

# ✠ 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 the works of Saint Nicholai Velimirovich*

*d. 1956*

*feast day - March 18*

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**T**heology means the word about God. Theology is therefore ALL or nothing. The whole of nature and the super-nature and the subternature - IS ALL theology; all man and every part of him is theology; every meadow and every flower is theology; Sirius and the Milky Way, nebulae and meteors are theology; the history of the planet and the history of the people, the history of radio-activity and the history of every butterfly, and of every grain of sand, and of every drop of water, and of every ray of light are theology.

**I**f the whole of nature is not theology, then theology is nothing or nature is nothing. If the whole of nature does not speak about God, who will believe Isaiah or Paul? If the whole of the world around is a wilderness, what can the voice of one prophet crying about God in that wilderness accomplish? If the whole universe does not speak of God, who can without contempt hear the words of one man?

**C**onsider the lilies of the field, and if they tell you nothing about God, the abundance of the wealth and wisdom of Solomon will say nothing to you. Open an algebra book and if it does not reveal God, Moses will be unable to show you anything about Him. If you do not see God in the table of logarithms, why will you open the Epistle to the Romans?

**T**he publicans and the Pharisees sought a sign from heaven, and it was not given to them. But our generation seeks a heavenly sign - a miracle to believe. "Show us God," say many of our contemporaries - "show us God and we will believe." BUT HOW? Do not these people who despise miracles and do not believe in them, demand a greater miracle?...We must say to them: SHOW US WHAT IS NOT GOD!

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Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich was the Rector of St. Tikhon's Seminary  
and was glorified as a saint of the Church in 2003. He also compiled  
The Prologue from Ochrid, a collection of lives of the saints and  
meditations (see p. 6).*

## *St. Lioba, Abbess - Feast Day September 22*



**T**he Orthodox path for converting others to Christianity is one of example and teaching rather than coercion. During the first centuries, as the power of government was being exercised to coerce people away from the faith, the example of faithful Christians brought about the rapid spread of the church throughout the world.

**E**ven after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, missionaries whose zeal led them to pagan lands were careful to win people to the faith by showing the love of Christ in their lives. This method was followed by numerous saints whom we venerate - from St. Patrick in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Ss. Cyril and Methodius in the 9<sup>th</sup>, to Ss. Herman, Innocent, and others who came to North America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and St. Nicholas (whose mission in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was to the Japanese). All these laborers in God's vineyard did so through holy example and persuasive teaching. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, a group of English nuns, led by the Abbess Lioba, was called to engage in this kind of mission among the pagan Saxons.

**L**ioba was born in Wessex around the year 700. She was sent to the convent of Minster-in-Thamet to be educated and later entered Winborne Abbey under Abbess Tetta (the king's sister). There the bright young girl excelled in classical studies and especially in knowledge of the Scriptures, the writings of the Fathers, and the decrees of the councils. Along with the other nuns, Lioba developed skill in manuscript copying, which the nuns sometimes executed in the style of imperial documents, writing in gold letters on purple velum.

**L**ioba's relative (probably a cousin on her mother's side of the family) was the priest Boniface, who in 722 was consecrated to be a missionary bishop to Saxony, Thuringia and Hesse. Lioba was greatly interested in this effort and she began a correspondence with her cousin, offering her prayers for the success of his mission.

Establishing his “headquarters” in Mainz, Bishop Boniface began the arduous task of preaching Christianity to the local people. Some years later, recognizing the need for the “anchoring” presence of monastics and remembering Lioba’s interest, he wrote to the Abbey at Winborne requesting the assistance of mission-minded nuns. Thirty nuns, under Lioba’s direction, willingly left home, family, and all that was familiar to share in this missionary endeavor.

A monastery was established for the nuns at Bischofsheim on the River Tauber and there, following the daily pattern of manual work (in the kitchen, bakery, brewery, and garden), study - and above all, prayer - established by St. Benedict, the nuns began to convert others through their example and teaching. Just as the custom had been in England, girls were sent to them to receive a basic education and the nuns looked after families in need. Their example of daily prayer had a positive effect on the local people and many - community leaders and clerics - came to Abbess Lioba for counsel and encouragement. “Daughter” monasteries were founded as the convent filled with local girls taking monastic vows.

Abbess Lioba, as well as the other nuns (such as St. Walburga, who became the Abbess of Heidenheim) maintained a correspondence with their founding bishop. About 150 letters to and from St. Boniface have been preserved and attest to the piety and love of St. Lioba and her companions as they persevered in their mission despite the emotional distress of being so far from their homeland.

In 754, as St. Boniface departed for further missionary work in Friesland, he wrote to Lioba, commending to her the care of his monks at Fulda in the event of his death. He expressed a desire that she be buried with him in the tomb at Fulda prepared for him at her death. St. Boniface did indeed receive the crown of martyrdom shortly thereafter and Lioba often visited his shrine in the monastery at Fulda.

After a long and faithful life of 80 years, St. Lioba passed from this life to the next and was buried near the high altar in the monastery at Fulda, honoring her cousin’s request. Within fifty years of her death, she was included in the lists of saints in German liturgical books. When Rudolf of Fulda wrote her “life” in 837, he declared of this saintly woman that “she taught by example in patience and love toward others.” May we, through the intercession of St. Lioba, be Christ’s missionaries in this same way.



*The Feast of  
St. Michael & All Angels  
September 29<sup>th</sup>*

# Back to School

*As another school year begins, we pray for our children, who face many challenges and opportunities. We ask for God's blessing especially on Amanda Painter, as she returns to Roanoke College; and on Christopher Jones, who is entering George Mason University, and Alice Hawfield, who is beginning studies at New York University. We also pray for those in high school and middle school, those who are home-schooled, and the infants and toddlers who are daily becoming more knowledgeable in the ways of the world. Parents and all of us in the parish have a responsibility for the education of these children in the ways of God. As a reminder, we include the following, from the preface to a timeless little book, On the Upbringing of Children, by the Russian Bishop Irenaeus, written in 1901 and reprinted by the (Serbian) St. Xenia Skete in 1991.*

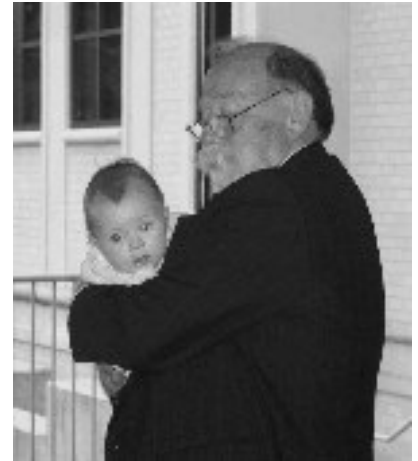


**N**ever in the history of mankind has there been such a plethora of advice available to parents on how to raise their children. There are books about how to maximize your child's intelligence, talents, creativity; how to speed and enhance his learning; how to integrate and improve his motor skills, his self-esteem; how to get him to use both sides of his brain; and how to make sure he's "well-adjusted" - in other words, how to produce a "super-baby." But the shortest review of this material reveals that, from an Orthodox Christian's perspective, most of it is woefully limited and one-sided. Most often, the books available focus entirely on the child's adjustment to this world and blithely ignore his moral and spiritual development. There is precious little available to help parents prepare the child to become a citizen of heaven. But what other goal of child-raising can even take a close second to this paramount objective?

**I**t was not that long ago that pious parents raised their children to become Saints, to serve God in this world and the next. Perhaps only two generations go, parents were still raising Saints in Orthodox countries. But the success of anti-Christianity in our time has been so complete that concern for one's own salvation is considered, at best, a harmless eccentricity, while concern for one's children's salvation is sometimes even considered dangerous by forward-looking educators. It is time for us to ask: Are we the last Christians? "When the son of man returns, will he find faith upon the earth?" [Luke 18:8] God forbid that we should be called upon to answer for children whom we have prepared to go to college, but not to confess their faith in a hostile environment... We must strive to train our own and our children's souls to the high ideal of holiness given us by Christ. May God [grant assistance to] parents in their difficult and delicate task of raising children fit for His Kingdom.

## Parish News

Our newest member, Eve Theodora O'Neill (shown here entertaining her godfather, Jerome Chiles) was baptized on Saturday, July 24 at Ss. Peter and Paul Church in Potomac. We are grateful to Fr. George Rados for allowing us to use their building for the baptism and festivities following.



St. Gregory's was represented at the Special Archdiocesan Convention in Pittsburgh (July 16-17) by Fr. Nicholas, Khouria Rebecca, Subdeacon Jerome, and the O'Neills (including Eve Theodora who made many new friends). The Western Rite Vicariate met on Thursday (July 15) beginning with a Sung Mass served by members of St. Gregory's (as we were the closest parish). We heard reports from the Western Rite congregations which included the new missions in Wichita and the Hudson Valley in New York; additional missions are in formation in Texas. St. Columba's, formerly in Bolder, CO, has built a new building in Lafayette (<http://www.stcolumbachurch.org/building.cfm>); and Our Lady of Walsingham, Mesquite, TX has a good possibility of buying an existing church building.

In the Convention itself we passed a new Archdiocesan Constitution to reflect our new self-ruled status, granted by the Patriarchate. We passed a budget for 2006 that reflects the new organization of the Archdiocese and nominated candidates for an election of new bishops (the bishops will elect three additional bishops within the next year). The Archdiocese has been reorganized into nine dioceses and St. Gregory's will be part of the Diocese of New York and Washington, DC, directly under Metropolitan PHILIP. Although the convention had been scheduled to last for two days, the business of the convention was completed in one day - a reflection of the unity which has come to this Archdiocese as a gift of the Holy Spirit, under Sayedna PHILIP's leadership.

In September we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Cross with Sung Mass on the eve of the feast (Monday, September 13) and the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels will also be celebrated on the eve of the feast (Tuesday, September 28). Both services will be at 7:30PM and be followed by potluck suppers.



# Concerning Holy Cross Day - September 14

By St. Nikolai Velimirovic, from The Prologue From Ochrid, translated by Mother Maria, 1986.



*We adore thee, O Christ,  
and we bless thee, because  
by thy Holy Cross thou  
hast redeemed the world.*

**O**n this day are commemorated two events connected with the Precious Cross of Christ: the first, the finding of the Cross on Golgotha and the second the returning of the Cross to Jerusalem from Persia.

**S**taying in the Holy Land, the holy Empress Helena decided to look for the Precious Cross of the Lord. An old Jew called Judah was the only person who knew the whereabouts of the Cross, and, under pressure from the Empress, he revealed that the Cross was buried under the Temple of Venus that the Emperor Hadrian had built on Golgotha. The Empress ordered that this idolatrous temple be pulled down, and then, digging deep below it, she found three crosses. While the empress was in uncertainty about how to recognize which cross was the Lord's, a funeral procession passed by. Then Patriarch Macarius told them to place the crosses one by one on the dead man. When they placed the first and second on him, the dead man remained unchanged, but when they placed the third on him, he was restored to life. By this, they knew that this was the Precious and life-giving Cross of Christ. After that, they placed it on a sick woman, and she recovered. Then the Patriarch raised the Cross aloft for all to see, and the people sang with tears: "Lord, have mercy!" The Empress Helena had a silver casing made, and placed the precious Cross in it.

**L**ater, King Chozroes conquered Jerusalem, took the people into slavery and carried the Lord's Cross off to Persia, where it remained for fourteen years. In 628, the Greek Emperor Heraclius was victorious over Chozroes and brought the Cross back to Jerusalem with great ceremony. Entering the city, Heraclius was carrying the Cross on his back, but suddenly the aged Emperor was unable to take another step. Patriarch Zacharias saw an angel directing the Emperor to take off his imperial robes and walk beneath the Cross along the way that Christ had walked, barefoot and humiliated as He had been. He passed this vision on to the Emperor, who stripped himself of his raiment and, in poor clothing and barefoot, took up the Cross, carried it to Golgotha and placed it in the Church of the Resurrection, to the joy and consolation of the whole Christian world.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>September 2004</h1>						A = Abbot B = Bishop C = Confessor K = King M = Martyr
			1 St. Giles, A  FAST	2 St. Stephen of Hungary, KC	3 Feria  FAST	4 St. Goradze of Prague, BM  <i>No Vespers</i>
5 Pentecost XIV  8:30AM Matins 9AM Sung Mass	6 Feria	7 St. Sergius of Rome, BC; St. Cloud, C	8 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary  FAST	9 Ss. Dorotheus & Gorgonius, Mm	10 Feria  FAST	11 Ss. Protus & Hyacinth, Mm  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
12 Pentecost XV  8:30AM Matins 9AM Sung Mass	13 Feria  7:30 Sung Mass (pot-luck supper following)	14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross	15 Ember Day  FAST	16 St. Cyprian of Carthage, M; St. Ninian, BC; St. Cornelius, BC	17 Ember Day St. Lambert, BM  FAST	18 Ember Day  <i>6PM Vespers</i>  FAST
19 Pentecost XVI (St. Theodore of Canterbury, BC) 8:30AM Matins 9AM Sung Mass	20 Vigil of St. Matthew	21 St. Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist	22 Ss. Maurice & Companions, Mm  FAST	23 St. Thecla; VM, St. Linus, BM	24 St. Juvenaly, M; St. Peter the Aleut, M  FAST	25 Feria  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
26 Pentecost XVII (Ss. Cyprian & Justina, Mm) 8:30AM Matins 9AM Sung Mass	27 Ss. Cosmas & Damian, Mm	28 St. Wenceslas, KCM  7:30 Sung Mass (Pot-luck supper following)	29 St. Michael & All Angels  FAST	30 St. Jerome, PrCD; St. Gregory the Illuminator, BC	1 St. Remigius BC  FAST	2 Holy Guardian Angels  <i>6PM Vespers</i>

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

Coffee Hour follows Liturgy.