

# ✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

March, 2023 - Volume XXVIII, Issue 3

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. Caesarius of Arles

d. 542

lead to progress for us and not judgment. For if we lead a careless life, involving ourselves in too many occupations, refusing to observe chastity, not applying ourselves to fasting and vigils and prayers, neither reading Sacred Scripture ourselves nor willingly listening to others read it, the very remedies are changed into wounds for us. As a result of this we shall have judgment, where we could have had a remedy...

**B**ehold, dearest brethren, through the mercy of God the season of Lent is approaching. Therefore I beseech you, beloved, with God's help let us celebrate these days, salutary for bodies and healing for the soul, in so holy and spiritual a manner that the observance of a holy Lent may

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**H**ave no love for the world, nor the things the world affords [I John 2:15] because the world with its seductions is passing away [I John 2:17]. What, then, remains in a man except what each one has stored up in the treasury of his conscience for the salvation of his soul by reading or prayer or the performance of good works? For miserable pleasure, still more wretched lust and

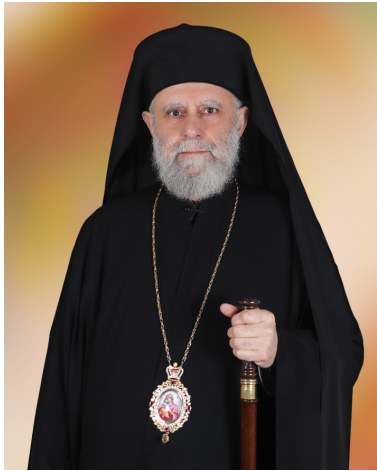
dissipation, through a passing sweetness prepare eternal bitterness; but abstinence, vigils, prayer, and fasting lead to the delights of paradise through the briefest hardships. The Truth does not lie when He says in the Gospel: *Straight and narrow is the road that leads to life, and how few there are who find it!* [Matt. 7:14] Not for long is there rejoicing on the broad way, and not for long is there labor on the straight and narrow road. After brief sadness those who travel the latter receive eternal life, while those who travel the former, after short joy, suffer endless punishment...

**F**or this reason, dearest brethren, by fasting, reading, and prayer in these forty days we ought to store up for our souls provisions, as it were, for the whole year... During these days we ought to rest from the winds and the sea of this world by taking refuge, as it were, in the haven of Lent, and in the quiet of silence to receive the divine lessons in the receptacle of our heart. Devoting ourselves to God out of love for eternal life, during these days let us with all solicitude strive to repair and compose in the little ship of our soul whatever throughout the year has been broken or destroyed or damaged or ruined by many storms, that is, by the waves of sins...

**I**f in accord with your usual practice you both willingly heed and strive faithfully to fulfill, dearest brethren, the truths which we

are suggesting for the salvation of all by presuming upon your obedience, you will celebrate Easter with joy and will happily come to eternal life. May He Himself deign to grant this, who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

## *Our New Metropolitan*



A new Metropolitan for the Archdiocese of North America has been announced by our Patriarch, JOHN X. The holy Synod of the Patriarchate chose from among the three names of those nominated by our Archdiocese and has selected Metropolitan Saba (Esper). For the past twenty-four years, he has been the Metropolitan of Bosra, Hauran and Jabal Al-Arab in southern Syria, one of the poorest dioceses in the Patriarchate. The following are

excerpts from the letter which His Eminence sent out upon his election:

To my beloved in the North American Archdiocese

I received the news of my election as the metropolitan of your God-protected archdiocese with silence and feelings of deep emotions. I remembered the day of my elevation to the office of the holy episcopacy twenty-four years ago. At that time, I had said in my address, “As I stand in Your presence, O Lord, let my hands carry Your gifts to Your people, my feet to lead them to You, my mouth to utter Your words, my heart to extend Your love to them. Make me a good and faithful servant.”

Today, He is sending me to you through the commission of the Fathers of the Holy Synod of Antioch as a servant, father, and shepherd. As He honors me to minister to you, I cannot but bow my head obediently and confidently trusting in His support and your cooperation with me. Together, we will “pluck up and break down” all evil, and “build and plant” every good. We, the shepherds, cannot save the sheep of Christ who were entrusted to us unless we follow the example of the Good Shepherd ourselves...

I ask for your prayers on my behalf as I lift you up in every prayer that I offer to the Lord of the Church and entrust you with the blessings of God the Father, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Saba

Archbishop of New York  
and Metropolitan of All North America

## *St. Photini*

*Feast Day ~ March 20*

None of the events of our Lord’s earthly life are without meaning for us today, including the story of St. Photini, the Samaritan woman at the well, described by St. John in the fourth chapter of his Gospel.

The story is simple on its surface: Christ was passing through the city of Sychar, Samaria, and as his disciples went to buy food, he stopped at a well for water to quench his thirst. A Samaritan woman arrived to draw water and was surprised when the Jewish man asked her for a drink of water. In the course of their conversation, Christ revealed the woman’s many sins and



offered her the “living water” which brings eternal life. He revealed Himself as the Messiah and she immediately ran to tell her family and friends. Jesus stayed in this city, preaching to the people, for two days, and many accepted him as the Savior.

**T**here are many lessons for us in this story. It is one in which Jesus’ actions rise above the societal expectations of that time and

place. The Samaritans - a mixed race people who accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament and worshiped in their own temple on Mt. Gerizim instead of in Jerusalem - were despised by the Jews. As with our Lord’s associations with tax collectors and others looked down upon by society, it was considered highly inappropriate for him to speak with a Samaritan. Not only that, it was also inappropriate for a respectable Jewish man to speak openly with a woman who was not of his household. Jesus reminds us that salvation is not limited by societal customs and restrictions.

**T**he Samaritan woman was a notorious sinner, one who had been married many times and was at that time living with a man who was not her husband. Jesus let her know that He was aware of her sins but, seeing that she was ready for repentance, He offered her the living water. No matter how grievous our sins have been, we are offered this same gift if we repent.

**A**s the realization that this man was a great prophet and possibly the Messiah who was longed for even by the Samaritans, the woman immediately abandoned her chore of drawing water from the well and ran back to the city to tell her family, neighbors, and

friends and brought them to meet Jesus. St. John tells us that Jesus stayed with the people of Sychar for two days after which they knew that he was indeed “the Christ, the Savior of the world.” [John 4:42] The woman had one brief encounter with God and it changed her life and that of all whom she told. We meet Jesus every day in our prayers, at every service in the gift of Communion. Should we not, like the Samaritan woman, be an evangelist and tell everyone that we know the good news of Christ?

**T**his is where the story ends in Holy Scripture, but the tradition of the Church tells us more. It is said that, after the Resurrection, some of the Apostles returned to Sychar and baptized the woman and others. She was given the name Photini, meaning “enlightened one”, at that time.

**T**he Emperor Nero (who reigned from 54-68) was brutal in his persecution of the followers of this new religion. When the martyrdom of Ss. Peter and Paul (c. 64) became known, Photini and her family moved to Carthage to join the Christian community there. Her older son, Victor, was an officer in the Roman army and, when ordered to arrest Christians, he confessed his own faith and was sent with other Christians to Rome for punishment. Photini and others traveled from Carthage to Rome to join them. They were all put in prison and, through three years of questioning, refusal to recant their beliefs, and torture, many others were converted by their perseverance.

**F**inally, this group of Christians was put to death and received the crown of martyrdom. St. Photini, who had a life-changing encounter with the living God at a well, was thrown into a well, where she ended her earthly life and passed to life eternal.

**W**e ask that St. Photini intercede for us that we may follow her good example of evangelism and faithfulness. *Holy Photini, pray for us.*

## Parish News

We begin the month of March with the observance of Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent in the Western calendar. Vespers will be offered at 6:30PM and the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes followed by Mass will begin at 7. A Lenten (fasting) pot-luck meal will follow.



The pan-Orthodox observance of the Sunday of Orthodoxy will be held at Ss. Constantine & Helen Orthodox Church, (721 Norwood Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20905), on March 5 at 5pm. The speaker will be Dr. Lewis Patsavos, Professor of Canon Law emeritus at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School Of Theology.

Stations of the Cross will be offered on Friday evenings, March 10, 17, 24, and April 7 with a study on the “hard sayings” in Holy Scripture following. We expect to offer this study by Zoom or live-stream, as well as in person.

Low Masses will be offered at 7:30AM on Wednesdays during Lent, March 8, 15, 22, 29, and April 5.

On Saturday, March 25, we will celebrate the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary with Matins at 9:30AM and Mass at 10, followed by a pot-luck brunch.



## Hymns to the Mother of God



*Hail Mary, Mother of God,  
sacred treasure of the universe,  
inextinguishable flame,  
crown of virginity,  
sceptre of orthodoxy,  
indestructible temple,  
tabernacle for him  
whom the world could not contain,  
Mother and Virgin!*

*Thanks to you, the Gospels praise  
him who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hail, you whose virgin's womb  
contained the sublime.*

*Thanks to you  
the Cross is venerated  
and adored throughout the world;  
the heavens exult,  
angels and archangels are joyful,  
the devils are pursued,  
the wicked tempter falls from heaven.*

*Thanks to you, debased humanity  
has been to heaven raised,  
and all of those beings subject to idols,  
reached cognition of the truth.*

*Through you the holy baptism  
is the oil of delight for the faithful;  
Through you there are so many kinds  
of churches in the world,*

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*Address Correction Requested*

*through you people gather together in unity.  
And what more should one say?*

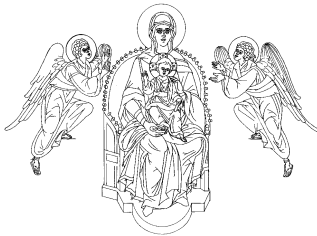
*Through you, the light,  
the only begotten Son of God,  
shone on those who lay in darkness  
and the shadow of death;  
through you the prophets predicted the future;  
the apostles announced salvation to the people;  
the dead rise again.*

by St. Cyril of Alexandria (370-444)

*It is necessary that the Savior  
born of a Virgin without blemish  
would be received by an uncorrupted heart:  
and as Mary bore him chastely,  
so does our soul  
guard him without sin.  
Mary is the model for our souls.  
Since Christ,  
as he sought the virginity of his Mother,  
thus entirely seeks our souls.*

by St. Maximus of Turin (380-465)

Reprinted from *Sing the Joys of Mary: Hymns from the First Millennium of the Eastern and Western Churches*, edited by Costante Berselli and Georges Gharib.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>March 2023</h1>						<i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i>
			<b>1</b> Ash Wednesday; St. David of Wales, BC, 544  <i>Mass at 7pm</i> ✓	<b>2</b> St. Chad, BC, 672	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> St. Lucius I, PM, 254  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>5</b> First Sunday in Lent ( <i>Sunday of Orthodoxy</i> )  ✓	<b>6</b> Ss. Perpetua & Felicitas, Mm, 203	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Ember Wednesday in Lent  <i>Mass at 7:30am</i>	<b>9</b> St. Gregory of Nyssa, BCD, 394	<b>10</b> Ember Friday in Lent; Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, Mm, 320 <i>Stations of the Cross at 6:30pm</i>	<b>11</b> Ember Saturday in Lent; St. Sophronius of Jeru- salem, BC, c. 369  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>12</b> Second Sun- day in Lent  ✓	<b>13</b> St. Gregory the Great, BCD, 604 (trans.)	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>  <i>Mass at 7:30am</i>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> St. Patrick, BC, 461; St. Joseph of Arimathea, C, 1 <sup>st</sup> C  <i>Stations of the Cross at 6:30pm</i>	<b>18</b> St. Cyril of Jerusalem, BCD, 386; St. Edward, KM 979  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>19</b> Third Sunday in Lent  ✓	<b>20</b> St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin, 1st C (trans.); St. Cuthbert, BC, 687	<b>21</b> Repose of St. Benedict, c. 550	<b>22</b>  <i>Mass at 7:30am</i>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> St. Gabriel the Archangel  <i>Stations of the Cross at 6:30pm</i>	<b>25</b> The Annunci- ation of the Blessed Virgin Mary  <i>Mass at 10am</i> <b>W</b> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>26</b> Fourth Sunday in Lent  ✓	<b>27</b> St. John of Damascus, CD, 749	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>  <i>Mass at 7:30am</i>	<b>30</b> St. John of the Ladder, Ab, 649	<b>31</b> St. Innocent of Alaska, BC, 1879  <i>Stations of the Cross at 6:30pm</i>	