

# ✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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

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## *A Reading from a Sermon by Saint Caesarius*

*Archbishop of Arles  
d. 542  
feast day - August 27*

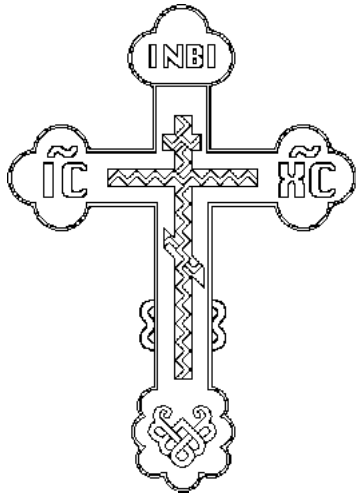
*Inside:*

*St. Pachomius . . . . . 2  
Parish News . . . . . 4  
The Ceremonies of Baptism  
and Chrismation . . 4  
Calendar . . . . . insert*

The Lord commanded Moses to make a brazen serpent and hang it on a tree, so that anyone who had been struck might look on it and be healed from death. Although this serpent seems to be quite wonderful, dearly beloved, still it prefigured the Incarnation of the Lord. Perhaps this thought might seem difficult to some men, if the Lord Himself had not spoken in the gospel. Thus He said: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." [John 3:14] That brazen serpent was then hung on a pole, because Christ was to be hung on the cross. At that time whoever had been struck by a serpent looked on the brazen serpent and was healed. Now the human race which was struck by the spiritual serpent, the devil, looks upon Christ with faith and is healed. If a man had been struck and failed to behold that brazen serpent, he died. So it is, brethren: if a man does not believe in Christ crucified, he is slain by the poison of the devil. Then, a man looked at the dead serpent in order to escape the live one; now, if a man wants to avoid the devil's poison, he looks on Christ crucified.

Death receives its name from a deadly bite, and it befell the human race because of the bite of the ancient serpent. Moreover, death could not be conquered except by death, so Christ suffered death in order that His unjust death might overcome the just death. By dying for them unjustly, He freed those who were rightly guilty. Whatever the devil did in the case of Adam, he seems to have done justly in the case of that man who sold himself for the pleasure of a single tree. Therefore, in Adam, as in his own servant, he rightly claimed dominion for himself as the master, but in the sufferings of Christ in whom he did not find a stain of sin, he performed his wicked deeds unjustly. As the Lord Himself said in the Gospel: "Behold the prince of this world is coming, and in me he finds nothing." [John 14:30]

What does this mean, he finds nothing: no sin at all. In the psalms He further says: “I must restore what I did not take away.” [Ps. 68:5] For this reason, by suffering death unjustly, Christ payed what Adam justly owed. The latter stretched out his hand to sweet fruits, the former extended them to the bitter cross; the one points out the tree of death, the other the tree of salvation. The one lifted himself up against God and fell; Christ humbled Himself in order to raise up all men. Adam brought death to everyone, Christ restored life to them all. At that time each one who looked on the brazen serpent was healed of the poisonous serpents. The brazen serpent which was put on a tree overcame the poison of the living serpents; when Christ hung on the cross and died, He suppressed the ancient poison of the devil and freed all men who had been struck by him.



O blessed cross which makes men blessed! O cross, from which such great and wonderful fruits are gathered! The fruit of the cross is a glorious resurrection. This fruit of the wood is truly planted “near running water,” [Ps. 1:3] for Baptism is always joined to the cross. However, this wood produced “its fruit in due season,” [Ps. 1:3] at the Lord's Resurrection. It will do so again when He appears from heaven, is seen on earth, and with the dazzling sign of the cross preceding Him, comes from above. Then, the bodies of all men who are buried will rise again, and then, “The faithful shall exult in glory.” [Ps. 149:5] Then those who are not confounded now because of the cross of their King and Lord but rather glory in it, “shall sing for joy upon their couches.” [Ps. 149] To Him is honor and glory together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

## *St. Pachomius, Abbot ~ Feast Day, May 14*

The goal of the Christian life is sanctification, union with God. We are to follow holy Scripture and the traditions of the Fathers, we are to pray fervently and partake of the Sacraments in striving for holy living. In our quest for “deification” we are to abstain from all that is sinful and which leads us away from God.

In the first centuries of the Church, martyrdom was often the shortest path to union with God, but as Christianity became accepted and favored in the Roman Empire, some chose to be “martyrs” to the world through monasticism.

St. Anthony of Egypt, in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century, established the path of monasticism - of leaving the world for the desolation

of the desert and the struggle to overcome temptation in isolation from others. St. Anthony is known as the “father of monasticism”; his way is known as the “eremitical” way.

A generation later, St. Pachomius of Egypt developed a different kind of monasticism, one in which sanctification was worked out in community with others. He is known as the founder of “cenobitic” monasticism.

Pachomius was born into a pagan family. At the age of 20, he was drafted into the Imperial army and during his service as a soldier, he was stationed in a Christian town and came in contact with the local people. He was impressed most of all by their kindness and generosity. When he was discharged from the army in 313, Pachomius became a catechumen and learned everything he could about the one True God. After his baptism, he decided to dedicate his whole life to God, so he sought out the hermit Palamon to learn how to live the ascetic life. Palamon at first refused the young man, testing his determination, but Pachomius' perseverance convinced the elder of his sincerity.



After several years of austere desert living, Pachomius had a vision in which an angel instructed him to build a monastery outside the deserted village of Tabennisi - a monastery with cells for many monks. Following these instructions on faith, Pachomius soon found himself surrounded by seekers. Out of necessity, he began to formulate a “rule” for these men, based partly on what he had learned from Palamon and partly on the needs of a group of people living together as a monastic community. The men were organized into groups based on their work skills and everything about their lives (including what they ate, how they dressed and slept) was determined by referring to holy Scripture. Pachomius, as the father of the community, entered completely into the life of service which he expected of the other monks - he waited on tables, tended the vegetable garden, cared for the sick.

Abbot Pachomius was known as a healer and miracle worker, but he also knew that God did not always grant healing. He prayed for God's will, not his own. He had many visions (like the one which began his monastic community) but warned his monks against seeking visions, as some were not from God but from the devil. He declared that the greatest vision was to see the “invisible God in the visible man who is his temple.” [quoted in *Vida Prima Graeca*, written c. 390 to record the memory of St. Pachomius by those who had known him.]

As the community grew, more monastic houses were founded by Pachomius, eventually totaling eleven (nine for men and two for women), and many who struggled to live a holy life in

these communities also became venerated as saints (St. Silvanus the actor, St. Paphnutius, and many others). His rule influenced later monastic leaders (such as St. Basil and St. Benedict) as they developed rules for their communities.

**P**lague struck the monks in the year 345 and Abba Pachomius was among those who died. He was 60 years old and had given the greater part of his life in humble devotion to God. His first impressions of Christian love - witnessed in the community he met while a young soldier - had inspired him to show his followers that it is in service to others that we most clearly achieve sanctification. Holy Pachomius, pray for us.

## *Parish News*

**W**e will celebrate our Lord's Ascension on the eve of the festival, Wednesday, May 19, with Sung Mass at 7:30PM followed by a pot-luck supper.

**O**n the celebration of the great feast of Pentecost on May 30, we will, as in past years, read the story of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles in many languages. In addition to Greek, Latin, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Czech and Japanese, we hope to add Hebrew and Arabic this year. If you have another language to offer, please speak with Fr. Nicholas.

**W**e welcome into Christ's holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Orthodox Church, the newly-illuminated servant of God John Michael Richard Goldman. Rick was baptized and chrismated at the Paschal Vigil, according to the most ancient practice of the Church (*see article following*).

**W**e welcome into the world and the parish family Eve Theodora O'Neill, who was born on March 30 and made her first appearances at church with her parents, Lien and Jim, during Holy Week. We look forward to her baptism in the near future.



**W**e will welcome Eric Cleveland home from his deployment in Kuwait on May 3. We continue to pray for God's protection for him and all those serving our country in difficult times.

**A**s this newsletter is going to press, Fr. Nicholas is in Jordan, participating in a clergy tour visiting the biblical sites in that country. Details of this trip will appear in the next newsletter.

*Lt. Col. Eric Cleveland showing a stained class window in a chapel in Baghdad which a unit commissioned from a local artist.*

# *The Ceremonies of Baptism and Chrismation*

With the service of Baptism at the Paschal Vigil still fresh in our memories, let us examine the meaning and symbolism behind some of the ceremonies we witnessed. These notes are adapted for Western Rite Orthodox usage from the Roman Ritual of 1964.

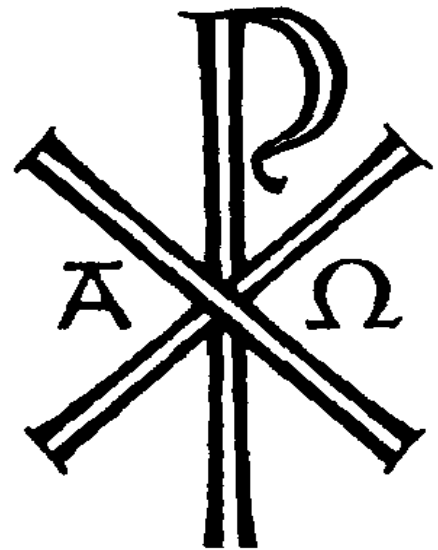
*Priest: What do you ask of the Church of God?*

*Catechumen: Faith.*

*Priest: What does Faith bring you to?*

*Catechumen: Life Everlasting.*

From the beginning the Church has proclaimed to men the good news of salvation in Christ. And from one who wants the benefit of the good news the response of faith is demanded. To ask for baptism is first of all to ask for the faith of the Church. The Catechumen undergoes a number of exorcisms which are to free the subject from the power of Satan, who has this power in view of original sin. The signification is accomplished by an exhaling of breath, as to blow away something, or figuratively, the act of dispelling the evil spirit. He is also marked with the sign of the Cross. By the cross Christ takes possession of the mind and heart of the Catechumen, fitting him to become a temple of the Blessed Trinity...



*Priest: Receive the salt of wisdom: may it avail thee for mercy unto life eternal.*

Salt is a condiment meant to flavor foods and also preserve them. Among some peoples it is given to a newly arrived guest in sign of hospitality and friendship. Among the Hebrews it was eaten to symbolize the binding nature of a compact. Christ told the Apostles: "You are the salt of the earth" (Mt 5.13). As salt acts on food to preserve it and keep it from spoiling, Christ's followers are to influence the world for good and to preserve from corruption the truths He taught them. In the rite of baptism salt is especially a symbol of wisdom--that the subject be given a relish for heavenly doctrine; and a symbol of a blessed immortality...

*Then the Priest, with his thumb, touches the ears of the Catechumen, saying, Ephthatha, that is, be opened.*

*Then he touches the nostrils saying, For a savour of sweetness.*

Christ used this action and these words in healing the deaf-mute...Here the action and words signify that the inner

faculties are being attuned and sharpened to perceive the good news of Christ's redeeming grace and its fragrance.

*Do you renounce Satan? And all his works? And all his allurements?*



The Catechumen now publicly renounces the devil three times, corresponding to the later threefold profession of faith. The candidate turns to the West, a symbol of darkness and evil and the lair of evil spirits, and spits in that direction to show loathing for the father of darkness. He then turns to the East, the region of the rising sun...the scene of Christ's second coming, to swear allegiance to our Lord... We can learn from this that baptism requires a reorientation or conversion of the whole man.

*I anoint thee with the Oil of salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, that thou mayest have eternal life.*

The Christian life is a contest and a struggle against the powers of evil. Therefore, as an athlete of Christ the baptismal candidate is anointed with oil, signifying that he is willing to engage in the contest, and that he is being given suppleness and strength for this purpose.

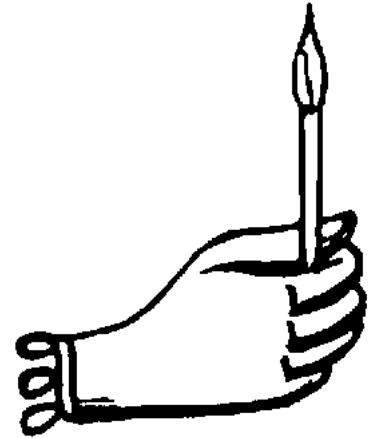
*I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

We come now to the most highly symbolic act of the whole rite: baptism in water which signifies and effects the cleansing of the soul, death and burial of the old life that comes from Adam, and resurrection to the new life that comes from union with Christ. No words can tell more eloquently what transpires here than these quotations from Sacred Scripture: "I will pour out on you pure water and you shall be purified. I will cleanse you of all your stains and of all your idols, and I will give you a new heart" (Ez 36.25). "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for it, to consecrate it, cleansing it by water and word, so that He might present the Church to Himself all glorious, with no stain or wrinkle or anything of the sort, but holy and without blemish" (Eph 5.26-27). "Let us make our approach in sincerity of heart and full assurance of faith, our guilty hearts sprinkled clean, our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10.22). "Have you forgotten that when we were baptized into union with Jesus Christ we were baptized into His death? By baptism we were buried with Him, and lay dead, in order that, as Christ was raised from the dead in the splendor of the Father, so also we might set our feet upon the new path of life" (Rom 6.3-4). "Baptized into union with Him, you have all put on Christ as a

garment" (Gal 3.27). "For in baptism you were buried with Him, in baptism also you were raised to life with Him" (Col 2.12).

*I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, and I confirm thee with the Chrism of salvation: the Seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit...*

According to long-standing tradition priests and kings are Anointed with oil. Christ our High Priest and King of kings received a supernatural anointing from His heavenly Father. So also [this person], newly made a Christian, is given the priestly anointing, because through baptism he shares in the priesthood of Christ... Another reason for the anointing is that baptism imprints on the soul an indelible character, marking one with the sign of membership in the Church and designating the right to participate in her worship. The Christian, as a witness of Christ, receives the seal of the cross as well as the anointing with chrism on his forehead, for he ought to be proud of his faith and to radiate it in an unblushing front, in demeanor redolent of sincerity and conviction. His very body, too, is consecrated and raised up to its proper role as image of the soul. The whole man is engaged in the duty of being a prophet, yes, even a martyr of God. The fragrant perfume in the chrism of anointing signifies the fragrance of a virtuous life that should characterize the new people of God.



*Receive this white garment, and see thou carry it without stain before the judgement-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life.*

Figuratively [this action is] putting off the old man of sin who stems from Adam. [The] new white garment is a sign of new innocence and purity; or as St. Paul says, "putting on Christ as a garment." This is reminiscent of our Lord's parable of the wedding garment.

*Receive this burning light, and keep thy baptism, so as to be without blame; keep the commandments of God, that, when the Lord shall come to the nuptials, thou mayest meet Him in the company of all the saints in the heavenly court, and have eternal life, and live for ever and ever. Amen.*

In a final ceremony the newly baptized is presented with a lighted candle... This is reminiscent of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. The present rite points up the truth that baptism is related not only to the past--the sacrifice of Christ; not only to the present--the grace of new birth; but also to the future--the glory of the life to come.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>May 2004</h1>						<b>1</b> Ss. Philip & James, Apostles  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
<b>2</b> <sup>3<sup>rd</sup></sup> Sunday after Easter [St. Athanasius]  <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM sung</i>	<b>3</b> Finding of the Holy Cross	<b>4</b> St. Monica, Widow	<b>5</b> <sup>Feria</sup>  FAST	<b>6</b> St. John Before the Latin Gate	<b>7</b> St. John of Beverley, BC	<b>8</b> <sup>Feria</sup>  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
<b>9</b> <sup>4<sup>th</sup></sup> Sunday after Easter [St. Gregory Nazianzen, BCD] <i>8:30AM Matins</i>	<b>10</b> <sup>Feria</sup>	<b>11</b> <sup>Feria</sup>	<b>12</b> St. Epiphanius of Salamis, B  FAST	<b>13</b> St. Boniface of Tarsus, M	<b>14</b> St. Pachomius, Abbot  FAST	<b>15</b> <sup>Feria</sup>  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
<b>16</b> <sup>5<sup>th</sup></sup> Sunday after Easter (Rogation) [St. Brendan]  <i>8:30AM Matins</i>	<b>17</b> Rogation Monday	<b>18</b> Rogation Tuesday [St. Venantius, M]	<b>19</b> <sup>Vigil of Ascension</sup> on [St. Dunstan of Canterbury, BC] <i>7:30 Sung Mass, pot-</i>	<b>20</b> Ascension of Our Lord	<b>21</b> Of the Octave  FAST	<b>22</b> Of the Octave  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
<b>23</b> Sunday After Ascension  <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	<b>24</b> St. Vincent of Lerins, CD (Of the Octave)	<b>25</b> St. Urban of Rome, BM (Of the Octave)	<b>26</b> St. Eleutherius of Rome, BM (Of the Octave)	<b>27</b> <sup>Octave of Ascension</sup> St. Bede the Venerable, CD	<b>28</b> St. Germanus of Paris, BC  FAST	<b>29</b> <sup>Vigil of Pentecost</sup>  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
<b>30</b> <sup>The Feast of Pentecost</sup>  <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	<b>31</b> <sup>Whit Monday</sup> [St. Petronilla, VM]					

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

*Coffee Hour is held on Sunday mornings following Liturgy.*