

✠ 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
Sermon by
St. Philaret
of Moscow
d. 1867

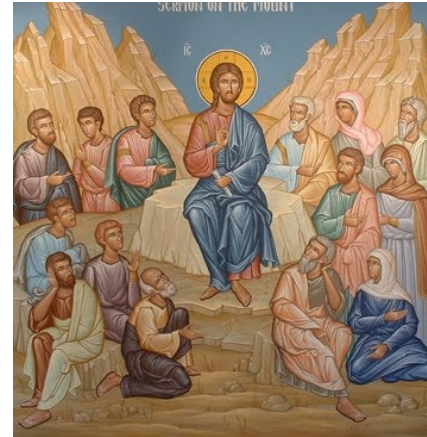
Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven [Luke 6:23]

The Lord Jesus commands us to rejoice and leap for joy. He promises us a reward, a great reward, a heavenly reward. Will any of us receive this reward, which is doubtless a perfect reward? For the Judge who gives it is just, and so He will give a worthy reward, and He is good, so He will give a generous reward, and He is all-powerful, so He will accomplish His own promise in the fullness of His power. Will any of us enter into such joy, which is doubtless a blessed joy? For He who calls us to this joy is the Source of blessedness.

Rejoice in that day! What is this day, pre-determined for joy? Will it come for us? Will we live long enough to see

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it? Let us delve more deeply into the words of Christ, to better understand this pre-determined day. *Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!* [Luke 6:22-23]

Thus, the day on which Christians rejoice and leap for joy is the time when they are hated, exiled, and dishonored for the name of Christ. Now do you want to live to see this day, to delight in this joy? Or do you want it to pass you by, even before you see it? Do you now not want to taste this joy whose taste you do not know? One cannot condemn the person who answers, in this situation, with the words of Christ Himself: *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me*, this cup of hatred from men, of persecutions, of dishonor. However, one cannot help but praise the one who has enough courage to constantly add these words of Christ to the afore-mentioned phrase: *nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt, O heavenly Father!* [Matt. 26:39]

Though we leave it to the all-wise and inscrutable judgments of God to choose those worthy of the difficult labor and exalted blessedness of suffering for Christ, we must not fail to pay attention to that word of Christ that is instructive for all in general. In order to complete ascetic labors, and to overcome suffering, we must glean the necessary strength and the encouraging hope given to us in the promise of heavenly reward: *for your reward is great in heaven...*

God does not forbid man to think of the reward. He even uses the thought of the reward to encourage man to fulfill the

commandments and acquire perfection. *Honor your father and your mother* - this is a command. And immediately after it, follows the reward to encourage its fulfillment: *that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you*. Here, on the other hand, is a requirement for those who want to be perfect: *if you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor*. And yet, after this exalted command, the Lord again offers a reward to encourage the listener: *and you will have treasure in heaven* [Matt. 19:12]...

It may be natural to desire the best things in life; however it does not accord with reason to seek these good things so much that we forget and lose the far better heavenly rewards... Would it not be better for the natural state of man if people did not have such high regard for earthly rewards? They are always insufficient compared to the labor required for their acquisition. They always give less joy compared to the unpleasantness of the seeking, the competition, the self-imposed deprivations of the one striving to receive them. How can they compare with heavenly rewards, which are always great, which give complete joy that cannot be taken away?

Lord, generous in Thy promises and faithful in their fulfillment, confirm in us through fruitful remembrance and expectation this “great reward in heaven.” May earthly rewards not allure us, and may no temporary sorrow or loss overwhelm us.

St. Ethelwold of Winchester

Feast Day ~ August 1

When St. Gregory the Great desired to share the Gospel with the English people, he sent a group of monks from his monastery in Rome. Monks were the obvious ones to be missionaries for such a difficult task: they were disciplined in their



lives of constant prayer and they were accustomed to putting aside personal desires to work as a community for a greater cause. Their work in the south of England, in addition to that of the missionary monks from Ireland in the north, bore fruit and resulted in a nation of Christian people.

The monastics - both monks and nuns - continued to be a vital force in English society. They provided education for promising youth, they offered pastoral care and continual prayers for the people, and some even gave advice to kings and other rulers. But difficult times for the monasteries

began with the plunder of Lindisfarne Abbey in 793 by Viking raiders and continued periodically until the Norman Conquest in 1066. The gold altar ornaments were stolen, monks were murdered, and monastic buildings were destroyed, resulting in a decline in monastic life. Some monasteries never recovered and reopened. Others were partially restored and taken over by “secular” clergy who had never been monks and did not practice the ascetic life of monastics. Many were married and passed on the former monastic properties to their children; they provided the needed pastoral care of the lay people in the area but did not carry on the discipline of constant prayer, study, and work that was the life of a monk. Even in those monasteries that had continued that pattern, there was laxity and neglect of intellectual pursuits. A period of monastic reform began in the 10th century with the work of three leading figures: St. Oswald, St. Dunstan, and St. Ethelwold.

Ethelwold was born sometime between the years 904 and 909 in Winchester, England during the reign of King Ethelstan. As was typical for the child of a noble family, he was sent to court as a teenager, where he may have met (St.) Dunstan, whose life was

intertwined with his through the years. He went to Bishop Elfheah of Winchester for religious study and was ordained to the priesthood by him on the same day that Dunstan was ordained.

After Dunstan was sent to Glastonbury to be the abbot, Ethelwold also went there for further study and took monastic vows. These two men, along with (St.) Oswald, ushered in a great period of learning, renewal, and reform. Dunstan eventually became the Archbishop of Canterbury, Oswald the Archbishop of York, and Ethelwold the Bishop of Winchester.

During his time at Glastonbury Abbey, Ethelwold became impatient about the slow progress of monastic reform. He thought the monks there were too lax in their practice of the Rule of St. Benedict so he asked the king (now King Eadrid) for permission to travel to visit some of the famous continental monasteries (Fleury and Cluny). The king refused and, instead, appointed Ethelwold abbot of the monastery of Abingdon. This monastery, which had earlier been partially destroyed, was now being served by secular clergy, but no monks were there keeping the Rule of St. Benedict.

Like a fiery Old Testament prophet, Abbot Ethelwold made a “clean sweep” of the monastery, expelling the married priests. He was able to rebuild the old monastery buildings and attract other men who had taken the vows of poverty and celibacy and who were committed to lives which combined prayer, study, and work, including artistic creativity. The monks are said to have produced many objects in precious metal, bells and even a pipe organ.

In 963, Ethelwold was consecrated Bishop of Winchester, where he continued his reform of monastic establishments. His *Regularis Concordia*, which consisted of rules for monastic life in England, was adopted around 970. It includes a translation of the Rule of St. Benedict into Old English, a copy of which is the only surviving prose translation of the Rule into a European vernacular

in the early Middle Ages. During his episcopacy, the Winchester school of manuscript illumination reached its peak and he commissioned the most important surviving manuscript of the school, the *Benedictional of Saint Ethelwold*, which is now in the British Library.

Popularity is not necessarily associated with sainthood. Of course, there are many saints who were well-loved and held in high esteem by all around them, but there are others who - at times and with some people - were scorned for their directness or harsh methods. It is only with hindsight that their contributions are fully recognized and appreciated. Ethelwold had a reputation in his lifetime for being rigidly uncompromising and his dealings with the secular clergy - particularly those who were married - was especially hostile, but his work to improve the discipline of the monastics and to strengthen the intellectual and artistic contributions to the life of the Church came to be considered of utmost importance for late Anglo-Saxon society. For this reason Ethelwold became known as a saint of the Church. We give thanks that God can do great work not only through those who are mild-mannered and patient but also through those who, like St. Ethelwold, are more direct in their relations with others.

Bishop Ethelwold passed from this life to the next in 984, leaving behind a strong monastic presence in England and a flourishing intellectual and artistic religious life. The work of those earlier missionary monks, which had been so violently disrupted, was now restored, sadly awaiting the destruction of monasticism by the monarch centuries later. We ask for St. Ethelwold’s intercessions for those who have taken on the disciplined life of monasticism in our time and for us as we strive for more discipline in our own prayer lives. Holy Ethelwold, pray for us.

Sources: *Greek East and Latin West* by Andrew Louth; *Life of St. Ethelwold* by Wulfstan of Winchester, edited by Lapidge and Winterbottom; *The Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* by Vladimir Moss; websites: *Abingdon-on-Thames*; *British Library Museum*; *orthochristian.com*; *Wikipedia*.

Parish News



Two major liturgical celebrations occur on Sundays in the months of July and August: On July 25, we will observe the feast of St. James (the “Greater”) at Mass that day and the Assumption (Dormition) of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be celebrated on Sunday, August 15. In addition, the feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord will be celebrated on the Eve, August 5, with Liturgy at 7:00PM, preceded by Vespers at 6:30.

Thanks to Ben Caldwell and his team of volunteers from his Trail Life troop, we now have 8 new benches and several small tables for the deck. This was Ben’s service project and it required planning, working out a budget, purchasing materials, and supervising the work of several young men and their fathers (and Fr. Nicholas). Outdoor coffee hours will now be much more comfortable!

The Parish Council has voted to move forward with several unexpected building issues in addition to the completion of Phase 2 of our remodeling plan and gaining an occupancy permit for the parish hall. The air conditioning system in the chapel has to be replaced as well as the roof of the entire building. Contracts for these projects have been agreed upon and work will be done over the next several months. Donations to help meet these unplanned expenses will be greatly appreciated!

The Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God - from The Prologue by St. Nikolai

The Lord who, on Sinai, gave the Fifth Commandment: “Honor thy father and thy mother”, showed by His own example how one must reverence one’s parents. Hanging in agony on the Cross, He remembered His mother, and indicating the Apostle John, said to her: “Woman, behold thy son!”, and to John: “Behold thy mother!” and, with this concern for His mother, He breathed His last.

John had a home on Sion in Jerusalem, where he settled the Mother of God and left her to pass her remaining days on earth. By her prayers, her kindly advice, her meekness and patience, she was of immense help to her Son’s apostles. She spent virtually the rest of her life in Jerusalem, often going round the places that reminded her of the great events and the great works associated with and performed by her Son. She especially visited Golgotha, Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives. Of her journeys farther afield, her visit to St. Ignatius the God-Bearer is recorded, as are those to St. Lazarus the Four-days-dead, Bishop of Cyprus, to the Holy Mountain, to which she gave her blessing, and her stay in Ephesus with John during a fierce persecution of Christians in Jerusalem.

In old age, she often prayed to her Lord and God on the Mount of Olives, on the spot from which he ascended, to take her from this world. One day, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and revealed that she would enter into rest in three days’ time, and the angel gave her a palm-branch to be carried in her funeral procession. She returned home with great joy, with the heartfelt hope that she would see Christ’s apostles once more in this life.

The Lord fulfilled her desire and all the apostles, brought by Angels and clouds, gathered together at John’s house on Sion. It was with great joy that she saw the holy apostles, and she

encouraged, advised and upheld them, then peacefully gave her soul into God's hands without the slightest physical pain or struggle. The apostles took the coffin containing her body, from which an aromatic fragrance arose, and, accompanied by many Christians, took it to the Garden of Gethsemane, to the grave of Ss Joachim and Anna...



It was left to the Apostle Thomas, who was delayed, again by God's providence, to reveal a new and glorious mystery about the holy Mother of God. He arrived on the third day, and desired to embrace the

body of the holy and most pure. When the apostles opened her grave, he found only the winding-sheet - the body was not in the grave. That evening, she appeared to the apostles, surrounded by a multitude of angels, and said to them: "Rejoice; I will be with you always!"

Oh, how much there is for every one of the faithful to learn from the life of the Virgin Mother of God! She had the habit of going frequently to Golgotha, to the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane and Bethlehem, and to other places to which her Son had given special meaning. In all these places, and especially on Golgotha, she prayed to God on her knees. She thus gave the first example and impetus to the faithful of the practice of visiting the holy places out of love towards Him who, by the presence of His suffering and glory, made them holy and famous.

Our 25th Anniversary

The Covid restrictions have prevented us from having a public celebration for the 25th anniversary of our parish (March, 1996-

2021), but now that those restrictions are being gradually lifted, we can begin to plan an appropriate celebration. In anticipation of that, here are some highlights from our first ten years.

In 1995, Fr. Nicholas and Kh. Becky left the Episcopal Church, became Orthodox and moved to the Washington DC area to explore the possibility of forming a Western Rite Orthodox parish. The Church of Ss. Peter & Paul, then located in Bethesda, MD offered hospitality for those who began studying the faith. On the weekend of March 2-3 of 1996, Fr. Nicholas was ordained to the Diaconate and then the Priesthood by Bishop ANTOUN (of blessed memory) and our first parishioners were chrismated. We were given the name of St. Gregory the Great, Apostle to the English, author of hymns, who wrote the lives of the saints in the *Dialogues*, and who called himself the "servant of the servants of God."

Early on, the "personality" of our parish was established. We made attention to beauty, to the Liturgy and music a priority; we agreed that a portion of our income would go to help others; and we determined that we had a special mission to those who had not been brought up in the Orthodox Church. Most of the people who first joined us were "refugees" from other church bodies seeking the historical Church and its faith, but we were soon also joined by some who had no religious background and by converts from other faiths. We were happy to be a "door" into Orthodoxy.

In 1999, Ss. Peter & Paul sold their building to prepare for building a new temple and we had to move to rented space in the dingy unused basement of a Methodist Church in NW DC. Through the efforts of members with artistic, sewing, and carpentry skills, the necessary furnishings were created to transform this room into a beautiful Orthodox chapel. Several years later, when we moved to an upper floor in the same building, an even more beautiful chapel was created.

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Address Correction Requested

During these first ten years, we were blessed to welcome members who contributed so much to the life of our parish: Fr. Joachim Kunkel (who had been an Episcopal priest for over fifty years) who, after his ordination to the Orthodox priesthood, sang the Gospel at every Liturgy, heard confessions and shared his wisdom until his repose in 2000. His wife, Margaret Anna, served as our altar guild and flower lady until she became homebound and later reposed. Jerry Chiles was ordained Subdeacon and established a tradition of careful attention to liturgical matters. Karl Tsuji, in addition to serving at the altar, became our “treasurer for life.” Others sang in our small chant choir, baked holy bread, and provided coffee hours. We all served as “guinea pigs” during the planning for the *St. Ambrose Hymnal* and were happy to be the first to use *The English Office Noted*, the *Antiphoner* and the *Orthodox Ritual* - all projects of Fr. Nicholas.

We have also stored up unforgettable parish memories, and these, along with participation in Bible studies, weddings, baptisms and funerals, dinners and parish picnics, all have served to make St. Gregory’s a family of Christians striving together for holiness.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>July 2021</h1>						
<i>Sunday Matins at 9AM, Solemn Mass at 9:30</i>				1 Corpus Christi	2 Visitation of the BVM; St. John Maximovitch, BC, 1966; of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul	3 of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul <i>Vesper at 6PM</i>
4 Sunday in the Octave of Corpus Christi; 2 nd Sunday after Pentecost (Independence Day) <i>W</i>	5 of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul	6 Octave Day of Ss. Peter & Paul	7 Ss. Cyril & Methodius (B), CC, 9 th c.	8 St. Kilian of Wurzburg, BM, 689	9	10 Seven Holy Brothers, Mm, c. 165; St. Joseph of Damascus, 1860 <i>Vesper at 6PM</i>
11 Third Sunday after Pente-cost; Solemnity of St. Benedict, Ab, c. 540; St. Pius I, PM, c. 154 <i>G</i>	12 Ss. Nabor & Felix, Mm, 303	13 St. Anacletus, PM, 1 st c.	14	15 St. Vladimir of Kiev, KC, 1015; St. Henry, C, 1024	16 Our Lady of Einsiedeln	17 St. Alexis, C, 5 th c. <i>Vesper at 6PM</i>
18 Fourth Sunday after Pente-cost; St. Sergius, Ab, 1392; Ss. Sym- phorosa & her Seven Sons, Mm, c. 138 <i>G</i>	19 St. Seraphim of Sarov, PrC, 1833	20 St. Elias the Prophet, 9 th c. BC; St. Margaret of Antioch, VM, 304	21 St. Praxedes of Rome, V, 2 nd c.	22 St. Mary Magdalene, Penitent, 1 st c.	23 St. John Cassian, Ab, 433; St. Appollinaris, BM, 1 st c.	24 Vigil of St. James; St. Christina, VM, 3 rd c.; Ss. Romanus & David, Mm, 1015 <i>Vesper at 6PM</i>
25 St. James the Greater, Apostle, 44; Fifth Sunday after Pente-cost; St. Christopher, C, 251 <i>R</i>	26 St. Anne, Mother of the BVM, 1 st c.; St. Jacob Netsvetov, C, 1864	27 St. Pantelei-mon, c. 305	28 Ss. Nazarius, Celsus Mm, Ss. Victor, PM & Innocent PC, 5 th c	29 St. Martha of Bethany, V, 1 st c.	30 Ss. Abdon & Sennen, Mm, c. 303	31 St. Germanus of Auxerre, BC, 448 <i>Vesper at 6PM</i>

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>August 2021</h1>						<i>Sunday Matins at 9AM, Solemn Mass at 9:30</i>
1 Sixth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Peter's Chains; Holy Maccabees, Mm, c. 160 BC G	2 St. Stephen I, PM, 257	3 Finding of St. Stephen the Protomartyr, 415; St. Nicodemus, M, 1 st . c.	4	5 Our Lady of the Snows, 435; St. Oswald, KM, 642 <i>Mass at 7PM W</i>	6 Transfiguration of Our Lord; Ss. Sixtus II PM & Felicissimus, 285	7 Holy Name Day; St. Donatus of Arezzo, BM, 362 <i>Vesper at 6PM</i>
8 Seventh Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Cyriacus, Largus & Smaragdus, Mm, 304 G	9 St. Romanus, M, 258	10 St. Laurence, Deacon M, 258	11 Ss. Tiburtius & Susanna, Mm, 3 rd c.; St. Philomena, VM, c. 304	12	13 St. Maximus the Confessor, CD, 662; Ss. Hippolytus & comp., Mm, 235	14 Vigil of the Assumption; St. Eusebius, PrC, c. 300 <i>Vesper at 6PM</i>
15 Assumption of the BVM; Eighth Sunday after Pentecost W	16 St. Joachim, Father of the BVM, C, 1 st c; of the Oct. of the Assumption	17 of the Octave of the Assumption	18 of the Oct. of the Assump-tion; St. Helena, Ma, 330; St. Agapitus, M, 272	19 of the Oct. of the Assumption	20 of the Oct. of the Assumption	21 of the Oct. of the Assumption <i>Vesper at 6PM</i>
22 Ninth Sunday after Pente-cost; Oct. Day of the Assumption; Ss. Timothy, M, Hippolytus, BM G	23 Vigil of St. Bartholomew	24 St. Bartholo-mew, Apostle, 1st c.	25	26 St. Zephyrinus, PM, 219	27 St. Caesarius of Arles, BC, 542	28 St. Augustine of Hippo, BCD, 430; St. Moses the Black, C, 405 <i>Vesper at 6PM</i>
29 Tenth Sunday after Pente-cost; Beheading of St. John the Baptist; St. Sabina, M, c. 125 G	30 Ss. Felix & Adauctus, Mm, 304; St. Fiacre the Hermit, C, 670	31 St. Aidan of Lindisfarne, BC, 651				