

✠ 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 of St. Augustine of Hippo

d. 430

It was first made manifest in Him that we might know what to hope for ourselves. What He hath thus promised would come to us at the last, He willed not only to foretell but to demonstrate. Those who were present at that time, (even though they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit) handled Him, and saw that a spirit would not have flesh and bones, such as they saw Him to have. Thus He spake to them, not only in words which they could hear,

During these Holy Days in commemoration of the Lord's Resurrection, we purpose to preach, so far as He will empower us, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. For this is our faith, to wit: the gift of resurrection, which was bestowed upon the flesh of our Lord Jesus

Christ, is what is promised to us, for



flesh and bones, as ye see me have. Of course, men have disputed this evidence; for what else could men do, seeing that they are wise only according to man's wisdom, which thus permitteth them to dispute concerning God in spirit of what God hath shown them of himself. He is God, they are men. But God knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are but vain.

To carnal men, the one rule of understanding is his ordinary experience: seeing is believing. What men are accustomed to see, that they credit; what they are not accustomed to see, that they deem incredible. But God often worketh wonders (that is, things contrary to what we are accustomed) because he is God. Every day many men are born that previously had no existence at all; and this is a greater miracle than that a few, who did exist, have been raised from the dead. Yet this wonder is not recognized as such; on the contrary, it is disregarded because man is accustomed to it. Christ rose again from the dead; that is a fact. He had a body: He took flesh, He hung upon the cross, He gave up the ghost; His flesh was laid in the tomb. After that, He showed His flesh as alive again, He lived again in the flesh. Why wonder, why deny it? God wrought this.

but in a body which they could see; as if it had not been enough to show Himself to their sight, but must needs even offer Himself to be touched and handled.

For He said: Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? For they supposed that they had seen a spirit. Therefore He added: Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not

Inside:

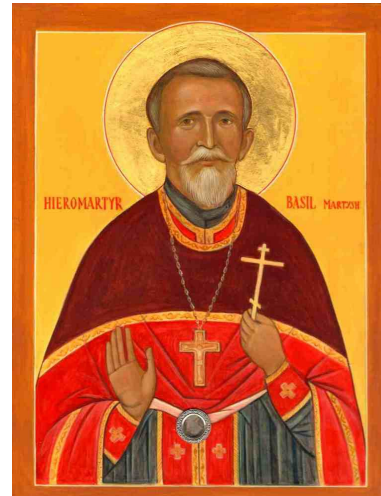
St. Vasily Martysz.....	3
Parish News	5
The Resurrection of Christ	6
The Lord is My Shepherd	7
Calendar	11

St. Vasily Martysz *Feast Day ~ May 4*

In 2003, a new Orthodox saint who had connections with America was glorified. St. Vasily Martysz was a Polish-born priest who served first in the Territory of Alaska and later in Pennsylvania and Canada before returning to Poland. He was martyred during the last chaotic days of World War II, in 1945, having survived the two World Wars and the Bolshevik Revolution.

Vasily was born in Southeastern Poland in 1884, the son of a judge (who later became a priest after his retirement from that position). Vasily's first visit to North America was at the age of ten when he and his father visited New York. Deciding to follow in his father's footsteps and enter the priesthood, Vasily graduated from the seminary in Chelm (whose rector at the time was Bishop [St.] Tikhon, later Metropolitan of Moscow) in 1889, married his wife, Olga, was ordained deacon, and the next year was ordained priest. The young couple left Poland for New York, expecting to be assigned to a parish there but, instead, were sent to the Territory of Alaska to a parish which covered Spruce and Woody islands near Kodiak.

Orthodox Christianity had existed in Alaska for two hundred years, brought there initially (in 1794) by St. Herman and other missionaries. Fr. Vasily contributed to the growth of this missionary effort by traveling via kayak to perform his pastoral duties in this vast territory. He was instrumental in the building of the Church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Virgin at Afognak, a church which survived an earthquake and tidal wave in 1964 when all around it was destroyed. Two daughters were born to the family and after they moved to Pennsylvania, a son and another daughter were born. In 1912 - after nearly twelve years of service in the "New World" - the Martysz family was given permission to return to Poland.



There, Fr. Vasily's service as a parish priest and teacher of religious education in a girls' school came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of war. The Polish clergy were ordered to evacuate to Russia. Fr. Vasily continued serving as a priest and teacher until the Bolsheviks came to power and he had to earn a living for his family by unloading railroad cars. In 1919, Polish refugees in Russia were allowed to return to Poland and Fr. Vasily was then given the

assignment of forming an Orthodox military chaplaincy service for the War Department.

In addition to those duties, Fr. Vasily worked closely with Metropolitan George of Warsaw and All Poland, particularly in establishing autocephaly for the Polish Orthodox Church, and was with him on the day in 1923 when he was assassinated.

As part of his military chaplaincy work, Fr. Vasily arranged for pastoral work among the Ukrainian Orthodox Christians who were interned in camps in Poland. In 1921, he offered the Divine Liturgy for over 5,000 prisoners in one camp, preaching in the Ukrainian language.

Retiring from government service in 1936, Fr. Vasily and Mat. Olga moved to the village of Teratyn, building a home for themselves and another for their widowed mothers. But after the invasion of Poland by the Germans in 1939, village life suffered greatly. Both of their mothers died and then also Mat. Olga. The Martysz' daughter, Helen, and her family moved in with Fr. Vasily to help care for him. On Great and Holy Friday, May 4, 1945 - just a few days before the Nazi surrender - criminals broke into the

home, tortured Fr. Vasily for four hours and beat his pregnant daughter until she miscarried her child. Finally, Fr. Vasily was shot and killed, his only crime being that he was a priest. For this he is considered a martyr.

Fr. Vasily is a wonderful example for us all of a faithful servant of Christ. His priesthood was lived out in some of the most difficult and challenging situations: the Alaskan wilderness and great distances, wars, revolution. May St. Vasily, intercede for us that we may serve faithfully no matter how difficult our lives become. *Holy Vasily, pray for us.*

Sources: websites of the Orthodox Church in America, Holy Cross Orthodox Church (High Point, NC), St. Herman Seminary, the Order of Centurions, and OrthodoxWiki.

Parish News

Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen! Thanks to all who contributed to making our Holy Week and Paschal celebrations among the most beautiful we've had. God even provided some of the most beautiful weather we've ever had, especially for those ceremonies which required outside processions.

We will continue our celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord during the entire month of May. On Sunday, the 22nd, we will welcome Bishop JOHN, the episcopal overseer for our Western Rite parishes. His Grace will be here for Saturday Vespers and the Sunday morning services, as we celebrate the Dedication of our church building and remember our twenty-six-year history. More details regarding the celebrations will be announced soon.

Thanks to Fr. Nicholas, who has become our parish gardener, for the plantings around the grounds of the church property. As the

flowering plants in our Mary garden, between the deck and the ramp, and other areas come alive this Spring, we see reminders of the Resurrection in God's beautiful creation.

The Resurrection of Christ

by Metropolitan Hierotheos



The Resurrection of Christ is the greatest event in history. It is what distinguishes Christianity from every other religion. The other religions have mortal leaders, while the head of the Church is the risen Christ. The Resurrection of Christ is the renewal of human nature, the recreation of the human race, the living of eschatological reality. When we speak of the Resurrection, we do not separate it from the Cross, for the Cross and the Resurrection are the two poles of the redemptive experience, just as we pray in the Church, “through the Cross is joy come into all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us sing His Resurrection”, or just as we sing “We venerate thy Cross, O Master: and we glorify Thy Holy Resurrection.”

In the Church we constantly speak of Christ's Resurrection, which has great significance for the life of the believer. We do not believe in social revolutions, because the greatest good in the world came from the Resurrection and not from any human social revolution. Even if we correlate the Resurrection with true revolution, we find ourselves in the truth, from the point of view that through Christ's resurrection man returned to his original position and rose still higher. The word for revolution is derived from a verb which means to come back to the former position. This

rectification, the restoration of man took place through the Resurrection of Christ.

The Apostle Paul clearly proclaimed: *And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile.* [I Cor. 15, 17]. The truth and power of the faith is due to the shining fact of the Resurrection of Christ. Without this the Christians are *of all men the most pitiable* [I Cor. 15, 19]...

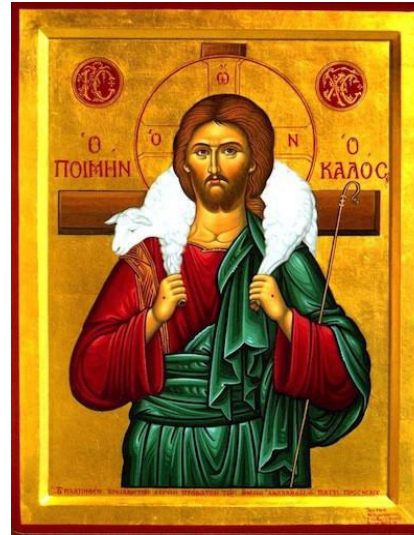
Christ's resurrection is the greatest event in history. It is a matter of deification and resurrection of the human nature and of a hope for deification and resurrection of our own person. Since the medicine has been found, there is hope of life. Through Christ's Resurrection both life and death acquire another meaning. We do not regard as life the whole of the events of history, but communion with God. And we do not regard as death the end of the present life, but man's withdrawal from Christ, while separation of the soul from the body is not death but a temporary sleep. The Apostle Paul, precisely because he feels united with the Risen Christ, can confess: *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* [Rom. 8:38, 39].

An excerpt from *The Feasts of the Lord*.

The Lord is My Shepherd

by Fr. Patrick Reardon

One has the strong impression - strong to the point of certitude - that the "Good Shepherd Psalm" [Ps. 22/23] is the best-known, most frequently prayed and the most widely memorized psalm of the Bible...Many believers pray it daily.



The popularity of this psalm is doubtless related to the traditional attraction of the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, the latter a fact readily demonstrable from the New Testament and the very earliest Christian art.

This attraction, still very widespread, was absolutely universal among the first Christians. For instance, in Matthew, written in Syria, the theme of Jesus as the Good

Shepherd was especially related to that of evangelism and the sending out of the Apostles (Matt. 9:36-38). This emphasis is consonant with the parable of the Shepherd's searching for the lost sheep, preserved in Matt. 18:12-14.

In Mark's Gospel, written in Rome, the theme of the Good Shepherd was especially associated with the Multiplication of the Loaves (Mark 6:34). Here one sees Jesus making his flock recline on the green grass (6:19), an image clearly drawn from our psalm. Evidently this became a favorite image among the Christians at Rome, for pictures of Jesus as the Good Shepherd appear everywhere in the catacombs and other early art in that city...

Besides Syria and Rome, the symbol of Jesus as Good Shepherd was also clearly a popular one among the Christians in Asia Minor. For example, in the mid-second century the Bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, refers to our Lord as "the Shepherd of the Church". Much earlier, however, that theme was already recorded in the Gospel of John, written in the Asian capital of Ephesus. At the very end of this Gospel, Jesus refers to "My lambs" and "My sheep" (John 21:15-17), but the longer development of this idea is

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in chapter 10. In this chapter, several aspects of the image are treated: the sensitivity of the sheep to the Shepherd's voice (vs. 3-5, 8, 14, 16, 27), the utter uniqueness of the Shepherd in contrast to the hireling or the robber (vs. 1, 2, 8-10, 12, 13), the Shepherd's giving of His life for His sheep (vs. 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18), the gathering of the lost sheep into a single flock (16), and their total security (vs. 28, 29).

In the traditional exegesis of the Church, this psalm bears special reference to the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Chrismation, and the Holy Eucharist. Thus, it is the baptismal font that the psalmist has in mind when he proclaims: *He leads me beside the still waters: He restores my soul.* Thus, too, it is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Chrismation that is referred to when the psalm says: *You anoint my head with oil.* Thus, likewise, it is the Altar of the Messianic Banquet that the psalm means when it says: *You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;... my cup brims over....*

Such is the mystic table that the Good Shepherd, having led us safely through the valley of the shadow of death, prepares before us, beside the still waters, our heads anointed with oil.

An excerpt from Christ in the Psalms. This book is in our parish library. In the Western Rite lectionary, we hear the Gospel of John 10:11-16 on the Second Sunday after Easter.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>May 2022</h1>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Mass at 9:30AM</i>
1 Low Sunday: First Sunday after Easter <i>W</i>	2 St. George, Martyr, 303 (tr); St. Athanasius, BCD, 373	3 Finding of the Holy Cross	4 St. Mark the Evangelist, 1 st c. (tr.)	5 Ss. Philip and James, Apostles, 1 st c. (tr.)	6 St. John before the Latin Gate	7 St. Alexis Toth, C, 1909 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
8 Second Sunday after Easter; Apparition of St. Michael, c. 492 <i>W</i>	9 St. Gregory Nazianzen, BCD, 390	10 Ss. Gordian, 362 & Epimachus, 250, Mm	11	12	13	14 St. Boniface of Tarsus, M, 290 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
15 Third Sunday after Easter; St. Pachomius, Ab, 346 <i>W</i>	16 St. Brendan the Navigator, 577, Ab	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 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
22 Sunday in the Octave of the Dedication; 4th Sunday after Easter; St. Romanus of Subiaco, Ab, 560 <i>W</i>	23	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 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
29 Fifth Sunday after Easter <i>W</i>	30 Rogation Monday; St. Felix I, PM, 274 <i>(Memorial Day)</i>	31 Rogation Tuesday; St. Petronilla, VM, c. 100				