

✠ 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.
Gregory the
Great +604
d. 397*

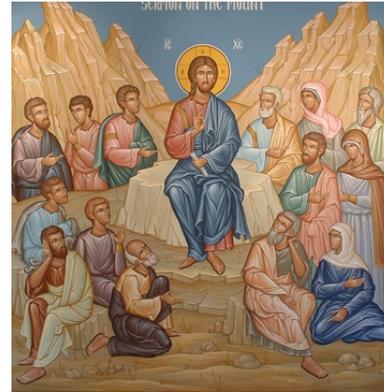
Since all the Sacred Writings are filled with the commandments of the Lord, why does He say of Charity, as if it were some singular commandment: *This is my commandment, that you love one another* [John 15:12] if not for the reason that every commandment is a

commandment solely of love, and that all of them are one single precept; because, whatever is commanded is based solely on love. For as the many branches of a tree derive from one root, so the multitude of virtues derive from one charity. And a branch of good work has no freshness, unless it remains rooted in charity.

The commandments of the Lord therefore, are many, and one; many in the diversity of their works, one in their root of love. And He teaches us how we are to hold fast to this love, Who, in many places of Holy Scripture, attain to the

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sublime rewards of love commands us to love our friends in Him, and our enemies because of Him. For he truly possesses charity who loves his friends in God, and his enemy because of God. For there are those who love their neighbors, but because of the bond of kinship or blood; and the Sacred Scriptures do not forbid them this love. But one is the love to which nature

spontaneously inclines us, and another the love to which we are obliged in obedience to the Lord's commands. The former truly love their neighbor; nevertheless they do not attain to the sublime rewards of love because the love they bestow is not spiritual but carnal. So when our Lord said: *This is my commandment, that you love one another*, He at once adds: *as I have loved you...*

The supreme proof of our charity is that we love even him who is against us. It was for this that Truth Itself endured the torments of the Cross, and in His love prayed even for His tormentors, saying: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* [Luke 23:34] What wonder then that His Disciples while they lived loved their enemies, seeing their Master loved His enemies even as they put Him to death?

But you say that an enemy has done us grave injury, has caused us loss, done harm to those who help us, persecuted those who love us? These things might be remembered, if our sins had not to be forgiven. For our need our Advocate has composed a prayer; and He Who is our Advocate is also Judge in the same case. And in the prayer He made, He inserted this condition: *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us* [Matthew 6:12]; and by saying this bind ourselves the more...

What must we do therefore, brethren, but bestow on our brothers the love of true charity? Let no malice remain in our

heart. May Almighty God be mindful of our love of our neighbor, that He may have mercy on our sins. Remember what we have been commanded to do: *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.* We too have debtors, and we also are debtors. Let us then forgive what is owed to us, that we may be forgiven what we owe.

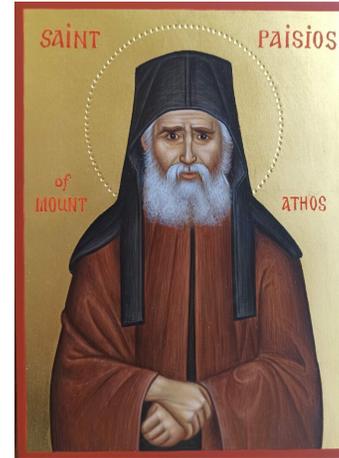
St. Paisios of the Holy Mountain

Feast Day ~ July 12

How many times do we hear the phrase, “Man plans, God laughs!” or something similar? What we desire for our lives - no matter how worthy and laudable that is - may not be what God has planned for us, or our plan may be altered for other purposes unknown to us but only to God. St. Paisios of the Holy Mountain provides us with a picture of one who, through his humility and obedience, followed God’s plan for his life.

Born in Cappadocia in 1924, the baby was named by - and for - his parish priest, Archimandrite Arsenios, who predicted that this child would become a monk. Soon, the family was sent to Greece as part of the “population exchange” between Turkey and Greece. Even at five years of age, little Arsenios declared that he wanted to be a monk. He spent his youth reading about the lives of the saints and praying and meditating in the nearby forest.

After completing his basic education, Arsenios learned the trade of carpentry as had our Lord Jesus Christ. When civil war broke out in Greece, Arsenios’ participation in the war was primarily as a radio operator, but he also volunteered to serve on the front lines in the place of married men.



After the war, Arsenios was finally able to pursue his dream of monasticism. He went to Mount Athos to seek a spiritual guide and, after four years as a novice, he began to ascend through the various levels of monastic life; he was tonsured as a Rassophore monk and given the name Averkios. He spent time under the obedience of Elder Symeon, who gave him the obedience to care for an elderly sick hermit and tonsured him to the Small Schema in 1957, giving him the name Paisios.

The eremitical life of a hermit, which Fr. Paisios desired so much, had to be postponed again because he was needed by the people of his village, Konitsa, who were suffering economically and spiritually. So he moved into the nearby Monastery of the Mother of God, which was in ruins, and used his carpentry skills to help rebuild it while also helping the local people resist the aggressive proselytizing of Protestant missionaries.

After four years, Fr. Paisios was able to move to a cell near the Monastery of St. Katherine’s on Mount Sinai, where he lived in solitary asceticism. Even though he had thought to be a hermit in the desert, his life here was not all prayer and meditation: he continued using his wood-working skills to produce wooden crosses to sell to the many pilgrims who came to this holy mountain, giving the proceeds for food for the Bedouins who provided protection for the monks. Some of the money went toward cookies for the Arab children who loved to visit him.

The monk Paisios returned to Mount Athos in 1964 and, despite respiratory health problems, continued the ascetic life, having visions of the saints and angels. In 1966, Fr. Paisios had an operation to remove part of his lungs and a group of young women

who wanted to become nuns donated blood for his operation; he later helped them to establish their own monastery. During this time, his visions continued including a vision of the Uncreated Light - that Light of God which was manifest at the time of Our Lord's Transfiguration. In 1968, Fr. Paisios was tonsured into the Great Schema by the Russian Elder Tikhon and, in 1979, he moved to a cell of the Koutloumousiou Monastery where he remained for the rest of his life. There, many people came to seek his advice and ask for his prayers - so many, in fact, that signs showing the way to his cell had to be erected! Because of his intense ascetical practices and the time he spent with visitors, he allowed himself only a few hours of sleep at night. He also continued to use his hands in creating small printed icons to give to his visitors.

Increased health problems now included colon cancer which was the eventual cause of his death on July 12, 1994. His body was buried next to St. Arsenios of Cappadocia, whose life he had written. St. Paisios of the Holy Mountain was glorified as a saint of the Orthodox Church by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in 2015.

To live in solitary silence, praying and contemplating the ways of God was the sole desire of St. Paisios from early childhood throughout his seventy years of life. Through the grace of God, he was able to do this, but only with numerous diversions involving helping others: learning a trade, serving his country selflessly, caring for an elderly monk, helping his village financially and spiritually while rebuilding a ruined monastery, aiding nuns in the founding of a monastery, helping the bedouins on Mount Sinai, and then offering spiritual counsel to the numerous people who came to him for help, despite suffering from painful illness. God has shown us in the life of St. Paisios that we are to seek our sanctification both in contemplating him but also, through humility and obedience, in showing his love in service to others. *Holy Paisios, pray for us.*

Parish News



On Sunday, July 2, we will celebrate the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to St. Elizabeth. This wonderful event, which is described in the Gospel of Luke, gives us the canticle *Magnificat*, which is sung at Vespers, and also words of St. Elizabeth which form part of the prayer, *Hail Mary*. Two important feast days in the month of August are the Feast of the Transfiguration on Sunday, August 6, and the Assumption (Dormition) of the

Theotokos, which we will celebrate on the Eve, Monday, August 14.

The Archdiocesan Convention will be held in Phoenix, AZ, from July 23-30 with Patriarch JOHN X attending. Karl Tsuji (Reader Simon) and Fr. Nicholas will represent St. Gregory's at the convention.

Sense of Sin by Metropolitan SABA

Saint Sophrony Sakharov (a disciple of Saint Silouan the Athonite and heir to his holiness) says in his book, *We Shall See Him As He Is*, "During my long years as a father confessor, I can say and affirm, with profound sorrow, that few people know deep down the heart's sense and the nature and substance of sin. For the most part, they confess at an ethical, human level. If they do not rise up from that, in some cases they do not reach true knowledge of the reality of sin."

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Address Correction Requested

The great majority of believers do not practice the mystery of confession, which means that repentance is not existentially on the table in their life and that sin is not something that troubles them. The personal sense of sin is what leads to repentance. Someone who feels pain from his illness hastens to seek healing from a doctor or a clinic. So, too, does someone who feels pain from his sin hasten to a father confessor to be freed from it in piety. If confession and retreat at a monastery is not currently practiced, what can we deduce from this?

The pattern of contemporary life kills the sense of sin. The prevailing spirit of individualism, the various worldly things in which society is immersed, the media and the bad examples they offer, and the ceaseless pursuit of greater luxury do not leave room for man to be concerned about his inner self. How can someone who is addicted to films about killing, violence and vampires acquire a merciful heart and compassion? How can a believer feel the reproach of his conscience in a society almost entirely based on lying and deceit? And how does a chaste person endure lustful thoughts when the invitation to satisfy the lust of his body meets him in advertisements on the street, in magazines, and on the television, even in his own home?

Faced with this increasing spirit of worldliness, the faithful need to increase the spiritual things in their daily life. Faced with a movement that pulls him downwards, man needs a stronger movement that pulls him upwards. Persistence in daily prayer, diligence in group prayer, keeping company and friendship with virtuous people, eager devotion to spiritual reading, daily reading from the Holy Gospel, practicing the mystery of confession, and taking care to spend time in spiritual retreat free man from the weight of worldly pressure and release him into the wide-open spaces of life with God.

Reprinted from *Spiritual Guidance: An Anthology of Writings and Teachings* by His Eminence Matropolitan Saba (Isper), translated from the Arabic by Dr. Samuel Noble.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>July 2023</h1>						<p>1 of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul; St. Gall of Clermont, BC, 553</p> <p><i>Vespers at 6pm</i></p>
<p>2 Visitation of the BVM; comm. 4th Sunday after Pentecost; St. John Maximovitch, BC, 1966</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>W</i></p>	<p>3 of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul</p>	<p>4 of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Independence Day)</i></p>	<p>5 of the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul</p>	<p>6 Octave Day of Ss. Peter & Paul; St. Paladius, BC, c. 450</p>	<p>7 Ss. Cyril & Methodius (B), CC, 869 & 885</p>	<p>8 St. Kilian of Wurzburg, BM, 689</p> <p><i>Vespers at 6pm</i></p>
<p>9 Fifth Sunday after Pentecost</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>G</i></p>	<p>10 Seven Holy Brothers, Mm, c. 165; St. Joseph of Damascus, 1860</p>	<p>11 Solemnity of St. Benedict, Ab, c. 540; St. Pius I, PM, c. 154</p>	<p>12 Ss. Nabor & Felix, Mm, 303</p>	<p>13 St. Anacletus, PM, 1st C</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 St. Vladimir of Kiev, KC, 1015</p> <p><i>Vespers at 6pm</i></p>
<p>16 Sixth Sunday after Pentecost; Our Lady of Einsiedeln</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>G</i></p>	<p>17 St. Alexius, C, 5th C</p>	<p>18 St. Sergius, Ab, 1392; Ss. Symphorosa & her Seven Sons, Mm, c. 138</p>	<p>19 St. Seraphim of Sarov, PrC, 1833</p>	<p>20 St. Elias the Prophet, 9th c. BC; St. Margaret of Antioch, VM, 304</p>	<p>21 St. Praxedes of Rome, V, 2nd C</p>	<p>22 St. Mary Magdalene, Penitent, 1st C</p> <p><i>Vespers at 6pm</i></p>
<p>23 Seventh Sunday after Pentecost; St. John Cassian, Ab, 433; St. Appollinaris, BM, 1st C</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>G</i></p>	<p>24 St. Christina, VM, 3rd c.; Ss. Romanus & David, Mm, 1015</p>	<p>25 St. James the Greater, Apostle, 44; St. Christopher, C, 251</p>	<p>26 St. Anne, Mother of the BVM, 1st c.; St. Jacob Netsvetov, C, 1864</p>	<p>27 St. Panteleimon, c. 305</p>	<p>28 Ss. Nazarius, Celsus Mm, Ss. Victor, PM & Innocent PC, 5th C</p>	<p>29 St. Martha of Bethany, V, 1st C</p> <p><i>Vespers at 6pm</i></p>
<p>30 Eighth Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Abdon & Sennen, Mm, c. 303</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>G</i></p>	<p>31 St. Germanus of Auxerre, BC, 448</p>					<p><i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i></p>

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>August 2023</h1>						
<i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i>		1 St. Peter's Chains; Holy Maccabees, Mm, c. 160 BC	2 St. Stephen I, PM, 257	3 Finding of St. Ste- phen the Proto- martyr, 415; St. Nicodemus, M, 1 st . C	4	5 Our Lady of the Snows, 435; St. Oswald, KM, 642 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
6 Transfiguration of Our Lord; comm. Ninth Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Sixtus II PM & Felicis- simus, 285 <i>W</i>	7 Holy Name Day; St. Donatus of Arezzo, BM, 362	8 Ss. Cyriacus, Largus & Smaragdus, Mm, 304	9 St. Romanus, M, 258	10 St. Laurence, Deacon M, 258	11 Ss. Tibertius & Susanna, Mm, 3 rd C; St. Philomena, VM, c. 304	12 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
13 Tenth Sunday after Pente- cost; St. Maximus the Confessor, CD, 662; Ss. Hippolytus & comp., Mm, 235 <i>G</i>	14 Vigil of the Assumption; St. Eusebius, PrC, c. 300 <i>Mass at 7pm</i>	15 Assumption of the BVM <i>W</i>	16 St. Joachim, Father of the BVM, C, 1 st C; of the Oct. of the Assumption	17 of the Octave of the Assumption	18 of the Oct. of the Assump- tion; St. Helena, Ma, 330; St. Agapitus, M, 272	19 of the Octave of the Assumption <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
20 Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost; of the Octave of the Assumption <i>G</i>	21 of the Octave of the Assumption	22 Oct. Day of the Assumption; Ss. Timothy, M, 311 & Hippolytus, BM, c. 225	23 Vigil of St. Bartholomew	24 St. Bartholo- mew, Apostle, 1st C	25	26 St. Zephyrinus, PM, 219 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
27 Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost; St. Caesarius of Arles, BC, 542 <i>G</i>	28 St. Augustine of Hippo, BCD, 430; St. Moses the Black, C, 405	29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist; St. Sabina, M, c. 125	30 Ss. Felix & Adauctus, Mm, 304; St. Fiacre the Hermit, C, 670	31 St. Aidan of Lindisfarne, BC, 651		