing the presence of the Risen Lord on earth, will be extinguished after the Gospel at this service.

The great feast of Pentecost, fifty days after Pascha, falls on June 16 this year. As we celebrate the appearing of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire and hear about them speaking in many languages, we will repeat a portion of the Epistle in as many languages as are represented at St. Gregory's.

Trinity Sunday, when in the Western Rite we celebrate the great mystery of God as One in Three Persons, is June 23. The feast of Corpus Christi in celebration of the Holy Eucharist will be observed on the Sunday in the Octave, June 30.



The Parish Life Conference for the Eastern Dioceses will be held at Antiochian Village June 26-30.

St. Gregory Orthodox Church  
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*Address Correction Requested*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>June 2019</h1>						1 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
2 Fifth Sunday after Easter; Ss. Marcellinus, Peter and Erasmus, Mm, 304 <i>W</i>	3 Rogation Monday; St. Kevin of Glendalough, Ab, c. 618	4 Rogation Tuesday; St. Petroc, C, 564	5 St. Boniface, BM, 754; Vigil of the Ascension <i>Mass at 7:30pm W</i>	6 Ascension Day	7 of the Octave of Ascension; St. Meriadoc, BC, 659	8 of the Octave of Ascension <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
9 Sunday after the Ascension; St. Columba of Iona, Ab, 597 <i>W</i>	10 of the Octave of Ascension; St. Margaret of Scotland, QW, 1092	11 of the Octave of Ascension	12 St. Barnabas, Apostle, 1 <sup>st</sup> c. of the Octave of Ascension	13 Octave Day of the Ascension	14 St. Basil the Great, BCD, 379	15 Vigil of Pentecost; Ss. Vitus, Modestus & Crescentia, Mm, c. 303 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
16 Pentecost <i>R</i>	17 Monday after Pentecost	18 Tuesday after Pentecost; St. Ephrem the Syrian, DnCD, 373	19 Ember Wednesday in the Oct. of Pentecost; Ss. Gervase & Protase, Mm, 2nd. c.	20 Thursday after Pentecost; St. Silverius, PM, 538; Translation of St. Edward, KM, 980	21 Ember Friday in the Octave of Pentecost	22 Ember Sat. in the Octave of Pentecost; St. Alban, Proto-martyr of England, 209 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
23 Trinity Sunday; St. Etheldreda, QV, 679 <i>W</i>	24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist	25	26 Ss. John & Paul, Mm, c. 362	27 Corpus Christi	28 St. Irenaeus of Lyons, BM, 202; Vigil of Ss. Peter & Paul	29 Ss. Peter & Paul, Apostles, 1st c. <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
30 Sunday in the Octave of Corpus Christi; Comm. of St. Paul the Apostle <i>W</i>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Mass at 9:30AM</i>

*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.*