

✠ 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. Gregory Nazianzen d. 390

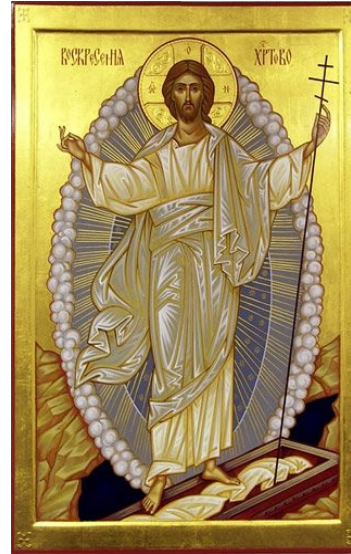
The Passover of the Lord, the Passover, and again, in honor of the Holy Trinity, I say, the Passover. This is to us the festival of all festivals and the celebration of all celebrations, not only among the feasts that pertain unto men and are established upon earth, but even among those that belong to Christ himself, and are celebrated to His glory, for this feast

outshines all others, even as the sun outshines the stars. Yesterday the Lamb was slain and the doorposts anointed, while Egypt bewailed her first-born, but the Angel of death has passed us by (for the sign was even to him a thing of terror and awe) for we were protected by the Precious Blood.

Today we leave Egypt utterly behind us, and Pharaoh our cruel master, and his harsh officers; for we are delivered from the clay and the making of bricks. Nor is there any to forbid us to celebrate the feast of our exodus in the Lord our God, for indeed

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we celebrate it not with the leaven of our former malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, bringing with us nothing of the unholy leaven of Egypt. Yesterday I suffered with Christ upon the cross, today I am glorified with Him. Yesterday I shared His death, today I am made alive again with Him. Yesterday I was buried with Him, today with Him I arise.

But, indeed, let us bring gifts to Him who for our sakes suffered and rose again. Perchance ye think that I speak of gold or silver or embroideries or shining jewels of great price, which are but the weak and fragile substance of the earth, that remaineth in the ground, and which are for the most part in the hands of unregenerate men, servants of things terrestrial, princes of this present world? Nay, rather, let us bring ourselves, as the riches most dear to God and most worthy of his acceptance. Let us give back the copy to Him, whose image we are, let us recognize our dignity, let us render honor to our pattern, let us understand the power of this mystery, and the end of which Christ's death was consummated. Let us be like Christ, even as Christ is become like us. Let us be made as gods through Him, inasmuch as He, for our sakes, was made Man.

Christ took what was lower, in order that He might give us the higher. He became poor that by His poverty we might be made rich. He took upon Him the form of a servant, to set us at liberty. He stooped, that we might be exalted. He was tempted, that we might overcome. He was despised, that He might bring us to glory. He died, to bring us salvation. He ascended on high to draw unto Himself those who were sunk in sin. Let a man give all things to Him who gave Himself for us as the price of redemption and as the

substitute of our guilt. Nothing so great, however, can be given in return, as the offering of ourselves, if we rightly understand this mystery, and if we, for His sake, become all things, whatsoever He for our sakes became.

St. Dymphna

Feast Day ~ May 15

During the covid-19 pandemic, the mental and emotional health of many people has been adversely affected. Most of us have occasionally felt a lack of purpose and sometimes even feelings of hopelessness, while those who were already struggling with some form of mental illness have become worse. Mental illness can present itself in many different ways - from occasional, mild depression to the delusions and paranoia associated with severe schizophrenia.

The Church has always recognized the spiritual dimension of illness of any kind. Most of our prayers for healing also include pleas for forgiveness of sins. In Orthodoxy, we do not accept the idea that illness or disability is a punishment by God for sins committed, but the Church does teach that the first step toward healing is repentance.

The Church also honors the work of physicians in treating - and sometimes healing - illnesses. Medical skill is a gift from God and Christians are encouraged to seek medical help to treat physical and mental illnesses. We also ask for the prayers of the saints, particularly those who have had experience with illness.

A young Irish princess is often invoked as an intercessor for those who suffer from, or are affected by mental illness. St. Dymphna, the daughter of an Irish chieftain, lived in the 7th century. Her father, Damon, was a pagan, but her mother was a devout Christian and had brought her daughter up in the Christian



faith. At the age of 14, Dymphna decided to dedicate her life to Christ by remaining celibate and devoting all her time to prayer and acts of mercy.

Dymphna's mother suddenly died and her father was so devastated that he had something of a mental breakdown. Her mother had been exceptionally beautiful and was adored by her husband and, as Dymphna looked very much like her mother, her father soon began to

confuse the two. He tried to press his physical affections on her but she managed to resist until his political advisors began to suggest that he remarry for the stability of his kingdom. He expected to marry his own daughter and she had to leave home in order to escape the desires of his disordered mind.

Along with her confessor, Fr. Gerebernus, and several servants from the royal household, Dymphna found safety in what is now Belgium in the small town of Gheel. They began to minister to the poor and sick and built a hospice for those in need. It was this charitable work which was Dymphna's undoing. The money she brought with her was the coinage of her father's realm with his picture imprinted on the coins. He had been searching for her for a year and was able to discover her whereabouts through those coins.

Damon arrived in Gheel to retrieve his daughter and was so enraged at her refusal to respond to his physical advances that he took out his sword and cut off her head as well as that of Fr. Gerebernus. The townspeople, who had so benefitted from her Christian charity, buried the bodies in a nearby cave where a church was later built.

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Address Correction Requested

The people of Gheel decided to continue the work that Dymphna had started. They accepted those who were ill - especially from mental disorders - into the hospice and as the capacity was soon exceeded, they began taking the ill into their own homes. This tradition has continued to this day, with the people of Gheel taking in mentally ill “boarders” who are first evaluated at a psychiatric hospital and who are given the opportunity to work and live as members of the community. From the charity of one young woman, fleeing from the danger of incest from her mentally ill father, God has blessed this work and allowed it to flourish for centuries.

We ask for the intercessions of St. Dymphna for those who suffer from any kind of mental illness and for their families who also suffer. May God, through her prayers, give healing and solace.

Parish News

Installation of outside handrails has now been finished. As we await the minor tasks remaining in the parish hall before an occupancy permit will be given, we continue to have outdoor coffee hours when the weather permits, and we remain at 50% of capacity in the chapel as per County regulations.

The entire month of May falls within the fifty days of the Paschal season and fasting is suspended until Pentecost. We will observe the annual celebration of the dedication of our church building (which occurred on May 21, 2017) on May 23.

We welcome Nicodemus Clement into our parish family. The son of Candace and Patrick Woolley (and brother of Demetrius), he was born on Maundy Thursday, April 29.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>May 2021</h1>					<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Mass at 9:30AM</i>	1 Holy Saturday <i>Vigil at 10pm V/W</i>
2 Pascha: The Resurrection of Our Lord <i>Mass at 11am W</i>	3 Monday in the Octave of Easter	4 Tuesday in the Octave of Easter	5 Wednesday in the Octave of Easter	6 Thursday in the Octave of Easter; St. John before the Latin Gate	7 Friday in the Octave of Easter; St. Alexis Toth, C, 1909	8 Saturday in the Octave of Easter; The Apparition of St. Michael the Archangel <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
9 Low Sunday: First Sunday after Easter; St. Gregory Nazianzen, BCD, 390 <i>W</i>	10 St. Mark the Evangelist, 1 st c. (tr.); Ss. Gordian, 362 & Epimachus, 250, Mm	11 Ss. Philip and James, Apostles, 1 st c. (tr.)	12 Finding of the Holy Cross (tr.); St. Epiphanius, BC, c. 403	13	14 St. Boniface of Tarsus, M, 290	15 St. Pachomius, Ab, 346 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
16 Second Sunday after Easter; St. Brendan the Navigator, Ab, 577 <i>W</i>	17	18 St. Venantius, M, 250; St. Theodotus & comp., Mm, c. 303	19 St. Dunstan, BC, 988; St. Pudentiana, V, 2 nd c.	20	21 Feast of Dedication; St. Constantine, C, 337	22 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
23 Sunday in the Octave of the Dedication; Third Sunday after Easter	24 St. Vincent of Lerins, C, 450	25 St. Urban, PM, 230; St. Aldhelm, BC, 709	26 St. Augustine of Canterbury, BC, 605	27 St. Bede, CD, 735; St. John I, PM, 526	28 St. Germanus of Paris, BC, 576	29 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
30 Fourth Sunday after Easter; St. Felix I, PM, 274 <i>W</i>	31 St. Petronilla, VM, c. 100					