

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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

A Reading from a Homily by St. Bede the Venerable

*died AD735
feast day - May 27*

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M*y soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my savior.* With these words Mary first acknowledges the special gifts she has been given. Then she recalls God's universal favors, bestowed unceasingly on the human race.

When a man devotes all his thoughts to the praise and service of the Lord, he proclaims God's greatness. His observance of God's commands, moreover, shows that he has God's power and greatness always at heart. His spirit rejoices in God his savior and delights in the mere recollection of his creator who gives him hope for eternal salvation.

These words are often for all God's creations, but especially for the Mother of God. She alone was chosen, and she burned with spiritual love for the Son she so joyously conceived. Above all other saints, she alone could truly rejoice in Jesus, her savior, for she knew that he who was the source of eternal salvation would be born in time in her body, in one person both her own son and her Lord.

F*or the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.* Mary attributes nothing to her own merits. She refers all her greatness to the gift of the one whose essence is power and whose nature is greatness, for he fills with greatness and strength the small and the weak who believe in him.

She did well to add: and holy is his name, to warn those who heard, and indeed all who would receive his words, that they must believe and call upon his name. For they too could share in everlasting holiness and true salvation according to the words of the prophet: *and it will come to pass, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will*

be saved. This is the name she spoke of earlier: *and my spirit rejoices in God my savior.*



Therefore it is an excellent and fruitful custom of holy Church that we should sing Mary's hymn at the time of evening prayer. By meditating upon the Incarnation, our devotion is kindled, and by remembering the example of God's Mother we are encouraged to lead a life of virtue. Such virtues are best achieved in the evening. We are weary after the day's work and worn out by our distractions. The time for rest is near, and our minds are ready for contemplation.

What should a Western Rite Church look like?

A few thoughts from Fr. Nicholas

As St. Gregory's proceeds with the renovation of our new home on Euclid Street I have been asked many questions: *What will our new chapel look like? How will it be decorated? Will we have an iconostasis?* St. Gregory's has had four homes up to this time - the chapel of Ss. Peter and Paul on Bradley Boulevard, the parish hall of Eldbrooke Methodist Church, the "upper room" at Eldbrooke, and currently the chapel at Ss. Peter and Paul at their new location on River Road in Potomac. Pictures of each of these homes are found on our web site: stgregoryoc.org. The Euclid Street property will be our first home that is completely ours (along with our friends at Adams Bank). This gives us the opportunity to shape the appearance of the chapel to be as we wish it to be, considering the limitations of the space and our budget, but without the limits imposed by sharing the space with others.

So how should it look? As with all things in the Orthodox Church we should not try to make it up on our own; we have centuries of tradition to guide us. We can look to the great ancient churches of Rome such as *San Clemente*, and Ravenna such as *San Appolinare in Classe*, or to Gothic Revival masterpieces such as *St. Cyprian's*, *Clarence Gate* in London. Then we can also look to our sister Western Rite congregations who have churches that are converted houses (*Our Lady of Regla* in Miami) or commercial buildings (*St. Benedict's*, Wichita Falls and *Our Lady of Walsingham* in Mesquite). Others have bought existing churches and beautified them for Orthodox worship (*St. Mark's* and *St. Augustine's* in Denver, *St. Vincent's* in Omaha, *St. Andrew's* in Eustis and *St. Nicholas* in Spokane). Still others have been able to design and build their own buildings (*St. Peter's* in

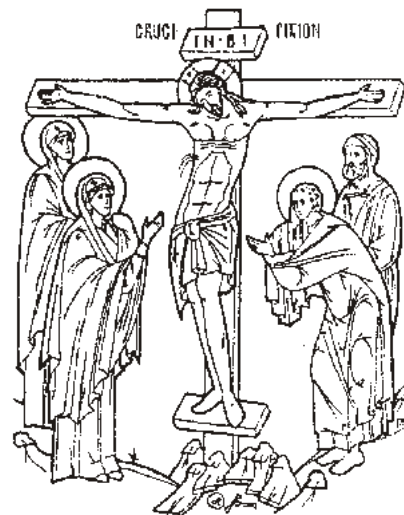
Ft. Worth, *St. Michael's* in Whittier and *St. Columba's* in Boulder). Each of these congregations has done an excellent job of working with the resources at hand, providing space that is appropriate for our worship. Pictures of some of these churches are on our web site under links to other Western Rite parishes.

Our property is a row house built around 1915 and converted for church use by a Pentecostal church about thirty-five years ago. We have already removed the carpet, dropped ceiling and florescent lighting. The new drywall ceiling has been installed and we are currently working on the lighting and flooring, in addition to many other projects. Most of the work that we are doing at this time is simply to put the building back into good shape and make it useable. We will move our altar and other things into place around the end of the month and hope to be able to have our first liturgy in our new home no later than the Feast of the Transfiguration on August 6.

As time and resources permit, we will make enhancements to the chapel. It will be good to worship in the space for a while before making any major plans. The chapel space is small and we may need to try a several different arrangements to see what works best. At first nothing will be “fixed” in place and the wooden chairs we have ordered will allow for greater flexibility than pews would.

In both the East and the West it has been customary to separate the altar area, the holy place, from the rest of the church. While the iconostasis is a normal feature of an Eastern Orthodox Church (and in our two homes which included one our acolytes rather liked hiding behind the screens), we will not have one at our new home. The Western equivalent to the iconostasis is the Rood Screen. *Rood* or *rode* is the Anglo-saxon word for *cross* and a Rood Screen - at times a simple beam across the chancel surmounted by a cross, at other times an elaborate screen filled with carvings and paintings of the saints - was a common feature in early British and other European churches (for examples see <http://www.norfolkchurches.co.uk/screens/screens.htm>).

Another common feature of ancient Western churches is a covering suspended over the altar called a *baldachino* or *ciborium*. Royal thrones also have canopies overhead as a sign of respect and reverence. Many people are familiar with the bronze baldachino over the altar at St. Peter's in Rome and Ss. Peter and Paul in Potomac has a fine stone baldachino. This canopy could be made of wood, stone or metal supported by pillars; alternatively it could be made of cloth or wood and attached to or suspended from the ceiling. The earliest examples had curtains





An icon of St. Lawrence from the Rood Screen at St. Mary's Church, Somerleyton, England

suspended between the columns and, when closed during the consecration of the Holy Gifts, emphasized the mystery of the Eucharist. If St. Gregory's has a canopy in the future, it is likely to be a simple cloth suspended over the altar.

We have been given wonderful examples of Byzantine iconography over the past years. Metropolitan PAUL of Australia, when he served as priest of St. George's in Washington, gave us our large icon of the Crucifixion and Fr. George Rados and the people of Ss. Peter and Paul have given us icons of Christ and the Theotokos. We also have feast day icons that are copies of Greek masterpieces. There is nothing unusual about Byzantine iconography in a Western church; the churches of Rome, Ravenna and Venice are all blessed with the finest examples of Byzantine mosaics in existence. While we are so fortunate to have these treasures at St. Gregory's, in the future we might supplement them with new icons painted in the early Western style, as St. Mark's in Denver, St. Peter's in Ft. Worth, and St. Columba's in Boulder have done.

The answer to the question "*What will St. Gregory's in Washington look like?*" is "*come and see.*" At first we will move in with what we have and then enrich our surroundings as time and resources permit, based on our tradition and shaped by the requirements of our worship. As with all churches, this will evolve over time as we worship, pray and sing in this space. We will strive to make this temple beautiful and wondrous, both by the decorations and by our lives and worship - and all to the glory of God.

Parish News

On Pentecost, June 25, we rejoiced to welcome Miraim Hollenbeck into the Holy Orthodox Church and the family of St. Gregory's through the sacrament of Chrismation.

Also on Pentecost, some acolytes, choir singers, and members of St. Gregory's traveled to Lynchburg, VA to witness the four Baptisms and seventeen Chrismations of members of the former Christ Church (Anglican) congregation who have now entered the Orthodox Church. Two weeks later there were additional Chrismations, as well as a baby to baptize and a marriage to bless. Fr. Nicholas continues to provide pastoral support and catechesis for them, celebrating the Eucharist there every other Sunday afternoon. Deacons from the diocese are with them on the other Sundays until Fr. Robert (now Alban) Waggener will, God willing, be ordained in September.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>July 2006</h1>						1 St. Gall, BC, 553 <i>6PM Vespers</i>
2 Visitation of the BVM <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	3 Within the Octave of Ss. Peter & Paul	4 St. Andrew of Crete, BC, 740	5 Ss. Cyril & Methodius, BbCc, 9 th c. <i>Parish Life Conference</i> FAST	6 St. Paldadius, BC, c. 450 <i>Parish Life Conference</i>	7 St. Illyd, Ab, 505 <i>Parish Life Conference</i> FAST	8 Feria <i>Parish Life Conference</i> <i>6PM Vespers</i>
9 Pentecost IV <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	10 St. Felicitas & Seven Holy Brothers, Mm, c. 150	11 Solemnity of St. Benedict	12 Ss. Nabor & Felix, Mm, c. 304 FAST	13 St. Anacleto of Rome, BM, 1 st c.	14 Feria FAST	15 St. Vladimir of Kiev, KC, 1015 <i>6PM Vespers</i>
16 Pentecost V <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	17 St. Alexius, C, 5 th c.	18 St. Sergius of Radonezh, Ab., 1392	19 Feria FAST	20 St. Margaret of Antioch, VM, c. 304	21 St. Praxedes of Rome, V, 2 nd c. FAST	22 St. Mary Magdalene, Penitent, 1 st c. <i>6PM Vespers</i>
23 Pentecost VI <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	24 St. Romanus & David, Mm, 1015 Vigil of St. James FAST	25 St. James the Greater, Apostle, 1 st c.	26 St. Anna, Mother of the BVM FAST	27 St. Panteleimon, M, c. 305	28 St. Samson of Dol, BC, c. 565 FAST	29 St. Martha of Bethany, V, 1 st c. <i>6PM Vespers</i>
30 Pentecost VII <i>8:30AM Matins</i> <i>9AM Sung Mass</i>	31 St. Germanus of Auxerre, BC, 448					

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

Coffee Hour follows Sunday Liturgy.