

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church
A Western Rite Congregation of the Antiochian Archdiocese
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From a homily of St. Gregory Palamas d. 1359

During their earthly lives, all the saints are an incentive to virtue for those who hear and see them with understanding, for they are human icons of excellence, animated pillars of goodness, and living books, which teach us the way to better things. Afterwards, when they depart this life, the benefit we gain from them is kept alive for ever

through the remembrance of their virtues. By commemorating their noble deeds, we offer them that praise which, on the one hand, we owe them for the good they did our ancestors, but which, on the other, is also fitting for us at the present time, on account of the help they give us now.

If we commemorate the saints with hymns and appropriate songs of praise, how much more should we celebrate the

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memory of Peter and Paul, the supreme leaders of the pre-eminent company of the apostles? They are the fathers and guides of all Christians... As chief shepherds and master builders of our common godliness and virtue, they tend and teach us all, like lights in the world, holding forth the word of life [Phil. 2:15-16]. Their brightness excels that of the other radiantly pious and virtuous saints as the sun outshines the stars, or as the heavens, which declare the sublime glory of God [Ps. 19:1], transcend the skies... Not only do they bring people out of darkness into this wonderful light, but by enlightening them they make them light, the offspring of the perfect light,

that each of them may shine like the sun [Matt. 13:43], when the author of light, the God-man and Word, appears in glory. . .

Anyone who looks at Peter will see that through repentance and painful grief he not only adequately healed the denial into which he had been drawn, but he also completely rooted out of his soul that passion which had made him fall behind the others. Wishing to demonstrate this to everyone, the Lord, after His passion in the flesh for our sake and His rising on the third day, used those words to Peter which we read in today's Gospel, asking him, *Simon, son of Jonah, lovest me more than these* [John 21:15]... What does the Lord do? Since Peter has shown that he has not lost his love for Him and has now acquired humility as well, He openly fulfils the promise made long before and tells him, *Feed my lambs* [John 21:14]. Referring to the company of believers as a building, He promised to make Peter the foundation stone, saying *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church* [Matt. 16:18].

Let us long to be saved, and obey those who lead us in that direction through their words and deeds. As long as each of us wishes to take the road leading to salvation, the teacher, prepared by our common Savior, is at hand, together with the giver of salvation, who, in His overwhelming love for mankind, is more than ready without being called or beseeched. Christ asks Peter three times so that three times he can reply affirming his faith, thus healing his threefold denial with his threefold confession.

Given that Paul made the same confession of faith as Peter, and had the same zeal, humility and love, surely they received the same rewards from him who measures everything with completely just scales, yardstick and plumbline. Anything else would be unreasonable. That is why the Lord told Peter, *Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church* [Matt. 16:18], whereas He said to Ananias of Paul, *He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings* [Acts 9:15]. Which name? Clearly the name we have been given, the name of Christ's Church, which rests on the foundation stone of Peter. Notice that Peter and Paul are equal in prominence and glory, and both hold up the Church. Consequently the Church now bestows one and the same honor on both, and celebrates them together with equal esteem. As we consider the outcome of their lives, let us imitate how they lived...

May we all attain to this by the grace of the only-begotten Son of God, to whom belong all glory, might, honor and worship, together with His Father without beginning and the all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and for ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Parish news

What a wonderful celebration we had on May 22 with the observance of our Feast of Dedication, the 26th anniversary

of our parish, and the visitation of our father in God, Bishop JOHN. Thank you to all who helped to make the celebration so memorable.



We begin the month of June with Vespers at 6:30PM and Mass at 7 on June 1, the Eve of Ascension Day. On Saturday, June 11, we will celebrate the Vigil of Pentecost with Mass at 10AM. The great fifty-day Paschal cycle in the Church year will conclude with the celebration of Pentecost on June 12. In the Western Rite calendar, Trinity Sunday will be observed on June 19 and the feast of Corpus Christi will be observed on the Sunday within the Octave, June 26.

The Parish Life Conference for the Eastern Dioceses will be held at Antiochian Village June 29 - July 3, with Western Rite Vespers on Thursday, June 30.

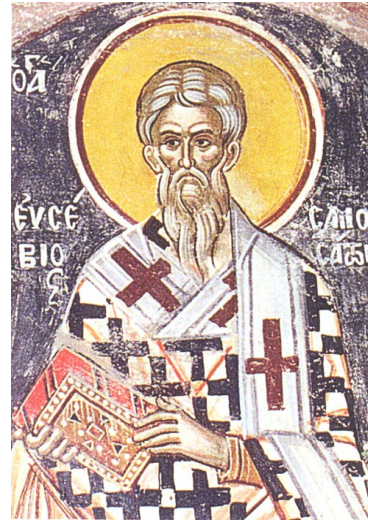
St. Eusebius of Samosata Feast Day ~ June 21

St. Eusebius is an example of courage and fortitude in the face of great difficulties during the fourth century when the Arian heresy was dominant in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. The officials of the time probably used words such as “stubborn” and “obstinate”, to describe him, as they were unable to thwart his efforts to keep Orthodox Christian beliefs alive in the midst of persecution.

St. Eusebius first appears in the pages of history when St. Meletius was elected as the Patriarch of Antioch in 361. Constantius, the Emperor at the time, and the Arian bishops were under the false impression that Meletius would be one of them, and when they discovered that he was staunchly Orthodox and would defend the decisions of the Council of Nicea, they plotted to have his election overturned. Eusebius was the Bishop of Samosata and he held the official decree of the election. So the fight was on! Constantius sent officers to retrieve the decree and to threaten Eusebius with the loss of his right hand if he did not comply with the imperial order. Bishop Eusebius was adamant in his refusal to surrender this all important document and held out both his hands in answer to the Emperor's threat. Constantius was shocked at this, but perhaps with a little admiration for Eusebius' "stubbornness", he backed away from his threat but sent the Patriarch Meletius into exile.

Constantius was succeeded by Julian the Apostate in 361 who initiated more violent and organized persecution of Orthodox Christians. In order to provide encouragement for the faithful and to ordain Orthodox priests to serve them, Bishop Eusebius travelled throughout Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine disguised in military garb. This stubborn bishop had found another way to foil the heretics!

During the one-year reign of Emperor Jovian, Orthodox Christianity was given a brief respite from persecution, but in 374, the Arian Emperor Valens sent Bishop Eusebius into exile in Thrace. Desiring to protect his people from reprisals and further violence, the now elderly bishop told the soldier who had brought the order for his banishment to say nothing public and to allow him to leave quietly in the middle of the night. With their shepherd removed from his position, the members of Bishop Eusebius' flock refused to acknowledge the Arian bishop who was put in his place and would not attend church or meet with him. The people of Samosata could also be stubborn!



Finally, in 378, Bishop Eusebius was able to return to his diocese when Gratian became emperor and the official persecutions ended. But the poison of heresy did not die easily and when the bishop went to a village for the enthronement of another bishop in 380, an Arian woman threw a heavy tile at him, striking a deadly blow. As he lay dying, St. Eusebius entreated his people not to retaliate against the woman.

Sometimes, being obstinate and stubborn is the appropriate thing. When truth is being distorted and perverted, Orthodox Christians must not waiver in their faithfulness to the teachings of the Church. We must not accommodate to the false teachings of wolves in sheep's clothing. May the intercessions of St Eusebius of Samosata help us to be courageous and even stubborn! *Holy Eusebius, pray for us.*

Resources: website of the Orthodox Church in America; website of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; Catholic Encyclopedia website, New Advent; A Western Rite Orthodox Martyrology; Wikipedia.

The Sundays of Pentecost

by a Monk of the Eastern Church

In order to mark that, at Pentecost, the liturgical cycle has reached its fulness, the Orthodox Church calls all the Sundays which follow "Sundays after Pentecost"...[There is] a curious split between the series of Sundays which belong in a certain way to Pentecost - to the time of fulness - and the feasts of Our Lord (Advent, Christmas and Epiphany) - which are times of awaiting,

of birth and growth. In fact, during the first five or six months of the liturgical year, believers will know how, in their worship, to relate the Sundays, spiritually, with the mystery of Christ awaited, appearing, and growing in the midst of men. On the other hand, it is good that we should know how to maintain the Sundays from Pentecost till the end of the liturgical year in the framework of the “time of Pentecost”. These Sundays are celebrated in the spirit of Pentecost: at the liturgies we shall hear episodes from the gospels which take place long before Pentecost, and belong to the earthly life of Jesus before his Passion and his glorification. But we can interpret them in terms of the Spirit, for it is under the breath and through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus spoke and acted.

Divine light first appears with the birth of Christ, it grows with him; on Easter night it triumphs over the darkness; at Pentecost it reaches its full zenith. Pentecost is “the midday flame”. But this development, which the liturgical year expresses, must correspond to a growth of the inner light in our soul. The riches and symbolism of the liturgical year are worth nothing if they do not help this “inner light” to guide our life.

In spiritual life three stages can be discerned which are comparable to three conversions. The first conversion is the meeting of the soul with our Lord, when he is followed as a Friend and as a Master. The second conversion is a personal experience of pardon and salvation, of the cross and of resurrection. The third conversion is the coming of the Holy Spirit into the soul like a flame and with power. It is by this conversion that man is established in a lasting union with God. Christmas or Epiphany, then Easter, and finally Pentecost correspond to these three conversions. Alas! It is probable that we have not yet been transformed into living flame by the many Pentecosts with which already, year after year, we have been liturgically associated. But at least it is good never to lose sight of what graces, what possibilities each Pentecost brings us.

Reprinted from *The Year of Grace of the Lord*

Meditation and Worship

By Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

One can pray everywhere and anywhere, yet there are places where prayer finds its natural climate; those places are churches, fulfilling the promise: *I will make them joyful in my house of prayer* [Is. 56:7]



A church, once consecrated, once set apart, becomes the dwelling-place of God. He is present there in another way than in the rest of the world. In the world he is present as a stranger, as a pilgrim, as one who goes from door to door, who has nowhere to rest his head; he goes as the lord of the world who has been rejected by the world and expelled from his kingdom and who has returned to it to save his people. In church he is at home, it is his place; he is

not only the creator and the lord by right but he is recognized as such. Outside it he acts when he can and how he can; inside a church he has all power and all might and it is for us to come to him.

When we build a church or set apart a place of worship we do something which reaches far beyond the obvious significance of the fact. The whole world which God created has become a place where men have sinned; the devil has been at

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work, a fight is going on constantly; there is no place on this earth which has not been soiled by blood, suffering or sin. When we choose a minute part of it, calling upon the power of God himself, in rites which convey his grace, to bless it, when we cleanse it from the presence of the evil spirit and set it apart to be God's foothold on earth, we reconquer for God a small part of this desecrated world. We may say that this is a place where the kingdom of God reveals itself and manifests itself with power. When we come to church we should be aware that we are entering upon sacred ground, a place which belongs to God, and we should behave accordingly.

The icons seen on church walls are not merely images or paintings: an icon is a focus of real presence. St. John Chrysostom advises us, before we start praying, to take our stand in front of an icon and to shut our eyes. He says "shut your eyes", because it is not by examining the icon, by using it as a visual aid, that we are helped by it to pray. It is not a substantial presence in the sense in which the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ. An icon is not, in this sense, Christ, but there is a mysterious link between the two. By the power of grace an icon participates in something which can best be defined in the words of Gregory Palamas as the energies of Christ, as the active power of Christ working for our salvation.

An icon is painted as an act of worship. The wood is chosen and blessed, the paint is blessed, the man who wishes to paint prepares himself by fasting, by confession, by communion. He keeps ascetical rules while working and when his work is completed, it is blessed with holy water. Thus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the icon becomes more than a painting. It is loaded with presence, imbued with the grace of the Spirit and linked with the particular saint it represents in and through the mystery of the communion of saints and the cosmic unity of all things...

Reprinted from *Living Prayer*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>June 2022</h1>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>
			1 Vigil of the Ascension <i>Sung Mass at 7pm W</i>	2 Ascension Day	3 of the Octave of the Ascension; St. Kevin of Glendalough, Ab, c. 618	4 of the Octave of the Ascension; St. Petroc, C, 564 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
5 Sunday after the Ascension; St. Boniface, BM, 754 <i>W</i>	6 of the Octave of the Ascension	7 of the Octave of the Ascension	8 of the Octave of the Ascension	9 Octave Day of the Ascension; St. Columba of Iona, Ab, 597	10 St. Margaret of Scotland, QW, 1092	11 Vigil of Pentecost; St. Barnabas, Apostle, 1 st c.; <i>Mass at 10AM V/R</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
12 Pentecost <i>R</i>	13 Monday after Pentecost	14 Tuesday after Pentecost; St. Basil the Great, BCD, 379	15 Ember Wednesday in the Oct. of Pentecost; Ss. Vitus, Modestus & Crescentia, Mm, c. 303	16 Thursday after Pentecost	17 Ember Friday in the Octave of Pentecost	18 Ember Sat. in the Octave of Pentecost; St. Ephrem the Syrian, DnCD, 373 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
19 Trinity Sunday; Ss. Gervase & Protase, Mm, 2nd. c. <i>W</i>	20	21	22 St. Alban, Proto-martyr of England, 209	23 Corpus Christi; St. Etheldreda, QV, 679	24	25 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
26 Sunday in the Octave of Corpus Christi; 2 nd Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. John & Paul, Mm, c. 362 <i>W</i>	27	28 Vigil of Ss. Peter & Paul	29 Ss. Peter & Paul, Apostles, 1st c.	30 Comm. of St. Paul the Apostle		