

✠ 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. Proclus of Constantinople d. 446

Glorious is our Paschal Festival; and truly splendid this great assembly of the Christian people. And within this holy mystery are contained things both old and new. The celebration of this week, or rather its joyfulness, is shared by such a multitude, that not alone

does man rejoice on earth, but even the powers of heaven are united with us in joyful celebration of Christ's Resurrection. For now the angels, and the hosts of the Archangels, also keep holiday this day, and stand waiting for the triumphant return from this earth of Christ Our Lord, Who is King of heaven. And the multitude of the Blessed likewise rejoice, proclaiming the Christ Who was begotten before the day star rose. The earth rejoices, now washed by divine blood. The sea rejoices, honored as it was by His Feet upon its waters. And ever more let

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each soul rejoice, who is born again of water and the Holy Ghost; and at last set free from the ancient curse!

With such joy does Christ fill our hearts this day by His Resurrection, not alone because He gives us the gladness of this day, but because He has also given us salvation through His Passion, immortality through His Death, healing for our wounds, and resurrection from our fall! And long ago, Beloved, this Paschal Mystery,

begun in Egypt, was symbolically pointed out to us in the Old Law, in the sacrifice of the lamb. And now, in the Gospel, let us celebrate the Resurrection of the Lamb: our Pasch.

Then a lamb of the flock was slain, as the Law laid down [Ex. 12]; now Christ, the Lamb of God, is offered up. There a sheep from the sheepfold; here, in place of the sheep, the Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep. There the sprinkled blood upon the doorposts was a sign of deliverance for the people of God; here the precious Blood of Christ was poured out for the deliverance of the whole world: that we might be forgiven our sins. There the firstborn of Egypt were slain; here the manifold children of sinners are made clean confessing the Lamb. There Pharaoh and his fearful host were drowned in the sea; here the spiritual Pharaoh with all His people are immersed in the deep of baptism. There the children of the Hebrews, crossing over the Red Sea, sang their song of victory to their Deliverer, singing: *Let us sing to the Lord: for he is gloriously magnified* [Ex. 15:1]; here those found worthy of baptism sing their song of victory, singing: *One Holy, One Lord Jesus Christ, in the glory of God the Father.*

St. Anicetus, Pope & Martyr

Feast Day ~ April 17

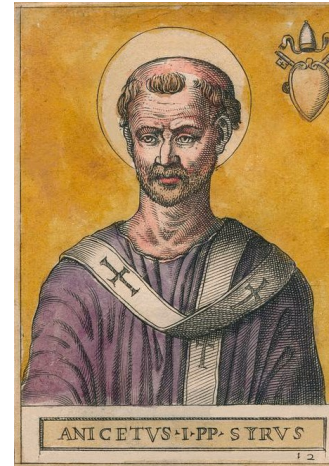
St. Anicetus, a Syrian by birth (from the city of Emesa, which is modern-day Homs), was elected Bishop of Rome around the year 155. As with all the bishops of Rome in the first three centuries of the Christian Church, Pope Anicetus lived in dangerous times. Adherents of this illegal religion were suffering persecution and martyrdom around the Roman Empire, sometimes sporadically and at other times more intensely and in wider geographic areas. As the bishop of the Western half of the Empire, Pope Anicetus' challenges were great.

There were also challenges from within the Church, heretical movements which attempted to alter the teachings of the Church, those accepted as revealed Truth. Pope Anicetus was strong in his opposition to Gnosticism and Marcionism, two of the most prominent heresies of his day.

But St. Anicetus is also remembered for being in the midst of a controversy which began as a difference in practice and, through several centuries, developed into a major issue for the unity of the Church.

Pascha, Easter, is known as the "feast of feasts". It is the most important celebration of the Christian year as we express our joy at the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, His "trampling down death by death". From the morning when the myrrh-bearing women discovered that the tomb was empty and reported it to the Apostles, the remembrance of this day has been of greatest importance in the life of the Church.

When to celebrate this great feast was an unresolved question in Pope Anicetus' day. The majority of Christians celebrated Easter on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the



spring equinox (using the computations of Alexandria), but the "quarto-decimans" placed the celebration on the 14th day of Nisan (no matter what day of the week) in the Jewish lunar calendar to coincide with the celebration of Passover according to the historical events described in the Bible. They claimed that they received their tradition from the Apostle John, while those who celebrated a Sunday Easter credited their tradition to Ss. Peter and Paul.

This difference in practice was not resolved easily. Pope Anicetus' predecessor, Pius I (pope from 140-154), called for the Sunday celebration in his jurisdiction, but the quartodeciman practice continued in the East. Pope Anicetus took a tolerant stance regarding the difference in practice. When the aging St. Polycarp of Smyrna, who had been a disciple of the Apostle John, visited him in Rome to discuss this issue, they could not come to an agreement, but resolved to allow for this difference in practice without breaking communion with each other.

Around the year 190, Pope Victor I attempted to mandate the Sunday practice to the whole church but was severely rebuked for assuming such universal authority by St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, and others. Finally, in 325 at the Council of Nicaea, the issue was determined once and for all and most of the quartodeciman churches began to celebrate Pascha on Sunday. For the unity of the Church, it was important for all Christians to celebrate on the same day.

However, in remote parts of the world, this difference in practice continued. Christianity had been brought to the British (Ireland, Scotland, Wales) before the arrival of missionaries from Rome in 596, and they were taught to celebrate Easter on the



14th day of Nisan, according to the teachings of St. John the Apostle. As the Roman mission increased among the Anglo-Saxons, tensions arose over the difference between Celtic and Roman practice. Finally, the issue was resolved for this part of the world by another church council, the Synod of Whitby in 664, during which Bishop Wilfrid argued successfully that the Church in the British Isles should celebrate Easter with the rest of Christendom.

Christianity became divided once again on when to celebrate Pascha when the Roman Catholic Church adopted a new calendar - the Gregorian calendar - in 1582. This altered the determination of the vernal equinox and the first full moon, making the Nicaean formula reach a different result for the Orthodox Church, which continues to use the Julian calendar for determining the date of Easter. There have been many calls for resolving this problem, but until a solution is found, we continue to confuse the non-Christian world with our different celebrations.

When we celebrate the “feast of feasts” this year, we can be thankful for the work of all who came together to resolve different customs and traditions and bring us to unity and we pray that our current divisions may be resolved. We can also be thankful for St. Anicetus, who graciously and patiently accepted differences with his fellow bishop, Polycarp, praying for a future time when the issue would be decided.

St. Anicetus was martyred, according to the tradition of the Church, around the year 168 during the reign and persecutions of co-emperor Lucius Verus. May St. Anicetus pray for us that, through patience, we may resolve our differences and come to unity in the Church. *Holy Anicetus, pray for us.*

Parish News



Passion Sunday, April 2, marks another step in our journey towards Easter. The altar and sacred ministers have been clothed in purple since the preparatory pre-Lenten season and now, the crosses throughout the chapel and the parish hall will be veiled. On Palm Sunday, April 9, we begin Holy Week, the last week of preparation before the joyful celebration of Pascha.

The week-day low masses will conclude on Wednesday, April 5 (the service is at 7:30AM). Stations of the Cross, Litany of the Cross, and Bible study on the difficult passages in scripture will conclude on Friday, April 7. Palm Sunday will begin with the blessing and distribution of palms, procession (weather permitting) outside, and the singing of the Passion Gospel story of St. Matthew. On Monday and Tuesday, April 10 and 11, Mass will be offered at 7PM (Vespers at 6:30) with the singing of the Passion Gospels of St. Luke and St. Mark. On Wednesday, April 12, the Unction mass with the blessing of oils and anointing will be offered.

On Maundy Thursday, April 13, we will celebrate the institution of the Eucharist by our Lord and the service will include the ceremony of the Washing of Feet in remembrance of Christ’s washing of the Apostles’ feet. The Blessed Sacrament will be taken in procession to the Altar of Repose (and this area will be available for meditation and prayer), and the main altar will be stripped in remembrance of our Lord’s being stripped of His garments. The service of Tenebrae will be sung following a simple (and silent) meal.

The Good Friday service on April 14, beginning at 12 noon, will include the singing of the Passion Gospel of St. John, the veneration of the Cross (with the singing of the Reproaches), and the Mass of the Presanctified (the only time in the year that this mass is offered in the Western Rite).



Finally, on Saturday, April 15, we will celebrate our Lord's Resurrection at the Vigil beginning at 9PM. (If you have not already made your confession, Fr. Nicholas and Fr. Raphael will be available for confessions from 8PM.) We begin this service outside as the Paschal fire is lit, the Paschal candle is blessed and carried into the church, we hear the story of our salvation recounted in holy Scripture, water is blessed, our Baptismal vows are renewed, and we sing the joyful chant

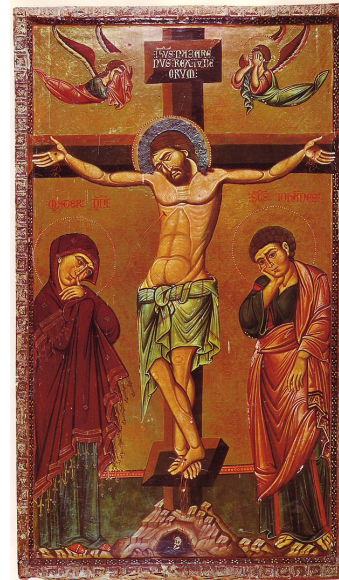
"Alleluia!" again as we celebrate the first Mass of Easter. A Paschal feast will follow.

While the services of this week call to mind the historical events of Jesus' last week on earth in His human form, they are not simply a "re-enactment" of these events. We believe that we are on God's time and that these events are present now. As we hear in the *Exultet* at the Vigil: "This is the night, which throughout the whole world doth separate them that believe in Christ from the wickedness of the age"; "this is the night wherein, breaking the chains of death, Christ ascendeth from hell in triumph."

On Easter morning, April 16, Mass will be at 11AM, with the singing of the *Vidi Aquam* ("I beheld water...") and the most

ancient of our Sequence hymns, "Christians, to the Paschal Victim".

Maxims on the Cross by Metropolitan SABA



The Cross is my life and there is no life except through the cross.

Jesus will continually look down with open arms because He wants my soul, for which He died, in order to embrace it.

The Cross is not a fixed point upon which Jesus was hanged on a certain day. Rather, it is the basis for the movement of the Lord's heart towards all humanity.

In its outward appearance, the Cross was an expression of the injustice of the world, but inwardly the cross is all joy, love and surrender to the Father for the salvation of the world.

The Cross is the beacon upon which Christ places the light of the world, by which we become a light for the world.

Constant meditation on the Cross of our Lord gains for the soul freedom, peace, power and forgiveness.

The Cross is not merely a sort of beautiful spiritual meditation. It is also enduring suffering in order to stand against the sinful world.

The Cross is our weapon during spiritual warfare.

The Experience of the Apostles

by St. Nikolai of Ochrid

That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled declare we unto you [I John 1:1, 2]. Such is the apostles' preaching. The apostles did not speak as secular sages, nor as philosophers, and certainly not as theorists who created hypotheses about nothing at all, in order to invent something. They speak about things which they did not seek, but which they found themselves in the midst of unexpectedly; of facts which they did not find but which found them; which, so to speak, unexpectedly found and took hold of them. They did not go in for spiritual research or apply themselves to the study of psychology, and still less dabble in spiritualism. Their calling was that of fishermen - an utterly down-to-earth occupation. And, while they were catching fish, the God-Man came to them and, carefully and gently, began to lead them to a new calling in His service.

They... very slowly and gently, with fear and uncertainly and much hesitation, came near to Him and learned to know Him. The fact they experienced was supernatural, but their way of experiencing that fact was utterly sensory, learned through positive encounter. No modern teacher could hope to pursue such a positive method of coming to relationship with Christ. The apostles saw not just one miracle but many; they heard not just one lesson but innumerable lessons - enough to fill many books. They beheld the risen Lord forty full days, walking with Him, talking with Him, eating with Him, touching Him. In brief, they were given, personally and at first hand, thousands of wonderful facts, which are gathered together and affirmed in the one enormous fact that Christ is God and man, the Son of the living God, the Savior of men, who loves them as He saves them; the almighty Judge of the living and the dead. O risen Lord, confirm in us this faith and zeal of Thy holy apostles. To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>April 2023</h1>						1 St. Melito of Sardis, BC, 177 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
2 Passion Sunday; St. Mary of Egypt, Penitent, c. 421 <i>V</i>	3 St. Sixtus I, PM, 127; St. Joseph the Hymnographer, C, 883	4 St. Isidore of Seville, BCD, 636	5 <i>Mass at 7:30am V</i>	6 St. Notker, C, 912	7 St. Tikhon of Moscow, BC, Patron of the Western Rite, 1925 <i>Stations of the Cross at 6:30pm</i>	8 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
9 Palm Sunday <i>R/V</i>	10 Monday in Holy Week <i>Mass at 7pm V</i>	11 Tuesday in Holy Week; St. Leo the Great, PCD, 461 <i>Mass at 7pm V</i>	12 Wednesday in Holy Week <i>Mass at 7pm V</i>	13 Maundy Thursday <i>Mass at 7pm W</i>	14 Good Friday <i>Liturgy at 12noon B</i>	15 Holy Saturday <i>Vigil at 9pm V/W</i>
16 Pascha: The Resurrection of Our Lord <i>Mass at 11am W</i>	17 Monday in the Octave of Easter	18 Tuesday in the Octave of Easter	19 Wednesday in the Octave of Easter	20 Thursday in the Octave of Easter	21 Friday in the Octave of Easter	22 Saturday in the Octave of Easter <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
23 Low Sunday: First Sunday after Easter <i>W</i>	24 St. George, Martyr, 303 (trans.)	25 St. Mark the Evangelist	26 Ss. Cletus, 89, and Marcellinus, 304, PpMm	27	28 St. Vitalis, M, 1 st C	29 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
30 Second Sunday after Easter <i>W</i>						<i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i>