

✠ 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 of Nyssa d. 394

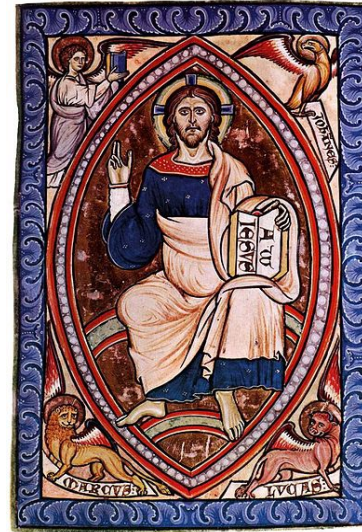
Since Christ is our peace, we shall be living up to the name of Christian if we let Christ be seen in our lives by letting peace reign in our hearts. He has brought hostility to an end, as the apostle said. Therefore, we must not allow it to come back to life in us in any way at all but must proclaim clearly that

it is dead indeed. God has destroyed it in a wonderful way for our salvation. We must not, then, allow ourselves to give way to anger or bear grudges, for this would endanger our souls. We must not stir up the very thing that is well and truly dead, calling it back to life by our wickedness.

But as we bear the name of Christ, who is peace, we too must put an end to all hostility, so that we may profess in

Inside:

<i>St. Peter of Alexandria</i>	3
<i>Parish News</i>	5
<i>The Call to all Christians to be Saints</i>	6
<i>The History of All Saints</i>	7
<i>Calendar</i>	11



our lives what we believe to be true of him. He broke down the dividing wall and brought the two sides together in himself, thus making peace. We too, then, should not only be reconciled with those who attack us from without, we should also bring together the warring factions within us, so that the flesh may no longer be opposed to the spirit and the spirit to the flesh. Then when the mind that is set on the flesh is subject to the divine law,

we may be refashioned into one new creature, into a man of peace. When the two have been made one we shall then have peace within ourselves.

The definition of peace is that there should be harmony between two opposed factions. And so, when the civil war in our nature has been brought to an end and we are at peace within ourselves, we may become peace. Then we shall really be true to the name of Christ that we bear.

When we consider that Christ is the true light far removed from all falsehood, we realize that our lives too should be lit by the rays of the sun of justice, which shine for our enlightenment. These rays are the virtues by which we cast off the works of darkness and conduct ourselves becomingly as in the light of day. Then, when we refuse to have anything to do with the darkness of wickedness and do everything in the light, we ourselves shall also become light and our works will give light to others, for it is in the nature of light to shine out.

But if we look upon Christ as our sanctification, then we should keep ourselves free from all that is wicked and impure both in thought and in deed and so prove ourselves worthy to bear his name, for we shall be demonstrating the effect of sanctification not in words but in our actions and in our lives.

St. Peter of Alexandria

Feast Day ~ November 25

Sometimes, being in the right place at the right time is dangerous - even deadly. Such was the case for St. Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria in the early fourth century.

Peter began his path to prominence by studying theology with Theonas, the Patriarch of Alexandria. Further education led eventually to his position as head of the famous theological school of Alexandria. As the Patriarch was dying, he asked that Peter - who had, through the years, progressed from Reader to Subdeacon, Deacon and then Priest - succeed him as Patriarch. This happened in the year 300.

In 303, the Emperor Diocletian began his severe persecution of Christians and in 306, Patriarch Peter chose to go into hiding so that he could secretly continue to minister to his people. During the next five years, he communicated to parishes by letter, he managed to visit widows and orphans and those who were in prison, and he held services wherever and whenever he could. Many Christians were tortured and threatened with death for their religious beliefs and some lapsed out of fear for their lives. The Patriarch urged that mercy be shown to them and he devised a plan for their readmittance to the Church.



However, during Peter's apparent absence from Alexandria, Meletius, the Bishop of Lycopolis, usurped his position and began issuing his own severe orders denying the lapsed the right to return to the Church. He also ordained one of his followers, Arius, who would later have an unfortunate effect on the Church. When Peter returned from exile in 311, during a lull in the persecutions, he excommunicated Arius for his heretical teachings on the person of Christ.

The Patriarch's return was noticed by the authorities and he was soon arrested and sent to prison to await death by beheading. There is an almost humorous story about Peter's time in prison that is probably apocryphal: it is said that Meletius was also arrested and put in the same prison. The two bishops argued so heatedly that Peter finally erected a curtain between them to end the verbal battle!

When Peter was being taken out of the prison for execution, a large number of Alexandrian Christians gathered at the gate of the prison to protest. Hoping to avoid a riot that might end in more bloodshed, the Patriarch suggested to the guards that he be taken out quietly through the back of the prison, even though that necessitated cutting a hole in the stone wall. So, in the middle of the night, the holy man was taken to the place where St. Mark had been martyred, and received the crown of martyrdom himself.

Even during a time of persecution, St. Peter had helped to build up the Church of Christ in Alexandria, leading it to preserve

Orthodoxy at a time when heretical voices were distorting the truth. His writings had long-lasting influence, with his *On the Divinity* offering guidance to the participants at the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon.

We give thanks to God for placing St. Peter of Alexandria in the right place at the right time to protect and guide the Church in a difficult time. May we ask for his intercession as we also face a difficult time. *Holy Peter, pray for us.*

Resources: *Catholic Online* article; *New Advent* article; *Orthodox Saints* by George Poulos; *Orthodoxwiki* article; *Wikipedia* article.

Parish News

The month of November begins with two important feast days in the liturgical calendar of the Church: All Saints on November 1 and All Souls on November 2. We will transfer our celebration of All Saints to the Sunday within the Octave, November 6. At coffee hour after Mass that day, we will continue a custom which has been a part of our tradition since the beginning of St. Gregory's parish, telling the stories of many of the saints. Please be prepared to share something about your patron saint or one who is important to you. Feel free to wear a costume or bring a "prop" to demonstrate something about the life of the saint.

On Wednesday, November 2, our observance of All Souls Day will begin with Vespers of the Departed at 6:30PM, followed by a Requiem Mass at 7, during which the names of departed family members and loved ones will be remembered. A pot-luck supper will follow.

The Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple will be celebrated on Monday, November 21 with Vespers at 6:30, Mass at 7, and pot-luck supper following.

The penitential season of Advent begins on Sunday, November 27, when we prepare, through fasting, almsgiving, and confession, for the Nativity of our Lord.

The Call to All Christians to be Saints

by St. Nikolai of Ochrid

To the saints which are in Ephesus [Eph. 1:1]. The Apostle calls the Christians in Ephesus saints. He does not call one or two of them saints, or any one group of them, but them all. Is this not one of God's great wonders: that men, not in the desert but in the city, and that an idolatrous and dissolute city, should be saints? That married men should be saints, men who had children, who worked and traded. Such were indeed the first Christians. Their dedication, faithfulness and zeal in the Faith, as well as their holiness and purity of life, gives them the right to be called saints.

If saints have become the exception in these latter days, the unholy were the exception in those first days. Saints were the norm. We must not, therefore, be surprised that the Apostle calls all baptized souls in Ephesus saints - and has another, yet more lofty, name for all Christians: that of sons, sons of God [Gal. 4:6]. The Lord Christ Himself gave us the right to call ourselves such, when He taught us to address God as "Our Father".

Oh, my brethren, do we not say to God every day: "Holy God"? Do we not call the angels holy? Do we not call the Mother of God holy? And the prophets and apostles, and the martyrs and the righteous? Do we not call heaven, and the Kingdom of heaven, holy? Who, then, can dwell in the holy Kingdom but the saints? If we hope for salvation, we hope also for sanctity.

Holy God, who dwellest in the holy place and restest among the saints, calling the holy to Thyself and having mercy on

them; help us also, that we may be sanctified in thought, word and deed - to Thy glory and our salvation. To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

The History of All Saints



The martyrs, who were so numerous in the first centuries of Christianity, were the first to be venerated with special observances. One of the earliest records of the honor which Christians gave to a martyr is found in a letter written by the church in Smyrna (in Asia Minor) in the year 156. The letter describes what happened after the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, the bishop of that city, when the authorities refused to allow the Christians to provide a decent and reverent burial for

their holy shepherd. The centurion, yielding to the desires of the pagan crowd, burned St. Polycarp's body according to Roman tradition. The letter states:

...we afterwards took up his bones, which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place; where the Lord will permit us to assemble together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom for the commemoration of those that have already fought in the contest and for the training and preparation of those that shall do so hereafter...

Local Christian communities held such celebrations for those of their number who had died, but after a time the numbers became so great that a general observance was needed. The recognition of holy lives which did not end in martyrdom brought about the desire for honoring other kinds of saints, and asking for the intercessions of the saints (which was consistent with Jewish belief; see 2 Maccabees 15:12-16) became common.

Feast days for the celebration of the saints were observed in the East from the time of St. Ephrem the Syrian (306-373). By the time of St. John Chrysostom (349-407), the primary day for this observance had become the Sunday after Pentecost and this day was also observed in Rome until the 7th century.

The great building called the Pantheon, dedicated to all the Roman pagan gods, which had been built by Marcus Agrippa (64BC-12AD) and restored by Severus Augustus (145-211AD), was reborn as a Christian church on May 13 in the year 609. On that day, Pope Boniface IV made a solemn procession to the catacombs, brought out the relics of the martyrs, and reverently transported them in twelve magnificently adorned chariots to the Pantheon, now consecrated as a church in honor of the martyrs. Abbot Prosper Gueranger, says of this day:

Thus, after six centuries of persecution and destruction, the martyrs had the last word; and it was a word of blessing, a signal of grace for the great city hitherto drunk with the blood of Christians. Rehabilitated by the reception she was giving to the witnesses of Christ... she now burned before the saints the incense they had refused to offer to her idols; their blood had flowed before the very altar on which she now invited them to rest...

May 13 continued to be the day on which an annual celebration of the saints occurred in this church, but the day we now celebrate as All Saints Day emerged when the feast was moved to



November 1 to coincide with that of an oratory in honor of all the saints dedicated at St. Peter's in Rome in 732 by Pope Gregory III.

St. Bede (672-735) and Archbishop Egbert of York (d. 766) both record November 1 as the feast for all saints in England. In keeping with a custom in Spain and Gaul of three days of fasting and penance at this time of year, a

Vigil for All Saints on October 31 was added and by the 10th century, November 2 had become a day for a general celebration of departed loved ones with a Requiem Mass. This formal observance began under the influence of Abbot Odilo of the Monastery of Cluny (as recorded by Sigebert of Gembloux in 998), and from there spread to other Benedictine monasteries and eventually to churches throughout the Western world.

Most pre-Christian societies had some festivals for honoring the dead or appeasing the ghosts of the dead, and the veneration of ancestors was common in many primitive cultures. Celtic Samhain, Roman Lemuria, Mexican "Day of the Dead" celebrations with origins in Aztec observances all either gave way with the advent of Christianity or have been incorporated into the celebrations of All Saints and All Souls. Sadly, in America today, All Hallows Even - Halloween - is one of the most popular "holidays" and our society is filled with very un-Christian ideas about the souls of the departed. May we, as Christians, use every opportunity to extol the virtues of the saints and promote a proper understanding of death in the knowledge of the Resurrection.

Resources: P. Brown: *The Cult of the Saints*; L. Cowie and J. Gummer: *The Christian Calendar*; F. Cross, ed.: *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*; Dom G. Dix: *The Shape of the Liturgy*; Abbot P. Gueranger: *The Liturgical Year, Vol. 6*; J. Meyendorff: *The Church in History, Vol. II*.

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Address Correction Requested

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2022</h1>						
		1 All Saints Day	2 All Souls Day <i>Mass at 7pm</i> B	3 of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Winifred, VM, c. 660	4 of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm, c. 304	5 of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Zachariah, M, and Elizabeth, Ma, 1st C. <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
6 Sunday in the Oct. of All Saints; 21 st Sun. after Pentecost; St. Leonard of Noblac, Ab, c. 559 W	7 St. Wilibrord of Echternach, BC, 739	8 Patriarchs & Prophets of the Old Law (Oct. Day of All Saints); Four Crowned Martyrs	9 Dedication of the Basilica of St. Savior in Rome, 324; St. Benignus, BC, c. 468	10 Ss. Tryphon, Respicius & Nympha Mm, c. 250	11 St. Martin of Tours, BC, 397; St. Theodore the Studite, Ab, 826 <i>(Veterans' Day)</i>	12 St. Martin I, PC, 655 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
13 22 nd Sunday after Pentecost; St. Britius of Tours, BC, 444 G	14 St. Gregory Palamas, BCD, 1359	15	16	17 St. Hilda of Whitby, V, 680; St. Gregory the Wonder-worker, BC, c. 270; St. Gregory of Tours, BC, 594	18 Dedication of Basilica of Ss. Peter & Paul, 4 th c.; St. Odo of Cluny, Ab, 942	19 St. Pontianus, PM, 235 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
20 23 rd & Last Sunday after Pentecost; St. Edmund, KM, 870 G	21 Presentation of the BVM; St. Gelasius, PC, 496 <i>Mass at 7pm</i> W	22 St. Cecilia, VM, c. 230	23 St. Clement, PM, 96; St. Felicity of Rome, M, 165	24 St. Chrysgonus of Aquileia, M., c. 304 <i>(Thanksgiving Day)</i>	25 St. Katherine of Alexandria, VM, 4th c.	26 St. Peter of Alexandria, BM, 311 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
27 First Sunday in Advent V	28	29 St. Saturninus, M, 309	30 St. Andrew the Apostle, 1st c.			