

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

June 2005 - Volume X, Issue 6

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

A Reading from a homily by St. Gregory the Great

*died 604AD
feast day - March 12*

Inside:

*St. Kevin of Glendalough . . . 2
Parish News 4
Calendar 5*

That the disciples were so slow to believe in the Lord's resurrection did not come so much from their want of strength as to strengthen us in the future, if I may speak in this way. He showed them in their doubt many proofs of his resurrection. What happens to us when we read and acknowledge them is that we are strengthened as a result of their doubt. Mary Magdalene, who was quick to believe, has helped me less than Thomas, who remained so long in doubt. While doubting he touched the scars of the wounds, and cut out of our hearts the wound of doubt.

Let us see what Luke reports in order to teach us the truth of the Lord's resurrection: "While he was eating with them he told them not to depart from Jerusalem" [Act. 1:4]; and after a little while, "As they were looking on he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight." [Act. 1:9] Note the words; mark the mysteries. "While he was eating with them he was lifted up." He ate and he ascended, so that the reality of his body might be disclosed as a result of his eating...

On this festive day we must particularly consider this, dearly beloved, that our decree of condemnation has been cancelled today [Col. 2:14], our sentence to corruption has been changed. The nature which was told, "You are dust and into dust you shall go" [Genesis 3:19], today went to heaven.

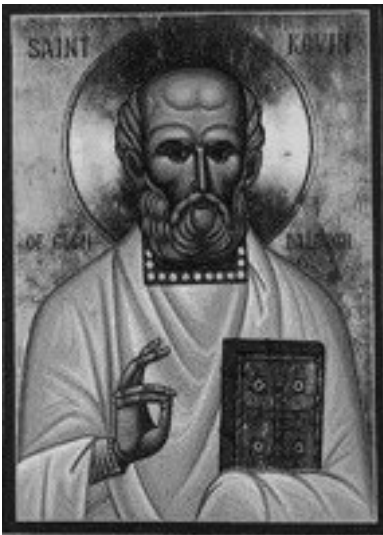
Of this festival the psalmist said: "Your splendor has been raised above the heavens" [Ps. 8:1]; and again: "God has ascended with a shout of joy, and the Lord with the sound of a trumpet" [Ps. 47:5]; and again: "Ascending on high he led captivity captive, he gave gifts to men." [Ps. 68:18]. Ascending on high, he led captivity captive since he

swallowed up our perishable nature by the power of his imperishable one. He gave gifts to men, because after sending the Spirit from above he gave to one the utterance of wisdom, to another the utterance of knowledge, to another the gift of virtue, to another the gift of healing, to another various tongues, to another the interpretation of utterances. [1 Cor. 12:8-10]. He gave gifts to men.

St. Kevin of Glendalough ~ Feast Day June 3

It is a human trait to want to follow the lives of the famous. We Americans have carried that trait to extremes in our day, with high profile trials of actors and athletes, tabloids recording every movement of those in the public eye, and television shows devoted to creating new “idols” for public adulation.

How much more wonderful it is when that very human need to connect with those who are famous is directed toward ones who exemplify Christian holiness and charity. In centuries past - before television, movies and instantaneous internet communication - the saints were often the focus of such public attention. St. Kevin of Glendalough was, both during his life and after, the object of this kind of devotion.



Kevin (or Coaimhghin, Coemgen, or Keivin) was born at the end of the 5th century in Leinster, Ireland. His Christian parents had him baptized by (St.) Cronan and, with the aid of (St.) Petroc, sought to bring him up in the faith. At age 12, Kevin went to live in a local monastery for further education. Having decided to continue in the monastic life, Kevin was eventually ordained priest by Bishop Lugidus.

Seeking greater solitude for prayer and meditation, Kevin began to search for a place in the wilderness. Guided by an angel, he traveled to Glendalough (“the valley of two lakes”), where he discovered a Bronze Age cave tomb, which he used as a cell. This cell became known as “St. Kevin’s Bed.” There, for the next seven years, Kevin lived as a hermit. His ascetic practices were severe: he dressed in animal skins and his diet often consisted of nettles and herbs that grew wild in the area. He spent many long hours in prayer and developed a unique rapport with the animals who came into contact with him.

As has so often happened to holy hermits, word of this man spread among the nearest people, and soon Kevin was

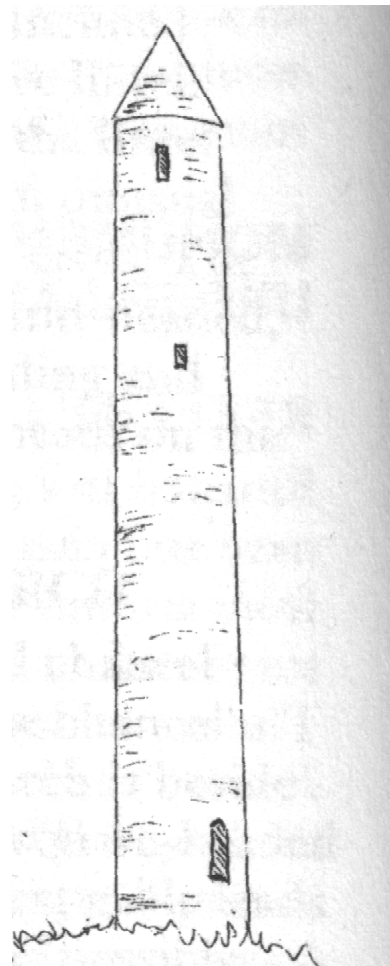
attracting followers. Out of necessity, he founded a monastery to accommodate those desiring the monastic life. Abbot Kevin made a pilgrimage to Rome, bringing back many relics for the monastery. Eventually, as the monastery grew, other houses were founded from this original one. Pilgrims seeking spiritual guidance came to the monastery to venerate the relics and to receive counsel, instruction, and the blessing of Abbot Kevin.

With renewed desire for solitude, Kevin left the monastery under the guidance of others and withdrew to the wilderness to live again as a hermit. His monks and other followers pursued him, however, and after four years, he returned to Glendalough to remain as abbot until his death (at over 100 years of age!) on June 3, 618.

Following his repose, pilgrimages to Glendalough continued, as the faithful came to venerate the relics of holy Kevin. Guest houses were added to the monastic buildings and hospitality became a major responsibility of the monks. A city grew up around this establishment and a cathedral was eventually built. Even today, tourists and pilgrims can see remnants of St. Kevin's monastery and evidence of the devotion which this holy monk has received through the centuries.

There are many tales about St. Kevin. Since the Irish have historically been great story-tellers, many of these probably fall into the category of "pious legend." However, they often reveal evidence of the great ascetic strength and reverence for animals that are doubtless literally true of St. Kevin. One story is often portrayed in pictorial representations of St. Kevin. It relates how, during one Lent, when the saint was in his hermit cell kneeling in prayer with outstretched arms, a blackbird flew into his open palm, built a nest and laid her eggs. In his compassion for one of God's creatures, St. Kevin remained motionless until the eggs had hatched and the baby birds had learned to fly!

When we succumb to our very human curiosity about the famous and prominent, may we remember that, in the eyes of God, the truly prominent are those who, like St. Kevin of Glendalough, have given their lives to prayer and service. May St. Kevin pray for us on our earthly pilgrimage.



*The round tower at
Glendalough Abbey*

Parish News



We will observe Rogation-tide on Sunday, June 5 as we sing the Litany in procession, praying for God's blessing on the crops and on other labors which provide for our needs.

We will celebrate the Feast of the Ascension on the Eve - Wednesday, June 8 - with a Sung Mass at 7:30PM followed by a pot-luck supper.

At Pentecost, the culmination of the great 50 day celebration which began at the Paschal Vigil, we read of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and the miracle of their ability to speak in many different tongues of "the wonderful works of God." [Acts 2:1-11]. As is our custom at St. Gregory's, we will read this account in as many different languages as possible.

We welcome Scott Parker as a catechumen and we pray for him as he continues his journey of faith in the Orthodox Church. Classes in the basics of our faith will begin soon; please speak to Fr. Nicholas if you are interested in attending as a "refresher" course.

Congratulations to Nathaniel Green, who will graduate from High school this month. Nathaniel will attend Hampden-Sydney College in Farmville, Virginia in the fall.

Thanks to Jennifer Caldwell, who has been updating the records and reorganizing the parish library. If you have books or videos from the library which you have finished reading or watching, please return them so they can be added to the inventory.

We have begun having Bible story time for the little ones of the parish on Sundays following coffee hour. A child is never too young to hear the stories of our faith.

The Eastern Region Parish Life Conference will be held in Morristown, New Jersey, June 29-July 3, hosted by St. George's in Little Falls, NJ. The Archdiocesan Convention, July 24-31, will be in Dearborn, MI this year. Anyone interested in attending these conventions should speak to Fr. Nicholas as soon as possible.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>June 2005</h1>						
			1 ^{Feria}	2 ^{Ss.} Marcellinus Peter & Erasmus, MM (304)	3 ^{St. Kevin of Glendalough, Abbot (618); St. Clotilda, Queen (545)}	4 ^{St. Petroc, C (564)} <i>6PM Vespers</i>
			FAST		FAST	
5 ^{Fifth Sunday after Easter (Rogation)} <i>8:30AM Matins 9AM Sung</i>	6 ^{Rogation Monday}	7 ^{Rogation Tuesday; St. Meriadoc, BC (659)}	8 ^{Vigil of the Ascension} <i>7:30PM Sung Mass, followed by potluck</i>	9 ^{Ascension Day [Comm. St. Columba, Ab., 597]}	10 ^{Within the octave}	11 ^{St. Barnabas Apostle} <i>6PM Vespers</i>
					FAST	
12 ^{Sunday within the Octave of Ascension} <i>8:30AM Matins 9AM Sung Mass</i>	13 ^{Within the Octave}	14 ^{St. Basil the Great, BCD (379)}	15 ^{Within the Octave}	16 ^{Octave of the Ascension}	17 ^{Friday after the Octave}	18 ^{Vigil of Pentecost} <i>6PM Vespers</i>
			FAST		FAST	
19 ^{Pentecost} <i>8:30AM Matins 9AM Sung Mass</i>	20 ^{Whit Monday}	21 ^{Whit Tuesday}	22 ^{Ember Wednesday [Comm. St. Alban, M, 209]}	23 ^{Vigil of St. John the Baptist}	24 ^{Nativity of St. John the Baptist [Comm. Ember Friday]}	25 ^{Ember Saturday} <i>6PM Vespers</i>
			FAST		FAST	FAST
26 ^{Trinity Sunday} <i>8:30AM Matins 9AM Sung Mass</i>	27 ^{Feria}	28 ^{Vigil of Ss. Peter & Paul [Comm. St. Irenaus, BC, 202]}	29 ^{Ss. Peter & Paul, Apostles (1st c)}	30 ^{Corpus Christi [Comm. St. Paul]}	<i>The Eastern Region Parish Life Conference is June 29-July 3 in Morristown, NJ</i>	
			FAST			

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

Coffee Hour follows Sunday Liturgy.