

✠ 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 by St. Hilary of Poitiers d. 367

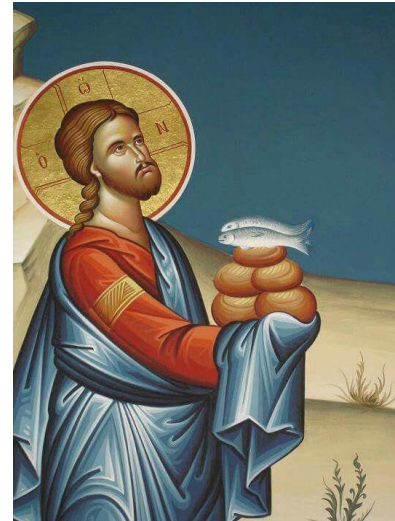
The times of the Law being now at an end, and buried together with John [the Baptist], his disciples then came from the Law to the Gospel, and told the Lord what had happened. And so the Law being ended, the Word of God, embarking on a ship, enters the Church, and passes over into a desert place; abandoning His association with

Israel to enter into hearts yet empty of the knowledge of God. The people hearing this followed the Lord out of the city into the desert; that is, withdrawing from the Synagogue to the Church. And He, seeing the multitude had compassion on it, and healed all their sick and infirm; that is, cleansed the bodies and souls beset with the lassitude of unbelief, that they might understand the new Gospel.

And when the disciples urged Him to send away the people, to buy food in the neighboring villages, He

Inside:

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>St. Hegesippus</i> | 3 |
| <i>Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God</i> | 6 |
| <i>Palm Sunday</i> | 7 |
| <i>Parish News</i> | 8 |
| <i>Holy Week</i> | 9 |
| <i>Calendar</i> | 11 |



replied to them, that they have no need to go, showing that those He healed were not in want of the food of the doctrine of the Law and had no need to return to Judea to buy it. So He bids His Apostles feed them. Did He not know they had nothing to give? Did He not know, He Who saw the secrets of men's hearts, how much the Apostles had for themselves?

But all this had a symbolic purpose, now to be unfolded.

For it had not yet been given to the Apostles to prepare, and to minister, the heavenly bread, the food of eternal life. Their reply opened the way to an ordered exposition of spiritual teaching. For they answered that they had only five loaves and two fishes: for till now they had been nourished from the five loaves; that is, from the five books of the Law, and by the two fishes, that is, by the preaching of the prophets and of John. For in the works of the Law, as from bread, there was life; and the preaching of John and the prophets refreshed as with water the true hope of human life. It was these, therefore, since they were nurtured in them, that the Apostles at first carried with them; from them the preaching of the Gospel is shown to have been foretold, and, rising from these sources, its own perfection grows in ever increasing richness.

And so, taking the loaves and fishes, the Lord looked up to Heaven, then blessed and broke them, giving thanks to the Father that, after the Law and the Prophets, He is Himself become the Evangelical Bread. And when He had commanded the people to sit down on the grass, not to lie prone on the earth, but to sit upheld by the Law, each one spread his own good works, like the grass of the earth, under him. The bread is also given to the Apostles, because it is through them the gifts of the divine grace

are to be given. Then the people ate of the five loaves and the two fishes, and were filled. And of the fragments of the bread and of the fishes, after all who had sat down were satisfied, there remained over enough to fill twelve baskets: that is, the hunger of the multitude is satisfied by the word of God coming to them from the teaching of the Law and the Prophets; and the abundance of the divine goodness, kept in reserve for the people of the Gentiles, has overflowed from the source of eternal Food unto the filling of the Twelve Apostles...

The wonder of this deed surpasses human understanding. And while often things are done which the mind can grasp but words cannot explain, in these things even the acuteness of the mind to perceive is at a loss, astonished at the very thought of the complexity of this unseen action...Under this visible work we have an invisible making; and the Lord of heaven's mysteries works the miracle of this mystery before us. And the Power of Him Who makes surpasses all nature; and the nature of that power far exceeds our understanding of what He does; and all that remains is the Mystery of His power, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth world without end. Amen.

St. Hegesippus, the Chronicler

Feast Day ~ April 7

When Moses encountered the living God on Mount Sinai, he was given the ten commandments - the rule of life for the Hebrew people who were being led from captivity in Egypt to the Promised Land - written on two tablets. These same commandments were properly interpreted by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became a man to fulfill the "law and the prophets."

Why was it necessary to have these laws in written form? That question was dealt with by Ss. John Chrysostom and John

Cassian among others, who said that God had implanted his laws in man at Creation (natural law), but that because man, with his God-given free will, had disobeyed and obscured the laws of God, it was necessary to have written codes of law to regulate man's behavior.

Thereafter, the Hebrew people - through the centuries of pilgrimage, establishment of nations and kingdoms, wars, exiles, and returns - kept and studied the written accounts of the law and the prophets and the history of the Chosen People. This written record was brought into Christianity by the first followers of Christ and was enriched by the Gospels and Epistles of the Apostles and Evangelists. We hold this written record to be very precious, we study God's word, and we read (or sing) it in all our liturgical services.

In addition, we consider it of utmost importance to pass on the Tradition of the Church through the writings of later Fathers, the records of the decisions of the great Councils of the Church, the lives of the Saints, the disputations surrounding the heresies that plagued the Church at times. It is through these written accounts that the Church remains a safe Ark.

The Gospels, written between the years 65 and 96 by Christ's Apostles and read at every Mass, provide us with accounts of Jesus' earthly life. The Epistles, letters written by St. Paul, St. James, St. Peter, and St. Jude from c. 50-96 are important records of how the early church dealt with problems and how we are to live out the teachings of Christ. From the beginning, these written records were copied, passed on to all the church communities, and read publicly and interpreted by preachers.

In the second century, the continuing story of the Church was recorded by historians, among them Hegesippus, called "the Chronicler" for his five books ("memoirs") in which he expounds apostolic tradition in an intentional simple style. Unfortunately,



only a small portion of his writings have survived, but we know of them through later historians who relied on them, particularly Eusebius (260-339), who quote from these memoirs.

Hegesippus was probably a Jew, born around 110, who converted to Christianity. He apparently lived in Palestine and traveled to Rome during the pontificate of St. Anicetus (pope from 155-166). On his travels, he visited and gathered information from churches which he reported to Pope Anicetus. Eusebius quoted this example from Hegesippus' writings:

And the Church of the Corinthians remained in the true word until Primus was bishop in Corinth; I made their acquaintance in my journey to Rome, and remained with the Corinthians many days, in which we were refreshed with the true word. And when I was in Rome, I made a succession up to Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleuterus. And in each succession and in each city all is according to the ordinances of the law and the Prophets and the Lord.

Some of the information which has been gleaned from Hegesippus' writings include an account of the death of St. James "the Just" and the election of his successor, St. Simeon, as bishop of Jerusalem. He wrote of the exile to Patmos of St. John the Evangelist by the Emperor Domitian; he wrote of the letter of Pope St. Clement I to the Corinthians regarding the persecution of Domitian; and he wrote that Hermas, the author of the non-canonical book, *The Shepherd of Hermas*, was the brother of Pope Pius I (pope from 140-154).

During this Lenten season, as we spend more time in studying God's word and reading the works of the Church fathers and

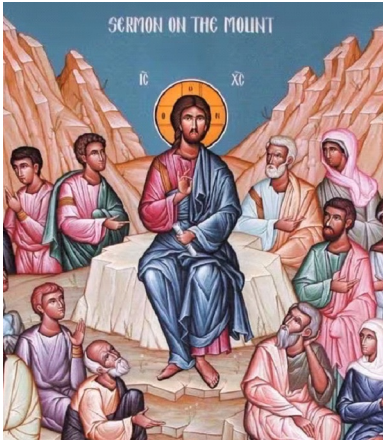
the lives of the saints, we give thanks for all our spiritual ancestors who have preserved these writings and this Tradition, thus preserving the faith of the Apostles. *Holy St. Hegesippus, pray for us.*

Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

by Archbishop Dmitri Royster (OCA, d. 2011)

When the Lord tells us to *seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness*, we recall that the underlying theme of the whole Sermon on the Mount [is] "the kingdom." His first recorded utterance was *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; in this, His first extended sermon, He shows how that kingdom is attained and manifested in the life of those who follow Him.

What He is telling us now is that the thing that motivates His followers is the acquisition of the kingdom. All the worries and preoccupations of this world, those cares and hopes that are earthbound, must be overcome by the Christ, no matter how important or normal they may seem to be. The greatest obstacle in the path of the person who sets out to reach the kingdom of God is anxiety over property and over insurance for the future. These two things can become, almost without our realizing it, our primary objects of devotion. They hinder our spiritual development: how can we reconcile the Christian concept of stewardship of this world's goods with the pagan notion of the selfish acquisition of more and more earthly treasures? How can we put all our trust and dependence on God and still be excessively concerned about security for tomorrow? We cannot forget the severe lesson taught us by the Lord's parable of the rich man who was so successful and whose goods increased so much that he had to tear down his barns and build larger ones so as to store up insurance for a carefree future. *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.* [Luke 12:16-21]



Seek ye first... The response of the follower of Christ to His coming to us and setting up the kingdom among us must be to concentrate all his concerns on doing His will. The final realization of the kingdom will, of course, be in the age to come, but we enter it now in the present life, and in our own personal life we must strive to live as children of the kingdom. Anxious thought for the things that preoccupy the non-

believer is not worthy of a Christian. So, our concerns, all these things will be added unto us. In other words, to the attainment of the kingdom will be added all the things that we have need of: He does not mean that we will be rewarded with riches. It takes an enormous amount of faith to live the life of a child of the kingdom; it is without any doubt the greatest possible adventure open to man, for it takes putting all our trust in God and His loving care.

An excerpt from *The Kingdom of God: the Sermon on the Mount*

Palm Sunday

by Metropolitan Nicolae, Romanian Metropolia of the Americas

During His life on this earth, our Lord and Savior rarely did or said what others expected of Him, and He certainly did not fulfill His people's expectations for a Messiah.

From His birth in a cave to His humiliating death on the Cross, Christ shapes a new vision for the Kingdom of Heaven: it is manifest not through force but through love and humility. This unexpected King kneels to wash His disciples' dusty feet and



invites us to follow Him with the faith of a child. He invites us to love and serve as he did.

Palm Sunday begins the final road to the Cross. This week we see Him offer Himself, even unto death. How unthinkable, that the Creator of the cosmos would permit His creatures to take His life! Yet Christ's humility renders death powerless, so now we may return to loving communion with Him. We complete our earthly journey with

the hope of abundant, eternal life in Our Father's house.

As we view the Cross before us this Holy Week, let us remember how Christ emptied Himself for our sake. Let us seek ways to imitate Him in loving service wherever we have the opportunity. And let us find in His Cross the light and life of the Resurrection - for this is our great hope!

Reprinted from *Reflections for Great Lent*, published by International Orthodox Christian Charities

Parish News

During the month of April, we will continue to offer Stations of the Cross and Litany of the Cross as a Lenten devotion on Fridays at 6:30PM. We will also continue our collection of baby items for the Orthodox Christians for Life National Baby Shower which will be donated to the Shady Grove Pregnancy Center. Offerings for the Archdiocesan Food for Hungry People program provide another opportunity for alms-giving during this season.

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Address Correction Requested

Holy Week at St. Gregory's

Palm Sunday, April 28 - The service begins outside with the blessing and distribution of palms, the reading of the Palm Gospel, and a procession around the grounds of the church singing the hymns “All Glory, Laud, and Honor” and *Christus vincit*. At the Mass, the Passion Gospel according to St. Matthew will be sung in dialogue form.

Holy Monday, April 29 - The Passion Gospel according to Mark will be sung.

Holy Tuesday, April 30 - The Passon Gospel according to Luke will be sung.

Holy Wednesday, May 1 - We will celebrate the unction service at which the oils of catechumens and the sick will be blessed.

Maundy Thursday, May 2 - This service commemorates our Lord's institution of the Eucharist and will include the ceremony of the foot-washing, the procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar of Repose, and the stripping of the Altar. After a silent Lenten meal, the service of Tenebrae will be offered. All are welcome to remain for a time to meditate before the Sacrament.

Good Friday, May 3 - Beginning at noon, this service includes the singing of the Passion Gospel according to John, the Solemn Collects, the veneration the cross (during the singing of the Reproaches), and the Mass of the Presanctified.

The Paschal Vigil, Saturday, May 4 - We begin this service outside with the lighting of the Paschal fire, the singing of the Exultet, the readings which recount the story of our salvation, the blessing of water, the the Litany of Saints and, finally, the announcement of the Resurrection and the first Mass of Easter. A paschal meal will follow.

Easter Sunday, May 5 - Mass will be at 11AM, followed by brunch.

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| <h1>April 2024</h1> | | | | | | <i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i> |
| | 1 St. Melito of Sardis, BC, 177 | 2 St. Mary of Egypt, Penitent, c. 421 | 3 St. Sixtus I, PM, 127; St. Joseph the Hymnographer, C, 883 | 4 St. Isidore of Seville, BCD, 636 | 5 <i>Stations of the Cross at 6:30pm</i> | 6 St. Notker, C, 912 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> |
| 7 Third Sunday in Lent; St. Tikhon of Moscow, BC, Patron of the Western Rite, 1925 ✓ | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 St. Leo the Great, PCD, 461 | 12 <i>Stations of the Cross at 6:30pm</i> | 13 St. Herme- negild, M, 585 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> |
| 14 Fourth Sunday in Lent; St. Justin, M, 165 ✓ | 15 | 16 | 17 St. Anicetus, BM, 168 | 18 | 19 St. Alphege of Canterbury, BM, 1012 <i>Stations of the Cross at 6:30pm</i> | 20 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> |
| 21 Passion Sunday ✓ | 22 Ss. Soter, 174 & Caius, 296, BbMm | 23 St. George, M, 303 | 24 | 25 St. Mark the Evangelist, 1 st C | 26 Ss. Cletus, 89, and Marcel- linus, 304, PpMm <i>Stations of the Cross at 6:30pm</i> | 27 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i> |
| 28 Palm Sunday <i>R/V</i> | 29 Monday in Holy Week <i>Mass at 7pm</i> ✓ | 30 Tuesday in Holy Week <i>Mass at 7pm</i> ✓ | | | | |