

✠ 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 the First Epistle of St. Clement of Rome

*died c. AD100
feast day - November 23*

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We should observe that all the righteous have been adorned with good deeds and the very Lord adorns himself with good deeds and rejoices. Since, then, we have this example, we should unhesitatingly give ourselves to his will, and put all our effort into acting uprightly.

The good laborer accepts the bread he has earned with his head held high; the lazy and negligent workman cannot look his employer in the face. We must, then, be eager to do good; for everything comes from Him. For he warns us: ‘see, the Lord is coming. He is bringing his reward with him, to pay each one according to his work.’ he bids us, therefore, to believe on him with all our heart, and not to be slack or negligent in “every good deed.” he should be the basis of our boasting and assurance. We should be subject to his will. We should note how the whole throng of his angels stand ready to serve his will. For Scripture says: ‘Ten thousand times ten thousand stood by him, and thousands of thousands ministered to him and cried out: holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; all creation is full of his glory.’ We too, then, should gather together for worship in concord and mutual trust, and earnestly beseech him as it were with one mouth, that we may share in his great and glorious promises. For he says, “Eye has not seen and ear has not heard and man’s heart has not conceived what he has prepared for those who patiently wait for him.”

How blessed and amazing are God’s gifts, dear friends! Life with immortality, splendor with righteousness, truth with confidence, faith with assurance, self-control with holiness! And all these things are within our comprehension. What, then, is being prepared for those who wait for him? The Creator and Father of eternity, the all-holy, himself knows how great and wonderful it is. We, then, should make every effort to be found in the number of those who are patiently



looking for him, so that we may share in the gifts he has promised. And how shall this be, dear friends? If our mind is faithfully fixed on God; if we seek out what pleases and delights him; if we do what is in accord with his pure will, and follow in the way of truth. If we rid ourselves of all wickedness, evil, avarice, contentiousness, malice, fraud, gossip, slander, hatred of God, arrogance, pretension, conceit, and inhospitality. God hates those who act in this way; “and not only those who do these things but those who applaud them.” For Scripture says: “But God told the sinner: Why do you speak of my statutes and have my covenant on your lips? You hated discipline and turned your back on my words. If you saw a thief you went along with him, and you threw in your lot with adulterers. Your mouth overflowed with iniquity, and your tongue wove deceit. You sat there slandering your brother and putting a stumbling block in the way of your mother’s son. This you did, and I kept silent. You suspected, you wicked man, that I would be like you. I will reproach you and show you your very self. Ponder, the, these things, you who forget God, lest he seize you like a lion and there be no one to save you. A sacrifice of praise will glorify me, and that is the way by which I will show him God’s salvation.”

This is the way, dear friends, in which we found our salvation, Jesus Christ, the high priest of our offerings, the protector and helper of our weakness. Through him we fix our gaze on the heights of heaven. In him we see mirrored God’s pure and transcendent face. Through him the eyes of our hearts have been opened. Through him our foolish and darkened understanding springs up to the light. Through him the Master has willed that we should taste immortal knowledge.

St. Cosmas the Melodist: Feast Day - October 14

Prayers of Christians in every age have been offered for peace and tranquility, for life free from strife and danger. But when Christians have been faced with danger or oppression, the faithful have remembered Christ’s promise: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” and the Church has flourished.

Following the day of Pentecost when the Apostles preached the Gospel and met martyrdom or exile, the number of believers who were baptized into the Church increased daily. In the next generations, as the Roman state persecuted Christians, a great body of saints - a “cloud of witnesses” - was formed to pray for those who were still in the struggle and to give inspiration to those in years to come.

After peace was established between the Empire and the church by St. Constantine, monasticism provided a new kind of

martyrdom for those who sacrificed life in the world and subdued the passions. Once again, the Church flourished - this time in the creative offerings of poets and musicians who adorned our liturgies with songs of praise and thanksgiving. This creative flowering continued as the Church again experienced attack from without (by Muslim or pagan invaders) and within (by heretical movements). On October 14, we remember one of the poet-saints who has given us many beautiful hymns, St. Cosmas, the “Melodist.”

Born around the year 700 in the holy city of Jerusalem, Cosmas was orphaned at an early age, and had to resort to begging in the streets in order to survive. Through the great providence of God, Cosmas was rescued from this fragile existence by a high government official named Sergius. The man took him into his home, introduced him to his own son, John, and decided to formally adopt the orphan boy. Cosmas’ life was forever changed.

Sergius’ family lived in Damascus and, although that city was under Muslim rule and they were devout Christians, Sergius was allowed to maintain his position of authority and respect.

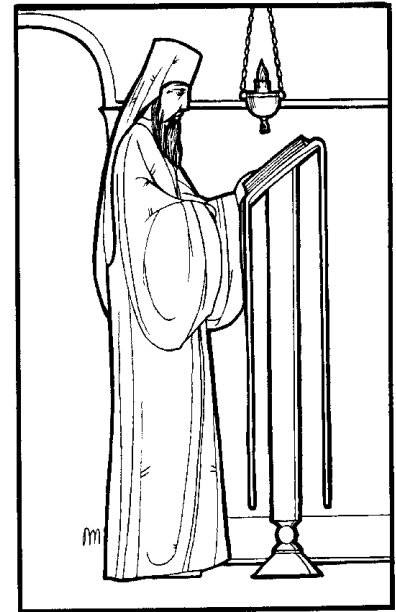
Cosmas and John were provided with a tutor, a monk also named Cosmas, who had been captured in Sicily and brought to Damascus to be sold as a slave. Sergius paid for his freedom and engaged him to teach the two boys. The monk gave them not only the basics of mathematics and literature, but also stirred their hearts to serve God as monastics.

Upon the death of his father, John worked for a while in government, as his father had, but soon both he and Cosmas entered the Monastery of St. Saba outside Jerusalem. Here the talent of each for poetry found expression in hymns for the services of the Church. These hymns began to be sung by the monks and eventually became known and sung in other churches as well.

Patriarch Meletos ordained the monk John to the priesthood first and later also ordained Cosmas and sent him to serve the Christians in Gaza.

St. John of Damascus remained at the Monastery of St. Saba for the remainder of his life, writing theological treatises and hymns, but his adopted brother was made Bishop of Maiuma in Gaza in 743. Even with the busy life of a hierarch serving his flock, Bishop Cosmas continued to write hymns, perhaps inspired by living so near to the events of our Lord’s life. He may have seen the shepherds’ field outside Bethlehem when he wrote:

The shepherds keep their flocks by night, the heaven glows out with wondrous light; the glory of the Lord is there, the Angel



*bands their King declare; the watchers of the night confessed,
“God of our Fathers! Thou art blest.”* [#58, St. Ambrose Hymnal]

Perhaps he had traveled as far north as Nazareth and climbed to the top of Mt. Tabor when he composed these words:

In days of old on Sinai the Lord almighty came in majesty and terror, in thunder cloud and flame: on Tabor, with the glory of sunniest light for vest, the excellence of beauty in Jesus was expressed. [#213, St. Ambrose Hymnal]

And he must have venerated the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem and wrote these words in celebration of the Resurrection:

*The clouds of night are past away; Mary, rejoice, rejoice to day;
the offspring of thy Virgin womb is risen from the Virgin tomb!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!* [#118, St. Ambrose Hymnal]

These hymns and many others continue to be used in Byzantine services, even after 1300 years, and we are grateful to those who have provided translations for use in our Western Rite services.

St. Cosmas died on October 14 in the year 750 and now sings with the heavenly choir, interceding for us before the throne of God. We give thanks for St. Cosmas as we sing his hymns, and we pray that, in times of strife and persecution, the Church will continue to flourish through the witness of her saints.

Parish News



We will celebrate two feast days this month with extra services: will have Vespers at 7:30pm on the Eve of St. Luke’s Day, October 17th, and on Saturday, the 20th, we will travel to Warrenton to join our “daughter” parish, St. Patrick’s, for a celebration for Our Lady of Walsingham. This festival, celebrating a vision of the Theotokos in Walsingham, England in 1061, has been joyfully kept in our Western Rite parishes. We celebrate Mass at 10am at St. Patrick’s, followed by a pot-luck brunch.

On Sunday, October 28, following our celebration of the Feast of Christ the King, we will enjoy a parish picnic at Pierce Mill Park (at the corner of Tilden St. And Beach Drive). Please bring food to share, casual clothes, and games to play, as we extend our fellowship as a parish family.

On Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm at the church, Fr. Nicholas will lead us in a series of classes on “Living the Orthodox Life in the World”, beginning on October 3.

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| <h1>October 2007</h1> | | | | | | |
| | 1 St. Remigius, BC, c. 530; St. Bavo, Hermit, 659 | 2 Holy Guardian Angels | 3 Feria 7:30PM Class FAST | 4 Feria | 5 St. Placid & Comps., Mm, 6 th c. FAST | 6 St. Faith, VM, c. 287 6PM Vespers |
| 7 Pentecost XIX 9AM Matins 9:30 Sung Mass | 8 Feria | 9 Ss. Denys, Rusticus & Eleutherius, Mm, 3 rd c. | 10 St. Paulinus of York, BC, 644 7:30PM Class FAST | 11 St. Kenneth, Ab., 599 | 12 St. Wilfrid of York, BC, 709 FAST | 13 St. Edward the Confessor, KC, 1066 6PM Vespers |
| 14 Pentecost XX 9AM Matins 9:30 Sung Mass | 15 Our Lady of Walsingham | 16 St. Gall, Ab., 646 | 17 Vigil of St. Luke 7:30 Vespers & Class FAST | 18 St. Luke, Evangelist | 19 St. Frideswide, V, 735 FAST | 20 Feria 10AM Mass at St. Patrick's in Warrenton 6PM Vespers |
| 21 Pentecost XXI 9AM Matins 9:30 Sung Mass | 22 Ss. Ursula & Comp., VvMm, 453 | 23 Feria | 24 St. Raphael, Archangel 7:30PM Class FAST | 25 Ss. Chrysanthus & Daria, Mm, 283 | 26 St. Ev-aristus, BM, c. 197 FAST | 27 Vigil of Ss. Simon & Jude 6PM Vespers |
| 28 The Feast of Christ the King 9AM Matins 9:30 Sung Mass; Parish Picnic following | 29 Ss. Simon & Jude (tr.) | 30 Feria | 31 Vigil of All Saints FAST | 1 All Saints 7:30 Requiem Mass; pot- luck supper following | 2 All Souls FAST | 3 St. Raphael of Brooklyn, BC 6PM Vespers |

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

Coffee Hour follows Liturgy