

# ✠ 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 Palamas

d. 1359

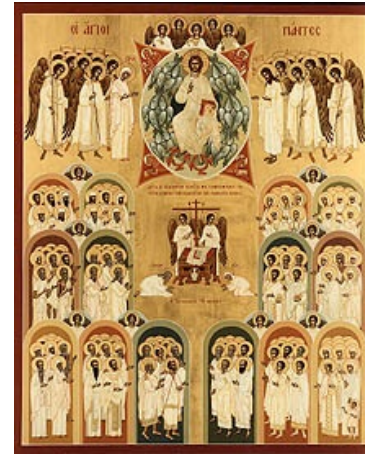
they willingly endured long periods of fasting, vigil and their joints dislocated and their bones crushed, and keeping the confession of faith in Christ in its integrity, complete, unharmed and unshaken. As a result there were bestowed on them the incontrovertible wisdom of the Spirit and the power to work miracles.

Let us consider the patience of holy men and women, how

Truly God is glorious in his saints [Ps. 68:35]. Let us call to mind the martyrs' superhuman struggles, how in the weakness of their flesh they put to shame the evil one's strength, disregarding pain and wounds as they struggled bodily against fire, sword, all different kinds of deadly tortures, patiently resisting while their flesh was cut,

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various other physical hardships as though they were not in the body, battling to the end against evil passions and all sorts of sin, in the invincible inner warfare against principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness [Eph. 6:12]. They wore away their outer selves and made them useless, but their inner man was renewed and deified by Him from whom they also received gifts of healing and mighty works. When we think on these matters and understand

that they surpass human nature, we are filled with wonder and glorify God who gave them such grace and power. For even if their intentions were good and noble, without God's strength they could not have gone beyond the bounds of their nature and driven away the bodiless enemy while clothed in their bodies.

That is why, when the psalmist and prophet declared, *God is glorious in his saints*, he went on to say, *he giveth strength and power unto his people* [Ps. 68:35]. Carefully consider the force of these prophetic words. Whereas God, according to the psalmist, gives all his people strength and power - for He shows no partiality - He is glorified only in His saints. The sun pours down its rays abundantly upon all alike, but they are visible only to those with open eyes. Those with clear-sighted, pure eyes benefit from the pure light of the sun, not those whose vision is dimmed because illness, mist or something similar has afflicted their eyes. In the same way, God richly bestows His help on all, for He is the ever-flowing, enlightening and saving founts of mercy and goodness. But not everyone takes advantage of His grace and power to practice and perfect virtue and show forth miracles, only those with a good intent, who demonstrate their love and faith towards God by good works, who turn away completely from everything base, hold fast to God's commandments and lift up the eyes of their

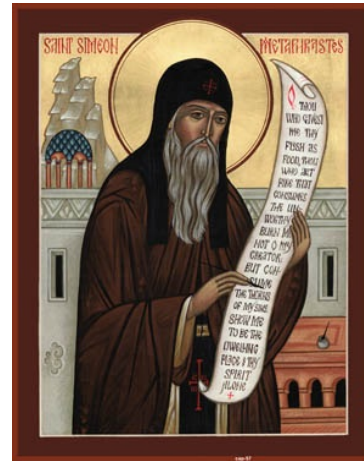
understanding to Christ the Sun of righteousness. He not only holds out a helping hand from above to those who struggle, but we also hear Him speaking to us and urging us on: *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, He says, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven.* [Matt. 10:32]

Each saint, as a servant of God, boldly acknowledged Him in this fleeting life before mortal men, though actually just for a brief period of this present age and in front of only a few. By contrast, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God and Lord of heaven and earth, will speak openly on their behalf in that eternal, never-ending world before God the Father, surrounded by angels, archangels and all the heavenly host, and in the presence of all mankind from Adam onwards. For all will rise and appear before the judgement-seat of Christ. Then, before everyone and in the sight of all, He will proclaim, glorify and crown those who demonstrated their faith in Him to the end.

## *St. Symeon Metaphrastes*

### *Feast Day ~ November 8*

Story-telling is one of the most important ways a society passes on its traditions to succeeding generations. Recounting the important events, ideas, and the great deeds of heroes contributes to the continuation of a culture. This is also true for the Church. At every service throughout the liturgical year, we hear the stories of our faith told again and again. The stories of the saints - those men, women, and children who have led particularly holy lives and those who have died steadfastly holding to Christ - are important as encouragement for our lives and as reminders of those who intercede for us. We must never forget the marvelous acts of God in the world and the lives of those who have come before us.



The Church also honors those who tell these stories, beginning with the Evangelists who wrote the Gospels and including hagiographers - those who wrote down for future generations the lives of the saints. Our patron, St. Gregory the Great, has been held in honor for this in both the West and the East, where he is called the “Dialogist” for his collection of “dialogues” retelling the lives of many saints. In the West, there are many who are honored for carrying on this tradition: St. Gregory of Tours for his *Vita Patrum*, St. Bede, for the stories in his *History of the English Church and People* and his lives of particular saints, and many others.

In the East, St. Symeon, whose appellation “Metaphrastes” can be translated as “compiler”, wrote a 10-volume menologion, or collection of lives of the saints, which for many centuries was the most important source of these lives in the Greek language.

Although earlier accounts place Symeon in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, it is now believed that he lived in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and served as an administrator under the Emperor Basil II. Symeon was considered a gifted diplomat and was given many opportunities to exercise his gifts in the numerous conflicts which the Byzantine Empire was engaged in at this time. Perhaps Symeon played some part in the political marriage of Basil’s sister, Anna, to Vladimir I of Kiev, thus establishing a relationship which resulted in the acceptance of Orthodox Christianity by the Russian people.

After serving faithfully as a diplomat, Symeon begged for permission to retire from public life and concentrate on the work he might do for the Church. Released from his duties,

Symeon began writing hymns and compiling the lives of the saints. He had been a devout Christian all his life and as a student of philosophy and later in his diplomatic position, he had acquired knowledge of many different languages. He now used that knowledge to search for stories and legends about the saints, their miracles, and their courageous martyrdoms.

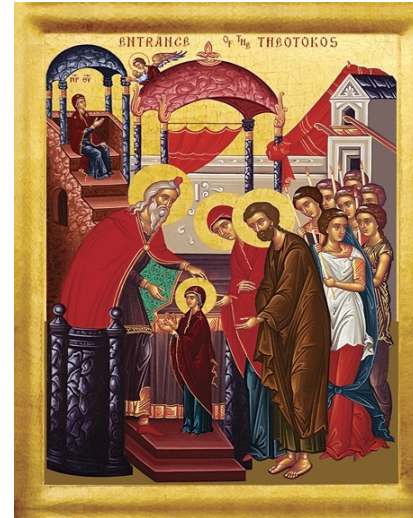
In sifting through all his sources and editing everything for compiling a readable collection, Symeon wrote in a popular style that would be easily understood by the average person in his day. An English translation by Stratis Papaioannou of some of these stories has now been published by the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library entitled *Christian Novels from the Menologion of Symeon Metaphrastes*. Indeed, the style and popularity of Symeon's work equaled that of modern writers of fiction.

We give thanks to God for the work of St. Symeon Metaphrastes and other writers and compilers like him who have labored to provide a record of those saints which are honored in the Church and whose memories must be preserved for future generations of Christians.

*Sources: Amazon Prime books.; The Catholic Encyclopedia; Orthodox Saints by George Poulos; the website of Roger Pearse; Wikipedia.*

## Parish News

We begin the month of November with the great feast of All Saints, when we pay special honor to that great spiritual army who inspire us and intercede for us. We will transfer our celebration to the Sunday within the octave of this feast, November 7. At coffee hour following Mass that day, we will share stories of our favorite saints. On Monday evening, November 1, we will celebrate a Requiem Mass at 7pm (preceded by Vespers for the Departed at 6:30) for those of our loved ones who have passed



from this life to the next. Please give Fr. Nicholas the names of any you would like to be remembered at this service. The feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos (11/21) will be commemorated on the Last Sunday after Pentecost this year. At the end of the month, on November 28, we enter of the season of Advent and the beginning of a new year in the Western liturgical cycle

Thanks to all who organized, purchased items, helped to assemble, and transport 72 health kits and 3 clean-up buckets for International Orthodox Christian Charities. These have now been delivered to the distribution center of Church World Service in New Windsor, MD. From there, kits are sent to all the areas of the world where people are in need due to war or natural disasters, such as Louisiana, where an IOCC team is currently helping with cleanup following hurricane damage.

## The Narrow Way of Orthodoxy

*An excerpt from an essay by Fr. Thomas Hopko*

When the early Christian martyrs were brought before their persecutors they often answered the threats of their torturers with the simple words: "I am a Christian!" The first Christian believers had no earthly identity... They belonged to God's kingdom... They belonged everywhere and nowhere, for they were fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. [Eph. 2:19]

The Orthodox Church is not of this world, but it is in the world for the sake of its salvation...The Lord Jesus Christ said that He is the Son of God who gives his flesh and blood for the life of the world. [John 6:51] The Orthodox Church can never be identified with this world. It is the presence of God's kingdom in this world until Christ comes again in glory at the end of the ages to establish God's kingdom throughout the whole of creation. But the Church is in the world for the sake of the world's life and salvation.

The narrow way that leads to life forbids Orthodox Christians to follow the destructive way of identifying Christ's Church with any particular social, political, economic, or military policy... But the narrow way that leads to life also forbids Orthodox Christians from taking the broad and easy way of withdrawal from direct involvement in the social, political, economic, and even military activities of the nations in which they live. It forbids them from taking the destructive way of turning Christ's Church into a self-enclosed, sectarian cult that has nothing to do with the world for which Christ was crucified and glorified...

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The hard and narrow way of Christ, the way of Orthodox Christianity which leads to life, lies between the two wide and easy ways to destruction: the way of religious sectarianism on the one side, where we consider everything outside of the Orthodox Church to be nothing other than undifferentiated demonic darkness to be avoided at all costs, and the way of religious relativism on the other, where we would see no significant or substantial uniqueness in Orthodoxy, except for the fact that it is the traditional tribal religion of certain European, Middle Eastern, and Asian peoples - which is to be defended at all costs not only against those who would destroy it, but also against those who might wish to embrace it and accept it as their own.

May Orthodox Christians throughout the world find and follow the way of Christ and the Church, which is the hard and narrow way of Orthodoxy. We can do so only by God's grace



through remaining in closest communion and cooperation with one another. There is no infallible magisterium in Orthodoxy. No one person, bishop, or local church possesses the whole truth on any given issue; and no individual, hierarch, or church community is exempt from error. The Orthodox Church is a *sobornal* [conciliar] church. It is a church in which the Holy Spirit brings God's truth in Christ to the body of believers through the prayers and spiritual feats of the saints. The Orthodox Church is a church in which human persons discover God's truth by bearing each other's burdens, hearing each other's words, sharing each other's experiences, correcting each other's fault, and benefitting from each other's wisdom... May there always be among us those who remain steadfastly faithful to God.

*Reprinted from Speaking the Truth in Love, a collection of essays by Fr. Thomas Hopko published by St. Vladimir's Press*

## *On Holiness*

by St. Nikolai of Ochrid

Holiness, my brethren, is the virtue that encompasses all the other virtues. A saint, a mere man, is adorned through it with all the virtues. If a man is a man of prayer and is not compassionate, he cannot be called a saint, and if a man endures all things but has not faith and hope, he does not belong among the saints. If a man is full of compassion but is without faith in God, truly such a man cannot be reckoned among the saints. A saint is a perfected man,



such Adam was in Paradise; or, still better, a man such as is the New Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the Saint of saints. Here is the Sower of sanctity upon the earth and the Guardian of the saints in history. He has revealed to us the ideal of the true saint. He is the prototype of the saints, as He is also the primal image of man. A true man, my brethren, is nothing other than a saint. Saint and man - they are the same thing. He has shown us what it means to be a man and what it means to be a saint. And

so His Apostle Peter commands us: *Be holy in all manner of living.* A saint cannot be a saint only in one part of his life, but must be so in the whole of it. We must be holy in every part and particle of our lives, so that we may be counted among the saints, among the people who are conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prototype of the saints and the Primal Image of man.

*O all-holy Lord, to Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.*

**O** Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord: grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living; that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

*A Collect for All Saints Day*

**St. Gregory Orthodox Church**  
c/o 804 E Randolph Rd  
Silver Spring, MD 20904  
*Address Correction Requested*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2021</h1>						
<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Mass at 9:30AM</i>	<b>1</b> All Saints Day  <i>Mass at 7:30pm B</i>	<b>2</b> All Souls Day	<b>3</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Winifred, VM, c. 660	<b>4</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm, c. 304	<b>5</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Zachariah, M, and Elizabeth, Ma, 1st C.	<b>6</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Leonard of Noblac, Ab, c. 559  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>7</b> Sunday in the Oct. of All Saints; 20 <sup>th</sup> Sun. after Pentecost; St. Wilibrord of Echternach, BC, 739 <i>W</i>	<b>8</b> Patriarchs & Prophets of the Old Law (Oct. Day of All Saints); Four Crowned Martyrs	<b>9</b> Dedication of the Basilica of St. Savior in Rome, 324; St. Benignus, BC, c. 468	<b>10</b> Ss. Tryphon, Respicius & Nympha Mm, c. 250	<b>11</b> St. Martin of Tours, BC, 397; St. Theodore the Studite, Ab, 826  <i>(Veteran's Day)</i>	<b>12</b> St. Martin I, PC, 655	<b>13</b> St. Britius of Tours, BC, 444  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>14</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> Sun. after Pentecost; St. Gregory Palamas, BCD, 1359  <i>G</i>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> St. Hilda of Whitby, V, 680; St. Gregory the Wonder-worker, BC, c. 270; St. Gregory of Tours, BC, 594	<b>18</b> Dedication of Basilica of Ss. Peter & Paul, 4 <sup>th</sup> c.; St. Odo of Cluny, Ab, 942	<b>19</b> St. Pontianus, PM, 235	<b>20</b> St. Edmund, KM, 870  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>21</b> 22 <sup>nd</sup> & Last Sunday after Pentecost; Presentation of the BVM; St. Gelasius, PC, 496 <i>G</i>	<b>22</b> St. Cecilia, VM, c. 230	<b>23</b> St. Clement, PM, 96; St. Felicity of Rome, M, 165	<b>24</b> St. Chrysgonus of Aquileia, M., c. 304	<b>25</b> St. Katherine of Alexandria, VM, 4th c.  <i>(Thanksgiving Day)</i>	<b>26</b> St. Peter of Alexandria, BM, 311	<b>27</b>  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>28</b> First Sunday in Advent  <i>V</i>	<b>29</b> St. Saturninus, M, 309	<b>30</b> St. Andrew the Apostle, 1st c.				