

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

April, 2021 - Volume XXVI, Issue 4

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

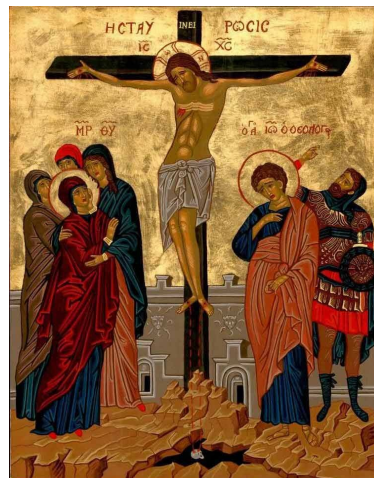
From a Homily by St. Ambrose of Milan d. 397

Behold, dearly beloved, the sacred days are drawing near, *the acceptable time*, of which it is written: *Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation* [II Cor.: 2]. And so you must be more earnest in prayer and in almsgiving, in fasting and in watching. He that till now has given alms, in these days let him give more; for as water quenqueth a flaming fire, so does almsgiving wipe out sin [Eccles. 3:33]. He that till now fasted and prayed, let him fast and pray still more; for there are certain sins which are *not cast out, except by prayer and fasting* [Mt. 17:20].

Should anyone cherish anger towards another, let him forgive from his heart. Should anyone take unjustly what

Inside:

St Zachaeus...	3
Parish News...	5
The Hymns of Holy Week...	6
Calendar...	11



that which belongs to another, let him restore it; and if not fourfold, at least that which he has taken; if he desires God to be merciful to himself [Lk. 19:8]. And though a Christian should abstain at all times from cursings and revilings, from oaths, from excessive laughter, and from idle words, he must do this especially in these holy days, which are set apart so that, during these forty days, he may by penance wipe out the sins of the whole year.

Let you believe, and believe firmly, that if in these days you have made a thorough confession of your sins, and done penance as we have told you, you shall receive from Our Most Merciful Lord the pardon of all your offences; as did the Ninivites, who earned deliverance from their afflictions by doing penance in sackcloth and ashes [John 3]. So you also, following their example, if you cry out with all your heart to the Lord, you will invoke His Mercy on you, so that serene and joyful you will celebrate the day of the Lord's Resurrection, and, thus blessed, you will after this life cross over to your heavenly home, by the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

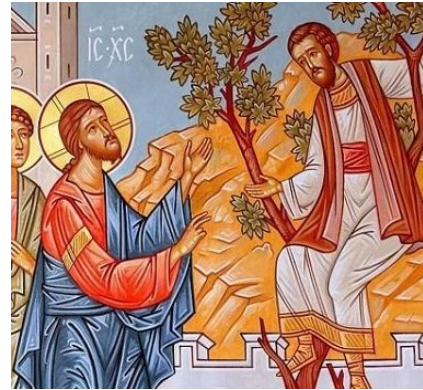
St. Zachaeus Feast Day ~ April 20

The New Testament is filled with wonderful stories of conversion of life - of changing direction, of putting away old ways of thinking and acting and following Christ. Some of these stories are about quiet, behind-the-scenes changes of heart such as that of Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50-53) who was a Jewish

“council member” who had dissented from the vote to condemn Jesus and then had made public his conversion by offering to bury the body of our Lord. He is venerated as a saint of the Church. Some conversion stories are about the recipients of Christ’s healing powers such as the blind man in Luke 18:35-43; the story of the good thief, St. Longinus (Luke 23:39-42), is a near death story of repentance and acceptance. Perhaps the most dramatic conversion story is that of St. Paul, who had to be struck blind and hear the voice of the Risen Christ speaking to him before he turned away from persecuting Christians to become the greatest missionary of the Church.

The story of Zachaeus (Luke 19:1-9) is one of conversion after a very personal encounter with the Savior. As a wealthy tax collector who was well-known for cheating his fellow Jews in collecting taxes for the hated Roman authorities, Zachaeus was also hated. His motivation in life was greed and he was considered a great sinner by those in his city of Jericho. But when his short stature caused him to climb up into a sycamore tree to get a better look at Jesus as He passed through the city, the other people in the crowd were astonished when our Lord told Zachaeus - a blatant sinner - to come down from the tree because he was going to dine at his home that day. When the Lord entered his house, Zachaeus “received Him joyfully” and immediately blurted out his repentance by announcing his intention to give back the money he had taken four-fold and to give half his material wealth to the poor. His reward for this confession was that most wonderful statement of Christ’s: *Today salvation has come to this house.*

Perhaps Zachaeus had been following the reports of Jesus travels and His teaching; perhaps this had caused him to suffer much guilt over his illegal and immoral business practices. But the moment of true conversion did not happen until Zachaeus had an encounter with the living Christ. Like St. Paul, in the presence of the Savior, he was finally moved to change his life.



The passage in the Gospel of Luke which relates this story is all we have in Scripture about Zachaeus, but holy Tradition takes the story further. It is believed that the repentant sinner became one of the Seventy, the missionaries first appointed by Christ and later expanded by the Apostles. He is thought to have accompanied St. Peter on his

travels following his baptism and that St. Peter eventually appointed him to be the first bishop of Caesarea in Palestine. He is listed as such in the Apostolic Constitutions, a fourth century collection of treatises on subjects such as Liturgy and Church Order.

Conversion is a life-long process. Although many of us were born into the Church, others came to the decision to enter the Church after a long period of study and worship. Most of us did not have a dramatic experience of conversion. But we can still encounter the living Christ through the study of Holy Scripture; we can keep a vision of the Resurrected Christ in our hearts by faithfully receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist; in helping the hungry, the sick, and the stranger, we are in the presence of Christ (Matt.25:40).

Each of us is a “house” which Jesus would enter if we allow Him. He says to all who would follow Him: *make haste... for today I must abide at your house.* If we, like St. Zachaeus, receive Him joyfully, we will hear Him say, *Today, salvation has come to this house.*

Resources: G. Poulous: Orthodox Saints; websites of the Orthodox Church in America, Orthodoxwiki, Wikipedia, and Mystagogy.

Parish News

We are grateful that the restrictions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic are being eased somewhat. More of us are now able to worship in church together (still wearing masks and keeping families at a distance from others as much as is possible in our small chapel). We will hope to have outdoor coffee hours whenever the weather is favorable, and we pray that the pandemic will soon be over.

For the remainder of the Lenten season, we will continue to have Stations of the Cross and Litany of the Cross on Fridays at 7PM. The services for Holy Week are as follows:

Palm Sunday (April 25) - After 9AM Matins, we go outside for the blessing and distribution of Palms and a procession around the grounds in remembrance of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem before the Crucifixion. At the Gospel, we will hear the narrative of St. Matthew sung by the clergy and choir.

Monday and Tuesday of Holy Week - Mass will be at 7PM and the Passion story from the Gospels of Mark and Luke will be heard.

Wednesday of Holy Week - At this Mass, the oils of catechumens and the sick will be blessed.

Maundy Thursday - This service includes many ceremonies based on Jesus' last days before the Crucifixion. The institution of the Eucharist is celebrated and our pastor will wash the feet of acolytes as Christ washed those of the Apostles. The consecrated Bread and Wine will be carried in procession to the Altar of Repose (upstairs) and the chapel altar will be stripped of its ornaments as our Lord was stripped of His garments. The service of Tenebrae will be celebrated at the end of the evening.

Good Friday (April 30 at 12 noon) - We will observe the time which our Lord hung on the Cross at this service, which will include the singing of St. John's Passion Gospel; the veneration of the Cross by the faithful while the choir sings the long chant, the Reproaches; and Communion from the Bread and Wine consecrated the night before. The altar is still bare and we leave the church in silence.

The Paschal Vigil (May 1 at 10PM) - We begin this service outside with the lighting of the Paschal fire; a procession into the church while the Exultet is sung; Scripture readings which tell the story of our redemption; the Blessing of the Water, renewal of Baptism vows, the singing of the Litany of the Saints, and finally the celebration of the Resurrection with the first Mass of Easter.

Easter Day (May 2 at 11AM) - We continue the celebration of the Resurrection in this Mass, preceded by the chant *Vidi Aquam* while the people are sprinkled with water blessed at the Vigil.

English: Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!

Greek: Christos anesti! Alithos anesti!

Arabic: El Messieh kahm! Hakken kahm!

Russian: Khristos voskrese! Voistinu voskrese!

Amharic: Kristos tenestwal! Bergit tenestwal!

Tagalog: Si Cristo ay nabuhay! Siya nga ay nabuhay!

The Hymns of Holy Week

The hymns we sing in Western Rite worship are in two categories: liturgical hymns and para-liturgical hymns. The latter can be taken from any period in history and include texts based on scripture (such as *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*, written by Joachim Neander in 1680 and based on Psalms 103 and 150), descriptions of scriptural events (such as *On Jordan's Bank*



the Baptist's Cry, written by Charles Coffin in 1736 on the message of St. John), and reflections on theological matters (such as *Lord, Enthroned in Heavenly Splendor*, by G. H. Bourne, d. 1925, which speaks of the Real Presence of Christ in the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist). When the Western Rite was established in the Antiochian Archdiocese, permission was given to use such hymns - even those written by non-Orthodox - if the content was not contrary to the

Orthodox faith. We are grateful to be able to sing these hymns, which are a major part of the Western Christian heritage.

Liturgical hymns are prescribed (required) as part of a particular liturgical occasion. These include the Office hymns at Matins and Vespers, the several Sequence hymns (such as *Come, Thou Holy Paraclete* for Pentecost) on major feast days, and the many beautiful hymns which are part of the ceremonies of Holy Week. These are our most ancient hymns and are usually associated with Gregorian chant melodies. The history of some of these hymns is given below.

There is a legend about *All Glory, Laud, and Honor* (*gloria, laus et honor*), the hymn we sing on Palm Sunday as we process outside around the grounds of the church. The hymn is said to have been written by Theodulph, the 9th century bishop of the city of Orleans, who had been wrongly accused of a crime and wrote the hymn while he was in prison. When the king passed by the bishop's cell on Palm Sunday in the year 821, he heard him singing this hymn and was so moved that he immediately demanded the release of the prisoner. Whether or not this story is true, the hymn soon began to be sung at the Palm Sunday procession throughout the West.

Ubi caritas (*Where Charity and Love Are*), is the hymn sung by the choir during the washing of feet ceremony on Maundy Thursday. After the extreme act of humility and charity which this ceremony represents, we are reminded in the hymn that as we follow Christ's example of charity He will be with us. The text is attributed to Paulinus of Aquileia in 796. The traditional melody is probably also from the late 8th century.

One of the most ancient hymns of the Church will be sung by the choir on Good Friday as part of the Reproaches, a long series of reminders of what God's people have done to Christ ("Because I led thee through the desert forty years, and fed thee with manna, and brought thee forth into a land exceeding good: thou hast prepared a Cross for thy Savior."). The refrain for this chant, usually called by its Greek name *Trisagion*, is "Holy God, holy, mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy upon us." The text is also sung in Greek: *Hagios O Theos, Hagios Ischyros, Hagios Athanatos, eleison hymas*. The text of this refrain is common to all Orthodox liturgies - East and West - as well as Roman Catholic and some Protestant churches. It is often associated with a miraculous event in Constantinople in the mid-fifth century but is thought to be much earlier in origin. It is recorded to have been used at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and was part of the Gallican liturgy before it began to be used in Rome and other parts of the West. A controversy arose when the Armenian church added the phrase "who was crucified for us", addressing the hymn to God the Son, but the other Christian bodies maintained the understanding that the hymn was to the Holy Trinity.

The Royal Banners Forward Go is sung on Maundy Thursday as the Blessed Sacrament is carried from the church to the Altar of Repose and is also the evening office hymn for Passiontide and for feasts of the Holy Cross. Written by the poet and Bishop of Poitiers Venantius Fortunatus (540-600), it was composed for a very special occasion which is described in vivid terms by St. Gregory of Tours in his *History of the Franks*. The abess

St. Gregory Orthodox Church
c/o 9415 Wire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Address Correction Requested

Radegund had received a gift from the Emperor Justin II of a piece of the True Cross and it was brought in solemn procession to the monastery at Poitiers on November 19, 569, when this hymn was first sung.



Sing *My Tongue*, also by Fortunatus, was probably originally a part of *The Royal Banners*. It is sung at the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday and some of its verses are sung as the morning office hymn for Passiontide and for feasts of the Holy Cross.

As we go through the events of our Lord's last week on earth before His Crucifixion and Resurrection, we should remember that the hymns we are singing have been sung for twelve- to fifteen-hundred years by faithful Christians throughout the world. May God protect the Church so that these hymns may continue to be sung until the Lord returns at the last day.

Resources: Hymns and Their Stories by *Edgar Gibson*; The Liturgical Year: Passiontide and Holy Week by *Abbot Prosper Gueranger*; Greek East and Latin West (Vol. III of The Church in History) by *Andrew Louth*; The Week of Salvation by *James Monti*; The Hymnal 1940 Companion, prepared by a Commission of the Episcopal Church; online articles from *Wikipedia*.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>April 2021</h1>						
<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>				1 St. Melito of Sardis, BC, 177	2 St. Mary of Egypt, Penitent, c. 421	3 St. Sixtus I, PM, 127 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
4 Third Sunday in Lent; St. Isidore of Seville, BCD, 636 ✓	5	6 St. Notker, C, 912	7 St. Tikhon of Moscow, BC, Patron of the Western Rite, 1925	8	9	10 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
11 Fourth Sunday in Lent; St. Leo the Great, PCD, 461 ✓	12	13 St. Hermene- gild, M, 583	14 St. Justin, M, 167	15	16	17 St. Anicetus, BM, 168 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
18 Passion Sunday ✓	19	20	21	22 Ss. Soter & Caius, PpMm, 174	23 St. George, Martyr, 303	24 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
25 Palm Sunday <i>R/V</i>	26 Monday in Holy Week; St. Cletus, 89 & Marcellinus, 304, PpMm <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> ✓	27 Tuesday in Holy Week <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> ✓	28 Wednesday in Holy Week <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> ✓	29 Maundy Thursday <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> ✓	30 Good Friday <i>Liturgy at noon</i> B	1 Holy Saturday <i>Vigil at 10pm</i> <i>V/W</i>