

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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A Reading from the First Epistle of St. Clement

d. c. 100

feast day - November 23

Inside:

The Necessity of Prayer . . . 2

Ss. Simon and Jude 4

Calendar 7

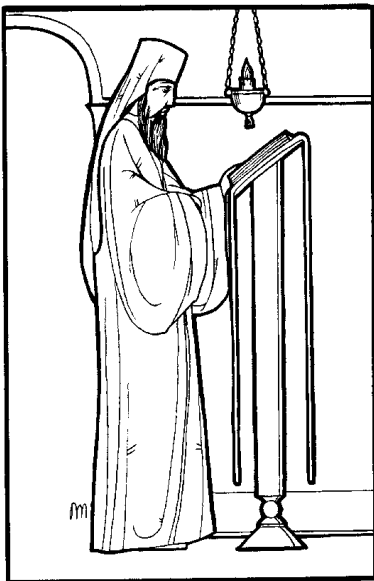
This is the way, dear friends, in which we found our salvation, Jesus Christ, the high priest of our offerings, the protector and helper of our weakness. Through him we fix our gaze on the heights of heaven. In him we see mirrored God's pure and transcendent face. Through him the eyes of our hearts have been opened. Through him our foolish and darkened understanding springs up to the light. Through him the Master has willed that we should taste immortal knowledge. For, "since he reflects God's splendor, he is as superior to the angels as his title is more distinguished than theirs." [Heb. 1:3, 4] For thus it is written: "He who makes his angels winds, and his ministers flames of fire." [Heb. 1:7; Psalm 104:4] But of his Son this is what the Master said: "You are my Son: today I have begotten you. Ask me and I will give you the nations for you to inherit, and the ends of the earth for you to keep." [Heb. 1:5; Psalm 2:7, 8] And again he says to him: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." [Heb. 1:13; Psalm 110:1] Who are meant by "enemies"? Those who are wicked and resist his will.

Really in earnest, then, brothers, we must march under his irrefragable orders. Let us note with what discipline, readiness, and obedience those who serve under our generals carry out orders. Not everybody is a general, colonel, captain, sergeant, and so on. But "each in his own rank" [I Cor. 15:23] carries out the orders of the emperor and of the generals. The great cannot exist without the small; neither can the small exist without the great. All are linked together; and this has an advantage. Take our body, for instance. The head cannot get along without the feet. Nor, similarly, can the feet get along without the head. "The tiniest parts of our body are essential to it," [I Cor. 12:21, 22] and are valuable to the total body. Yes, they all act in concord, and are united in a single obedience to preserve the whole body.

Following this out, we must preserve our Christian body too in its entirety. Each must be subject to his neighbor, according to his special gifts. The strong must take care of the weak; the weak must look up to the strong. The rich must provide for the poor; the poor must thank God for giving him someone to meet his needs. The wise man must show his wisdom not in words but in good deeds. The humble must not brag about his humility; but should give others occasion to mention it. He who is continent must not put on airs. He must recognize that his self-control is a gift from another. We must take to heart, brothers, from what stuff we were created, what kind of creatures we were when we entered the world, from what a dark grave he who fashioned and created us brought us into his world. And we must realize the preparations he so generously made before we were born. Since, then, we owe all this to him, we ought to give him unbounded thanks. To him be glory forever and ever Amen.

The Necessity of Prayer

by Fr. Matta El-Meskeen



The human soul's relationship with God and the longing to speak with him are essential elements of man's very being. In the same way, ministry and praise are essential elements in the nature of angels. The tree that is ordained to bear fruit according to its kind does so in its proper season. So, too, does the man who responds to the spirit of worship within his soul also bear good fruit in good time.

The tree appeals to the eyes of the gardener as one of good quality when it yields the expected fruit. So does the man who prays in good season appeal to God. The fruit, in fact, is the gardener's ultimate hope in planting the tree, then watering and tending it. Fruit is the relationship that binds the tree to the gardener's heart and thought. It is also the main purpose that motivates him to care for it and keep it in his garden.

Prayer functions in much the same way. God is the good vine dresser who bought us with his blood and acquired us for his vineyard. He planted us in his kingdom. He thus expects us to bear fruit. This is the ultimate aim of his enduring hardship and suffering on the cross. The ripe fruit of the blood that was shed, and the conscious response to the work of his love and suffering, is our prayer. But is prayer vital to our existence in this world?

First, we should know that the world in which we now live is one that has fallen back to the worship of idols - money,

greed, and sensual pleasure. It is a world from which the fear of God has withdrawn. The race for gathering wealth; the use of power, cunning, guile, and bribery for reaching distinguished positions; the resorting to lies for self-vindication; the use of force and oppression for establishing supremacy - all have now become commonplace. Such is the case both in the world and in the Church alike.

As for how to “save myself” in such a world, it has become a very critical problem. It demands much struggle and dissociation from this corrupt environment. One has to take refuge in prayer as the first and only weapon. In this age, more than in any other, prayer has become the vital need on which hang the loss or the salvation of one’s soul. In such an age, man may live without a God and escape the notice of everyone. He may even be praised and commended! In the midst of this world - which teems with atheism, sin, and injustice - prayer now stands as a reminder for all of us that we have a living God, a kingdom prepared for us, another glorious life, and a judgment we have to face.



Prayers also reminds us day after day that we are not of this world. We are the children of light. Prayer reminds us that we ought not to have communion with the dissolute, the wanton, the lewd, or the immoral.

Prayers restrains our hearts from coveting injustice. It keeps our feet from wandering down the path of sin and our tongues from flattery and lies. Prayer supplies us with a deep insight, so that we may refrain from involvement in wrongdoing or condoning improper behavior or praising wayward or wicked actions.

Prayers grants us every day with a new heartfelt peace in return for that which we lose as a result of the provocations and injustices that we face in the world. Had it not been for God’s grace, we could have been blighted with anxiety and morbidity.

Prayers is an inward light that exposes the blemishes and defects of our daily conduct. This saves us from being driven into the abyss of hell.

But God does not seek mere believers. Rather, he seeks “true worshipers...who worship him... in spirit and truth” [John 4:23, 24]. Here, Christ refers to the lawful state of prayer that is recognized by the Father. For God is truth, and he accepts no prayer except in truth. Such a prayer knows him well and surely believes in him. God is Spirit, and he accepts no prayer except in spirit. Such a prayer knows what eternal life is and submits to the

Spirit of God. Therefore, the prayer that is in spirit and truth is the only prayer acceptable to God. It is thus an expression of true spiritual contact with God. This definition is actually the summary of the whole clear-cut theological concept of true prayer, or spiritual prayer.

Moreover, Christ's words that God "seeks" such worshipers, or prayerful people, reveals the value and need for prayer from God's point of view: God seeks [John 4:23]. The word *seeks* implies that God looks for man's prayer and shares in providing the circumstances and possibilities for its success. It is as if the existence of man hangs ultimately in the eyes of God on the existence of those who worship him in spirit and truth! True prayer here appears as the only channel or bond between man and God. Without prayer, man loses the meaning of his existence and the purpose of his creation.

Oh that we should always remember that God ever seeks our worship! It is as if he awaits the hour of our prayer.

Ed. Note: Fr. Matta El-Meskeen (Matthew the Poor) is a monk and spiritual father of the Monastery of St. Macarius the Great, Wadi El-Natroun, Egypt. This excerpt is from Orthodox Prayer Life: The Interior Way.

St. Simon and St. Jude - Feast day, October 28

From The Lives of the Holy Apostles, translated from the Russian and published by Holy Apostles Convent in Buena Vista, Colorado, 1988.



The holy Simon was a native of Cana of Galilee and was known personally to the Lord and to His all-pure Mother, for the town of Cana was not far distant from Nazareth. When Simon celebrated the occasion of his marriage, he invited to that festivity the Lord, His immaculate Mother, and His disciples. Since there was a shortage of wine for the guests, the Lord changed water into wine [John 2:1-11]. Struck by this miracle, the bridegroom came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the true God, and, leaving his wedding festivities and his very house, he followed after the Lord with zeal. Hence he received the name "Zealot."

On Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in the form of tongues of fire, they received the gift of tongues, enabling them to preach the Gospel to all nations. Having received the Holy Spirit with the rest, Simon went forth and preached Christ throughout various lands, passing through Egypt, Mauritania, Libya, Numidia, Cyrenia and Abkhazia. In Abkhazia, a region of the northeastern shore of the Black Sea, he enlightened with the Faith of Christ many pagans. He also went to Britain, where he enlightened many unbelievers with the light

of the Gospel. There he was crucified by idolators and buried. This is one of the earliest traditions, the principal authority for which is St. Dorotheus, Bishop of Gaza (A.D. 300). St. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, a respected historian in his own right (A.D. 758-829), also confirms his visit to Britain. Other traditions place the apostle in Persia, with St. Jude, with whom he was martyred. And yet others claim that St. Simon...was buried in the city of Nikopsia....

The holy Apostle Jude was one of the twelve apostles of the Lord, and was of the tribe of Judah, from which David and Solomon were descended. St. Jude was born in the city of Nazareth in Galilee, the son of the righteous Joseph, to whom the all-pure Virgin Mary was betrothed. According to tradition, the mother of Jude was Salome, daughter of Haggai, the son of Barachiah, a brother of St. Zacharias, the father of the holy Prophet John the Forerunner of the Lord. This Jude was the brother of the holy Apostle James the Just, first hierarch of the Church of Jerusalem. The holy Apostle Jude is usually called Jude of James, that is, brother of the Apostle James. This appellation he preferred in accordance with his humility, for he considered himself unworthy to be called the brother of the Lord according to the flesh, since he had sinned before the Lord...by his lack of faith...

The holy Evangelist John the Theologian bears witness to Jude's sin of lack of faith when he writes: "Neither did His brethren believe in Him" [John 7:5]. Explaining this passage of the Gospel, the holy Theophylactus understands the brethren mentioned here to be the children of Joseph. He says: "Even His brethren, the children of Joseph (among whom also was this Jude), did not believe in Him - that is, in Jesus. And whence came this disbelief in Him? From their own foolish will and from envy, for it is more characteristic of kinsfolk to envy their own relatives than for outsiders to do so." Thus, it is clear that Jude sinned against the Lord in his lack of faith.

Apart from this apostle being called Jude of James, Jude also has other titles. The Evangelist Matthew calls him Lebbaeus [which] signifies "ardent... and Thaddaeus, which means "he who renders praise"... Very little is known to us of the life and activity of the holy Apostle Jude, apart from the fact that he married a woman named Mariam. Besides this, all that is known is that, during the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81-96), two grandsons of Jude, who toiled in working the land with their own hands, were brought before the emperor himself, on the basis of slanders made by heretics, because they were descendants of David and kinsmen of the Lord. But when the emperor saw for himself that they posed no political danger to him, they were set free.





*The Feast of Our Lady
of Walsingham is
October 15th*

Like the other “brethren of the Lord” according to the flesh, the Apostle Jude undertook many evangelical labors, spreading the Gospel of Christ. Shortly after the ascension into heaven of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle Jude, as did all of the apostles of Christ, set out to preach the Gospel. According to the testimony of the ecclesiastical historian Nicephorus: “The divine Jude... the son of Joseph and brother of the James who was cast down from the pinnacle of the temple of Jerusalem, preached the Gospel and disseminated Christianity first in Judaea, Galilee, Samaria, Idumaea, and afterwards in Arabia, Syria and Mesopotamia. Finally, he came to the city of Edessa, which belonged to King Abgar, where the Gospel had been preached before him by another Thaddaeus, one of the seventy apostles. There, the Apostle Jude set about and completed what had not been finished by that Thaddaeus.”

There is some indication that the holy Apostle Jude also preached Christianity in Persia, from whence he wrote his catholic epistle in the Greek tongue. The occasion or reason for his composing this epistle was the fact that ungodly people had concealed themselves within the community of believers, and turned the grace of God into an opportunity for iniquity and, under the guise of Christian freedom, allowed themselves to commit all manner of abominable deeds. This short epistle contains many profound thoughts and much edifying doctrine. It deals, in part, with dogmatic teaching: the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the difference between good and evil angels, and the dread judgment which is to come; and in part, with moral teaching: exhortation to avoid the impurity of sin.... The apostle advises everyone to be steadfast in his duties, in faith, prayer and love; he advises us to concern ourselves over the return of the erring, [and] to avoid heretics... [Jude 10:7]. Moreover, in his epistle, the holy Apostle Jude says that it is not enough for salvation to be converted from paganism to Christianity, but in addition to faith it is necessary to do good works befitting Christians and worthy of salvation... Thus, in a few words the Apostle Jude reveals great truths in his epistle.

Many other lands did the holy Apostle Jude visit, preaching the Gospel, converting peoples to the Christian Faith and guiding them to the path of salvation. Laboring in this manner, he reached the lands around Mt. Ararat, and there, having converted a multitude of people from idolatry, he made them Christians. By so doing, the apostle stirred up the pagan priests mightily against himself. They seized him and, after subjecting him to diverse tortures, hung him on a cross and ran him through with spears. Thus ended the struggle and life of the holy Apostle Jude, and he departed to Christ God, to receive from Him a crown of everlasting reward in heaven.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>October 2004</h1>					1 St. Remigius, BC, c. 530; St. Bavo, Hermit, 659 FAST	2 Holy Guardian Angels <i>6PM Vespers</i>
3 Pentecost XVIII <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	4 Feria	5 St. Placid & Companions, Mm, 6 th century	6 St. Faith, VM, c. 287 FAST	7 St. Mark of Rome, BC, 336	8 Feria FAST	9 Ss. Denys, Rusticus & Eleutherius, Mm, 3 rd century <i>6PM Vespers</i>
10 Pentecost XIX (St. Paulinus, BC, 644) <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	11 St. Kenneth, Ab.	12 St. Wilfrid of York, BC, 709	13 St. Edward, KC, 1066 FAST	14 St. Callistus, BM, c. 222	15 Our Lady of Walsingham FAST	16 St. Gall, Ab., 646 <i>6PM Vespers</i>
17 Pentecost XX <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	18 St. Luke the Evangelist, 1 st century	19 St. Frideswide, Abs., 735	20 Feria FAST	21 St. Hilarion of Gaza, Ab, c. 371	22 St. Ursula & Companions, Vv Mm, 453 FAST	23 Feria <i>6PM Vespers</i>
24 St. Raphael the Archangel [Pent. XXI] <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	25 Ss. Chrysanthus & Daria, Mm, 283	26 St. Evaristus, BM, c. 197	27 Vigil of Ss. Simon & Jude FAST	28 Ss. Simon & Jude, Apostles, 1 st c.	29 Feria FAST	30 Feria <i>6PM Vespers</i>
31 The Feast of Christ the King [Pent. XXII] <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>			<i>Confessions are heard during the Psalms at Matins, following Vespers, and by appointment.</i>			<i>Abbreviations: Ab = Abbot Abs = Abbess Ap = Apostle B = Bishop C = Confessor K = King M = Martyr Mm = Martyrs V = Virgin</i>