

# ✠ 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. Augustine of Hippo d. 430

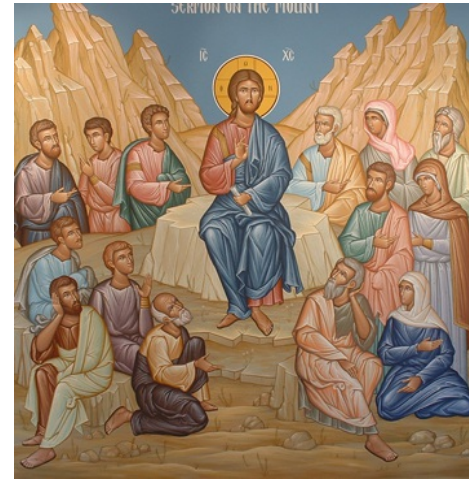
**B**lessed are the poor in spirit. Thus do the Beatitudes begin with humility, whereby the soul doth submit itself to God, and that through the gift of holy fear. Thereafter the soul goeth on in blessedness to grasp things divine, such as are set forth in the Scriptures; wherefore the soul

cometh to be meek as it is said *Blessed are the meek*; and that by reason of the gift of piety (or true godliness, as it is also called), then it beginneth to know what are the entanglements of this world, whereby we are held back in the customs of the world and in fleshly desires; and so in this third stage is the gift of knowledge, whereby the loss of the highest good is mourned for, from knowing how the soul is fain to cleave to the lowest; and hence, *Blessed are those that mourn*.

**N**ext, in the fourth state, is the gift of ghostly strength (or might, or fortitude, as it is variously called); for in this

*Inside:*

<i>Saints Tryphon, Respicius and Nympha</i> . . . . .	3
<i>Concerning Death</i> . . . . .	6
<i>Trampling Down Death by Death</i> . . . . .	8
<i>Calendar</i> . . . . .	11



stage of blessedness there is much labor, and the soul must exert itself greatly, to wrench itself away from those things wherewith, by reason of their pestilential sweetness, it was entangled. Hence, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness*. To which end such fortitude is very necessary, for what is retained with delight is not abandoned without pain.

**T**hen for all such as have shown fortitude in this labor, at the fifth stage is the gift of counsel, that is, perception as to how to escape from these entanglements. For unless one hath assistance in the matter from some one higher, he cannot fit himself to get out of his so many miserable entanglements. And it is only just that he who would have assistance of another's strength should assist one weaker than himself. For which reason counsel is indicated in the fifth stage, thus, *Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy*. The sixth benediction, *Blessed are the pure in heart*, showeth that at the sixth state there is purity which is the gift of understanding, springing from a good conscience, obtained by all these good works, wherein the soul is able to contemplate the highest good, which can be discerned only by a mind pure and tranquil.

**L**astly, there is, as the seventh, the gift of wisdom, that is, such a grace of contemplation of the truth as doth completely tranquilize the whole man, and give to him the likeness of God, thus bringing us to the conclusion, *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God*. The eighth, as it were, returneth to the beginning, because it showeth forth and commandeth what is complete and perfect. Therefore in the first and in the eighth is named the kingdom of heaven, thus, *Blessed*

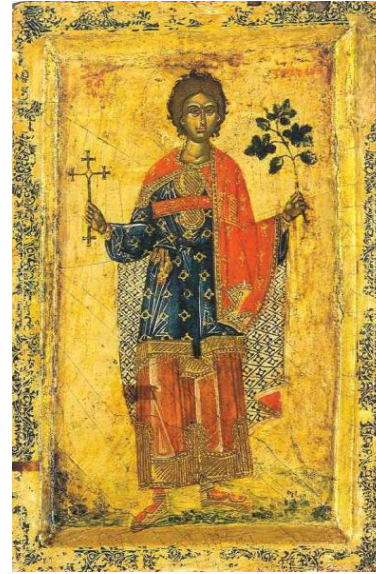
*are the poor in spirit; Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs in the kingdom of heaven.*

## *Ss. Tryphon, Respicius, and Nympha* *Feast Day ~ November 10*

**H**umility is one of the greatest - and most difficult - of all the virtues which Christians strive to acquire. Most of us have to struggle constantly with considering ourselves in charge, putting ourselves first, and having too high regard for our own opinions, plans, and desires. Setting all that aside and placing our lives in God's hands, desiring nothing more than to do his will is a characteristic of the saints. St. Tryphon is a wonderful example of a saint who, at a very early age, had learned to live in complete humility.

**T**ryphon was born into a poor Christian family in the village of Lampsacus which is now in Turkey. His main duty on the family farm was to tend the geese, which he did with loving care, praying as he worked. In the course of his contact with all the animals he cared for, it became apparent that he had a gift from God for healing, as he was able to help animals recover from injuries and illnesses. Before long, it was shown that this gift was also helpful with people who sought Tryphon for help with sickness.

**D**uring the reign of the Emperor Gordianus, Christians were shown a good deal of tolerance, despite the illegality of their religion. When his young daughter became deathly ill with a condition that none of the physicians could mitigate or heal, the Emperor sought help from all parts of the Empire. Word eventually came to him of this Christian farm boy who had miraculous powers for healing, so Tryphon was brought to Rome by imperial order. Praying over the girl while holding her hand, Tryphon asked God



to be merciful to her and her father, who had also shown mercy to Christians. The girl was brought back to health and the overjoyed Emperor began showering the healer with material gifts and offers of wealth and position. Tryphon humbly gave everything away to those who were poorer than his family and asked to return to the farm and his geese. But by now, Tryphon was famous.

**W**hen Gordianus died and Decius became Emperor in 244, everything changed for Christians. Decius was determined to stamp out this "dangerous" religion and a program of violent persecution and torture began. The local governor, hoping to curry favor with the Emperor by producing many Christians for this treatment, had Tryphon arrested and questioned. The humble saint declared his unswerving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and would not relent, no matter the amount and severity of the torture. In the year 250 or 251, St. Tryphon was sent to Nicaea where he was beheaded and received the crown of martyrdom.

**S**t. Nikolai of Ochrid attributes this beautiful prayer to St. Tryphon as he approached his death:

*O Lord, God of gods and King of kings, the holiest of all that is holy, I thank Thee that Thou hast made me worthy to finish the spiritual struggle without faltering. And now I pray Thee, let me not fall into the hands of the invisible demon, lest he drag me down into the pit of destruction. But may Thy holy angel lead me to Thy beauteous habitation and teach me to become an heir of the Kingdom that I so greatly desire.. Receive my soul, and hearken to*

*the prayers of all who will bring Thee offerings in memory of me; look Thou upon them from Thy holy habitation, give Thou them abundant and enduring gifts. For Thou art a good and merciful Giver of gifts, for ever and ever. Amen. [from Prologue from Ochrid]*

The local Christians retrieved St. Tryphon's body and would have buried him in the city of Nicaea, but the saint appeared to one of them in a vision asking to be returned to his humble village, so he was first buried in Lampsacus. Later, his relics were translated to Constantinople and then to Rome.

Two other saints were added to November 10 in the eleventh century for veneration with St. Tryphon: St. Respicius, who is thought to have been an official who was converted to Christianity through the courage of St. Tryphon at the time of his martyrdom, and St. Nympha, who, two centuries later, died while fleeing from the Goths who were invading Sicily and was buried in the church of St. Tryphon in Rome. On Eastern calendars and the current Roman Catholic calendar, St. Tryphon is celebrated on February 1.

In 552, the Christian Emperor Justinian erected a chapel in honor of St. Tryphon and in 575, the Emperor Justin dedicated a monastery in his name. Through the centuries, St. Tryphon became beloved as one of the "holy unmercenaries", saints who helped others without receiving money and are called upon for their intercessions, especially for healing. He is also known as a patron of gardeners, vine growers, and birds. May we, like St. Tryphon, be loving toward God's creatures and our fellow man, practice humility in our lives, help others in whatever ways we can, and be steadfast in our faith no matter what the cost. *Holy Tryphon, pray for us.*

Resources: *Liturgia Latina* (blog); Orthodox Church in America website; *Orthodox Saints* by George Poulos; *Prologue from Ochrid* by St. Nikolai Velimirovic; Wikipedia article.

## Parish News



On November 2, we will sing Vespers for the Departed at 6:30pm, and celebrate a Requiem Mass at 7, remembering our departed loved ones. A pot-luck supper will follow. The feast of All Saints will be celebrated on the Sunday within the Octave, November 5, and we will continue to honor the saints at coffee hour that day. Mass for the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple will be celebrated on Monday, November 20, at 7pm, preceded by Vespers at 6:30, and followed by a pot-luck supper.

Metropolitan SABA has requested that we collect aid for the suffering people of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, beginning on Sunday, November 12. These contributions will be sent from our Archdiocese to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem for the most pressing needs. We continue to pray for peace in the Middle East, Ukraine, and throughout the world.

## Concerning Death

by Metropolitan SABA

Saint Anthony the Great (251-356) once said to the pagans, when paganism was still the predominant religion, "It is no wonder that your worship of idols has not yet been persecuted because everyone honors them in every city. The Christians are always persecuted, but nevertheless their faith flourishes and grows greater than your faith... It has filled the inhabited world despite your sneering and the persecution of kings... When has death been scorned to this degree, apart from when the cross is raised? No one

doubts this, because he sees the martyrs with his own eyes as they scorn death for Christ's sake."

The words of this great saint are like a slap in the face for us Christians of this age, because we fear death and try in various ways to make it absent from our life. When we are forced to confront it, we either meet it with dark, despairing sorrow, as though life has ended completely and no trace remains of our faith in the resurrection and eternal life, or we deal with it with deadly egotism and a dulled sense that almost reaches the point of insensitivity, believing that it is a logical end for man and that we should just go on with our life, not missing any of the pleasures and lusts of this life. This latter attitude has become predominant in this fleshly age par excellence.

Those who "sorrow as others who have no hope" [1 Thess. 4:13] forget the resurrection from the dead and eternal life. They may believe in it theoretically, but they do not live according to their faith in daily practice. Those who say that their sorrow is in the heart, not in appearances, live without the resurrection and eternal life in practice and are only concerned with sating their worldly desires. In this behavior of theirs, they are true atheists.

Then we wonder why the Christian life grows weak within us. And why is the number of Christians who are not afraid to live their faith declining? And why are various other religions and sects growing and multiplying? Perhaps the primary answer is that Christians, in their effort to live the life of the heavenly kingdom on this earth, have confused it with purely worldly things. They have thus become so tightly drawn to this world that they are no longer capable of welcoming death with joy, because it removes them from this world to which they have enslaved themselves. Nor are they any longer prepared to welcome the death that brings them to more perfect life with their very beloved Lord. The mere recollection of death, which is a necessary Christian virtue, scares and rocks them. They want a life without death, so you see them

influenced by the values of the Western world that only believes in earthly life. They keep away from death and its remembrance, so there is no alternative to it shocking them when it comes.

How do we raise heroes when death scares us? How do we face persecution when death terrifies us? How do we bear witness to our faith when we shudder at martyrdom? These are questions that must be answered so that our standards will once more be truly Christian and this earthly life will become merely a passage-way to eternal life, which is true life. Perhaps adversity will rouse us to the words of the beloved hymn from Bridegroom Orthros: "Blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching." [cf Luke 12:37] Amen.

*Reprinted from Spiritual Guidance: an Anthology of Writings and Teachings by His Eminence Metropolitan SABA.*

## *Trampling Down Death by Death*

by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

To be Christian, to believe in Christ, means and has always meant this: to know in a trans-rational and yet absolutely certain way called faith, that Christ is the Life of all life, that He is Life itself and, therefore, *my* life. *In Him was life; and the life was the light of men* [John 1:4]. All Christian doctrines - those of the Incarnation, Redemption, Atonement - are explanations, consequences, but not the "cause" of that faith. Only when we believe in Christ do all these affirmations become "valid" and "consistent." But faith itself is the acceptance not of this or that "proposition" about Christ, but of Christ himself as the Life and the light of life. For *the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us* [I John 1:2]. In this sense Christian faith is radically different from "religious belief." Its



starting point is not “belief” but love. In itself and by itself all belief is partial, fragmentary, fragile. *For our knowledge is imperfect, and our prophecy is imperfect...as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.* [Only] *love never ends* [I Cor. 13]. And if to love someone means that I have my life in Him, or rather that He has become the “content” of my life, to love Christ is to know and to possess

Him as the Life of my life...

The Church is the entrance into the risen life of Christ; it is communion in life eternal, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. And it is the expectation of the “day without evening” of the kingdom; not of any “other world,” but of the fulfilment of all things and all life in Christ. In Him death itself has become an act of life, for He has filled it with Himself, with His love and light. In Him *all things are yours; whether...the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s* [I Cor. 3:21-23]. And if I make this *new life* mine, mine this hunger and thirst for the kingdom, mine this expectation of Christ, mine the certitude that Christ is Life, then my very death will be an act of communion with Life. For neither life nor death can separate us from the love of Christ. I do not know when and how the fulfilment will come. I do not know when all things will be consummated in Christ. I know nothing about the “whens” and “hows.” But I know that in Christ this great Passage, the *Pascha* of the world has begun, that the light of the “world to come” comes to us in the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit, for *Christ is risen and Life reigns*.

An excerpt from *O Death, Where is Thy Sting?*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2023</h1>						<i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i>
			<b>1</b> All Saints Day  <i>W</i>	<b>2</b> All Souls Day  <i>Mass at 7pm</i> <i>B</i>	<b>3</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Wini-fred, VM, c. 660; St. Sylvia, Ma, 592	<b>4</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm, c. 304  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>5</b> Sunday in the Oct. of All Saints; 22 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pente-cost; Ss. Zachariah, M, and Elizabeth, Ma, 1st C <i>W</i>	<b>6</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Leo-nard of Noblac, Ab, c. 559	<b>7</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Wili-brord of Echternach, BC, 739	<b>8</b> Patriarchs & Prophets of the Old Law (Oct. Day of All Saints); Four Crowned Martyrs	<b>9</b> Dedication of the Basilica of St. Savior in Rome, 324; St. Benignus, BC, c. 468	<b>10</b> Ss. Tryphon, Respicus & Nympha Mm, c. 250	<b>11</b> St. Martin of Tours, BC, 397; St. Theodore the Studite, Ab, 826 ( <i>Veteran's Day</i> ) <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>12</b> 23 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pente-cost; St. Martin I, PC, 655  <i>G</i>	<b>13</b> St. Britius of Tours, BC, 444	<b>14</b> St. Gregory Palamas, BCD, 1359	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> St. Hilda of Whitby, V, 680; St. Gregory the Wonder-worker, BC, c. 270; St. Gregory of Tours, BC, 594	<b>18</b> Dedication of Basilica of Ss. Peter & Paul, 4 <sup>th</sup> C; St. Odo of Cluny, Ab, 942 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>19</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pente-cost; St. Pontianus, PM, 235  <i>G</i>	<b>20</b> St. Edmund, KM, 870  <i>Mass at 7pm</i>	<b>21</b> Presentation of the BVM; St. Gelasius, PC, 496; St. Columbanus, Ab, 615  <i>W</i>	<b>22</b> St. Cecilia, VM, c. 230	<b>23</b> St. Clement, PM, 96; St. Felicity of Rome, M, 165  <i>(Thanksgiving Day)</i>	<b>24</b> St. Chryso-gonus of Aquileia, M., c. 304	<b>25</b> St. Katherine of Alexandria, VM, 4th C  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>26</b> 25 <sup>th</sup> & Last Sunday after Pentecost; St. Peter of Alexandria, BM, 311  <i>G</i>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Vigil of St. Andrew; St. Saturninus, M, 309	<b>30</b> St. Andrew the Apostle, 1st C		