

✠ 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 An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith by St. John of Damascus

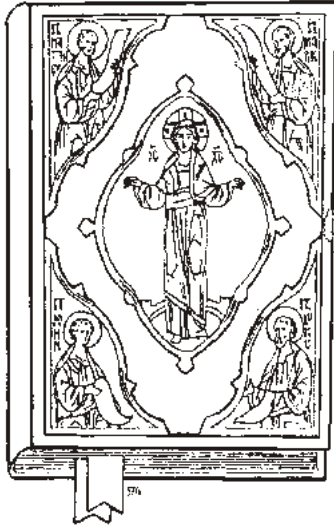
*died AD760
feast day - March 27*

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The God proclaimed by the Old Testament and the New is He who is celebrated and glorified in Trinity, for the Lord said, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil." [Matt. 5:17] For He worked our salvation, for the sake of which all Scripture and every mystery has been revealed. And again, "Search the scriptures: for these give testimony of me." [John 5:39] And the Apostle too, says, "God, who, at sundry times and in diverse manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son." [Heb. 1:1-2] Through the Holy Ghost, then, both the law and the Prophets, the evangelists, apostles, pastors, and teachers spoke.

Therefore, "all scripture, inspired of God, is quite profitable," [2 Tim. 3:16] so that to search the sacred Scripture is very good and most profitable for the soul. For, "like a tree which is planted near the running waters," [Psalm 1:3] so does the soul watered by sacred Scripture also grow fat and bear fruit in due season, which is the Orthodox faith, and so is it adorned with its evergreen leaves, with actions pleasing to God, I mean. And thus we are disposed to virtuous action and untroubled contemplation by the sacred Scriptures. In them we find exhortation to every virtue and dissuasion from every vice. Therefore, if we are eager for knowledge, we shall also be rich in knowledge, for by diligence, toil, and the grace of God who grants it all things succeed. "For he that asketh receiveth: and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." [Luke 11:10] So let us knock at the very beautiful paradise of the Scriptures, the fragrant, most sweet and lovely paradise which fills our ears with the varied songs of inspired spiritual birds, which touches our heart, comforting it when grieving, calming it when angry, and filling it with everlasting joy, and which lifts our mind onto the back of the sacred dove,



gleaming with gold and most brilliant, who bears us with his most bright wings to the only-begotten Son and heir of the Husbandman of the spiritual vineyard and through Him on to the Father of lights. Let us not knock casually, but with eagerness and persistence, and let us not lose heart while knocking, for so it will be opened to us. Should we read once and then a second time and still not understand what we are reading let us not be discouraged. Rather, let us persist, let us meditate and inquire, for it is written, "Ask thy father, and he will declare to thee; thy elders and they will tell them." [Deut. 32:7] For not all have knowledge. From the fountain of paradise let us draw ever-flowing and most pure waters springing up into life everlasting. Let us revel in them, let us revel greedily in them to satiety, for they contain the grace which cannot be exhausted. Should we, however, be able to get some profit from other sources, this is not forbidden. Let us be proved bankers and amass the genuine and pure gold, while we reject the spurious. Let us accept the best sayings, but let us throw to the dogs the ridiculous gods and unhealthy fables, for from the former we should be able to draw very great strength against the latter.

Kings and Saints

Edwin ~ October 12, and Edward the Confessor ~ October 13

In its long history of monarchy, England has often suffered through the reigns of weak, immoral, and even wicked rulers. But it has also been blessed with some rulers whose exemplary lives gave their subjects much more than the expected prosperous economy and prestige among the nations of the world. These kings are venerated by the Church as saints and are now called upon to aid their people through their heavenly intercessions as they aided the people through their just policies in their earthly lives.

Edwin was born around 585, a prince of one of the numerous smaller kingdoms which were spread across Britain at that time. He spent much of his youth in exile because of warfare among rival chieftains, but after a great battle victory in 616, he became king of Northumbria.

In an effort to strengthen his political power, Edwin sought to marry Ethelburga, a princess of the kingdom of Kent. There were difficulties in accomplishing this union, as Ethelburga was a Christian and Edwin a pagan. After much negotiating, the marriage was approved, on the condition that Edwin allow

Ethelburga to bring her chaplain with her. She and her household were to be able to freely practice their religion in Northumbria. As Edwin was a broad-minded and tolerant ruler, he agreed to this condition. Paulinus, the chaplain, was consecrated bishop and traveled to York with hopes for evangelizing the Northumbrian people.

Among all the “diplomats” at the Northumbrian court, the most skillful and successful were Queen Ethelburga and Bishop Paulinus. She exercised great patience, quietly teaching the king, by her example, the Christian virtues of charity and humility, and showing him her devotion to her Savior, Jesus Christ. The bishop, also, was patient, not criticizing the king’s religion, but taking every opportunity to point out to him the marvelous works of the one true God. Gradually, the king became more and more receptive to this new religion.

The turning point occurred on Pascha of the year 626, as related by St. Bede the Venerable in his *History of the English Church and People*. On the day that the Christian world was celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord, Queen Ethelburga gave birth to a daughter. And on that same day, in the pagan kingdom of Northumbria, the king narrowly escaped an assassination attempt. With the emotional impact of these conflicting events, King Edwin made a vow to study and accept his wife’s religion if he could be victorious over the enemies who had arranged the attack on him. His opportunity came soon and he won the battle. He was now ready to fight the battle for his soul against the forces of doubt, his pagan upbringing, and the intellectual hurdles which the devil put in his way.

In teaching the king about Christianity, Bishop Paulinus was aided by Pope Boniface, who sent letters of encouragement both to the king and to Queen Ethelburga. Love for Christ and His Church began to grow in King Edwin’s heart.

In one last important political step before he could be baptized, King Edwin consulted with Northumbria’s pagan spiritual leaders. The chief priest, Coifi, claimed that he himself was the most devout man in the kingdom, but that his devotion had won him no favor with the pagan gods. Another priest observed that their religion had taught them nothing of what had come before, or would come after, the short span of earthly life and that, if the new religion could shed light on these things, he would be in favor of it.

The last hurdle had been surmounted, so at the celebration of Pascha in the year 627, King Edwin and many of his subjects were baptized into the Christian faith.



Until his death in battle in 633, Edwin ruled his people with the same Christian virtues he had learned from his wife and from Bishop Paulinus. He was regarded by the Northumbrian people in his time and in future generations as a good and holy man and a model Christian ruler.



In the last years that English Christians were part of the Undivided Church, before the schism which separated West from East, the country was ruled by a devout and holy king, Edward, “the Confessor.” Edward was born in 1003, the son of King Ethelred (the “Unready”). He spent many years in exile because of the danger to Anglo-Saxon royal family members posed by the Danish invasions. As a young man, Edward developed an intense personal piety and was known to all for his holiness, a great rarity among those living at court. Edward was so highly regarded by the English people that he was urged to return to England by the nobles and leading churchmen in 1041. King Harthecanute, his half-brother, designated him as his successor and Edward was crowned king in 1042.

The Christian virtues of this ruler brought a period of much desired peace to the land. Edward was generous to the poor; he was fair in the laws which he enacted and lenient in punishments for small offenses. He was known to receive heavenly visions and he was blessed with healing powers. In 1045, Edward married Edith, who shared his great love of God. Some accounts say that they had both taken a vow of chastity which they honored after marriage, leaving them childless (and the country without a direct heir to the throne).

As a young man in exile, Edward desired greatly to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Peter in Rome. His circumstances never provided the opportunity, so in later life, Edward decided to found a monastery dedicated to St. Peter. He donated the land and a good portion of his wealth to build Westminster Abbey. The monastic church was consecrated on December 28, 1065, but King Edward was near death and unable to attend the ceremonies. After his death, the king’s body was buried in the Abbey and - through revolution, reformation and iconoclasm - his relics remained undisturbed. In later years, the church of Westminster Abbey became the place for coronations and other royal events.

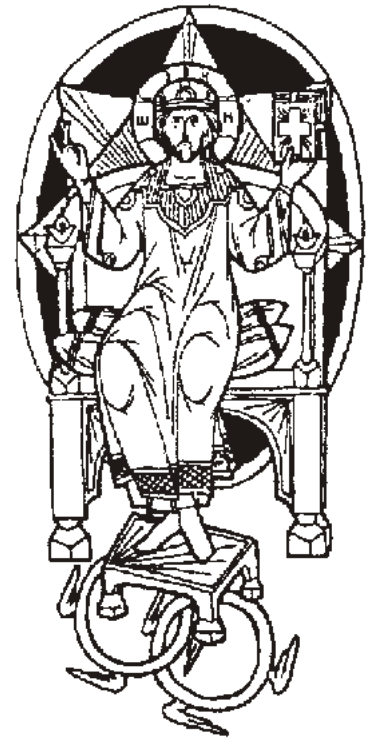
Following Edward’s death, as a result of the uncertain succession, the Normans were able to conquer England and alter the course of its history.

As we remember Edwin and Edward - both kings and saints - we pray that England may someday return to the Orthodox faith. And, as we in our country prepare for another election season, we pray for public officials whose service to God is above their service to men. Holy Edwin and holy Edward, intercede for us.

Behold Christ the King

adapted from goarch.org

We are called to behold our King: the Word of God made flesh - the One who is always present in His Church, coming ceaselessly to us in power and glory at every Eucharist, in every prayer and sacrament, and in every act of love, kindness and mercy. He comes to free us from all our fears and insecurities, "to take solemn possession of our soul, and to be enthroned in our heart," as someone has said. He comes not only to deliver us from our deaths by His death and Resurrection, but also to make us capable of attaining the most perfect fellowship or union with Him. He is the King, who liberates us from the darkness of sin and the bondage of death.



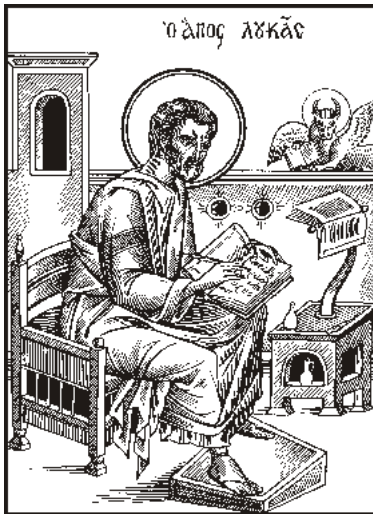
We are called to accept both the rule and the kingdom of God as the goal and content of our Christian life. We draw our identity from Christ and His kingdom. The kingdom is Christ - His indescribable power, boundless mercy and incomprehensible abundance given freely to man. The kingdom does not lie at some point or place in the distant future. In the words of the Scripture, the kingdom of God is not only at hand (Matthew 3:2; 4:17), it is within us (Luke 17:21). The kingdom is a present reality as well as a future realization (Matthew 6:10). Theophan the Recluse wrote the following words about the inward rule of Christ the King: "The Kingdom of God is within us when God reigns in us, when the soul in its depths confesses God as its Master, and is obedient to Him in all its powers. Then God acts within it as master 'both to will and to do of his good pleasure' (Philippians 2:13). This reign begins as soon as we resolve to serve God in our Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Then the Christian hands over to God his consciousness and freedom, which comprises the essential substance of our human life, and God accepts the sacrifice; and in this way the alliance of man with God and God with man is achieved, and the covenant with God, which was severed by the Fall and continues to be severed by our willful sins, is re-established."

The kingdom of God is the life of the Holy Trinity in the world. It is the kingdom of holiness, goodness, truth, beauty, love, peace and joy. These qualities are not works of the human spirit. They proceed from the life of God and reveal God. Christ Himself is the kingdom. He is the God-Man, Who brought God down to earth (John 1:1,14). “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world knew Him not. He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not” (John 1:10-11). He was reviled and hated.

Our king is the *Suffering Servant*, foretold by the Prophet Isaiah. We cannot understand Jesus' kingship apart from the Passion. Filled with infinite love for the Father and the Holy Spirit, and for creation, in His inexpressible humility Jesus accepted the infinite abasement of the Cross. He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions and made Himself an offering for sin (Isaiah 53). His glorification, which was accomplished by the resurrection and the ascension, was achieved through the Cross.

Parish News

St. Luke's Day is October 18th



As we continue to enjoy the blessing of having a home for St. Gregory's, we continue to make improvements on our building. The parish hall, which has now been used for several pot-luck suppers, is gradually being outfitted, and the upstairs apartment is nearly ready for rental, preferably to a non-profit organization. Our parish lending library has returned to church, admirably displayed, and is ready for books and videos to be checked out. If you have books from the library that you have finished reading please return them as soon as possible. Thanks to Jennifer Caldwell for categorizing and labeling books.

Several from St. Gregory's were privileged to be present at the Ordination to the Orthodox priesthood of Fr. Alban Waggener during the St. Thecla and St. Raphael Pilgrimage at Antiochian Village in September. We rejoice with Fr. Alban, Kh. Nancy and the people of Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Lynchburg.

Fr. Nicholas is now traveling to Warrenton, Virginia, for catechism classes with a group of Charismatic Episcopalians preparing for entry into the Orthodox Church. We will keep these good people in our prayers as they continue their journey of faith.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>October 2006</h1>						
1 Pentecost XVI <i>9AM Matins</i> <i>9:30 Sung</i> <i>Mass</i>	2 Holy Guardian Angels	3 Feria	4 Feria FAST	5 St. Placid & Companions, Mm, 6 th c.	6 St. Faith, VM, 287 FAST	7 Feria <i>6PM Vespers</i>
8 Pentecost XVII <i>9AM Matins</i> <i>9:30 Sung</i> <i>Mass</i>	9 Ss. Denys, Rusticus, & Eleutherius, Mm, 3 rd c.	10 St. Paulinus of York, BC, 644	11 St. Kenneth Abbot, c. 600 FAST	12 St. Wilfrid of York, BC, 709; St. Edwin, KM, 633	13 St. Edward the Confessor, KC, 1066 FAST	14 St. Callistus BM, c. 222 <i>6PM Vespers</i>
15 Our Lady of Walsingham <i>9AM Matins</i> <i>9:30 Sung</i> <i>Mass</i>	16 St. Gall, Abbot, 646	17 Vigil of St. Luke	18 St. Luke, Evangelist <i>7:30 Vespers</i> FAST	19 St. Frides- wide, V, Abbess, 735	20 Feria FAST	21 St. Hilarion of Gaza, Ab, c. 371 <i>6PM Vespers</i>
22 Pente- cost XIX <i>9AM Matins</i> <i>9:30 Sung</i> <i>Mass</i>	23 Feria	24 St. Raphael Archangel	25 Ss. Chry- santhus & Daria, Mm, 283 FAST	26 St. Eva- ristus, BM, c. 197	27 Vigil of Ss. Simon & Jude FAST	28 Ss. Simon & Jude, Apostles <i>6PM Vespers</i>
29 Christ the King <i>9AM Matins</i> <i>9:30 Sung</i> <i>Mass</i>	30 Feria	31 Vigil of All Saints FAST	1 All Saints FAST	2 All Souls <i>7:30 Requiem</i> <i>Mass; pot-</i> <i>luck supper</i> <i>following</i>		

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

Coffee Hour follows Sunday Liturgy