

✠ 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. Ambrose of Milan d. 397

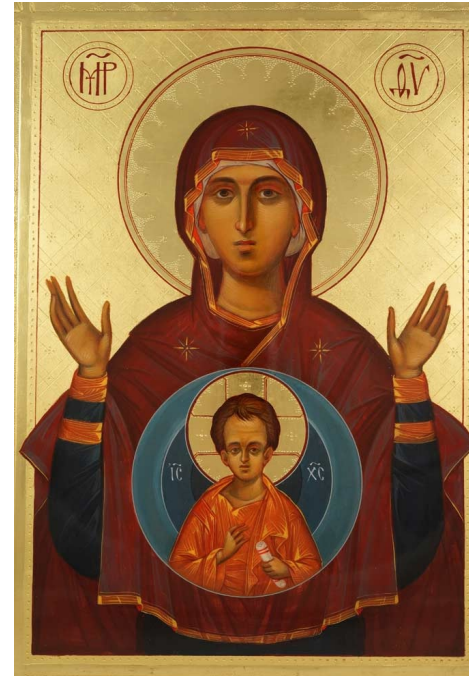
Deearly beloved, God in his goodness holds out to us the joys of eternal blessedness to lead us to the salvation of our souls, as you have heard in the apostle's words: *May you always be joyful in your life in the Lord.* The joys of the world lead to eternal sorrow, but the joys which accord

with the Lord's will draw those who persevere in them to things which will endure, things eternal. And so the apostles says: *I say it again: rejoice.*

He urges that our joy in God and our delight in fulfilling His commands should increase more and more: the harder we strive in this world to give ourselves to the precepts of God, our Lord, the more blessed shall we be in the life to

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come and the greater will be the glory which we attain in God's presence.

Show a gentle attitude towards all men. That is to say, the holiness of your life should be patent not only to God, but to men also, as an example of moderation and self-discipline to those who live on earth with you; it should be evident as a memorial of goodness to God and men.

The Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything. The Lord is always

near to those who call on him in truth, in right faith, in unshaken hope, in perfect love; he knows what we require before we ask him; he is always ready in any need to help those who serve him faithfully. Hence when evils beset us, we ought not show great anxiety; we should know that God is very close to us as our protector, in accordance with the words: *The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and will save the humble in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord will deliver them out of them all.* If we make every effort to fulfill and keep what he has commanded he for his part is not slow to repay us what he has promised.

In all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. If it happens that you are troubled and in distress, you are not to complain and be sorrowful - far from it - you must bear it patiently and cheerfully, giving thanks to God always in all circumstances.

The Fullness of Time by Metropolitan SABA

When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. [Gal. 4:4-5] What is the fullness of time? It is the most appropriate time for the coming of the Savior. Why? Is the Savior in need of an appropriate time? Of course He is not in need, but those for whose sake He has come are in need. They are not prepared, not capable of seeing and accepting Him at just any time, without preparation.

The coming of the Savior means that the act of salvation has started to be realized. Salvation is for us to become children of God, *that we might receive adoption*. Is this adoption (that is, salvation) realized for people who reject it or who do not know it? Is it realized in those souls who do not await it or do not desire it? Is it realized in souls that are busy with other things to the point that they forget their salvation? The fullness of time is the time in which Christ became incarnate. It was the time in which Christ was truly born from a specific human being. It is the time in which man became aware of God's presence within him, the activity of his grace in his life, and so he is born again in a true, spiritual birth.

Historically speaking, this expression means the time in which God could become incarnate among people and live with them. This is what God did, with incredible divine longsuffering. The Holy Bible informs us that God began, in practice, first by offering Himself to Abraham, then to Isaac, his son, and then to Jacob, Isaac's son. This was the beginning of divine disclosure, which continued for eighteen or so centuries, until it was completed in the incarnation of the second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity, Christ. At that time, *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*. [John 1:14]...

God worked slowly and patiently to change peoples' minds, hearts and morals, so that it would be possible for them to

know Him as He is, not as they imagined Him or desired Him to be. This is also what He has done with each of us, since He permits us to go through various experiences so that we are purified, come to discover Him present with us, and seek our salvation.

Does this mean that God only worked among the people of the Old Covenant? The earliest fathers of the Church teach us that He used this people to be a leaven of salvific faith for the rest of the peoples. That is to say that He - to Him be glory - revealed Himself to human kind through this people, with whom He charged this self-revelation as a responsibility and not a privilege. But He cared for other people in ways appropriate to their cultures and civilizations...

How may we receive Him today? How should we prepare ourselves, our hearts, and our inner realities so that we may see His salvific light? How should we prepare ourselves and open ourselves to Him so that His grace may be active in us? Let us replace hardheartedness with love, selfishness with sacrifice, hatred with forgiveness, miserliness with generosity, isolation with cooperation. He has given us all the ways we need to truly and effectively receive Him...

Excerpts from an article in *Spiritual Guidance: An Anthology of Writings and Teachings* by His Eminence Metropolitan SABA.

St. Vladimir Lozina-Lozinsky *Feast Day ~ December 13*

The persecution of Christians by hostile governments, which began in the earliest centuries of the Church, has continued in many centuries since that beginning. One of the worst times of persecution occurred during the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, which led to the Communist rule of Soviet Russia. Our Lord



Himself warned us about this: *Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you... but he who endures to the end will be saved.* [Matt. 24:9, 13] These times have produced many saints of the Church who have endured to the end, steadfastly proclaiming their faith in Christ. St. Vladimir Lozina-Lozinsky, glorified by the Russian Orthodox Church in 2000, is one of those saints.

Vladimir was born in 1885 into a family of doctors, his mother having been one of the first women doctors in Russia. After she died when the boy was only 3 years old, the family moved from Dukhovshchina to St. Petersburg, where Vladimir pursued his education through law school. In 1910, he took his place in the Senate. Rejected for military service at the front during World War I, Vladimir worked in medical transport.

And then, in 1917, the world changed for Vladimir. The Bolsheviks closed the Senate so he first worked as a statistician for the railway. But as the persecution of the Church increased, the young man first began to think of becoming a priest. When in 1918, he witnessed the execution of a priest who had been a family friend (and the last confessor of the royal family), he was admitted to the Theological Institute in St. Petersburg and eventually ordained to the priesthood.

Then the persecution of a particular Christian - Vladimir Lozina-Lozinsky - began. From 1924 on, he was repeatedly arrested on some charge or other, usually that of belonging to a "subversive" Christian organization, always declaring his innocence. Often his

family - who were still obviously influential - came to rescue him. The first time, they claimed that he was mentally ill and so he was released for medical reasons.

In 1925 another arrest (for a supposed monarchical plot) resulted in a death sentence, which was later changed to a ten year exile to the Solovetsky concentration camp. Having worked as a lawyer and a priest, Fr. Vladimir now cleaned toilets and did other lowly manual tasks, always humbly and without rancor. Once again, relatives managed to get the sentence reduced from ten years to five years in exile in Siberia.

Having finished this sentence, Fr. Vladimir served at the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael in Novgorod for a year before being arrested again in 1936. In light of his family's original claim, he was sent to a hospital for the mentally ill, but was declared sane.

On December 8, 1937, the archpriest, along with a number of parishioners, was arrested for being members of a capitalist group. This time, his family could not intercede and he was sentenced to death. On December 26, 1937, Fr. Vladimir was shot and the place where his body rests has never been found. This faithful priest who "endured to the end" is remembered among the New Martyrs of Russia (February 4 on the Western Rite calendar) and on his separate feast day, December 13. *Holy Vladimir, pray for us.*

Source: *Orthodoxwiki*

The Year of Our Lord by Fr. Georges Florovsky

That we begin our reckoning of time with Christ's birth is a fact which has long been but a mere convention for many. Seldom does one recall and recognize the great event from which we count time. So do we betray our ignorance and insensitivity. In ancient

days, times was computed from the Incarnation of God the Word. It signifies that we live in a world which has been renewed and redeemed already, that even now we live in the realm of grace and already reckon the years of the new creature. Time itself has been illumined by the light which the darkness cannot consume. In a new and higher sense God is with us from that mysterious day forward, from that mysterious night in Bethlehem. God was manifest in the flesh. [I Tim. 3:16] Since then we worship God who came down from heaven.



In the fullness of time God sent into the world his Son born of a woman. The Son of God became the Son of the Virgin. Here is the assurance and the beginning of salvation, the guarantee and source of eternal life. This is the reason for both

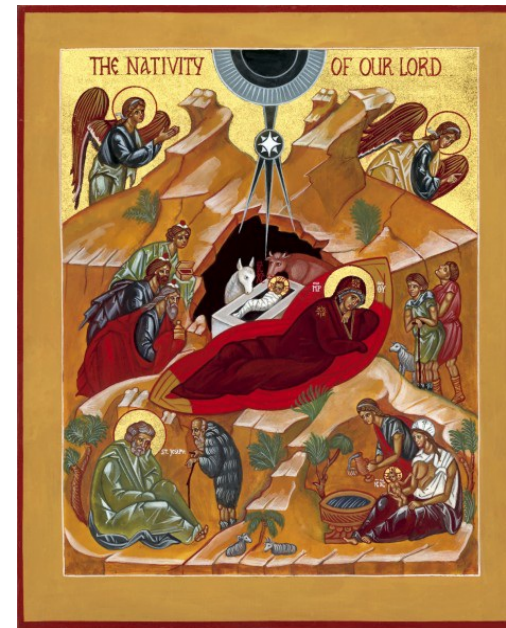
those on earth and those in heaven to rejoice - the mystery of Godmanhood, the glory of the divine Incarnation. The kingdom of God then began and was truly revealed in history itself; in the meekness and humility of a simple life. The star of the eternal covenant stopped and shone over the cavern in Bethlehem. The humiliation of the cavern testifies that the kingdom then revealed is not of this world. Although it happen then, in the day of King Herod, in the city of Bethlehem, this “then” is, in the true sense of the word, an everlasting “now.” It was truly a beginning, the beginning of something new - of the Gospel history. It was then the New Covenant was revealed. The prophecies came true.

The divine descent is not only divine condescension, but at the same time it is the revelation of glory. Then was human nature

healed through the ineffable divine assumption, and was reintroduced into communion with everlasting life. The action of grace reentered the world where it had been stopped by human sin. *Christ is born and earth and heaven are united: today God came down to earth, and man ascended into heaven.*

An excerpt from a reprint of an editorial in the *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, 1952.

Advent and Christmas, 2023



Drop down, ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.

Saturday, December 2: We begin the season of Advent with Vespers. The vestments will now be purple and we will sing the Advent Prose (the antiphon is above) at Vespers.

Sunday, December 3, the First Sunday of Advent: We will begin our

collection of canned and packaged foods for the Food For Hungry People program of our Archdiocese. Our collected items will be given to Manna Food Center, a local food bank.

Thursday, December 7: We will celebrate the eve of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary with Mass at 7:00pm, preceded by Vespers and followed by a pot-luck supper.

St. Gregory Orthodox Church
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Address Correction Requested

Saturday, December 16: Our annual para-liturgical service of Lessons & Carols will take the place of Vespers at 6:00pm. There will be Scripture readings, hymns, and choir music for Advent to help us prepare for the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord. We begin the Advent “O” antiphons, sung before the Magnificat on the remaining evenings until Christmas.

Sunday, December 17 through Christmas Eve: Each evening, the Novena will be observed with Vespers at 6:00pm.

Sunday, December 24: In the morning, we will observe the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Confessions may be made after Mass. After coffee hour, we will decorate the church for Christmas and we ask that all who are able please stay to help.

Unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given.

Sunday, December 24: Vespers will be sung at 6:00pm, confessions will be heard at 8:00, and we will sing carols and hear choir music for Christmas at 8:30. The first Mass of Christmas will be celebrated at 9:pm, followed by a Nativity feast.

Monday, December 25: Mass for Christmas morning will be celebrated at 10:00am, followed by brunch.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>December 2023</h1>					1 St. Eligius of Tournai, BC, 660	2 St. Peter Chrysologus, BCD, c. 450; St. Bibiana of Rome, VM, 363 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
3 First Sunday in Advent <i>V</i>	4 St. Barbara, VM, c. 306	5 St. Sabbas of Palestine, Ab, 532	6 St. Nicholas of Myra, BC, c. 342	7 St. Ambrose of Milan, BCD, 397 <i>Mass at 7pm</i>	8 Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary <i>W</i>	9 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
10 Second Sunday in Advent; St. Melchias-des, PM, 314 <i>V</i>	11 St. Damasus, PC, 384	12 St. Spiridon, BC, 348	13 St. Lucy, VM, 304; St. Herman of Alaska, C, 1837	14	15 St. Maurus, Ab, 6th C	16 St. Eusebius of Vercelli, BM, 371 <i>Lessons & Carols at 6pm</i> <i>O Sapientia</i>
17 Third Sunday in Advent; St. Lazarus of Bethany, BC, 1st C <i>V</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> <i>O Adonay</i>	18 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> <i>O Radix Jesse</i>	19 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> <i>O Clavis David</i>	20 Ember Wednesday; St. John of Kronstadt, C, 1908 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> <i>O Oriens</i>	21 St. Thomas, Apostle, 1st C <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> <i>O Rex gentium</i>	22 Ember Friday <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> <i>O Emmanuel</i>	23 Ember Saturday <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> <i>O Virgo virginum</i>
24 Vigil of the Nativity; Fourth Sunday in Advent <i>Mass at 9:30am</i> <i>Mass at 9pm</i> <i>V/W</i>	25 The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ; St. Anastasia, VM., c. 304 <i>Mass at 10am</i> <i>W</i>	26 St. Stephen, Proto-martyr, 1st c.; of the Octave of the Nativity	27 St. John, Evangelist & Apostle, 1st C; of the Octave of the Nativity	28 Holy Innocents, Mm, 1st C; of the Octave of the Nativity	29 of the Octave of the Nativity	30 of the Octave of the Nativity <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
31 The Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity; St. Sylvester, PC, 335 <i>W</i>						<i>Sunday services:</i> <i>Matins at 9am</i> <i>Sung Mass at 9:30</i>