

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

November 2026 - Volume XXXI, Issue 10

St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church
A Western Rite Congregation of the Antiochian Archdiocese
13407 Roxbury Rd., Silver Spring, MD ~ stgregoryoc.org

From On the Divine Images by St. John of Damascus

d. 760

eager to disturb the peace of Christ's Church through false lips and treacherous tongues which use God's word for an evil purpose, attempting to disguise his shameful and dark intention luring the hearts of the weak away from the true patristic usage. Some have risen up saying that it is wrong to make and display images of the saving wonders of Christ and the struggles of the saints against the devil, that by gazing

Now the devil, who is the enemy of the truth and fights against the salvation of mankind, in suggesting that images of corruptible man, or birds, or beasts, or reptiles should be made and worshiped as gods, led not only the Gentiles astray, but also many of the children of Israel. Now, in these days, he is

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upon them we may be moved to wonder, and glorify God. Is there anyone having knowledge of divine matters and spiritual sense that does not perceive in this a deception of the devil? For he does not wish to be conquered, and to have his shame exposed to all, or the glory of God and of His saints to be proclaimed in public.

If we attempted to make an image of the invisible God, this would be sinful indeed. It is impossible to portray one who is without body: invisible, uncircumscribed, and without form. Again, if we made images of men and believed them to be gods, and adored them as if they were so, we would be truly impious. We do neither of these things. But we are not mistaken if we make the image of God incarnate, who was seen on earth in the flesh, associated with men, and in His unspeakable goodness, assumed the nature, feeling, form, and color of our flesh...

Shame on you, wicked devil, for grudging us the sight of our Master's likeness, and the holiness which proceeds from it.

You would prevent us from gazing upon His saving sufferings, marveling at His condescension and praising His Almighty power. You are jealous of the honor which God has given to the saints. You wish us neither to see their glory portrayed nor zealously to imitate their courage and faith...

You have heard what is said: *You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness.* [Ex.26:31... You shall not make for yourselves molten gods, and, you shall not bow down to them and serve them as God, nor shall you adore the creature instead of the Creator. You shall have no other gods before Me; you shall adore no creature as God; you shall not adore the creature instead of the Creator...

Concerning this business of images, we must search for the truth, and the intention of those who make them. If it is really and truly for the glory of God and of His saints, to promote virtue, the avoidance of evil, and the salvation of souls, then accept them with due honor, as images, remembrances, likenesses and books for the illiterate. Embrace them with the eyes, the lips, the heart; bow before them; love them, for they are likenesses of God incarnate, of His mother, and of the communion of saints, who shared the sufferings and the glory of Christ, who conquered and overthrew the devil, his angels, and his deceit...The icon is a hymn of triumph, a manifestation, a memorial inscribed for those who have fought and conquered, humbling the demons and putting them to flight.

Parish News

We will celebrate the Feast of All Saints on Sunday, November 1. Even as we celebrate individual saints on their feast days throughout the year, this yearly observance is an opportunity to celebrate all the saints, known and unknown, whose lives and virtues we emulate and who intercede for us in heaven. At coffee hour after Liturgy, we will continue our celebration of the lives of the saints by giving short presentations about our patron, favorite, or an interesting saint.

To commemorate lives of our departed loved ones, we will celebrate a Requiem Mass on All Souls Day, Monday, November 2 with Vespers at 6:30pm, Liturgy at 7 and pot-luck supper following. Please give Fr. Nicholas the names of any departed loved ones you wish to have mentioned by name in this service.

We will remember many things on Sunday, November 8. The liturgical celebration is of the Patriarchs and Prophets of the



Old Law. This is not an ancient feast day but one which was created by Fr. Alexander Turner and Fr. Paul Schneirla, the first two Vicars-General of the Antiochian West Rite. As most of the Old Testament saints were not included in the Western calendar of saints (but many are in the Byzantine calendar), this service was intended to correct that under one commemoration. We honor and give thanks for all those through whom God prepared His people to receive the Incarnate Christ.

On November 8, we will also remember Lauren Housley, who departed this life on November 9, 2025. New icons of the holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel have been given by many donors in her memory and they will be blessed

at this service. Icons of St. Gregory the Great, our patron, and St. John the Baptist, which have been given in memory of Subdeacon Jerry (Jerome) Chiles, will also be blessed. These new icons were painted by iconographer Borislav Zivkovic of Houston (see agapeicons.com).

The feast of the Presentation of the Theotokos in the Temple will be celebrated on Saturday, November 21 with Matins at 9:30am, Mass at 10 and a pot-luck brunch following. Sunday, November 29 marks the beginning of the Western liturgical year with the First Sunday in Advent when we are more intentional about fasting, alms-giving, confession, and preparing to celebrate the Incarnation of Our Lord.

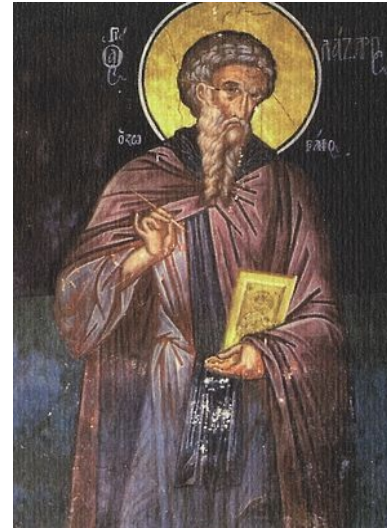
St. Lazarus the Iconographer ~ November 17

The various heretical movements in the early centuries of Christianity (Gnosticism, Arianism, Docetism, Pelagianism, Nestorianism, Donetism) were resolved through the determinations of Ecumenical Councils. This continued in the first iconoclastic controversy (726-787) which was resolved in the Second Council of Nicaea in 787. But the iconoclastic view that had raged in the previous century was reignited with Emperor Leo the Armenian in 815. The Law as given to the Jews through Moses was so misinterpreted that it violated the Orthodox Christian understanding of the Incarnation. As a precursor to the puritanical violence against representations of Christ and His saints during the Protestant Reformation, the iconoclasts demanded the destruction of icons as “idols” instead of “windows into heaven” to be venerated.

St. Lazarus, a monk in 9th century Constantinople, was one who suffered greatly during this time. Born in Armenia in 810, Lazarus entered monastic life at an early age and studied the art of painting (or “writing”) icons at the Studios Monastery in Constantinople. He was ordained to the priesthood and was recognized not only for painting icons and frescos but also for his ascetic life.

When Theophilus became emperor in 829, he continued the iconoclastic view. He sought out Lazarus, perhaps to make an example of him. Lazarus was arrested and, when confronted with the issue of icons, adamantly refused to destroy or to stop painting images of Christ and His saints. He was imprisoned and then, because it was unlawful to kill an ordained man, he was tortured by having white hot horseshoes placed against his hands - the hands which had honored the Incarnate God and the saints.

As Lazarus lay injured and dying, the Empress Theodora, who was a secret iconophile, convinced her husband to release



Lazarus from prison. He soon recovered and was able to return to his religious duties in a secluded church on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. Upon the death of Theophilus in 842, Theodora reigned as regent for her young son and the decision of the Second Council of Nicaea was reconfirmed. Veneration of icons was returned in churches, monasteries and homes and Lazarus was able to use his artistic gift once more to restore icons that had been damaged and to create new ones. Lazarus was also valued for his diplomatic skills and in 856 was sent to Rome as an emissary to Pope Benedict III to try to resolve some of the differences between the Latin-speaking West and the Greek-speaking East. Lazarus the iconographer passed from this world to the next in 865 while returning from this mission.

Sadly, none of the known works of St. Lazarus - including a fresco in the Phoberos Monastery, the restored figure of Christ over an entrance gate to a palace in Constantinople and others - have survived. Pilgrim accounts credit St. Lazarus with the mosaics in the apse of Hagia Sophia, now a mosque for the iconoclastic Muslims.

The Eastern feast day for St. Lazarus is November 17 but in the Roman Martyrology, he is included in the list of saints for February 23 with these words: *At Constantinople, St. Lazarus, monk, who was tortured with dread torments by command of the Iconoclast Emperor Theophilus, because he painted sacred pictures. His hand was burnt with a hot iron, but he was healed by the power of God and repainted the holy pictures that had been destroyed. He ended his life in peace.*

We give thanks to God for St. Lazarus, who defended the truth before an emperor despite torture and who served the Church faithfully using his gift for painting icons to glorify God. *Holy Lazarus, pray for us.*

Icons, Iconography & Iconology

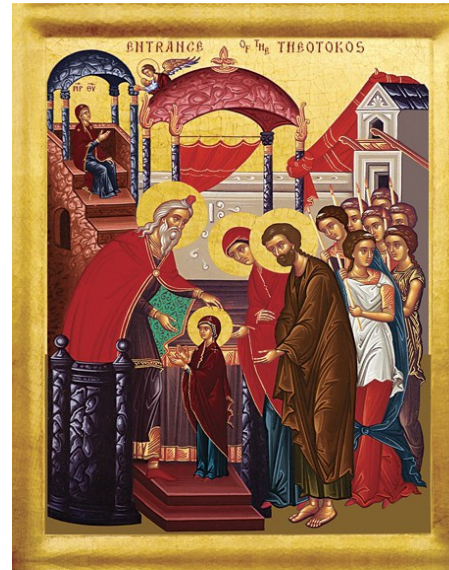
Adapted from lectures by Fr. Hareth Ibrahim

A church without icons is like a room without windows. This saying of St. Justin Popović illustrates the importance of the presence of icons in the church building, as a place of worship. Many elements come together to make true worship: icons, incense, hymnology, vestments, objects used, and even [the] structure of church building itself!

A building with icons becomes a place where we may take a look at Heaven and the inhabitants of Heaven. We see them living in glory and praising God in thanks for His love to mankind. Seeing them encourages us to seek first the kingdom of God [Matt. 6:33], to *pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.* [Hebrews 12:14] We enter the church as if we are entering the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Heaven. Henceforth, we are to experience heavenly matters.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann explains how worship expresses the Orthodox faith by saying: *The Orthodox faith finds its most consistent expression in worship. It is worship that provides the authentic Christian life with grace, insight, teaching, inspiration, and strength. The distinctive Orthodox principles of religious education are found in the organic link between the Church's liturgical life and its educational efforts.*

Worship educates us through the Gospel and makes the divine scriptures more accessible to understanding and application. It shows us the purpose of the ancient prophecies in Jesus Christ,



leads us to understand His saving work, and motivates us to join the angels in praising and thanking Him.

Liturgical worship is attached to remembrance (*anamnesis*). This remembrance of the historical redemptive events that God accomplished for us, becomes present before the worshipping community. Through the liturgy, an event that occurred once in history and will never be repeated again in time

becomes truly present before us. Worship, in this regard, transcends the rituals. Worship (daily prayers and sacraments) brings alive all the saving events. They are no longer events of the past but of the present with an eschatological orientation.

The terms iconology and iconography are derived from the Greek word for image combined with either the word for writing or with the word for reason and thought. The two terms are closely connected and have often been used interchangeably. However, different meaning can be attributed to each term...

An iconographic approach might focused on what appears in the image: figures, objects, gestures, or patterns that appear across different works or time periods. This is a systematic process, allowing scholars to build a visual database that shows how symbols have evolved over time. Without this step, it's much harder to trace the roots and meanings of recurring elements in art history.

Iconology builds on the work of iconography by placing symbols within their broader cultural, historical, and philosophical

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contexts. Instead of simply asking “what is shown?” it asks “why is it shown this way, and what does it reveal about the society [and faith] that produced it?”

From lectures for the Iconology I class at the Antiochian House of Studies

On Holiness

by St. Nikolai of Ochrid

Holiness, my brethren, is the virtue that encompasses all the other virtues. A saint, a mere man, is adorned through it with all the virtues. If a man is a man of prayer and is not compassionate, he cannot be called a saint, and if a man endures all things but has not faith and hope, he does not belong among the saints. If a man is full of compassion but is without faith in God, truly such a man cannot be reckoned among the saints. A saint is a perfected man, such as Adam was in Paradise; or, still better, a man such as is the New Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the Saint of saints. Here is the Sower of sanctity upon the earth and the Guardian of the saints in history. He has revealed to us the ideal of the true saint. He is the prototype of the saints, as He is also the primal image of man.

Atrue man, my brethren, is nothing other than a saint. Saint and man - they are the same thing. He has shown us what it means to be a man and what it means to be a saint. And so His Apostle Peter commands us: *Be holy in all manner of living.* [I Peter 1:15] A saint cannot be a saint only in one part of his life, but must be so in the whole of it. We must be holy in every part and particle of our lives, so that we may be counted among the saints, among the people who are conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prototype of the saints and the Primal Image of man.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2026</h1>						<i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i>
1 All Saints Day; 22 nd Sun. after Pentecost; Ss. Cosmas and Damian of Asia Minor, Mm, c. 303 <i>W</i>	2 All Souls Day <i>Mass at 7pm</i> <i>B</i>	3 St. Winifred, VM, c. 660; St. Sylvia, Ma, c. 592	4 of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm, c. 304	5 of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Zacha- riah, M, & Elizabeth, Ma, 1 st C; Ss. Galac- tion & Episteme, Mm, 251	6 of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Leo- nard of Noblac, Ab, c. 559	7 of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Wili- brord of Echternach, BC, 739 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
8 23 rd Sun. after Pentecost; Patriarchs & Prophets of the Old Law (Oct. Day of All Saints); Four Crowned Mm <i>G</i>	9 Dedication of the Basilica of St. Savior in Rome 324; St. Benignus, BC, c. 468	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. John Chrysostom, BCD, 407; St. Britius of Tours, BC, 444	14 St. Gregory Palamas, BCD, 1359 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
15 24 th Sun. after Pentecost <i>G</i>	16	17 St. Gregory the Wonder- worker, 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; St. Barlaam of Antioch, M, 304	20 St. Edmund, KM, 870	21 Presentation of the BVM; St. Gelasius, PC, 496; St. Columbanus, Ab, 615 <i>Mass at 10AM</i> <i>W</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
22 25 th and Last Sun. after Pentecost; St. Cecilia, VM, c. 230 <i>G</i>	23 St. Clement, PM, 96; St. Felicity of Rome, M, 165	24 St. Chryso- gonus of Aquilaia, M., c. 304	25 St. Katherine of Alexandria, VM, 4 th C; St. Peter the Hesychast, C, 9 th C <i>(Thanksgiving Day)</i>	26 St. Peter of Alexandria, BM, 311	27 St. James the Persian, M, 421	28 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
29 First Sunday in Advent; St. Saturninus, M, 309 <i>V</i>	30 St. Andrew the Apostle, 1st C					