

✠ 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. Ceasarius of Arles d. 542

If you want the sacred writings to become sweet to you and the divine precepts to profit you as they should, withdraw from worldly occupations for several hours to reread the divine words in your homes and to dedicate yourselves entirely to God's mercy. Then will happily be fulfilled in you what is written

concerning the blessed, that *On the law of the Lord he shall meditate day and night.* [Ps. 1:2]. Moreover, *Blessed are they that search his testimonies: that seek him with their whole heart,* [Ps. 118:2, 11] and: *Thy words have I hidden in my heart, that I may not sin against thee.* [2 Cor. 5:3] Just as the man who hides God's words in his heart does not sin, as you have heard, so the one who does not hide them does not

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cease to sin. Now, it is not enough for merchants to acquire profits from just one source of income; they provide more means of increasing their substance, and farmers try to sow different kinds of seeds in order to be able to provide enough food for themselves and their family. How much more, then, should it not suffice for your spiritual profit that you hear the divine lessons in church, but among your company at home you should engage in sacred reading... Thus, in the storehouse of your heart you may be able to prepare spiritual wheat and to store pearls of the Scriptures in the treasury of your souls...

Notice carefully, beloved brethren, that the sacred Scriptures have been transmitted to us like letters from our heavenly country. Our country is paradise, and our parents are the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs; the angels are its citizens, Christ is our King. When Adam sinned, we were all as though thrown into the exile of this world. However, since our King is more kind and merciful than can be imagined or expressed, He deigned to send us through the patriarchs and prophets sacred writings as letters of invitation, summoning us to the eternal and excellent country...

As we think over these facts wisely and usefully, dearly beloved, let us strive to put an end to all idle gossip, calumnies, and buffoonery as much as we can. With all our strength let us flee from the hindrances of this world and seek some hours when we can devote ourselves to prayer or reading for the salvation of our souls. Thus may be fulfilled in us what is written: *They that are learned shall shine as stars for all eternity.* [Dan. 12:3] May He deign to grant this, who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns God world without end. Amen.

St. Eustache, Martyr ~ September 20

It had been fewer than fifty years since the dramatic conversion of St. Paul to Christianity on the road to Damascus when another Roman citizen - a prominent general in the army - also had a dramatic conversion experience. Placidus was an honorable man, charitable and kind, but like Saul of Tarsus, he accepted the Roman laws concerning the persecution of Christians. When he was on a hunting trip, something strange happened that would change his life. Pursuing a large stag, he was stunned to see the stag turn toward him, displaying a shining cross in its antlers. Then Placidus heard a voice telling him to seek Christ and be baptized. Too moved to resist this directive, Placidus took his wife and two young sons to the local bishop, received instruction, and the family were all baptized, Placidus taking the name Eustache.

The bishop had wisely warned Eustache and his family that the life of the Christian would not be easy, that they should be prepared for persecution but should remain steadfast in their newfound faith. The tragedies which this family suffered were not what they expected: they were not immediately arrested for becoming Christians but, rather, their servants all died of a plague and their home was ransacked and much of their wealth stolen. Reeling from this change in their circumstances, Eustache took leave from the army and moved his family to a small village where they lived for a while in poverty and humility, but giving thanks that their knowledge of Christ always sustained them.

More trials were to come. They decided to go to the Holy Land to visit the places associated with Christ and his Apostles when another series of misfortunes occurred. Theopiste, Eustache's wife, was held captive by the ship's captain, and Eustache and their two sons were put off the ship at a port far from their intended destination. Then his sons were taken from him - by wild animals according to some reports and other accounts say barbarians.

In sorrow, Eustache found work as a laborer and prayed constantly for his lost family. After about fifteen years, members of Emperor Trajan's army began to lament the absence of their skilled general, Placidus, as they battled against a barbarian invasion. Two young officers were sent to search for the general to compel him to return to his earlier position. The young soldiers eventually found the general and were amazed to see him in his humble circumstances and to hear of his conversion. Listening to his story, they realized that this man was their father from whom they had been separated for so long. They soon persuaded him to return to the army with them and as they prepared to leave the village, a woman living nearby came to Eustache to plead with him to let her travel to Rome with him. She explained that she had been held captive by a ship captain and later abandoned when the captain died and she wanted desperately to return home in the hopes of finding her husband and children. Suddenly, they all realized that God had reunited their family in this miraculous way. They rejoiced to be together again and they made their journey back to Rome.

After successfully aiding in the military campaign, Eustache was approached by the emperor and ordered to join in the celebration ceremonies, which included offering worship to the Roman gods. When Eustache refused, declaring himself a Christian, the livid emperor ordered the general, along with his wife and sons, to be tortured and eventually put to death by roasting in a metal container. Later, their unburnt relics were buried and, in times more favorable to Christians, were translated to a church built in Rome in honor of St. Eustache. Having suffered much during this life, St. Eustache and his family received crowns of glory in the next. *Holy Eustache, pray for us!*



The story of St. Eustache spread throughout the Christian world and he became a much-venerated saint in the East and the West. He is included in the collection of saints known as the “Fourteen Holy Helpers”, who are believed to intercede on behalf of us for various illnesses, life circumstances, or professions; St. Eustache is the patron saint of hunters. The story of his conversion after seeing a stag with a cross in its antlers was merged into the story of St. Hubert (d. 727) in the Middle Ages.

Resources: Alban Butler: Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Saints; David Farmer: Oxford Dictionary of Saints; George Poulos: Orthodox Saints; St. Nikolai Velimorović: Prologue From Ochrid; website of the Orthodox Church in America; online Encyclopedia Britannica.

Parish News

In the month of September, there are a number of feast days which will be celebrated with week-day masses: The Consecration of St. Gregory the Great will be observed on the eve, Thursday, September 2; for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the eve, Monday, September 13; and for St. Michael on Tuesday, September 28 (the eve). Vespers on each of these evenings will be at 6:30PM and Mass at 7. We now have our occupancy permit from the County following the parish hall renovations, but pot-luck suppers after these services will depend on covid-related directives at the time.

Our Parish History, Continued

Because of continued COVID restrictions, we have not yet been able to plan for a public celebration of our parish 25th anniversary. Until that is possible, we are providing a brief history of the parish. The follow-ing report on parish life from 2006-2016 is a continuation of the report on our first ten years which appeared in the last newsletter.



We celebrated the 10th anniversary of St. Gregory’s parish in 2006 with a weekend of beautiful services (at which Keivan Shahrokhi was tonsured as a reader) and a wonderful

banquet. These events took place at Ss. Peter & Paul church in Potomac, MD, who - as they had at the beginning of our parish - provided a place for us to meet. The Methodist church where we rented space for 8 years had closed and we were once again without a home. At the anniversary celebrations, Bp. THOMAS admonished our Parish Council to find a place to purchase. Only weeks later, we were able to buy a former townhouse which had been converted to a Pentecostal church, and we spent the next several months working hard on the renovations necessary for creating another beautiful Orthodox chapel and parish hall.

Parish life now became more “permanent”. We were able to expand our collection of vestments and other liturgical items, we acquired a two-manual and pedal pipe organ which fit perfectly in the choir area, and we now were able to have services for all the major feast days. Through the sacramental life of our parish and the prayers of our people, this humble building became for us the gate of heaven.

During these ten years, we increased our lending library, enjoyed “Ask Abouna” sessions at coffee hours, had many wonderful parish dinners, game days, and All Saints parties. We adopted the feral cats in the neighborhood and, primarily through the efforts of Subdeacon Jerome, we maintained two lovely city gardens.

Our outreach projects included making health kits for IOCC, laminating icons to send to the Philippines, sponsoring our own Maria Roeber as a missionary to Tanzania through OCMC. For outreach to the community, we donated our Food for Hungry People collections to Martha's Table and held a used book sale for the benefit of the local Boys and Girls Club.

We said joyful goodbyes to two of our members who are now monastics: Grete Roeber - Sister Margarete and now Mother Macrina at Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, CA, and Michele Green - Sister Michele, who is at Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City, PA. We were grateful for the ordination as deacon and then priest in 2011 of Fr. Raphael Garcia and the contributions which he and Kh. Catherine make to our parish. We had our first wedding in our little chapel and in 2011, Karl Tsuji was tonsured as Reader and Nathaniel Green in 2012. We bade farewell to Bryan Puterbaugh, Carol Lackman, and Jerry Chiles, who reposed during this time, and we rejoiced at the marriage in 2015 of Candace Archer and Patrick Woolley, the first marriage of a couple who had met at St. Gregory's.

Our participation outside the parish included hosting a Western Rite conference in 2010, and our clergy, acolytes and choir director help with the Western Rite Vespers service which has become a regular part of Parish life Conferences. As Fr. Nicholas catechized three new Western Rite parishes during this time - Holy Trinity in Lynchburg, VA, St. Patrick's in Bealton, VA, and St. John the Baptist in Lewistown, MD - we hosted services and dinners for their members.

Even though our location on Euclid St. in Washington DC was near the geographic center of our parish and afforded easy access to a metro stop, there were difficulties that increased during this ten-year period. There was no possibility of expansion of the building and on-street parking became ever more restricted. So, in 2015, the Parish Council began searching for another suitable property. 13406 Roxbury Rd. in Silver Spring, MD, a house with

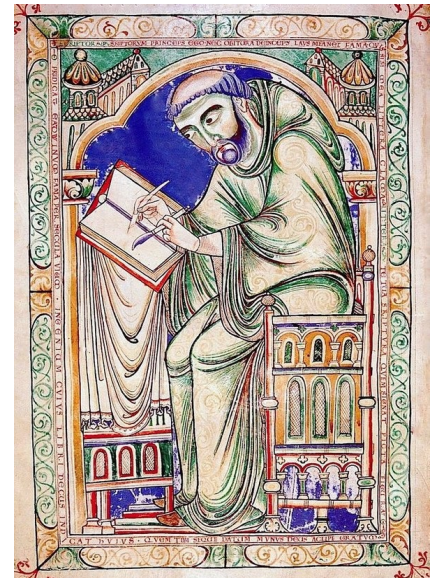
room for a chapel and parish hall and over two acres of land, was purchased in September of that year and the long process of gaining the required permits began.

After selling our city property, we had to vacate it in December of 2015 and began meeting in the chapel of the Woods Academy in Bethesda, MD while construction began on the new property. We ended our second decade grateful for the opportunity to continue to worship together as a community and with hope for the future. *To be continued...*

Contra Plagam

by Monica Burnett

Two weeks prior to starting his college career, our own Nathan Caldwell created an original translation of a 9th century Latin prayer beseeching the Lord for deliverance from a deadly plague. The medieval author of this prayer, Sedulius Scottus (or Scotus), an Irish monk, had fled from the Viking raids afflicting his homeland and had been cordially received by Hartgar, the Bishop of Liège, in the territory that is now Belgium. When a plague began to claim the lives of the local populace, Sedulius Scottus composed a desperate plea for divine aid.



The process of translating from one language into another is comparable to building a bridge because the support structures on both ends must be sturdy. First the translator must grasp the meaning of the text in its original language, carefully considering

the nuances of that language and the historical context of the text. Then, in rendering a faithful translation into another language, he (or she) must draw upon his own treasury of words and phrases in that language, selecting those that convey most accurately the shades of meaning in the original text.

Nathan has used his extensive talents and training to summon the past into the present, providing us what a time-honored prayer for an end to our pandemic. *Thank you, Nathan!*

Deliver the people subject to Thee, O holy Ruler; let Thy wrath fade away; kindly look upon these bitter tears and sighs, O Christ.

Thou art our Father and exalted Lord; we are Thy servants, O Good Shepherd, bearing the sign of roseate blood upon our brows.

Who is admitted to Thee from the gloomy underworld? Do the dead devote praises to Thee? We ask hesitantly, fearing the Judge of a rod of iron.

Now let the goblet of wrath give no drink to the deserving of anger and the people. Let the ancient pities shine forth - We beseech Thee, hear us.

We pray Thee, may Thou destroy our evil works, and preserve us, O praised ruler; make good the light of the world over the dark shadows of judgments.

O Holy of Holies, and King of Kings, let Thy right hand visit Thy people; may Thou perceive us clearly with Thy countenance; let us not pass away.

St. Gregory Orthodox Church
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Address Correction Requested

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>September 2021</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 <i>Mass at 7pm</i> <i>W</i>	3	4 St. Gorazde of Prague, BM, 1942 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
5 11 th Sunday after Pentecost <i>G</i>	6 <i>(Labor Day)</i>	7 St. Cloud, C, 560; St. Sergius I, PC, 701	8 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary	9 St. Gorgonius, M, 304	10	11 Ss. Protus & Hyacinth, Mm, c. 257; St. Paphnutius, BC, 4th c. <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
12 12 th Sunday after Pentecost <i>G</i>	13 <i>Mass at 7pm</i> <i>R</i>	14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross	15 Ember Wed- nesday; St. Nicomedes, M, 4th c.	16 Ss. Cornelius, PM, 254 & Cyprian, BM 258; St. Ninian, BC, 5 th c.	17 Ember Friday St. Lambert, BM, 705	18 Ember Satur- day <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
19 13 th Sun. after Pentecost; St. Theodore of Canter- bury, BC, 690; Ss. Januarius & comp., Mm, c. 305 <i>G</i>	20 Ss. Eustace & comp., Mm, c. 118	21 St. Matthew, Evangelist & Apostle, 1st c.	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 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
26 14 th Sunday after Pente- cost; Ss. Cyprian, BM & Justina, VM, c. 303 <i>G</i>	27 Ss. Cosmas & Damian, Mm, c. 303	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 Illumi- nator, BC, c. 323		