

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church - A Western Rite Mission of the Antiochian Archdiocese

A Reading from a homily by St. Gregory Nazianzus

d. 389

feast day - May 9

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I cannot restrain the outburst of my happiness on this occasion. Yea, I am uplifted in mind, and my heart is deeply moved. And thereby I am in danger of forgetting mine own meanness, in my longing for the office of the great John Baptist. Or rather, I should say, I am filled with desire to undertake the service which he performed. It is true that I am not, as was he, Christ's Forerunner; but at least I come, as did he, from the desert. And like him, my joy is in Christ who was, as on this day, illuminated; or I might better say, My joy is in Christ who now doth illuminate us, and that with his own splendor. For Christ is baptized! Therefore, let us go down together with him into the deep, that likewise together with him we may go up, enlightened with his splendor.

John is baptizing; Jesus draweth nigh. And he is come thither that perchance he may sanctify the one that now acteth as the ministrant of Baptism; and that he may beyond all doubt bury the Old Adam beneath the flood; and that he may hallow the baptismal streams, such as of Jordan, above all other water. For he who is both Spirit and flesh would open, to all that should ever be baptized, the power of grace, whereby we may be born again, of the water and the Spirit. But lo! The Baptist putteth him off; nevertheless Jesus insisteth. I, saith John, have need to be baptized of thee! So speaketh the Voice to the Word.

Jesus cometh up from the waters! In the Second Adam all mankind hath been washed. The whole world, which had been submerged, is uplifted. And thereupon the heavens were opened unto him. Not cleft merely, but set open wide! For those same heavens were, by the sin of the First Adam, closed to himself and to us his posterity, what time the flaming swords of the Cherubim barred the gates of paradise. But the heavens were opened wide to the Second

Adam. And then did the Holy Ghost himself bear witness. The Spirit beareth witness to one who is of the same substance as himself. For witness fitly cometh down from heaven unto one who is from thence.

St. Theodosius, the Cenobiarch

Feast day, January 11



St. Theodosius

St. Theodosius was born in Cappadocia, in 423. He imbibed the first tincture of virtue from the fervent example and pious instructions of his virtuous parents. He was ordained reader, but some time after being moved by Abraham's example to quit his country and friends, he resolved to put this motion in execution. He accordingly set out for Jerusalem, but went purposely out of his road, to visit the famous St. Simeon Stylites on his pillar, who foretold him several circumstances of his life, and gave him proper instructions for his behavior in each. Having satisfied his devotion in visiting the holy places in Jerusalem, he began to consider in what manner he should dedicate himself to God in a religious state. The dangers of living without a guide made him prefer a monastery to a hermitage; and he therefore put himself under the directions of a holy man named Longinus, to whom his virtue soon endeared him in a very particular manner. A pious lady having built a church under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, on the high road to Bethlehem, Longinus could not well refuse her request, that his pupil should undertake the charge of it; but Theodosius could not be induced by any entreaties to consent to this proposal: absolute commands were necessary to force him to a compliance. Nor did he govern long; for dreading the poison of vanity from the esteem of men, he retired into a cave at the top of a neighboring desert mountain, and employed his time in fasting, watching, prayers, and tears, which almost continually flowed from his eyes. His food was coarse [beans] and wild herbs... Many desired to serve God under his direction: he at first determined only to admit six or seven, but was soon obliged to receive a greater number, and at length came to a resolution, which charity extorted from him, never to reject any that presented themselves with dispositions that seemed sincere...

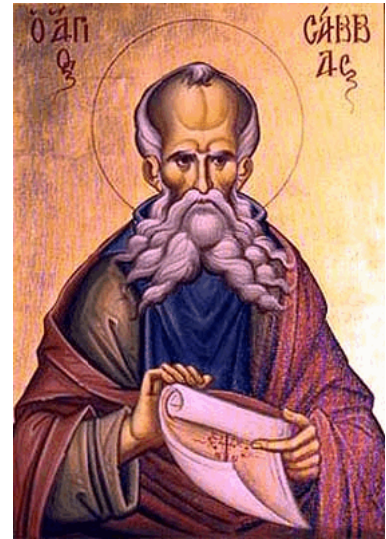
The lustre of the sanctity and miracles of St. Theodosius, drawing great numbers to him who desired to serve God under his direction, his cave was too little for their reception, there, having consulted heaven by prayer, he, by its particular direction, built a spacious monastery at a place called Cathismus, not far from Bethlehem, at a small distance from his cave, and it

was soon filled with holy monks. To this monastery were annexed three infirmaries; one for the sick, the gift of a pious lady in that neighborhood; the two others St. Theodosius built himself, one for the aged and feeble, the other for such as had been punished with the loss of their senses, or by falling under the power of the devil, for rashly engaging in a religious state through pride, and without a due dependence on the grace of God to carry them through it. All succors, spiritual and temporal, were afforded in these infirmaries, with admirable order, care, and affection. He erected also several buildings for the reception of strangers, in which he exercised an unbounded hospitality, entertaining all that came...

The monastery itself was like a city of saints in the midst of a desert, and in it reigned regularity, silence, charity, and peace. There were four churches belonging to it, one for each of the three several nations of which his community was chiefly composed, each speaking a different language; the fourth was for the use of such as were in a state of penance, which those that recovered from their lunatic or possessed condition before-mentioned, were put into, and detained till they had expiated their fault. The nations into which his community was divided, were the Greeks, which was by far the most numerous, and consisted of all those that came from any provinces of the empire: the Armenians, with whom were joined the Arabians and Persians; and thirdly, the Bessi, who comprehended all the northern nations below Thrace, or all who used the Runic or Slavonian tongue. Each nation sung the first part of the mass to the end of the gospel, in their own church, but after the gospel, all met in the church of the Greeks, where they celebrated the essential part of the sacrifice in Greek, and communicated all together.

The monks passed a considerable part of the day and night at their devotions in the church, and at the times not set apart for public prayer and necessary rest, every one was obliged to apply himself to some trade or manual labor, not incompatible with recollection that the house might be supplied with conveniences. Sallust, Bishop of Jerusalem, appointed St. Sabas superior general of the hermits, and our saint of the *Cenobites*, or religious men living in community throughout all Palestine, whence he was styled the *Cenobiarch*. These two great servants of God lived in strict friendship, and had frequent spiritual conferences together; they were also united in their zeal and sufferings for the church.

The emperor Anastasius patronized the Eutychian heresy [*ed. note*: Eutyches, who died in 454AD, is regarded as the founder of Monophysitism and denied that Christ's humanity was of "one substance" with ours], and used all possible means to



St. Sabas



engage our saint in his party. In 513 he deposed Elias, Patriarch of Jerusalem, as he had banished Flavian II, Patriarch of Antioch, and intruded Severus, an impious heretic, into that see, commanding the Syrians to obey and hold communion with him. Ss. Theodosius and Sabas maintained boldly the right of Elias, and of John his successor; whereupon the imperial officers thought it most advisable to connive at their proceedings, considering the great authority they had acquired by their sanctity. Soon after, the emperor sent Theodosius a considerable sum of money, for charitable uses in appearance, but in reality to engage him in his interest. The saint accepted of it, and distributed it all among the poor. Anastasius now persuading himself that he was as good as gained over to his cause, sent him an heretical profession of faith, in which the divine and human natures in Christ were confounded into one, and desired him to sign it. The saint wrote him an answer full of apostolic spirit, in which, besides solidly confuting the Eutychian error, he added, that he was ready to lay down his life for the faith of the church. The emperor admired his courage and the strength of his reasoning, and returning him a respectful answer, highly commended his generous zeal, made some apology for his own inconsiderateness, and protested that he only desired the peace of the church. But it was not long ere he relapsed into his former impiety, and renewed his bloody edicts against the orthodox, dispatching troops everywhere to have them put in execution. On the first intelligence of this, Theodosius went over all the deserts and country of Palestine, exhorting every one to be firm in the faith of the four general councils... His discourses had a wonderful effect on the people, and God gave a sanction to his zeal by miracles... The emperor sent an order for his banishment, which was executed; but [the emperor] dying soon after, Theodosius was recalled by his catholic successor, Justin, who, from a common soldier, had gradually ascended the imperial throne.

Our saint survived his return eleven years, never admitting the least relaxation in his former austerities. Such was his humility, that seeing two monks at variance with each other, he threw himself at their feet, and would not rise till they were perfectly reconciled; and once having excommunicated one of his subjects for a crime, who contumaciously pretended to excommunicate him in his turn, the saint behaved as if he had been really excommunicated, to gain the sinner's soul by this unprecedented example of submission, which had the desired effect.

During the last year of his life he was afflicted with a painful distemper, in which he gave proof of an heroic patience and an entire submission to the will of God... Perceiving the hour of

his dissolution at hand, he gave his last exhortations to his disciples, and foretold many things, which accordingly came to pass after his death. This happened in the one hundred and fifth year of his age, and of our Lord 529. Peter, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the whole country assisted with the deepest sentiments of respect at the solemnity of his interment, which was honored by miracles. He was buried in his first cell called the Cave of the Magi, because the wise men, who came to adore Christ soon after his birth, were said to have lodged in it.

Excerpted from Butler's Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Saints, Vol. 1 (first published in 1756; 1997 reprint).

A Sequence Hymn for Epiphany from the Sarum Missal

To the Child of God today Wise men rightful homage pay. Whom, immeasurably great, Chaldee sages venerate, to whose coming, man to save, all the prophets witness gave: His majestic throne on high, such his great humility, He refused not to forsake, and a servant's form to take; God from all eternity, ere the world began to be, He was man of Mary made: whom predicting Balaam said, Out of Jacob, seen from far, there shall come a flaming star, which with power shall smite the host of Moab to his utmost coast. Him their costly offering, gold, myrrh, incense, wise men bring. God, sweet incense; precious gold a king; myrrh doth a man unfold: angel-warned, no word they bring back to Herod, ruthless king, fearing much, in rage and hate, he should lose his royal state. Lo! The star before them went, homeward on their journey bent, glad they seek their native land, heeding not the king's command. Maddened with exceeding ire forth he sends the mandate dire throughout Bethlehem's costs to seek and to slay the infants meek. Now the choir their voice unite, organs swell with mystic rite, bringing to the King of kings, praise and costly offerings. O'er all kingdoms, o'er all lands may he spread his sheltering hands ever present to defend, unto worlds that never end.



Parish News

As we end our Christmas celebrations, many of us are still lamenting the way the world turns this holy time into an excessive riot of spending and partying (for at least a whole

month before December 25). Just as we Orthodox Christians can do much to counteract these distortions of the world by our prayerful preparation and attendance at all the services during Christmas, we should also sanctify the entire year by living the church's cycle of feasts and fasts. In doing this, we have a clearer sense of our place in God's eternal plan, and we keep our hearts grounded in the truths of our faith and our eyes on heaven. Saints days and other holy days are announced in this newsletter and in the Sunday bulletins, and Liturgies celebrated for the most important of these occasions are listed in the newsletter and on the web site.



We begin the year by celebrating our Lord's Circumcision on January 1 with a Sung Mass at 10:00AM, followed by a pot-luck brunch. We celebrate the three great mysteries of Epiphany - the visit and gifts of the Wise Men, the baptism of our Lord, and the first miracle of changing water into wine at a wedding in Cana - beginning on the Eve of Epiphany, Wednesday, January 5. At 7:00PM we will have the service of the Blessing of Water (water that will be used throughout the season for house blessings) and a Sung Mass at 7:30. A pot-luck supper will follow.

As the season of Epiphany is particularly long this year (Lent does not begin until mid-March and Pascha is May 1), there should be opportunity for blessing every home in the parish. Through this intentional dedicating of our homes to God, we ask for God's blessing upon the dwellings where we eat, sleep, study, play, pay bills, entertain friends and family, and we mark our doorways as a year-long reminder of this blessing. A house blessing can be an opportunity for introducing friends to the Orthodox faith or it can be a simple private event (and remember that you do not need to entertain or feed the priest). Please see Fr. Nicholas soon to schedule your house blessing.

The Annual Meeting of the parish will be held after Mass on Sunday, January 30, at which time we will hear reports on our work together, learn of the budget for the new year, and elect new Council members.

From the beginning of the Church, Christians have been admonished to give generously for those in need - to serve those in need is to serve Christ (MT. 25:31ff). To help relieve those suffering from the recent disaster in South Asia our gifts will be given through International Orthodox Christian Charities and can be sent directly (using the form found in the Sunday bulletins or at www.iocc.org) or checks can be made to St. Gregory's marked for "South Asia appeal".

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesd	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2005</h1>						1 The Cir- cumcision of our Lord <i>10AM Sung Mass, Pot-luck Brunch following</i>
2 nd Sunday after Christmas <i>8:30AM Matins 9:00 Sung Mass</i>	3 St. Genevieve, V, 512	4 St. Titus, BCM, c. 96	5 Vigil of Epiphany <i>7PM Blessing of Water, 7:30 Sung Mass, pot-luck supper following</i>	6 Epiphany	7 Of the Octave <i>FAST</i>	8 Ss. Lucian & Companions, MM, c. 290 <i>6PM Vespers</i>
9 ^{1st} Sunday after Epiphany <i>8:30AM Matins 9:00 Sung Mass</i>	10 Of the Octave	11 St. Theo- dosius, Ab., c. 529	12 St. Bene- dict Biscop, Ab., c. 690 <i>FAST</i>	13 Octave of Epiphany	14 St. Hilary of Poitiers, BCD, 367 <i>FAST</i>	15 St. Paul the Hermit, C, c. 345 <i>6PM Vespers</i>
16 ^{2nd} Sunday after Epiphany <i>8:30AM Matins 9:00 Sung Mass</i>	17 St. An- thony of Egypt, 356	18 St. Prisca, VM, c. 270	19 St. Mark of Ephesus, BC, 1445 <i>FAST</i>	20 Ss. Fabian, BM, 250, and Sebastian, M, 3 rd c.	21 St. Agnes, VM, 304 <i>FAST</i>	22 St. Vincent of Valencia, M, 304 <i>6PM Vespers</i>
23 ^{3rd} Sunday after Epiphany <i>8:30AM Matins 9:00 Sung Mass</i>	24 St. Tim- othy, Companion of St. Paul, BM, 97	25 Con- version of St. Paul the Apostle	26 St. Poly- carp, BM, 156 <i>FAST</i>	27 St. John Chrysos- tom, BCD, 407	28 St. Eph- rem, D, 373 <i>FAST</i>	29 ^{Feria} <i>6PM Vespers</i>
30 ^{4th} Sunday after Epiphany <i>8:30AM Matins 9:00 Sung Mass</i>	31 ^{Feria}					

Confessions are heard during the Psalms at Matins,
after Vespers, and by appointment.

Coffee Hour follows Liturgy on
Sunday mornings.