

✠ 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. Andrew
of Crete
d. 740*

The law comes to an end with Christ, who leads us away from the letter of the law so as to bring us to the spirit. It is fulfilled in this, that the lawgiver himself has brought it entirely to completion, transforming the letter into the spirit, summing up all things in himself and living by the law of love. He has made law subject to love,

and joined love to law in concord; not fusing the particular qualities of each, but in a marvelous way making light and free whatever is burdensome and servile and repressed: we are no longer to be enslaved by the elemental spirits of the world, as the apostle says, or held in the yoke of slavery to the letter of the law.

This is the summary of the benefits of Christ for us. This is the unveiling of the mystery, this is nature made new,

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God and man, and the deification of the human nature assumed by God. But so radiant, so glorious a visitation of God to men needed some prelude of joy to introduce to us the great gift of salvation. The present feast is such: the prelude in the birth of the Mother of God, and the concluding act is the union which is destined between the Word and human nature. A virgin is now born and suckled and

molded, and is made ready to be Mother of God, the King of all for ever.

Justificably then is the mystery of this day to be celebrated, since a double gain will be ours if we do so: we shall be led towards the truth, and we shall be led away from a life of slavery to the letter of the law. How will this be? Clearly, inasmuch as the shadow yields to the presence of the light, and grace introduces freedom in place of the letter. The present feast stands on the border between these: it joins us to the truth instead of signs and figures, and it brings in the new in place of the old.

Let the whole creation therefore sing praise and dance and unite to celebrate the glories of this day. Today let there be one common feast of those in heaven and those on earth. Let everything that is, in the world and above the world, join together in rejoicing. For today a shrine is built for the Creator of the universe. The creature is newly made ready as a divine dwelling for the Creator.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Behold the wood of the Cross, whereon was hung the world's salvation. O come, let us worship [antiphon for the unveiling of the Cross on Good Friday].

The most important symbol for the Christian is the cross. Crosses are placed on our church buildings and altars, are carried in our liturgical processions, and adorn vestments and altar linens. In baptism and chrismation, we are signed with the sign of the cross and are thus “marked as Christ’s own forever.” We wear crosses as a reminder of this, and we make the sign of the cross numerous times in church and in our daily lives. At the command of our Lord, we are to take up our own cross and follow Him.

There are several occasions in the church year which emphasize the importance of the Cross as the instrument of our salvation: in Holy Week, and especially Good Friday, when we mark the historical events leading up to Christ’s crucifixion; the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross on May 3; and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14.

On May 3, we remember the pilgrimage of St. Helena to the Holy Land, when she was shown the places associated with Jesus’ birth, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, and when she discovered the remains of the Holy Cross. A liturgical celebration of this is thought to have originated in the Gallican liturgy and later adapted into Roman use.

At his mother’s urging, Emperor (St.) Constantine had churches built over the holy sites - churches which were dedicated on September 13 and 14 in the year 335. The Christians of Jerusalem continued with yearly celebrations, including raising up the Cross for the veneration of the people, and this was soon established in Constantinople and other parts of the East.



The theft of the Holy Cross and other treasures by King Chosroes and his invading Persian army in 614 was a great tragedy, but in 627, the Emperor Heraclius defeated the Persians and the holy relics were recovered. Heraclius, perhaps proud of his accomplishment, tried to enter the Church of the Resurrection carrying the Cross with great pomp and ceremony but an invisible force prevented his entry. When he replaced his fine garments with simple sack-cloth and removed his shoes, he was allowed to take the Cross into the church in humility.

On the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, we celebrate these events and are reminded by St. Paul that *the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* [I Cor. 1:17]

We adore thee, O Christ, and we bless thee, because by thy Cross thou hast redeemed the world. [antiphon for the procession of the Reserved Sacrament on Good Friday]

St. Gerard of Hungary Feast Day ~ September 24

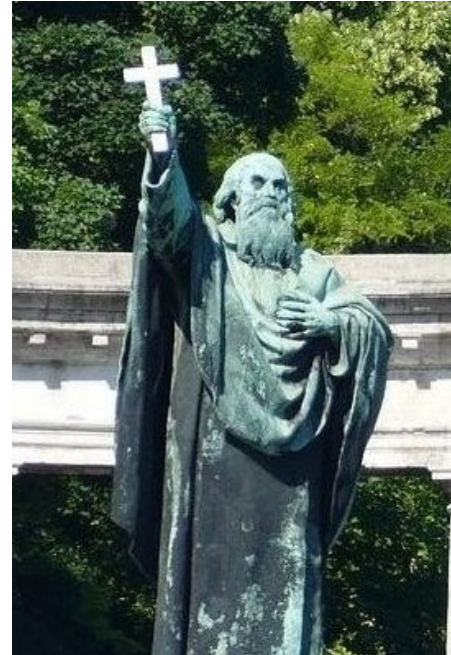
Often, we make plans for our lives that are never realized because God places other opportunities in our paths. In the lives of the saints, we read of many who gave up their personal desires when they realized that a roadblock that in their way was

actually God's call for a greater cause. This was certainly true for St. Gerard, the first Christian martyr of Hungary.

Born in Venice between 977 and 1000 to a wealthy family and given the name George at his baptism, the saint was destined for a prominent worldly career. After his father died while on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, George's name was changed to Gerard in his father's honor. Still in early childhood, Gerard suffered a severe illness and his family sought the fervent prayers of the monks of the nearby Benedictine monastery of San Giorgio. The child's health was restored and his family sent him to live with the monks. At the monastery, Gerard received an excellent monastic education which included not only the study of scripture and theology but also grammar, music, and law. By now, it was clear that a worldly career was not what God had planned for Gerard and he was tonsured as a monk of this community.

Around the year 1020, Gerard left Venice to embark on his own pilgrimage to the Holy Land. A storm caused his ship to make harbor near Istria, where he stayed in another Benedictine monastery. There he met the monk Rasina (or Radla), who had been a companion of Bishop (St.) Adalbert of Prague, the missionary to the Slavic peoples of Bohemia who had baptized Stephen, the first King of Hungary. Rasina urged Gerard to postpone his Holy Land pilgrimage and go to Hungary where there was a great need for missionaries to help with the Christianization of the people.

Gerard agreed to this proposal, temporarily delaying his pilgrimage, and traveled with Rasina to Pécs in Hungary where he was introduced to the bishop, Maurus and to Anastasius, the abbot of the local monastery. After hearing the monk preach several sermons, the bishop and the abbot declared to Gerard that they thought it was God's will that he had come to them and that he should remain in Hungary and help teach the people about Christ.



life were changed again.

There were still pagan groups at war with each other in this area and control of the territory was also sought by the Germanic rulers of the Ottonian dynasty. Slowly, chieftains and their followers accepted Christianity, at least outwardly. One of these chieftains, Ajtony, had been baptized by Greek monks who had settled near the Mures River. When a conflict developed between him (over an issue of taxation) and King Stephen, he was defeated in battle and his territory came under Stephen's rule. The king sent the Greek monks from Csanád to Oroszlámos in present-day Serbia and gave the monastery in Csanád to Benedictine monks, thus laying the groundwork for the eventual unfortunate divide between what became Orthodox Serbia and Roman Catholic Hungary. The king created a diocese with Csanád as the see city and appointed Gerard as the bishop. Evidently the king - and God - wanted Gerard to have a more active role in the spread of Christianity in Hungary!

When Gerard was introduced to King Stephen, the king prevailed upon him to serve as the tutor for his son, Emeric, who would be his successor. It was obvious that the pilgrimage was not going to happen. After a number of years providing spiritual counsel as well as secular studies to Emeric, Gerard decided to settle in the nearby hills, to live as a hermit and to write commentaries on the scriptures. It was from this place of solitude that Gerard was summoned by King Stephen and his plans for his

The cooperative efforts of Bishop Gerard and King Stephen resulted in much progress in the conversion of the Hungarian people and the building of many churches and monasteries. When Stephen died in 1038, he was succeeded by his nephew (his son, Emeric, having died in a hunting accident in 1031) who was deposed three years later. In this time of chaos, there were other pagan uprisings and it was during one of those, in the year 1046, that St. Gerard was martyred for the Christian faith. Some of the reports say that he was beaten and then placed in a wooden cart and thrown down a steep hill, as is depicted in some of his icons.

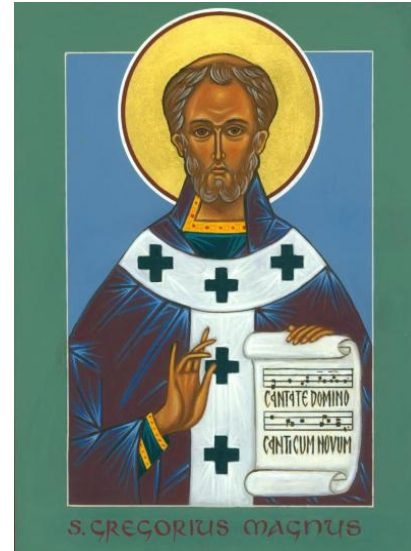
Gerard had spent his life humbly accepting God's will. Relinquishing his own personal plans, he had given all his efforts to making known to a pagan people the love and mercy of Christ. Foregoing a comfortable secular life, he had taken on the poverty and discipline of monasticism; abandoning a desire to see the Holy Land, he had worked to convert a pagan people; instead of living a quiet life of prayer as a hermit, he had taken on the responsibilities of a bishop. And, instead of dying in his bed in old age, he had suffered the anger of those opposed to Christianity and received the crown of martyrdom. May we be willing, like St. Gerard, to follow God's plan for our lives. *St. Gerard, pray for us.*

Resources: Greek East and Latin West: The Church AD 681-1071 by Andrew Louth; articles from Wikipedia and Stand for Christians; Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Saints by Rev. Alban Butler.

Parish News

As the directives from the Metropolitan and Montgomery County regarding the number of people who can gather in church have not changed, we will continue to offer a week-night Mass, in addition to the Sunday Mass and Communion from the Reserved Sacrament by appointment. We hope that, when the disarray outside caused by the ongoing construction in the parish

hall and on the handicap ramp has been cleared away, we will be able to have small coffee hour gatherings outside on Sundays. In the meantime, we will continue with Zoom coffee hours every other week.



On Thursday, September 3, we will celebrate the Consecration of St. Gregory, our patron, as Pope of Rome with Mass at 7PM. On Monday, September 7, Mass for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be at 7PM. On Monday, September 14, Mass for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross will be at 7PM as will the masses for St. Matthew on Monday, September 21, and St. Michael and All Angels on Monday, September 28. Please let Fr. Nicholas know which of these

services you wish to attend so that we can stay within our required limit and everyone will have an opportunity. Vespers is always offered on Saturdays at 6PM.

Music for the Soul

by Kh. Rebecca
Alford

As our isolation and “social distancing” continue and we are cut off from normal life - even the pleasure of seeing one another's smiles - we are more than ever in need of comfort and solace. For most of us, music can provide this comfort and I believe that the most comforting music of all is the Gregorian chant that we sing in church.

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Address Correction Requested

Gregorian chant (or plainsong, as it is also called) has been the primary music, the exclusive song, of the Church in the West since earliest times. Like its eastern Byzantine counterpart, it may have originated in the music of the Synagogue and developed in unique ways as Christianity spread throughout the Mediterranean world and beyond. These chants are characterized by smoothly flowing melodies not punctuated by strong rhythm: this is not music to tap your foot to, or march to, or waltz to! The gentle rise and fall of the melodic lines creates a sense of calm and is guaranteed to lower the blood pressure!

Almost everything that we sing at St. Gregory's is Gregorian chant - from the simple melodies of the Creed and Lord's Prayer to the more elaborate ones of the Kyrie and Gloria. Our humble offerings, with a limited number of people and choir singers, may be less beautiful than the music which is named for our patron saint should be, but the melodies themselves - whatever the quality of the singing - can lift our spirits.

For more perfect renderings of Gregorian chant, a search online will provide recordings, especially those by choirs of monastics who, by singing this music several times every day, have acquired the ability to sing as one voice, an ideal we should all strive for. Some recordings of Gregorian chant are marketed for purposes of relaxation or an aid to sleep. There was a time when I resented such a misappropriation of music intended for worship, but now - in this time of deprivation - I recognize that Gregorian chant can be helpful in many ways and can certainly be comforting music for our souls.

When we find ourselves feeling anxious about the world's situation, singing one of the chants that we remember from church or listening to a recording of Gregorian chant will surely be a balm to our souls, lifting our hearts toward heaven and reminding us to be joyful even in adversity.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>September 2020</h1>						
<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Mass at 9:30AM</i>		1 St. Giles, Ab, 708; Twelve Holy Brothers, Mm, c. 303	2 St. Stephen of Hungary, KC, 1038	3 Consecration of St. Gregory the Great, 590	4 St. Gorazde of Prague, BM, 1942	5 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
6 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>G</i>	7 St. Cloud, C, 560; St. Sergius I, PC, 701 <i>(Labor Day)</i> <i>Mass at 7pm</i> <i>W</i>	8 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary	9 St. Gorgonius, M, 304	10	11 Ss. Protus & Hyacinth, Mm, c. 257; St. Paph- nutius, BC, 4th c.	12 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
13 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>G</i>	14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross <i>Mass at 7pm</i> <i>R</i>	15 St. Nicomedes, M, 4th c.	16 Ember Wed- nesday; Ss. Cornelius, PM, 254 & Cyprian, BM 258; St. Ninian, BC, 5 th c.	17 St. Lambert, BM, 705	18 Ember Friday	19 Ember Satur- day; St. Theo- dore of Canterbury, BC, 690; Ss. Januarius & comp., Mm, c. 305 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
20 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Eustace & comp., Mm, c. 118 <i>G</i>	21 St. Matthew, Evangelist & Apostle, 1st c. <i>Mass at 7pm</i> <i>R</i>	22 St. Maurice & comp., Mm, 3rd c.	23 St. Thecla of Iconium, VM, 1st c.; St. Linus, PM, c. 80	24 Ss. Juvenaly, PrM, 1796 & Peter the Aleut, M, 1815	25	26 Ss. Cyprian, BM & Justina, VM, c. 303 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
27 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Cosmas & Damian, Mm, c. 303 <i>G</i>	28 St. Wenceslas, M, 938 ; St. Lioba of Mainz, V, 781 <i>Mass at 7pm</i> <i>W</i>	29 Dedication of St. Michael the Archangel	30 St. Jerome PrCD, 420; St. Gregory the Illuminator, BC, c. 323			