

# ✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

November, 2009 - Volume XIV, Issue 10

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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 St. Bede the Venerable*

*died c. AD735*

*Feast Day ~ May 27*

*Inside:*

<i>St. Hilda, Abbess. . . . .</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Conference in Chambésy. . .</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Parish News. . . . .</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Calendar. . . . .</i>	<i>7</i>

**B**eloved, let us rejoice that we have the opportunity to attain the palm of victory awarded for good works. Let us one and all strive cheerfully and freely in this contest of righteousness. Let us run in the race whereof God and Christ are witnesses. And if any of us hath already begun to advance beyond hankerings after temporal and worldly things, let us not delay our course by any turning back thereto. If the last day find us ready and, without such hindrances, running in the way of good works, we shall have no cause to complain that our Master is a scanty rewarder of our works.

**F**or he that giveth a red diadem for the passion of them that win through persecution, the same will bestow a white one upon them that in peace do prevail in the struggle for righteousness. Neither Abraham nor Isaac nor Jacob were martyrs, and yet for their faith and righteousness they merited the honor of the first place amongst the Patriarchs. And whosoever of us is found faithful, righteous, and praiseworthy, shall sit down with them at the banquet. Howbeit, we must be mindful to do God's will, not our own, for it is he that doeth God's will that abideth for ever, like as God himself abideth for ever.

**W**herefore, beloved, with mind clear, faith firm, courage true, and charity thorough, let us be ready for whatever God willeth; keeping the Lord's commandments with boldness: having innocency in simplicity, peaceableness in love, modesty in lowliness, diligence in service, watchfulness in helping those who toil, mercifulness in succoring the poor, constancy in standing up for the truth, severity in keeping discipline; that no ensample of good works be wanting to us. For these are the footprints which the Saints have left us, what time they were returning to their fatherland, that we, treading in their steps, might follow them into joy.

# *St. Hilda, Abbess of Whitby*

## *Feast Day ~ November 17*



**W**e have heard much lately about synod meetings and councils of the Church - those of the Holy Synod of Antioch meeting in Damascus, meetings of our local synod of North American bishops, meetings of SCOBA (the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in America), and the bishops of the “mother” countries meeting in Chambésy, Switzerland to discuss the Orthodox “diaspora.” This is how the Church has always made decisions. Since the first Council of Jerusalem about the year 49, when the Apostles agreed (with the aid of the Holy Spirit) that Gentile converts to the new religion did not have to first become Jews, the conciliar approach has been maintained in the Orthodox Church.

**S**t. Hilda, 7<sup>th</sup> century abbess of the Monastery of Whitby in England, served as the host for an important council which brought the Church in that remote part of the world into greater unity with Christians throughout the world.

**H**ilda (Hild) was born in 614 into the royal households of Northumbria and East Anglia, but her father was in exile at the time of her birth and died several years later. Hilda was subsequently raised at the court of her uncle Edwin, who re-conquered his territory in Northumbria to reign as king.

**I**n this setting, Hilda’s life was greatly affected by the fruits of the missionary venture to England begun by St. Gregory the Great around 597. After King Edwin’s first wife died in 625 (when Hilda was 11 years old), he took another wife, Aethelburga, the daughter of the King of Kent, who was a Christian. Aethelburga brought her chaplain, Paulinus, to court with her. A Roman monk, he had been sent by Pope Gregory to assist with the work of St. Augustine and the other monks who were evangelizing the kingdom of Kent.

**T**wo years later, Edwin gave up his pagan practices to become a Christian. Much of his household, including 13-year-old Hilda, was baptized with him in the river at York on April 12, 627. The dramatic story of Edwin’s long and thoughtful journey toward Christianity, the “deal” he made with God, and his eventual baptism were preserved by St. Bede in his *History of the English Church and People*.

**F**ive years later, King Edwin was killed in battle and all in his household fled the kingdom for safety in Kent. No details are

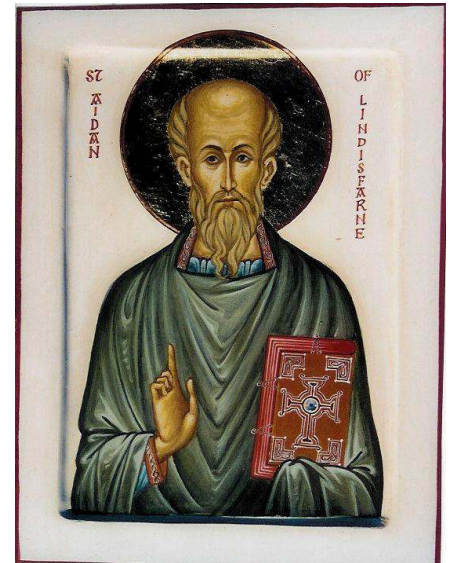
known of Hilda's life during this time. There is no record of a marriage, although as a royal princess she still offered political advantage for an arranged marriage. It is not until she was 33 years old that we hear of her activities again. At that time, she was planning to join her sister in a monastery in Chelles, France (near Paris). But her plans were changed at the last minute when she received an urgent request from Bishop Aidan of Lindisfarne. She was asked to return to Northumbria to help found a monastery at the mouth of the river Wear.

**A**s a monk, Aidan had been part of the Celtic Christian tradition which had been flourishing since before St. Gregory's Roman monks arrived in Kent. With monastic centers in Iona and Lindisfarne, the monks had maintained the Christian faith and some practices which were different from those of the Romans. The most problematic difference was with the way of calculating the date of Easter.

**H**ilda accepted the challenge offered by Bishop Aidan, began the monastery and served as its abbess, using a rule based on that of St. Columbanus, another Celtic monastic leader. Hilda went on to serve as abbess in another monastery at Hartlepool and in 657, founded an abbey at Streanaeshalch (a name later changed to Whitby). This abbey was a double monastery, with separate cells for men and women who shared a chapel and a ruler - in this case, Abbess Hilda.

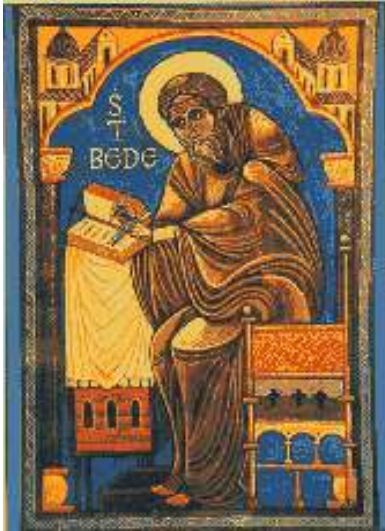
**U**nder Hilda's leadership, the monastery very quickly became a great center for learning and the abbess' counsel and advice were sought by secular rulers as well as priests and bishops (five of whom received their monastic training in this monastery). Abbess Hilda encouraged the talent of Caedmon, a simple cowherd who became one of the monks under her care and who was miraculously given the gift of composing Christian poetry in the vernacular. Caedmon is known as the first English poet.

**S**ince the death of Hilda's uncle King Edwin, there had been a succession of rulers in Northumbria and those who were Christian had been taught the Celtic traditions. When marriages (including that of the current King Oswiu) with those who had been brought up in Roman ways occurred, the result was very confusing and detrimental to the health of the Church in this part of the world. In the words of St. Bede: "It is said that the confusion in those days was such that Easter was sometimes kept twice in one year, so that when the King had ended Lent and was keeping Easter, the Queen and her attendants were still fasting and keeping Palm Sunday...this dispute rightly began to trouble the minds and consciences of many people, who feared that they might have received the name of Christian in vain."



*St. Aidan of Lindisfarne*

So in 664, the king called a Church Council to determine which of the two traditions his kingdom would adhere to. Abbess Hilda was asked to host this Council in the abbey at Whitby. The main parties in the discussions at the Council were Bishops Colman and Cedd, representing the Celtic viewpoint, and Bishop Agilbert and priests Agatho and Wilfrid, who were there to speak for the Roman traditions.



*The Venerable St. Bede*

St. Bede records in detail the proceedings of the Council. Bishop Colman explained that the Celtic practices had been passed down from generation to generation of monks, priests and bishops and that they had originated with the Apostle and Evangelist, St. John, who had been our Lord's "beloved" disciple. When it was Bishop Agilbert's turn to present his arguments, he requested that Wilfrid take his place because he could speak directly in the English language and not have to go through an interpreter. Wilfrid then proceeded to explain (in not very diplomatic terms - calling Bishop Colman "stupid"! ) that St. John's observance of Easter was at a time in the early Church when the laws of Moses were still being observed in order to avoid offence to the Jewish Christians. He told how the Church had moved away from tying Pascha to Passover and how the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 had confirmed the dating of the "feast of feasts" in a manner which had long been practically universal. Wilfrid reported on the celebration of Easter in Italy and Gaul, Africa, Asia, Egypt, Greece - places he had either traveled to or communicated with.

Wilfrid's arguments were persuasive and, after much debate about this and other issues (such as the style of the monastic tonsure) those present at the Council, under the king's leadership, agreed to adopt the Roman practices. Colman resigned his bishopric and returned home with the others who could not make the change. Abbess Hilda's intentions had been to vote for the Celtic traditions but she was won over by Wilfrid's arguments and brought her abbey into conformity with the rest of Christendom. With prayer, discussion, argument, reasoning - and with the aid of the Holy Spirit - a decision for the good of the Church in a particular land had been accomplished through the convening of a Council.

Hilda continued her good work in the monastery at Whitby, providing loving care and counsel to nuns and monks, building up the library and encouraging study, and inspiring others to holiness of living. According to St. Bede, "Christ's servant Abbess Hilda, whom all her acquaintances called Mother because of her wonderful devotion and grace, was not only an example of holy life to members of her own community; for she also brought about the amendment and salvation of many living at a distance, who heard the inspiring story of her industry and goodness."

**A**fter a painful illness of six years, St. Hilda fell asleep in the Lord. Her death was marked by the miraculous vision of her soul being carried to heaven by angels, a vision seen by one of the Whitby nuns and another nun in a monastery which St. Hilda had founded earlier in life.

**M**ay the Church in our time continue to seek the aid of the Holy Spirit when councils are held for making decisions about Church governance and practice. And may St. Hilda intercede for our bishops and other leaders who maintain this Apostolic conciliar approach. *Holy Hilda, pray for us.*

## *The Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference*

*At the Synaxis (gathering or assembly) of the Heads of all the Orthodox Churches, held in October of 2008, the bishops expressed their “desire for the swift healing of every canonical anomaly that has arisen from historical circumstances and pastoral requirements, such as in the so-called Orthodox Diaspora, with a view to overcoming every possible influence that is foreign to Orthodox ecclesiology.” The Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference was held to begin this process of healing. The following are excerpts from the documents issued by the bishops attending the Conference.*

**T**he Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference was convened by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, with the consensus of Their Beatitudes the Primate of the Most Holy Orthodox churches expressed during their Sacred Synaxis at the Phanar in October 2008. The Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference met at the Orthodox Center of Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy [Switzerland], from 6 to 13 June 2009 under the chairmanship of His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This Conference, to which all of the most holy Orthodox Autocephalous Churches were invited and were represented, studied the issue of the canonical organization of the Orthodox Diaspora...

**I**t is affirmed that it is the common will of all of the most holy Orthodox Churches that the problem of the Orthodox Diaspora be resolved as quickly as possible, and that it be organized in accordance with Orthodox ecclesiology, and the canonical tradition and practice of the Orthodox Church.



Likewise, it is affirmed that during the present phase it is not possible, for historical and pastoral reasons, for an immediate transition to the strictly canonical order of the Church on this issue, that is, the existence of only one bishop in the same place. For this reason, the Conference came to the decision to propose the creation of a temporary situation that will prepare the ground for a strictly canonical solution of the problem...

This Conference proposes that, for the transitional period where the canonical solution of the issue will be prepared, "Episcopal Assemblies" of all canonically recognized bishops in each region should be created...

The work and the responsibility of these Episcopal Assemblies will be the concern for manifesting the unity of Orthodoxy, the development of common action of all the Orthodox of each region to address the pastoral needs of Orthodox living in the region, a common representation of all Orthodox vis-a-vis other faiths and the wider society in the region, the cultivation of theological scholarship and ecclesiastical education...

The work of the Episcopal Assembly is conducted in accordance with the principles of the Orthodox conciliar tradition...

*These documents were signed by fifteen hierarchs, representing all the autocephalous Orthodox Churches. The first Episcopal Assembly in North America will be held after Pentecost of next year. May God guide the Church into greater unity as she seeks to speak with one voice.*

## Parish News

Our special observances in the month of November include Sung Mass for All Saints on Sunday, November 1, Requiem Mass for All Souls on Monday, November 2 and Vespers for the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Friday, November 20, at 7:30. The cycle of the Church year on the Western calendar begins anew on Sunday, November 29, the First Sunday of Advent.

Thanks to Cory Carandang (Josephine-Catherine's mother) for sewing lavabo towels and other altar linens.

We rejoice in the announcement of the clothing of Sister Margarete (Grete Roeber) at St. Barbara's Monastery on October 28. Because of county housing restrictions, ten of the nuns from St. Barbara's, including Sister Margarete, have now moved to Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, California.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2009</h1>						<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>
<b>1</b> The Feast of All Saints [comm. Pentecost XX]	<b>2</b> All Souls Day 7:10PM <i>Vespers of the Departed</i> 7:30 <i>Requiem Mass</i> <i>pot-luck supper following</i>	<b>3</b> St. Winifred, VM, 680	<b>4</b> Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm., c. 304	<b>5</b> St. Elizabeth, Ma., 1 <sup>st</sup> c., St. Silvia, Ma., 592	<b>6</b> Within the octave of All Saints; St. Leonard, C., c. 559	<b>7</b> St. Wilibrord of Echternach, BC, 739  6PM <i>Vespers</i>
<b>8</b> Patriarchs & Prophets of the Old Law [comm. Pentecost XXI]	<b>9</b> St. Benignus of Ireland, BC, c. 468	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> St. Martin of Tours, BC, 397; St. Theodore the Studite, C, 826	<b>12</b> St. Martin I, BM, 655	<b>13</b> St. Britius of Tours, BC, 444	<b>14</b> St. Gregory Palamas, BCD, 1359  6PM <i>Vespers</i>
<b>15</b> Pentecost XXIII	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> St. Gregory the Wonderworker, BC, c. 270; St. Gregory of Tours, BC, c. 594	<b>18</b> St. Odo of Cluny Ab, 942	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> St. Edmund, KM, 870  7:30 <i>Vespers</i>	<b>21</b> Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary; St. Gelasius, BC, 496; St. Columbanus, Ab, c. 615  6PM <i>Vespers</i>
<b>22</b> Last Sunday After Pentecost [Comm. St. Cecilia]	<b>23</b> St. Clement of Rome, BMD, c. 100	<b>24</b> St. Chrysogonus, M, c. 304	<b>25</b> St. Katherine of Alexandria, VM, c. 4 <sup>th</sup> c.	<b>26</b> Thanksgiving Day; St. Peter of Alexandria, BM, 311	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Vigil of St. Andrew  6PM <i>Vespers</i>
<b>29</b> First Sunday of Advent	<b>30</b> St. Andrew the Apostle, 1 <sup>st</sup> c.					

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

*Coffee Hour follows Sunday Liturgy. Sunday School for children is during Coffee Hour.*