

✠ 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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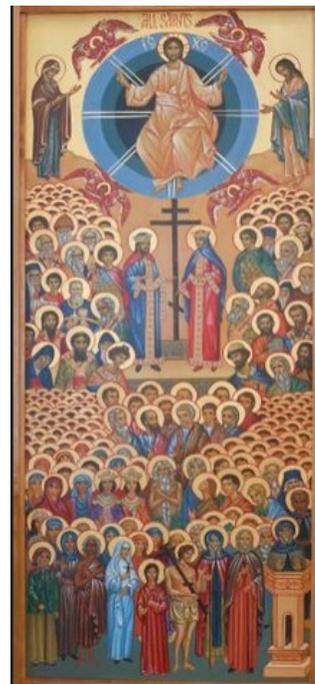
From the Letter of St. Clement to the Corinthians d. c. 100

How blessed, how marvelous are the gifts of God, my friends! Some of them, indeed, already lie within our comprehension - the life that knows no death, the shining splendor of righteousness, the truth that is frank and full, the faith that is perfect assurance, the holiness of chastity - but what of the things prepared for those who wait? Who but the Creator and

Father of eternity, the Most Holy himself, knows the greatness and the beauty of these? Then let us strain every nerve to be found among those who wait in patience for him, so that we too may earn a share of his promised gifts. And how is this to be done, my friends? Why, by fixing our minds trustfully on God; by finding out what is pleasing and acceptable to him; by doing whatever agrees with his perfect will; by following the paths of truth. Wickedness and wrongdoing of every kind must be utterly renounced; all greed, quarreling, malice and fraud.

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And it is by that very way, dear friends, that we find our own salvation: even Jesus Christ, the high priest by whom our gifts are offered, and the protector by whom our feebleness is aided. Through him we can look up to the highest heaven and see, as in a glass, the peerless perfection of the fact of God. Through him the eyes of our hearts are opened, and our dim and clouded understanding unfolds like a flower to the light; for through him the Lord permits us to taste the wisdom of eternity. He is the splendor of God's majesty; and as much greater than the angels as the title he has inherited is a loftier one than theirs.

So now, my friends, let us get on resolutely with our warfare under his unerring directions. The great cannot exist without the small, nor the small without the great. Every organism is composed of various different elements; and this ensures its own good. Take the body as an instance; the head is nothing without the feet, nor are the feet anything without the head. Even the smallest of our physical members are necessary and valuable to the whole body; yet all of them work together and observe a common subordination, so that the body itself is maintained intact.

In Christ Jesus, then, let this corporate body of ours be likewise maintained intact, with each of us giving way to his neighbor in proportion to our spiritual gifts. The strong are not to ignore the weak, and the weak are to respect the strong. Rich men should provide for the poor and the poor should thank God for giving them somebody to supply their wants. If a man is wise, let him show his wisdom by good deeds, not by words; and if he is modest, let him leave others to speak of his modesty, instead of

proclaiming it himself. To God we owe everything, and therefore on every count we are under the obligation to return thanks to him. Glory be to him for ever and ever. Amen.

St. Menas of Egypt, Martyr

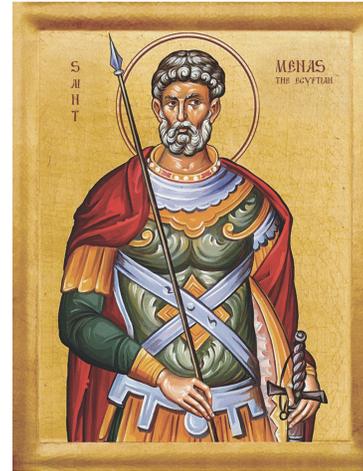
Feast Day ~ November 11

How many people are there who are “fed up” with jobs they can no longer tolerate and who would love to simply walk out through the office door and never go back? There are even saints who have done this, but their reasons were much more than professional “burn-out”. St. Menas, a fourth century Egyptian martyr, is such a one.

The story of Menas begins with his devout Christian parents, Aufinia and Audexios, and continues long after his earthly sojourn. Menas was only conceived after his mother - who had waited long for a child - prayed fervently before the icon of the Theotokos and heard a voice saying “Amen” to her prayer. When her son was born, he was given a name similar to Amen: Menas. Menas’ father, who had been a civil administrator, died when his son was only fourteen years old, and a year later, the young man entered the army to begin a military career.

Menas distinguished himself as a soldier and became highly respected for his service in Algeria until the Emperor Diocletian ordered all members of the military to sacrifice to the old Roman gods. Soon, the co-emperor, Galerius, made more extreme regulations, resulting in a great persecution of Christians who refused to participate in pagan sacrifices.

As one of those Christians, Menas shed his military attire, walked away from his commission in the army, and fled to the nearby mountains. There, he spent five years in fasting and prayer,



seeking to become closer to God and find peace in his heart.

But God had another plan for Menas. In a vision, the soldier-turned-hermit perceived that he was to become a martyr for the faith. Like Moses in the Old Testament, Menas came down from the mountain and encountered a wild, pagan celebration. Infuriated, he shouted to the people to stop their idolatry.

Shocked, they ceased their dancing and singing and reported Menas to the city prefect, Pyrrhus, who demanded an explanation for this disturbance. Menas declared his Christian faith in the one true God and Jesus Christ, his Son.

No amount of urging and cajoling could make Menas deny Christ and offer the required sacrifice. So he was tortured, beheaded, and his body was set on fire. Unharmful by the flames, Menas’ relics were rescued by fellow Christians and, according to some versions of the story, his sister bribed the authorities and took the body by ship to Alexandria and placed it in a church.

After the end of the persecutions, Pope (Saint) Athanasius of Alexandria had a vision, ordering him to send St. Menas’ relics out into the desert. At a certain spot in the desert, the camels carrying the body stopped and refused to go further, so this is where the saint’s relics were buried. A monastery was built here, many miracles occurred (particularly of healing, including of the daughter of Constantine the Great) and veneration of St. Menas brought many pilgrims to the site.

Evidence of widespread devotion to St. Menas all over the Christian world is provided by the many terracotta pilgrim’s flasks (for water from the shrine) which archaeologists have found as far afield as England, France, Germany, Spain, and Turkey.

Through the years, many conflicts brought about the destruction of the St. Menas monastery. The 7th century Persian invasion, the Arab conquest and subsequent Muslim rule, earthquakes and Bedouin raids all contributed to the loss of this important Christian pilgrim site. But in the 20th century a restoration began. In 1905, the shrine was re-discovered, excavations in the 1950s and '60s revealed the monastery with its basilica, pilgrims' baths for healing, and a hospital. In 1959, Pope Cyril VI of Alexandria began to build a new monastery close to the old remains. The Monastery of St. Menas was coming alive again.

Even before these discoveries, St. Menas was being revealed as active in this world. The most famous story about his intervention in human affairs occurred during World War II. In June of 1942, German General Rommel was headed toward Alexandria. He halted his army at El Alamein and engaged the greatly outnumbered Allied forces in battle. Under the sands lay the ancient monastery of St. Menas and, during the night, a vision of the saint coming out of his church at the head of a caravan of camels appeared in the German camp. The German soldiers were so scared by this miracle that they lost much of their courage and the battle turned to a victory for the Allies. Winston Churchill reported that they had never had a victory before Alamein and that they had never had a defeat after it. Later, when the church was excavated, one of the frescoes was revealed to show the exact picture from the vision.

The Church teaches us that the saints continue to intercede for us and to offer protection and inspiration. May we, like St. Menas of Egypt, give up our pursuits and employments which take us away from God - our modern day idols - and devote ourselves to worship of the one true God and his Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. *Holy Menas, pray for us.*

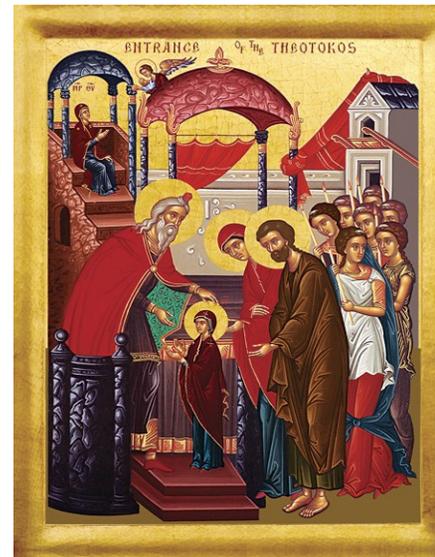
Resources: *Prologue from Ochrid*, St. Nikolai Velimirovich; websites: *CopticChurch.net*; *Orthodox Christianity Then and Now*; *Orthodox Church in America*; *Wikipedia*.

Parish News

We begin this month with the Church's feast of All Saints. At Mass on Saturday, November 1 at 10AM (Matins at 9:30), we will celebrate the lives and witness of the innumerable saints who are recognized for their sanctity and whose intercessions we implore. A pot-luck brunch will follow the service.

On Sunday, November 2, we will continue our celebration of the saints at coffee hour after Liturgy. Please be prepared to share something about your patron saint or a favorite saint. Costumes and props are welcome!

The observance of All Souls Day (normally November 2) will be transferred to Monday, November 3 with Requiem Mass at 7PM and Vespers of the Departed at 6:40. At this service, we will remember before God all the faithful departed among our families and loved ones. Please give Fr. Nicholas the names you wish to be included.



Mass for the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple will be held on the Eve, November 20 at 7PM, with Vespers at 6:30 and pot-luck supper following.

The Advent season of preparation for the Nativity of Our Lord begins on Sunday, November 30. The Church calls us during this time to fast, repent, and give alms for the poor. We will begin our collection of canned and

packaged food for the Archdiocesan Food for Hungry People program and a bin will be provided in the parish hall for your contributions.

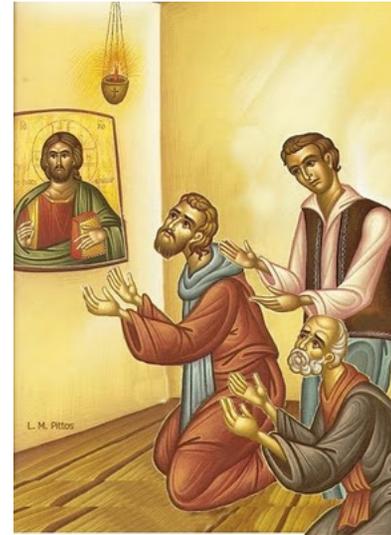
Praying for the Departed

by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

Many are dismayed at the thought of praying for the dead, and they wonder what one is aiming at, what one can hope in doing so. Can the destiny of the dead be changed if one prays for them, will the praying convince God to do an injustice and grant them what they have not deserved?

If you believe that prayers for the living are a help to them, why should you not pray for the dead? Life is one, for as St. Luke says: *He is not the God of the dead but of the living* [Luke 20:38]. Death is not an end but a stage in the destiny of man, and this destiny is not petrified at the moment of death. The love which our prayer expresses cannot be in vain; if love had power on earth and had no power after death it would tragically contradict the word of scripture that love is as strong as death [Song 8:6], and the experience of the Church that love is more powerful than death, because Christ has defeated death in his love for mankind.

It is an error to think that man's connection with life on earth ends with his death. In the course of one's life one sows seeds. These seeds develop in the souls of other men and affect their destiny, and the fruit that is born of these seeds truly belongs not only to those who bear it but also to those who sow. The words written or spoken that change a human life or the destiny of mankind, as the words of preachers, philosophers, poets or politicians, remain their authors' responsibility, not only for evil but also for good; the authors' destiny is bound to be affected by the way they have influenced those living after them.



The life of every person continues to have repercussions until the last judgement, and man's eternal and final destiny is determined not only by the short space of time he has lived on this earth but also by the results of his life, by its good or evil consequences. Those who have received seed sown as in fertile ground, can influence the destiny of the departed by prayerfully beseeching God to bless the man who has transformed their lives, given a meaning to their existence.

In turning to God in an act of enduring love, faithfulness and gratitude they enter this eternal kingdom which transcends the limits of time, and they can influence the destiny and the situation of the departed. It is not injustice that is asked of God; we do not ask him merely to forgive a man in spite of what he has done but to bless him because of the good he has done, to which other lives bear witness.

Our prayer is an act of gratitude and love, in so far as our life is the continuation of something that he stood for. We do not ask God to be unjust, and we do not imagine that we are more compassionate and more loving than he is, nor do we ask him to be more merciful than he would otherwise be; we are bringing new evidence for God's judgement, and we pray that this evidence should be taken into account and that the blessing of God should come abundantly for the one who has meant so much in our life. It is important to realize that we pray not in order to convince God of something but to bear witness that this person has not lived in vain, neither loving nor inspiring love.

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Address Correction Requested

Any person who has been the origin of love in any way has something to put forward in his defense, but it is for those who remain to bear witness to what he has done for them. Here again it is not simply a matter of goodwill or emotion. St. Isaac of Syria says: “Do not reduce your prayer to words, make the totality of your life a prayer to God.” Therefore, if we wish to pray for our departed, our life must back up the prayer. It is not enough to wake up to a certain feeling for them from time to time and then ask God to do something for them. It is essential that every seed of good, truth and holiness that has been sown by them should bear fruit, because then we can stand before God and say: “He has sown good, there was some quality in him which inspired me to do well, and this particle of good is not mine but his and is in a way his glory and his redemption.”

An excerpt from Living Prayer by Anthony Bloom, Archbishop and Metropolitan of Surozh.

The Hope of the Righteous

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God. And no torture will ever touch them. In the eyes of the undiscerning they seemed to have died, and their departure was considered to be misfortune. And their passage from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in man’s view they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Though chastened in a few things, great kindness will be shown them. For God tested them and found them worthy of Himself. He tested them like gold in a furnace and accepted them as a whole burnt offering. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth...because grace and mercy are upon His elect. [*Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-7, 9*]



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2025</h1>						1 All Saints Day <i>Mass at 10am</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
2 21 st Sun. after Pentecost; Sunday in the Oct. of All Saints <i>G</i>	3 All Souls Day (tr.); St. Winifred, VM, c. 660 <i>Mass at 7pm</i>	4 of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm, c. 304	5 of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Zachariah, M, and Elizabeth, Ma, 1 st C	6 of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Leonard of Noblac, Ab, c. 559	7 of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Wilibrod of Echternach, BC, 739	8 Patriarchs & Prophets of the Old Law (Oct. Day of All Saints); Four Crowned Martyrs <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
9 22 nd Sun. after Pentecost; Dedication of the Basilica of St. Savior in Rome 324; St. Benignus, BC, c. 468 <i>G</i>	10 Ss. Tryphon, Respicus & Nympha Mm, c. 250	11 St. Martin of Tours, BC, 397; St. Theodore the Studite, Ab, 826 <i>(Veterans Day)</i>	12 St. Martin I, PC, 655	13 St. Britius of Tours, BC, 444	14 St. Gregory Palamas, BCD, 1359	15 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
16 23 rd Sun. after Pentecost <i>G</i>	17 St. Gregory the Wonderworker, BC, c. 270; St. Hilda of Whitby, V, 680	18 Dedication of Basilica of Ss. Peter & Paul, 4 th C; St. Odo of Cluny, Ab, 942	19 St. Pontianus, PM, 235	20 St. Edmund, KM, 870 <i>Mass at 7pm</i>	21 Presentation of the BVM; St. Gelasius, PC, 496; St. Columbanus, Ab, 615	22 St. Cecilia, VM, c. 230 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
23 24 th and Last Sun. after Pentecost; St. Clement, PM, 96; St. Felicity of Rome, M, 165 <i>G</i>	24 St. Chrysgonus of Aquileia, M., c. 304	25 St. Katherine of Alexandria, VM, 4 th C	26 St. Peter of Alexandria, BM, 311	27 <i>(Thanksgiving Day)</i>	28	29 Vigil of St. Andrew; St. Saturninus, M, 309 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
30 First Sunday in Advent <i>V</i>						<i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i>