

✠ 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. Leo
the Great
d. 461*

These days, dearly beloved, which followed between the Resurrection of the Lord and His Ascension, were not passed in simple idleness. During them great truths were established, great mysteries revealed. During them the dread of death was taken away, and the immortality not alone of the soul but also of the body

made clear. The Lord breathing upon them the Holy Spirit was poured into all the Apostles...

When the Lord had appeared in their midst and had said to them: *Peace be to you* [Luke 24:36; John 20:26], the disciples began to be greatly troubled by grievous doubts, and, lest they cling to the notions which they then began to turn over in their minds (for they thought they beheld not a body but a ghost) He confutes these thoughts which were contrary to reality, and firmly confronting the eyes of the doubters with the marks of the crucifixion which still

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remained in His hands and in His face, and bids them feel them carefully with their own hands. For these scars of the nails and of the lance had been retained in His flesh that by means of them the wounds of unbelieving hearts might be healed, so that they would firmly grasp, not from a wavering faith but from sure and certain knowledge, that this Substance, which had lain in the sepulchre, was that which was now about to sit on the Throne of God the Father.

So through all this time, most dearly beloved, which passed between the Resurrection of the Lord and His Ascension into heaven, this was the aim of God's providence, this is taught, this is made known to the eyes and to the hearts of the faithful: that the Lord Jesus Christ, who had been truly born, and had suffered and died, was to be acknowledged as truly risen from the dead. And so it was that the most blessed Apostles and all the Disciples, who had been fearful because of the outcome of the Cross, and hesitant in their belief in the Resurrection, were now so strengthened by this manifest truth, that upon the Lord's entering into the glory of heaven they were not alone nor afflicted with sadness, rather they were filled with great joy.

And in truth it was a great and indescribable cause for joy, when, in the presence of the holy multitude, the nature of human kind ascended above the dignity of all the heavenly creatures, rising above the angelic order, above the sublimity of the archangels, with no limit amid all the glory of heaven to the height of its ascent till, received into the company of the eternal Father, it was made sharer of the Throne of His glory to Whose Nature it was united in the Son.

Therefore, since the Ascension of Christ is our uplifting, and whither the glory of our Head shall go thither the hope of our body is called, let us then, most dearly beloved, rejoice exceedingly with fitting joy, and let us be glad with devout giving of thanks. For on this day, not alone are we made sure heirs of paradise, but in Christ we have already reached the heights of heaven, and obtained more abundant gifts through the ineffable favor of Christ than we lost through the envy of the devil. For they whom the venom of the enemy cast down from the happiness of their first home, these, made one with Himself, the Son of God has set at the right hand of the Father, with Whom He lives and reigns, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God for ever and ever. Amen.

St. John Before the Latin Gate

Feast Day ~ May 6

Some of the feast days on the calendar of the Church represent events in the earthly life of our Lord (i.e. the Nativity, Presentation, Transfiguration, Resurrection, Ascension) or of the saints, such as the martyrdom of those who died for their faith (i.e. Ss. Peter & Paul on June 29) or the consecration of a bishop (i.e. St. Gregory the Great on September 3). The feast day of St. John Before the Latin Gate on May 6 is one of several feast days which celebrate a miracle.

St. John held a special place in the earthly life of our Lord. As the son of the fisherman Zebedee and Salome, the daughter of Joseph the Betrothed, John was Christ's nephew, and he was called the "beloved disciple" for his especially close relationship to Christ. He was one of our Lord's original twelve Apostles, thought to be the youngest, and he was one of those chosen to witness the Transfiguration. John was the only disciple who stood by the cross the crucifixion and, as He hung on the cross, Jesus bade John take responsibility for his blessed mother. All the other Apostles



received the crown of martyrdom after traveling to many parts of the world and preaching and teaching about the Savior, but John died a natural death in old age.

This does not mean that John didn't live the same life of witness as the other Apostles. He preached mostly in Asia Minor, in and around the city of Ephesus, where he served as Bishop. The miracle that is celebrated on May 6 shows that John was willing to accept martyrdom like the other

Apostles, but God had other plans for this beloved disciple.

During the fierce persecutions of Christians in the reign of the Emperor Domitian (81-96), the pagans of Ephesus who were enraged by the conversions of their countrymen through the teachings of John, sent him to Rome to appear before the Emperor. There, John was tortured in many violent ways but was strong in his refusal to denounce his Savior. As a final punishment, the Emperor had John placed in a cauldron of boiling oil at a place in front of the Latin gate, one of the gates in the southern part of the city wall. When the oil in the cauldron suddenly cooled so that John came out of it unscathed, the Emperor was frightened enough to end the tortures and instead to send John into exile.

Sent to the Greek island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, John had time to reflect on Christ's earthly life and ministry and he was given visions which he described in his book of Revelation, written during this time. When Domitian was assassinated and Nerva became emperor, many captives and those in exile were freed, so John returned to Ephesus where he wrote his Gospel and the three Epistles before his death at nearly 100 years of age.

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Address Correction Requested

Roman Christians did not forget the dramatic miracle of John's surviving the cauldron of boiling oil and, in more favorable times, a church was built near this site and a feast day was established to be celebrated by the Church.

We give thanks for the courage of the Apostles and for the miraculous ways of God. May the memory of this miracle be a reminder to us that God still works miracles and that our eyes should be open to them.

Resources: The Anglican Breviary; The Liturgical Year, Vol. 8, by Abbot Gueranger; The Orthodox Study Bible; Prologue from Ochrid by St. Nikolai; Wikipedia article.

Parish News

In this month, we will celebrate several important feast days. On May 3 we remember the Finding of the Holy Cross by St. Helena in Jerusalem in the 4th century; on May 24, we will observe the Sunday in the Octave of the Dedication of our church (the church was dedicated on May 21 in 2015 by Bishop John); and we will celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord on the Eve, May 28. The archdiocese has now lifted the restrictions on how many services we can have each week; however, the Maryland guidelines still limit gatherings to ten or fewer. Fr. Nicholas will be in touch soon with our revised schedule and plan. We look forward to the day when we can all worship together again.

The second phase of the remodeling of our building has begun. The parish hall is being made handicap accessible with an outside ramp, wider doors, and two ADA-compliant restrooms, and the kitchen area is being opened up for better traffic flow. This work will take several months to complete and, if we are allowed to return to church while it is still in progress, we can pray for good summer weather so that coffee hours can be held outside.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>May 2020</h1>					1 Ss. Philip & James, Apostles, 1 st c.,	2 St. Athanasius, BCD, 373 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
3 Finding of the Holy Cross; Second Sunday after Easter <i>W</i>	4 St. Monica, Ma, 387	5	6 St. John before the Latin Gate, 95	7 St. Alexis Toth, PrC, 1909; St. John of Beverly, BC, 721	8 Apparition of St. Michael of the Archangel	9 St. Gregory Nazianzen, BCD, 389 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
10 Third Sunday after Easter; Ss. Gordian, 362 & Epimachus, 250, Mm <i>W</i>	11	12 St. Epiphanius, BC, c. 403	13	14 St. Boniface of Tarsus, M, 290	15 St. Pachomius, Ab, 346	16 St. Brendan the Navigator, 577, Ab <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
17 Fourth Sunday after Easter <i>W</i>	18 St. Venantius, M, 250; St. Theodotus & comp., Mm, c. 303	19 St. Dunstan, BC, 988; St. Pudentiana, V, 2 nd c.	20	21 Dedication of St. Gregory's; St. Constantine, C, 337	22	23 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
24 Sun. in the Oct. of the Ded. of St. Gregory's 5th Sun. after Easter; St. Vincent of Lerins, C, 450 <i>W</i>	25 Rogation Monday; St. Urban, PM, 230; St. Aldhelm, BC, 709 <i>(Memorial Day)</i>	26 Rogation Tuesday; St. Augustine of Canterbury, BC, 605	27 St. Bede, CD, 735; St. John I, PM, 526; Vigil of the Ascension <i>Mass at 7:30pm W</i>	28 Ascension Day; St. Germanus of Paris, BC, 576	29 of the Octave of the Ascension	30 of the Octave of the Ascension; St. Felix I, PM, 274 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
31 Sunday after the Ascension; St. Petronilla, VM, c. 100 <i>W</i>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Mass at 9:30AM Livestream on Youtube</i>