

# ✠ 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 Homily of St. Theodore the Studite*

*died 826AD*

*feast day - November 11*

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Fasting is a renewal of the soul, for the holy Apostle says, *Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward is being renewed day by day*. And if it is being renewed, clearly it is being made beautiful according to its original beauty; made beautiful in itself it is being drawn lovingly to the one who said, *I and the Father will come and make our dwelling with him*. If then such is the grace of fasting, that it makes us into a dwelling place of God, we must welcome it, brethren, gladly, not grieving at the plainness of the diet, for we know that the Lord, though he is able to nourish lavishly, made a banquet for thousands in the wilderness from bread and water. Also because what is unusual, with enthusiasm becomes acceptable and painless.

Fasting is not defined by foods alone, but by every abstinence from evil, as our godly fathers have explained. And so, I beg you, let us abstain from despondency, idleness, sluggishness, jealousy, strife, maliciousness, self-indulgence, self-reliance; let us abstain from destructive desire which the many-shaped serpent lays before us when we are fasting. Let us listen to the one who says, 'The fruit which slew me was beautiful to behold and fair to eat'. And observe: he says beautiful to behold, not beautiful by nature. For just as if someone taking a pomegranate decked out with a scarlet rind should find it rotten, in the same way pleasure feigns untold sweetness, but when it is plucked it is found more bitter than gall, or rather, than a sharpened two-edged sword which devours the soul it has captured. This is what our forefather Adam suffered when he was tricked by the serpent; for when he touched the forbidden food, he found death instead of life.

This too is what all they have suffered who from then until now have been similarly deceived by the dragon. For just as he, who is darkness, *transforms himself into an angel of light*, so he knows how to transform bad into good, bitter into sweet, dark into light, ugly into beautiful, deadly into life-

giving; and so the all-evil one does not cease to lead the world astray at every opportunity. But let us at least, brethren, not be led astray by his manifold deceptions, nor suffer the fate of the birds who greedily approach what seems to be food and fall into the hunter's trap. Let us rather look on the outer coverings of evil as dung and when with the mind we have looked on evil in its nakedness we shall flee from it at once.



In addition let us welcome the times of psalmody, be enthusiastic for hymnody, attentive to the readings, making prostrations according to the given measure at each hour; *working with our own hands*, because working is good and because one who does not work is not judged worthy of eating. Let us *bear one another's burdens*, for one is weak and another strong, making use of food and drink and the other necessities with moderation, so that there is no provoking to jealousy among evil people, but zeal in goodness. In everything be good to one another, compassionate, reasonable, obedient, full of mercy and good fruits, *and the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and thoughts*.

And now, may you be found worthy without condemnation to reach the supreme day of the Resurrection, but in the age to come at the resurrection of the dead to gain the kingdom of heaven in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be the glory and the might, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

## *St. David of Wales*

### *Feast Day ~ March 1*

Nationalism and the fervor of a people for their heritage can be stirred by many things: the desire for independence from a ruling power; a common enemy or threat; the danger of losing customs and language. But how wonderful it is when the national pride of a people can be centered around the life and example of a holy saint. St. David, the patron saint of Wales, has inspired the Welsh people and assisted them through his intercessions, since the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

David (Dewid or Dewi in Welsh) was born around 497, the son of a local prince, Xantus, and his saintly wife, Nun, who brought their child up in the Christian faith. How Christianity came to this area of the British Isles, outside the Roman Empire, is an on-going matter of study and speculation on the part of historians. But there is no doubt that the Church was established

and thriving in Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, and many saints led their people toward perfection in this part of the world.

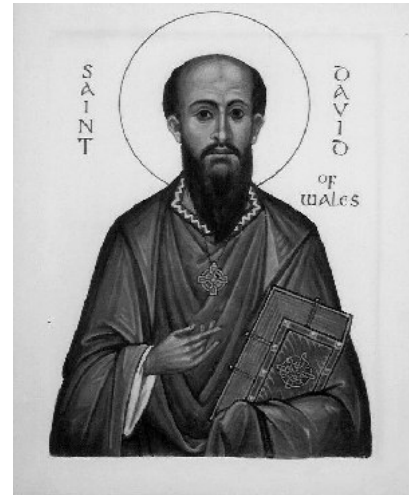
After being ordained to the priesthood, David withdrew to the Isle of Wight to spend his time in prayer and the study of Holy Scripture under the direction of Paulinus, who had been a disciple of St. Germanus of Auxerre. When he felt sufficiently prepared for the life of a priest, David began to travel, in the Celtic tradition, throughout the land, preaching, teaching and establishing monasteries. As the older pagan religion was still very much alive, David encountered great opposition from some local chieftains, but was able to slowly win over these sceptics, both by his teaching and through his manner of living.

The first of David's monasteries was at a place called Menevia, later named for the saint. Here he established a community of monks whose ascetic practices were patterned after those of the monks of the Egyptian desert. The men ate only bread and vegetables, drank only water, and spoke only when absolutely necessary. They spent their days in manual labor, primarily farming; they partook of their daily meal in silence; and they spent the last three hours of their day in prayer and meditation. Each new day began with prayer before returning to labor in the fields. They practiced "prayer without ceasing", as they went about this daily routine.

The Pelagian heresy, which had threatened the orthodoxy of British Christianity in the previous century, and which had been refuted by St. Germanus of Auxerre, was revived early in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. A synod was called at Brevi in 512 to deal with this renewed threat. David was invited to attend, and he spoke so eloquently and with such conviction for the Orthodox faith that Dubritius, the Archbishop of Caerleon, resigned his bishopric in favor of David. After many tears and protestations, David agreed to be consecrated as bishop if the see could be moved to his monastery at Menevia.

Bishop David soon called another synod at Victoria to ratify the decisions of that at Brevi. In caring for his people, he continued in works of mercy, and in preaching and teaching. To the other ascetical practices, David added that of standing for many hours immersed in cold water reciting the Psalms. Through his gift of miracles, Bishop David restored the sight of a blind monk. He founded more monasteries - ten or twelve in all - and added a chapel to the ancient church at Glastonbury, thought to be the oldest church in Britain.

Bishop David lived to be a very old man. He fell asleep in the Lord on March 1 around the year 589 and was buried at his



monastery. His holiness was acknowledged by all who knew him, and he was declared a saint at his death.

The first written account of St. David is in the Irish ‘Catalogue of Saints’ (c. 730) which related that some of the Irish “received the Mass” from St. David. Nearly four centuries after his death, St. David’s relics were translated to Glastonbury.

Even in our “post-Christian” era, St. David is revered as the patron saint of Wales and his feast day, March 1, is a national holiday, celebrated with leeks and daffodils. May all of us, whatever our national heritage, seek the prayers of St. David, the holy bishop and monk of Wales.

## *Parish News*



We welcomed James (“Skip”) Mersereau into holy Orthodoxy and the family of St. Gregory’s through Holy Chrismation on February 11. May God grant him many years.

On four Friday evenings during Lent, beginning on March 2, Nathan Hollenbeck will lead classes on “Alms-giving as a Path to Repentance.” Nathan has prepared these classes as part of the requirements for the program of study in the Archdiocesan St. Stephen’s Course. We will meet for a simple soup supper at 6:30, followed by Stations of the Cross and Benediction, and then convene the class in the Parish Hall.

St. Gregory’s parishioners donated 110 pounds of canned items during the Food for Hungry People drive. We have offered these canned goods to Martha’s Table, a local food pantry on 14<sup>th</sup> Street near the church.

As the feast of the Annunciation falls on a Sunday in Lent this year, the feast is transferred to Monday, March 26. We will celebrate with Sung Mass at 7:30, followed by a pot-luck supper.

On Friday, March 30, at 7:30PM, Bishop THOMAS will chrismate members of the Western Rite mission in Warrenton, Virginia. Fr. Nicholas has been meeting with this congregation for catechesis and will continue to serve them liturgically following their chrisimations until Fr. Patrick Cardine is ordained as their priest. The service on March 30 will be a Sung Mass, and we anticipate attendance by priests from the region as well as members of our other “sister” Western Rite congregation of Holy Trinity in Lynchburg. We rejoice with the people of Warrenton as they begin their life as Orthodox Christians in our archdiocese.

Sayedna THOMAS will return to St. Gregory's on the weekend of May 5 and 6 to dedicate our building. We look forward to this long-anticipated celebration.

## *Giving Gifts In-Kind of Appreciated Assets*

*We are grateful to parish treasurer Karl Tsuji and to Skip Mersereau for the following helpful explanation of another way of making contributions to St. Gregory's.*

Giving to St. Gregory's from appreciated assets rather than cash often makes a lot of sense for tax- and financial-planning reasons. The process ranges from the easily and quickly managed (e.g., stocks and bonds) to the somewhat more complex and time consuming (e.g., mutual funds, insurance products, and real estate) but generally you need no more than a little time, paperwork, and patience.

St. Gregory's has recently established an account with Charles Schwab, Inc. where we can now accept gifts of stocks and bonds. The process requires a few extra steps relative to writing a check, but proceeds fairly quickly. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact our parish treasurer, Karl Tsuji (at 202-205-3434 or [karl.tsuji@usitc.gov](mailto:karl.tsuji@usitc.gov)).

## *St. Paul's Church & Holy Incarnation Church*

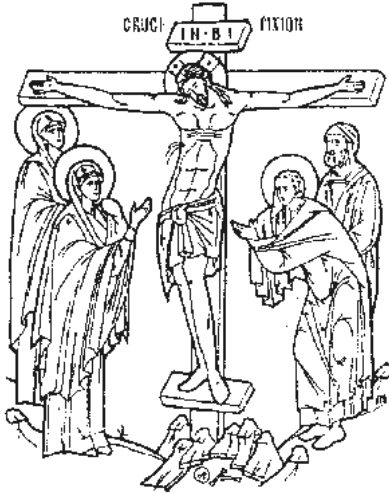
We welcome two new Western Rite congregations into the Archdiocese and the Western Rite Vicariate: St. Paul Orthodox Church in Houston, TX (Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America), and Holy Incarnation Orthodox Church in Detroit, Michigan (Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest).

Fr. Richard Petranek, who was an Episcopal priest for 33 years, was ordained to the holy priesthood in the Orthodox Church on November 19. With the forty former parishioners who made the journey to Orthodoxy with him, St. Paul's Orthodox mission has now been formed in Houston.

Fr. John Fenton was ordained to the holy priesthood on February 11 and celebrated the first Mass for Holy Incarnation mission in Detroit on February 18. Fr. John and most of the initial members of the parish are former Lutherans who have found a home in Orthodoxy.



# Stations of the Cross & Benediction



While the service of Stations of the Cross did not develop until after the schism of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it is based on ancient custom originating in Jerusalem. Western Rite Orthodox Christians are given permission to use post-Schism devotional material that is consistent with Orthodox theology and a logical development of earlier practice.

In the early centuries of the Church, pilgrims from all over the world joined with the Christians of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in visiting the sites associated with Our Lord's passion, death and resurrection. Seeing the place where He was condemned by Pilate and being physically present in the place where Simon of Cyrene helped carry the Cross were powerful aids to devotion and repentance. Praying in the places where Christ was crucified, buried and rose again brought wonder, joy and hope to pilgrims. The desire to share in this experience by those who could not go to the Holy Land led Petronius, the 5<sup>th</sup> century bishop of Bologna, Italy, to build a series of chapels at the Monastery of San Stefano representing these holy sites. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Franciscan monks who had established a presence in Jerusalem formulated the service of Stations of the Cross as a way for Christians everywhere to walk the way of the Cross.

The hymn *Stabat Mater* has become associated with Stations of the Cross, the verses sung as the faithful move from one station to the next. Authorship of this hymn is uncertain, but attribution is most often given to Jacapone da Todi (1230-1306) or Pope Innocent III (d. 1216). Remembering the prophecy of Simeon at the time of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple that a sword would pierce Mary's soul, the hymn describes the sorrow of the Theotokos in seeing her son suffer. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the *Stabat Mater* was also appointed as the Sequence hymn for the September 15th Feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary. Familiar to many Eastern Orthodox Christians is the hymn "A Most Grieving Mother" (St. Ambrose Hymnal # 90), a Ukrainian hymn of similar style and sentiments.

The brief service of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament provides the faithful with an opportunity to worship and adore Christ as He extends His risen and glorified life to be with His people sacramentally on earth. In this Lenten season, may we remember our Lord's suffering and death by walking the Stations of the Cross, just as we will celebrate his Resurrection from the dead in the great feast of Pascha.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>March 2007</h1>						
				1 St. David of Wales, BC, 589	2 St. Chad, BC, 672  <i>6:30 Supper, Stations, Benediction, Class</i>	3 Feria  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
4 <sup>2nd</sup> Sunday in Lent  <i>9AM Matins 9:30 Sung Mass</i>	5 Feria	6 Ss. Perpetua & Felicitas, Mm, 202	7 Feria	8 Feria	9 St. Gregory of Nyssa, BCD, 394  <i>6:30 Supper, Stations, Benediction, Class</i>	10 <sup>40</sup> Martyrs of Sebaste, Mm, 320  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
11 <sup>3rd</sup> Sunday in Lent  <i>9AM Matins 9:30 Sung Mass</i>	12 St. Gregory the Great, BCD, 604	13 Feria	14 Feria	15 Feria	16 Feria  <i>6:30 Supper, Stations, Benediction, Class</i>	17 St. Patrick, BC, 461  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
18 <sup>4th</sup> Sunday in Lent  <i>9AM Matins 9:30 Sung Mass</i>	19 St. Joseph	20 St. Cuthbert, BC, 687	21 Repose of St. Benedict, Ab, c. 550	22 Feria	23 Feria  <i>6:30 Supper, Stations, Benediction, Class</i>	24 St. Gabriel, Archangel  <i>6PM Vespers</i>
25 <sup>5th</sup> Sunday in Lent  <i>9AM Matins 9:30 Sung Mass</i>	26 Annunciation of the BVM  <i>7:30 Sung Mass, pot-luck supper</i>	27 St. John of Damascus, CD, c. 760	28 Feria	29 Feria	30 St. John of the ladder, AbD, 649  <i>7:30 Chrismations &amp; Mass in Warrenton</i>	31 St. Innocent, BC, 1879  <i>6PM Vespers</i>

Confessions may be made after Vespers, during the Psalms at Matins, and by appointment.

Coffee Hour follows Mass; Children's Story Time is during Coffee Hour.