

# ✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church  
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13407 Roxbury Rd., Silver Spring, MD - stgregoryoc.org

*From a  
Treatise by  
St. Hilary  
of Poitiers  
d. 367*

**T**he Lord commanded that baptism be given in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, that is, with a profession of faith in the Creator, the Only-begotten and the Gift.

There is one Creator of all, for there is one God the Father, from whom all things are. There is one Only-begotten, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom all things are. There is one Spirit, the Gift, in all things.

**E**verything therefore is arranged in due order and merit: there is one power from which all things are; there is one offspring, through whom all things are; there is one gift of fulfilled hope. Nothing will be found lacking to the perfection, within which, in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, there is the infinity of the eternal, the vision of the image, the enjoyment of the gift.

*Inside:*

<i>The Nativity of St. John the Baptist.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Parish News.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>The Mary Garden.....</i>	<i>6</i>



**W**e can learn from the Lord's own words the effect the Holy Spirit has in us: *I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. For it is to your advantage that I go away; if I go, I will send the Counselor to you.*

**A**nd again: *I will pray the Father, and he will send to you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth. He will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine.*

**T**hese words contain a general truth; they teach us the will of the Giver, and the nature and condition of the Gift. For since our weakness cannot grasp the Father and the Son, our faith, which has difficulty in conceiving the Incarnation, is enlightened by the gift of the Holy Spirit, as if a treaty were made through his intercession.

**W**e receive the Spirit, then, for the sake of knowledge. To take a comparison, our bodily nature will become unnecessary if the needs that it serves come to an end; the eyes will serve no purpose if there is no light or daytime; the ears will not know what function to perform if no words or sounds are uttered; the nose will find no work if it can smell no scents. Not that these senses will lose their nature for some reason; rather there must be a reason for their use. So too, unless the human mind drinks in the gift of the Spirit by faith, it will have the nature for understanding God but it will not have the light of knowledge.

The gift which is in Christ is one, yet offered, and offered fully, to all. Always available, it is given in proportion to each one's will to receive; it remains with each according to his will to grow in merit. This is what is with us to the end of time; this is our consolation in our time of waiting; this, through what it bestows and effects, is the pledge of our hope for the future; this is the light of our minds, the splendor of our understanding.

## *Nativity of St. John the Baptist*

### Feast Day ~ June 24

In the liturgical calendar of the Christian Church, only three birthdays are celebrated as feast days - that of Our Lord himself (December 25), who became Incarnate and was born as a human child to show us the way to eternal life; that of the Theotokos, the Mother of Jesus Christ our God (September 8), who was chosen to be the vehicle for the Incarnation; and that of St. John the Baptist, the Forerunner of the Lord, who paved the way for the earthly ministry of Christ. The Conceptions of Christ, St. Mary and St. John are also celebrated in the liturgical calendar as a reminder of the Church's teaching that human life begins at conception, despite the world's attempts to deny that truth.

The life of St. John the Baptist is given to us in vivid detail in Holy Scripture: how his unlikely conception was announced to his father, Zacharias, by the angel Gabriel and how Zacharias became mute because of his unbelief (Luke 1:5-22); how John, in the womb of his mother, Elizabeth, leapt at the presence of Christ in the womb of the blessed Virgin at her visitation with her cousin (Luke 1:39-56); how, after the birth of John, Zacharias' tongue was loosened when he named the child John at his circumcision as the angel had foretold (Luke 1:57-80); of how John, living in the wilderness around the River Jordan, began preaching repentance (Luke 3:1-20; John 1:19-28), baptized our Lord and proclaimed

him the Son of God (Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:21,22); how St. John's life was ended when Herod had him beheaded at the request of his step-daughter (Matthew 14:1-12).

These stories all show St. John as one whose role in God's plan was to prepare the way for Christ. God's plan had been unfolding in the long history of the Hebrew people and was now coming to the most important events - the Incarnation, ministry, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. John was the last of the Old Testament prophets, the final preparation for the New Covenant. John acknowledged his role when asked whether or not he was the Christ: *One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.* [Luke 3:16]

At the Nativity of St. John and his naming, a prayer of his father has ever enriched the liturgical life of the Church - the *Benedictus Dominus* (Luke 1:68-79). This canticle is sung at Matins in the English Office: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people.* One verse particularly points to St. John as the Forerunner of the Lord: *And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.*

We give thanks for the unfolding of God's plan for mankind, for the part that the holy saints have played in this plan, and, through the intercessions of St. John the Baptist, we pray that we may cooperate with God's plan for us.

## *Parish News*

We will welcome Nicodemus Clement Woolley into Christ's Holy Orthodox Church on Sunday, June 6 through the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation. On June 6 we will also



anticipate the Rogation days (June 7 and 8) at the end of Mass with a procession outside (weather permitting) and the blessing of the church grounds.

The Mass for Ascension Day will be celebrated on the Eve, Wednesday, June 9, at 7PM with Vespers at 6:30. The great feast of Pentecost is June 20. We will celebrate the very ancient Vigil Mass of Pentecost on Saturday, June 19, at 10AM. June 27 is Trinity

Sunday, a celebration of how God has been revealed to mankind as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God in three persons.

With the easing of restrictions on capacity and gatherings, we can now resume coffee hours (outside whenever possible) and have a greater number of people present together in church. We thank God for preserving our community during this pandemic and pray that we may safely resume the worship life that is essential for Christians.

The Parish Life Conference for the Eastern Region (the dioceses of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic and of New York and Washington, DC) will be held by Zoom again this year, with sessions beginning on Saturday, June 12 and continuing on Wednesday evenings, June 16, 23, and 30. This is an opportunity particularly for those of you who have not been able to attend an in-person PLC to participate in an event beyond our parish. Register at [www.HolyCrossOnline.org/PLC2021](http://www.HolyCrossOnline.org/PLC2021) to receive the zoom link. (Kh. Becky will be one of the speakers at the Antiochian Women meeting on June 12.) Vespers on that day will be at 5:30pm, throughout the diocese, as part of the PLC.

Congratulations to two parish graduates: to Svetlana Osadchik who has received a Master of Arts degree from Virginia

Theological Seminary and to Nathan Caldwell, who has graduated from a home-school high school program and plans to attend St. Vincent's College.

## *The Mary Garden*

Gardens and gardening (or farming) figure prominently in Holy Scripture. Many of Jesus' parables are about seeds, planting, and harvesting; we are told that Our Lord retired to a garden for quiet times with his disciples, and it was in the Garden of Gethsemane that He taught them - and us - the prayer which we say daily; after the Crucifixion, He was laid in the tomb which Joseph of Arimathea had created in a garden.

Throughout the centuries, Christians have made gardens dedicated to Christ or St. Mary, and many plants and flowers have been given names which refer to them. Our little garden at St. Gregory's dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, is filled with plants and herbs which, in horticultural folklore, are named for her or are associated with events in her life or her attributes. This is a list of the plants:

- Rose** = St. Mary is known as the "mystical rose" and the red rose represents her sorrow at Christ's crucifixion.
- Bleeding heart** = At Our Lord's Presentation in the Temple, Mary was told by Simeon that a sword would later pierce her heart.
- Carnation (dianthus)** = This flower represents Mary's love of God and, according to German legend, bloomed at Christ's Nativity.
- Clematis** = Virgin's bower.
- Columbine** = Our Lady's Slipper.
- Impatiens** = Mary's mother love.
- Lily of the Valley** = Our Lady's tears.
- Marigold** = Mary's gold.
- Scabiosa** = Mary's pincushion.



**Violet** = Our Lady's modesty.

**Foxglove** = Our Lady's gloves.

**Pulmonaria** = Mary's milk.

**Stock** = Our Lady's violet.

**Allyssum** = The flowers are in the shape of the Cross, beneath which the Blessed Virgin stood at her son's Crucifixion.

**Vinca** = Virgin flower.

**Sage** = Mary's shawl.

**Rosemary** = Mary's nosegay.

**Thyme** = The Virgin's humility.

**Marjoram** = Mary's bedstraw.

**Mint** = Mary's mint.

**Sweet Woodruff** = Also called Our Lady's Lace for the white flowers; said to have been used by Our Lady to line the manger.

**Nasturtium** = St. Joseph's flower. He was the protector of the Virgin and Child.

**Lenten Rose** = Blooms in the season when we prepare for the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord, witnessed by His Virgin Mother.

**Christmas Fern** = Parts of this plant remain green at the season when the Virgin gave birth to the Christ Child.

In addition to the wall plaque icon of St. Mary, the garden also has two representations of St. Fiacre who, in the West, is considered the patron saint of gardeners. His feast day is August 30 and the story of his life can be read on our website, as well as that of another gardener saint, St. Phocas, whose day is July 3.

We hope that you will stop here and enjoy the beauty of God's creation, saying a prayer for the intercessions of our Lady.

## *The Providence of God Through Creation* - An excerpt of a treatise by St. John Chrysostom

God made this wondrous and altogether harmonious creation for no one else but for you. So beautiful and so vast, diverse, sumptuous, sufficient, useful, and in every way profitable, being sustenance and support for the body, wisdom for the soul, and a suitable path to the knowledge of God - He made it for you.

It is possible to come to know God's providence from clouds, from the seasons, from the passage of time, from the winds, from the sea and the various kinds of creatures within it, from the earth and upon the earth the beasts, the creeping things, and the birds that traverse the air, as well as those that stay on solid ground, from the amphibians in marshes, springs and rivers, from the inhabited earth and from the uninhabited, from the sprouting seeds and trees and grasses and plants, from those that spring forth in desert places and in what is not the desert, from those that sprout on plains, in ravines, on mountains, and in valleys, from those the grow of themselves and those that grow with toil and cultivation, from tamed animals and untamed ones, wild ones and submissive one, small ones and large ones, from the birds and beasts and fish and plants and grasses that appear in the winter, in the summer, and in the fall, from the events of the night and those of the day, from the rains, from the duration of years, from death, from life, from the toil that has fallen to our lot, from despondency, from relaxation, from the food and drink that are given to us, from customs, from arts, from trees, from stones, from mountains containing mines, from the navigable sea and from the unnavigable, from islands, from harbors, from coasts, from the visible surface of the sea, from the depth of the waters, from the elements of nature from which the world was framed for us, from the disposition of the seasons, from the different length of the day and the night, from sickness and health, from our limbs, from the constitution of the soul, from the arts and from the skill which in the arts has been given to the race



of men, from the benefits of the animals and plants and other creatures that serve us, from the smallest and most insignificant living things. And what is more insignificant than ants and grasshoppers? But they too speak clearly of the providence and power and wisdom of God.

For that reason, the Prophet, who was deemed so worthy of the Spirit, having enumerated the whole of creation and recounted a few details, cried out with great

amazement these marvelous words: *How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.* [Ps. 103:24] And all that for you, O man!

Therefore, knowing from what has been said, as well as from many other things, that the providence of God shines forth more plainly than the light of this world, do not waste your efforts on what is superfluous, and do not pursue that which is unattainable, scrutinizing the causes of everything. For even existence itself has been granted to us out of His goodness, since He has no need for our service. And we must honor and worship Him, not only because He made us, or because He bestowed upon us an incorporeal and rational soul, or because He made us superior to all the other creatures, or because He entrusted us with dominion over all that is seen and conferred upon us the scepter - but because he has no need of us. The marvel of His goodness is that He brought us into existence without having any need of service from us. For, in truth, before we and the angels and the powers above came into being, He existed and possessed his own glory and blessedness; and it is only out of love for mankind that He brought us into existence and did all these things for us, and many more as well.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>June 2021</h1>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>
		1	2 Ss. Marcellinus, Peter and Erasmus, Mm, 304	3 St. Kevin of Glen- dalough, Ab, c. 618	4 St. Petroc, C, 564	5 St. Boniface, BM, 754  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
6 Fifth Sunday after Easter  <i>W</i>	7 Rogation Monday	8 Rogation Tuesday	9 St. Columba of Iona, Ab, 597; Vigil of the Ascension  <i>Sung Mass at 7pm W</i>	10 Ascension Day; St. Margaret of Scotland, QW, 1092	11 St. Barnabas, Apostle, 1 <sup>st</sup> c.; of the Octave of the Ascension	12 of the Octave of the Ascension <i>PLC begins</i>  <i>Vespers at 5:30pm</i>
13 Sunday after the Ascension  <i>W</i>	14 St. Basil the Great, BCD, 379; of the Octave of the Ascension	15 of the Octave of the Ascension; Ss. Vitus, Modestus & Crescentia, Mm, c. 303	16 of the Octave of the Ascension	17 Octave Day of the Ascension	18 St. Ephrem the Syrian, DnCD, 373	19 Vigil of Pentecost; Ss. Gervase & Protase, Mm, 2nd. c. <i>Mass at 10AM</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
20 Pentecost  <i>R</i>	21 Monday after Pentecost	22 Tuesday after Pentecost; St. Alban, Proto-martyr of England, 209	23 Ember Wed- nesday in the Oct. of Pentecost; St. Etheldreda, QV, 679	24 Thursday after Pentecost	25 Ember Friday in the Octave of Pentecost	26 Ember Sat. in the Octave of Pentecost; Ss. John & Paul, Mm, c. 362  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
27 Trinity Sunday; 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  <i>W</i>	28 Nativity of St. John the Baptist (tr.); St. Irenaeus of Lyons, BM, 202	29 Ss. Peter & Paul, Apostles, 1st c.	30 Comm. of St. Paul the Apostle			