

✠ 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 letter of St. Athanasius d. 373

It will not be irrelevant to examine the ancient tradition and the doctrine and the faith of the Catholic Church, which, as we know, the Lord handed down, the apostles preached, and the fathers preserved. For on this tradition the Church is founded, and if anyone

abandons it, he cannot be a Christian nor have any right to the name.

And so the Trinity, which is recognized in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is holy and perfect, and has no adulteration of that which is foreign or external. Nor is it compounded of creator and created matter, but it is endowed with the complete power of creating and energizing; its nature also is consistent with itself and undivided, and its energy and activity is one. For the Father makes all things through the Word in the Holy Spirit, and in that way the unity of the Holy Trinity is preserved. Thus in the Church one God is preached,

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who is “above all things and through all things and in all things”. Yes, certainly, “above all things” as the Father, the first principle and origin; and truly “through all things”, that is through the Word, and finally “in all things” in the Holy Spirit.

When Saint Paul was writing to the Corinthians about spiritual matters, he traced all things back to one God the Father as

to the fountain-head in these words: *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord: and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one.* [I Cor. 12: 4-6]

The gifts which the Spirit distributes to individuals are given by the Father through the Word. For all things which belong to the Father likewise belong to the Son: so that those things which are given by the Son in the Spirit, are true gifts of the Father. Similarly when the Spirit is in us, the Word by whom we receive him is also in us, and in the Word is also the Father, and this is the meaning of the text: *We* (that is, my Father and I) *will come to him and make our home with him.* [John 14:23] For where there is light there also is brilliance, and where there is brilliance, there the power and the glory of the light shine out.

Paul also in the second letter to the Corinthians give the same teaching in these words: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* [II Cor. 13:14] For grace and the gift which is given in the

Trinity is given by the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. For just as grace is given from the Father through the Son, so within us the fellowship in the gift cannot be brought about except in the Holy Spirit. If we have received the Spirit, then we have the love of the Father, the grace of the Son and the fellowship of the Spirit himself.

Saints John and Paul, Martyrs

Feast Day ~ June 26

Every time we come to Mass, we hear the names of saints who have been included in the list of martyrs in the Liturgy since as early as the fifth century - saints whose deaths attest to their steadfast faith in Christ in times of persecution. The historical details about the lives of some of these saints are no longer known, but we continue to honor them for their sacrifice and we ask God that, through their prayers, “we may be guarded by the help of thy protection.”

The story of two of these saints - John and Paul - which has been passed down through the ages in the oral tradition of the Church and through the martyrologies in various centuries presents us with a lesson in making the right choices in difficult times.

John and Paul are thought to have been brothers who, as members of the military, were assigned to the imperial household during the reign of (St.) Constantine I, especially offering protection for the emperor’s daughter, Constantia. A considerable fortune was bequeathed to them upon the death of Constantia, allowing them to retire from public service. Some accounts say that the two built a house on the Caelian Hill in Rome, one of the seven hills which define the landscape of the

city. Here the brothers chose to begin a life of philanthropy, using their inheritance to help those in need. Two centuries later, our own St Gregory lived just a little ways down the Caelian Hill from this place.

Life for all Christians in the Roman Empire changed when Julian (the “Apostate”) became emperor in the year 361. It was obvious from the very beginning of his reign that Julian was intent on crushing Christianity, which had taken such hold on the people since the days of Constantine I. He revived earlier pagan festivals, reinstated pagan temples of worship, and instituted practices which limited the influence of Christians in society. Even though, at first, Julian did not advocate the murder of Christians, this began to happen as a result of his policy changes.

Word of the Christian charity of the brothers John and Paul reached Julian and he promptly called them back into imperial service. Some citizens might have been flattered by having their abilities remembered and still needed after so many years, but John and Paul recognized this as an attempt to provoke them to recant their beliefs. They refused the emperor’s “offer”.

An officer sent by Julian informed them that they would be given ten days to reconsider and that they would be required to burn incense to an idol of Jupiter before returning to their duties. The two saints knew that they probably had only ten days to live, so they chose to spend those days carefully distributing the remainder of their wealth to those who needed it most or who would continue to use it as they had.

When the deadline - June 26 in the year 362 - arrived, the officer arrived at the house in Rome at night and, in secret, in order to avoid the wrath of those who loved and respected John and Paul, he beheaded them and buried them under their own house. He then spread the word that the brothers had been sent into exile.

Curious friends discovered the truth and soon the house was turned into a shrine to the brothers whose Christian deeds and courageous deaths made them immediately proclaimed saints of the Church.



While this story cannot be verified by checking historical records, the history of the house on the Caelian Hill provides more direct verification. Sometime in the latter half of the fourth century, the house was owned by Byzantium, a Roman senator, and his son (St.) Pammachius, who was a friend of St. Jerome. They built a basilica above the shrine and it became known as the church of Saints John and Paul. At some point, the relics of the saints were moved to the altar of the basilica above.

The exterior of this church was rebuilt in the 12th century, but it was not until the 19th century that the original shrine to the two saints beneath the house was rediscovered. This area contains wall paintings of the two saints as well as others.

Saints John and Paul instruct us in choosing a life of faithfulness and charity: by choosing to carefully make use of an inheritance for the good of others instead of themselves; by choosing to resist the flattery of an offer of employment in the halls of power; by choosing to refuse to worship a pagan idol; and by choosing the death of martyrs in order to attain eternal life in the kingdom of God. *Holy John and Paul, pray for us.*

Resources: *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Saints* by Rev. Alban Butler; [New Liturgical Movement.org](http://NewLiturgicalMovement.org); passiochristi.org; wikipedia.

Parish News

We were so blessed to have our new Metropolitan, SABA, with us on Rogation Monday, May 22. His Eminence was present for a service of Matins (within the Octave of our Feast of Dedication), followed by the Litany of Saints, which is appointed for the Rogation days, sung in procession around the building. Sayedna spoke briefly to us about always living the Resurrection and then met with the clergy of the Chesapeake Deanery. Thank you to those who helped prepare and serve the luncheon which followed.



The great Feast of Pentecost, celebrating the giving of the Holy Spirit, is on June 4; we will observe the Vigil of Pentecost at 10AM on Saturday morning, June 3.

Our Archdiocesan appeal to provide help to those affected by the earthquakes in

Turkey and Syria has been fruitful. The financial contributions from around the Archdiocese so far amount to more than \$1.75 million and St. Gregory's contributed \$2,520 to that total. Six parishes who have members with relatives among the survivors and the departed collected specific items of food, clothing, and medical aid. A large shipping container of these items was sent to Balamand, Lebanon, and from there, Patriarch JOHN X is overseeing the distribution to those in need.

The Parish Life Conference for the Diocese of Oakland, Charleston, and the Mid-Atlantic will be held at Antiochian Village June 28 through July 2.

Redeem the Times, For the Days Are Evil

by Metropolitan SABA

Time passes quickly, and a person finds that many years of his life have quickly passed without allowing him to achieve what he wants. He continues to bemoan this and blame himself for its having passed him by. Our people often use the expression “if only” to rationalize letting themselves down and being unable to order their life’s affairs in the best way.

Blaming others is a way to make excuses for oneself and to flee from bearing responsibility and facing up to failure. This teaches us laxity and laziness. Blaming something else - whether a person, society or circumstances - is easier than blaming oneself. Putting the responsibility on someone or something else makes one forever immune to that responsibility. Therefore, successful people do not make others responsible for their failure but face failure with courage and honesty and reevaluate their work to arrive at the reason that it did not succeed. Then they return to it once more in order to succeed.

Time is considered one of the most important things for bearing responsibility and succeeding in life. How is time passed? What and who direct its course? How can it be spent in useful undertakings? When is it wasted? How is time precious, and how is it priceless? When should I take part in a certain event, and when is my participation not beneficial? Am I the one who directs the course of my day? Or do I let the day and what happens to me in it by chance guide me according to its whim?

These are questions that contemporary man must confront if he wants to be successful. Time is precious, and the affairs of this world consume us completely. When someone sits in front of an enjoyable television show, he doesn’t feel that he has lost two

hours, for example, in watching an inane program until after the two hours have passed.

This shows believers the importance of redeeming the time in order to be at the service of man and not at his expense. An ordered daily rhythm of prayers and readings is more than necessary. Do the faithful dedicate time every day to be alone with God, each according to his circumstances, time, work, and number of responsibilities? Set aside time for God to be alone and receive spiritual and psychological provision for your long day.

Set for yourself a weekly rhythm. Don’t be satisfied with only a daily one. Spouses, for example, sometimes need to dedicate a special evening for themselves. Their home life and their marital relationship need a special date. That evening, they don’t visit anyone and don’t receive any guests in their home. In this way, issues don’t pile up within them until they explode. Everyone is capable of establishing for himself a special rhythm that brings him back to himself and to his Lord. It helps him to set the course of his life aright and to return it to the straight path. He becomes satisfied with long prayer and careful reading of God’s word, the Holy Bible. He offers a service of love that his work prevents him from undertaking during the week.

The monthly rhythm requires spending a calm day far from work and social obligations. A day in the company of loved ones who share my faith, my orientation, and my spiritual and moral concepts. A day that increases my communion with them and their communion with me. A day of praying, studying the word of God, and taking a walk in nature. A day that I spend at a monastery or in spiritual exercise. A day where I escape from my daily routine in order to reorganize my life’s priorities.

The world takes us far away. Today’s man is like a log swept along by the flow of a surging river. Don’t let yourself be the log, but rather be the flow of the river!

Reprinted from *Spiritual Guidance: An Anthology of Writings and Teachings* by His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper), translated from the Arabic by Dr. Samuel Noble.



St. Gregory Orthodox Church
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>June 2023</h1>						<i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i>
				1 Octave of the Ascension	2 Ss. Marcellinus, Peter & Erasmus, MM, 304	3 Vigil of Pentecost; St. Kevin of Glendalough, Ab, c. 618 <i>Vigil Mass at 10am Vespers at 6pm</i>
4 Pentecost <i>R</i>	5 Monday after Pentecost; St. Boniface, BM, 754	6 Tuesday after Pentecost	7 Ember Wednesday in the Octave of Pentecost	8 Thursday after Pentecost	9 Ember Friday in the Octave of Pentecost; St. Columba of Iona, Ab, 597	10 Ember Saturday in the Octave of Pentecost; St. Margaret of Scotland, QW, 1092 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
11 Trinity Sunday; 1 st Sun. after Pentecost; St. Barnabas, Apostle, 1 st C <i>W</i>	12	13	14 St. Basil the Great, BCD, 379	15 Corpus Christi; Ss. Vitus, Modestus & Crescentia, Mm, c. 303	16	17 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
18 Sunday in the Oct. of Corpus Christi; 2 nd Sunday after Pentecost; St. Ephrem the Syrian, DnCD, 373 <i>W</i>	19 Ss. Gervase & Protase, Mm, 2nd. C	20 Translation of St. Edmund, KM, 980	21	22 St. Alban, Proto-martyr of England, 209; St. Paulinus of Nola, BC, 431	23 St. Etheldreda, QV, 679	24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
25 Third Sunday after Pentecost <i>G</i>	26 Ss. John & Paul, Mm, c. 362	27	28 St. Irenaeus of Lyons, BM, 202; Vigil of Ss. Peter & Paul	29 Ss. Peter & Paul, Apostles, 1st C	30 Comm. of St. Paul the Apostle	