

✠ 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. Leo the Great

d. 461

After the blessed and glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (wherein was raised up in three days that true Temple of God which had been destroyed), there came by God's providential ordering a season of forty days, the annual commemoration of which endeth on this day. The original great forty days,

dearly beloved, were spent by the Lord in profitable instruction for our benefit. On this wise, his bodily presence was still given to the earth during all those forty days, that our faith in his resurrection might be armed with all needful proofs. For the death of Christ had troubled the hearts of many of his disciples; their thoughts were sad when they remembered his agony upon the cross, his giving up of the Ghost, and the burial in the grave of his lifeless body: and so a sort of hesitation had begun to weigh on them.

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Hence the most blessed Apostles and all the disciples who had been fearful concerning the death on the cross, and doubtful of the trustworthiness of the report of Christ's resurrection, were so strengthened by the clear demonstration of the truth, that, when they saw the Lord going up into the heights of heaven, they sorrowed not; nay, they were even filled with great joy.

And, in all verity, it was a mighty and unspeakable cause of rejoicing for all the holy multitude of believers, when they perceived that the nature of mankind was thus exalted above all creatures, even the heavenly spirits, so as to pass above the ranks of the Angels, and be raised beyond the heights of the Archangels. For on this wise they perceived that no limit was set upon the uplifting of that nature short of the right hand of the Eternal Father, where it was to be Sharer of his throne, and Partaker of his glory; and nevertheless it was still nothing more than that nature of man, which the Son hath taken upon him.

Therefore, dearly beloved, let us also rejoice with fitting joy. For the Ascension of Christ is exaltation for us. And whither the glory of the Head of the Church is passed in, thither is the hope of the body of the Church called on to follow. Let us rejoice with exceeding great joy, and give God glad thanks. This day is not only the possession of paradise made sure unto us, but in Christ our Head we are actually entering into the heavenly mansions above. Through the unspeakable goodness of Christ we have gained more

than ever we lost by the envy of the devil. For those whom our venomous enemy cast down from the happiness of their first estate, these same hath the Son of God made to be of one body with himself, and hath given them a place at the right hand of the Father: with whom he liveth and reigneth, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

St. Theodotus of Ancyra & Companions, Martyrs Feast Day ~ May 18

Hospitality is a hallmark of the Christian faith. There are many ways that Christians offer hospitality, beginning with the simplest offering of bountiful coffee hours after Liturgy. Offering a kind word or listening ear to someone who needs to talk about a concern is another way of giving hospitality, and parish outreach offerings and charitable giving to those in need also provide hospitality. St. Theodotus of Ancyra is a saint of the Church who expanded the concept of hospitality in new ways that were necessary in the early 4th century.

Theodotus, a devout Christian, was in the “hospitality industry” of his age. As an innkeeper, he offered the hospitality of good food and drink and clean accommodations to travelers and local people alike. When Diocletian issued orders to persecute the followers of Christ, the innkeeper began a special crusade, as his skills were needed in more ways than he had ever imagined.

Theotecnus, the Prefect of the province, was zealous in his efforts to carry out the Emperor’s orders. Many Christians in the area around Ancyra fled to the nearby mountains and Theodotus sent word to them that he would offer a place of refuge in his inn. When the local places for Christian worship were shut



down, Theodotus’ inn became a church. When the Prefect declared that all food sold in public establishments had to first be offered to the pagan idols, Theodotus was one step ahead of him. He had stockpiled wine and grain, anticipating such a measure. Now, he was able to offer from his supplies not only untarnished food and wine for the local Christians, but also bread and wine for the Eucharist which was now clandestinely celebrated in his inn.

There was yet one more way in which Theodotus practiced Christian hospitality. The Prefect had also denied Christian burial for those who had been arrested, tortured, and executed, ordering that their bodies be left out in the open and devoured by wild animals. Theodotus took upon himself the task of rescuing the bodies of martyrs and providing them with proper burials.

There were seven elderly maiden ladies in Ancyra, including Theodotus’ Aunt Tecusa, who had been arrested for being Christians. They had been severely mocked and harrassed before being turned over to some violent young men for defilement. Praying intensely for protection, Tecusa pulled the veil from her head, showing her grey hair, and the startled men ran away ashamed. The furious Prefect then ordered that the women be bound with heavy stones attached to their legs and thrown into a lake.

Theodotus had a dream in which Tecusa appeared to him, telling him where her body and those of the other six virgins could be found. The innkeeper and a trusted friend, Polychronius, went by night and were able to retrieve the seven bodies and provide them with decent burials.

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Address Correction Requested

When Theotecnus discovered that the women's bodies had been "stolen", he took his rage out on every possible offender. Polychronius was unable to withstand the torture and pointed out Theodotus as the one who had retrieved the bodies. The innkeeper was promptly arrested and killed with the sword for his faith in Christ and his many offers of hospitality to those in need.

The story of St. Theodotus was recorded by another friend, Nilus, who survived the ordeals of this time and place and was an eyewitness to much that happened. May we look to St. Theodotus for inspiration in finding ways to offer Christian hospitality and may his prayers aid us in our endeavors. *Holy Theodotus, pray for us.*

Parish News

Thanks to all who helped with our parish work day and to those who helped to make our Holy Week and Pascha observances so beautiful. We continue to celebrate the joy of the Resurrection as the Paschal season lasts until Pentecost, encompassing the entire month of May.

The Enthronement of our new Metropolitan, SABA, will take place at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Brooklyn, NY, on Saturday, May 13. Sayedna will be at St. Gregory's for Matins at 9:30AM on Monday, 5/22, followed by a Deanery meeting for the clergy.

Sunday, May 21, is the Sunday nearest the day when our building was dedicated, so we will celebrate our Feast of Dedication at Mass that morning.

The Ascension Vigil will be at St. Mary's in Hunt Valley, with Sayedna Saba, on 5/24, beginning at 4:30PM. Mass for Ascension Day at St. Gregory's will be on Thursday, May 25, at 7PM, preceded by Vespers at 6:30.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>May 2023</h1>						<i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i>
	1 Ss. Philip & James, Apostles, 1 st C	2 St. Athanasius, BCD, 373	3 Finding of the Holy Cross	4 St. Monica, Ma, 387	5	6 St. John before the Latin Gate <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
7 Third Sunday after Easter; St. Alexis Toth, C, 1909 <i>W</i>	8 Apparition of St. Michael, c. 492	9 St. Gregory Nazianzen, BCD, 390	10 Ss. Gordian, 362 & Epimachus, 250, Mm	11	12 St. Epiphanius of Salamis, BC, c. 403	13 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
14 Fourth Sunday after Easter; St. Boniface of Tarsus, M, 290 <i>W</i>	15 St. Pachomius, Ab, 346	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 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
21 Dedication of St. Gregory's; Fifth Sunday after Easter; St. Constantine, C, 337 <i>W</i>	22 Rogation Monday; St. Romanus of Subiaco, Ab, 560 <i>Matins at 9:30am</i>	23 Rogation Tuesday; St. Julia, VM, 439	24 Vigil of the Ascension; St. Vincent of Lerins, C, 450 <i>Vigil at St. Mary's</i>	25 Ascension Day; St. Urban, PM, 230; St. Aldhelm, BC, 709 <i>Mass at 7pm</i> <i>W</i>	26 of the Octave of the Ascension; St. Augustine of Canterbury, BC, 605	27 of the Octave of the Ascension; St. Bede, CD, 735; St. John I, PM, 526 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
28 Sunday after the Ascension; St. Germanus of Paris, BC, 576 <i>W</i>	29 of the Octave of the Ascension <i>(Memorial Day)</i>	30 of the Octave of the Ascension; St. Felix I, PM, 274	31 of the Octave of the Ascension; St. Petronilla, VM, c. 100			