

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church
A Western Rite Congregation of the Antiochian Archdiocese
13407 Roxbury Rd., Silver Spring, MD - stgregoryoc.org

From a homily by St. Nektarios of Aegina d. 1920

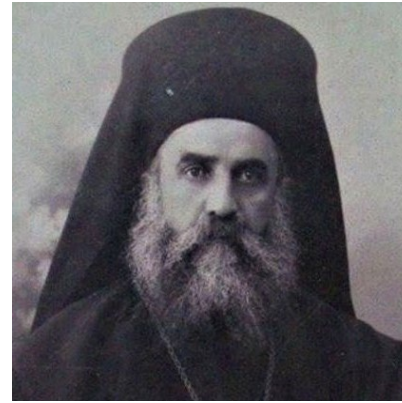
Man's spiritual nature requires Divine revelation, because without this man remains only potentially spiritual; he requires a Divine revelation in order to become actively spiritual. Accordingly, Divine revelation is not a supernatural, but rather a most natural event. It is associated with man's spiritual development and progress, although

we do not realize this due to its imperceptibility by our senses. This imperceptibility, however, cannot be used as a powerful argument to deny revelation, because the spirit is not subject to our senses either, yet it exists...

If God had not revealed Himself to the world, I doubt if man could have even conceived the notion of God. They who

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now deny His revelation would have known nothing about Him unless they had been taught this through revelation. If people now pride themselves on the knowledge of God - whom they deny - they owe this to revelation. Without revelation we are ignorant of matters beyond the senses, and we are unable to become spiritual. Both knowledge of God and spiritual formation are attributed to God's initial revelation. Therefore, God reveals Himself necessarily...

The fall was a result of man's misguided desire. Man's desire, which always sought that which is good, perfect, and pleasing to God, was displaced by an imaginary moral freedom that was deceitfully accepted by him as true ethical liberty. Man's fall attests to the necessity for union between our will and God's will, in which exists our true ethical freedom, and ceaseless communion with God, for all good things are brought forth through the Divine will...

To speak about God is one thing; to worship God is another. The person who worships God communicates with Him and is thus perfected and sanctified. He who has not come to know God has not worshiped Him either. And he who has not worshiped God has not become perfected or sanctified, or a communicant of the Divine. Without revelation, man is neither able to attain knowledge of the true God nor to be perfected in His love. God's revelation was absolutely necessary for the salvation of man. God has revealed Himself. Man, in turn, has come to know Him, has worshiped Him, and has been perfected in His love.

An excerpt from Christology by Saint Nektarios the Wonderworker, Bishop of Pentapolis, translated by the fathers of the Holy Monastery of St. Nektarios, New York.

St. Euphrosynos the Cook

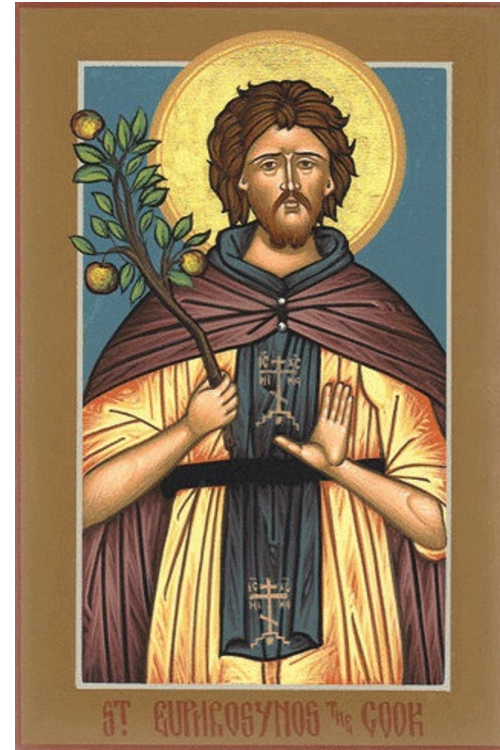
Feast Day ~September 11

The story of St. Euphrosynos is the story of a miracle and it is also the story of a plain, ordinary, down-to-earth truth.

The down-to-earth story is of the son of simple, illiterate peasants who were devout Christians and who raised their son, Euphrosynos, to love the Lord and to go about everything he did with praise and thanksgiving to God. Having had no schooling, the boy was limited to manual work as he grew up. Cooking was something he learned to do well and he pursued this sort of work wherever he could find it. Serving in the kitchen of an inn, he was allowed to partake of whatever food was being prepared - even the best - but he chose to eat sparingly and only simple food and he shared the rest of his portions with the neighborhood poor.

Euphrosynos' strong faith and desire to give himself completely to God eventually led him to seek entrance into one of the monasteries on Mt. Athos. There he was accepted and given the task of continuing his worldly work as the cook for the monks. Some of these monks - those who were held in high esteem for their theological knowledge, their chanting expertise, or their leadership roles among the brethren - looked down on this peasant monk as being beneath them. But none of this affected the humble cook, who went about his work in constant prayer and thanksgiving.

The miraculous part of this story began with one of the priest-monks who had never disparaged Euphrosynos. He had an intense experience one night, dreaming that he was in a beautiful garden. He was astonished to discover that the cook was also there. "What is this place" the priest asked, and Euphrosynos replied that this was Paradise and the elect of God could be here enjoying its



bounty. Euphrosynos then gave the priest a branch from a tree, with three beautiful, ripe apples.

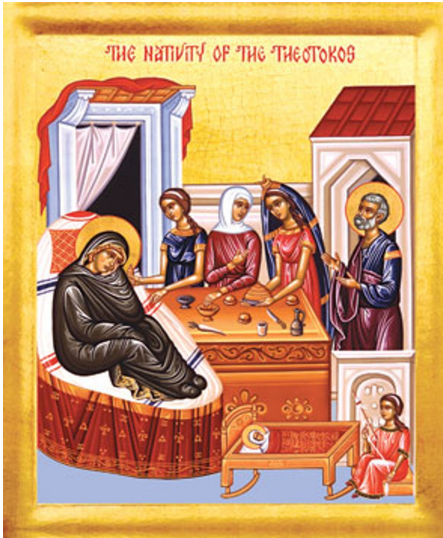
When the priest was awakened from his dream by the call to the night office, he saw the three apples on his bed. He hurried to the chapel and there saw the cook standing in his usual place among the other monks. After the service, the priest approached him and said, "Euphrosynos, where were you last night?" And the monk replied, "Where you were, Father." The priest

realized that a miracle had taken place to show to all the brethren that even the most lowly among them could be saints of God. He began to share the story of his dream and the apples with all the others, but Euphrosynos, fearing the attention that would be given him, disappeared into the wilderness where he spent the remainder of his life in solitary prayer.

The saints of God can be found wherever there are devout Christians who do their work, however humble, with joy and thanksgiving. The miracles of God are often given to show us this truth. *Holy Euphrosynos, pray for us.*

Sources: *Orthodox Saints* by George Poulos; Orthodox Church in America website; *Prologue from Ochrid* by St. Nikolai of Ochrid.

Parish News



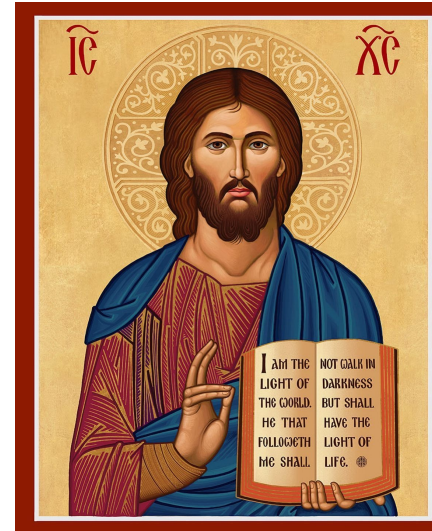
We will celebrate three major feast days during the month of September. The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, September 8, falls on Sunday this year as does the feast of St. Michael the Archangel (September 29). The Exaltation of the Holy Cross is on Saturday, September 14, and we will celebrate this feast with a 10am Mass (Matins at 9:30), followed by a pot-luck brunch.

The Antiochian House of Studies, the educational program offered by our Archdiocese to those who are seeking ordination (but unable to attend one of the Orthodox seminaries) and to those who simply wish to study our Orthodox faith more deeply, will resume this month. Fr. Nicholas co-teaches Liturgics and Church History for Western Rite students and Dr. Monica Burnett teaches the Latin Fathers. *O teach me true understanding and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments.* [Ps. 119:66]



Life as Revelation

by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann



God is revealed to people, and it is their receptive response, their acceptance of God's revelation, that is the very definition of faith.

Revelation, as a word, has only quite recently in history - in the last two hundred years - come to be widely understood as a synonym for the supernatural and miraculous, as something opposed to observable fact and incompatible with science. And

because it is understood to be incompatible with science and "real" life, revelation of any sort is regarded simply as a fiction, a figment of the imagination - or worse - the offspring of darkness and ignorance. This worldview has gradually stripped man (but thankfully not every man) of an incomparable deeper and richer understanding of the world, with the result that today we are tyrannized by this ideology. It is as if we have been told that all questions of life, of the world and of everything in it can be approached and understood exclusively through the use of a computer.

If, however, we free ourselves for a moment from bondage to this trivial, shallow, and above all extremely oversimplified worldview, then a completely different approach to everything in the world becomes possible, acceptable, convincing and ultimately self-evident. Suddenly the words "revelation" and "miracle" cease to be the offspring of darkness and ignorance.

What if *everything* is revelation? What if everything in the world and all of life is - in some completely different and deep sense which at the same time is so childishly simple - a revelation? What if everything is a miracle and everything is a mystery totally unrelated to the almighty computer? And what if every person's deepest, and at the same time most obvious, experience is that everything in the world is at once both what it is (what the computer can know about it) and something other, which no computer is capable of understanding and defining, something which is *revealed* to us, which *appears* and enters us as the most important and precious thing in our life?..

Christianity understands *revelation* - that it is not simply a strange and inexplicable manifestation of some sort - but that it is something which man's own experience confirms. *The heavens are telling the glory of God*, [Ps. 19:1]. *Let everything that breathes praise the Lord* [Ps. 150:6]. To put it simply, faith apprehends the world itself, life itself, as revelation, as the presence of the unseen in the seen. Indeed, by his very nature man lives genuinely only by revelations: revelations of beauty, revelations of love, revelations of nature, revelations of good. These are the things about which computers have nothing to say, but which at all times and in every place have given authentic meaning and real content to life.

Thus, all of this is the very first and most general revelation we can recognize. It comes to us in nature, in another person, in love, in joy and in suffering. It showers us in our childhood, when everything is received as miracle, as revelation. And during the better moments of our life, we know that Dostoevsky was right when he called this experience "the touching of other worlds..." At this point, in the unaccountable experience of revelation, a person would have to admit that its only possible source is God.

An excerpt from *Celebration of Faith*.

In Praise of the Psalms

by St. Basil the Great

A psalm is souls' calm, herald of peace, hushing the swell and agitation of thoughts. It soothes the passions of the soul; it brings her license under law. A psalm is welder of friendship, atonement of adversaries, reconciliation of haters. Who can regard a man as his enemy, when they have lifted up one voice to God together? So psalmody gives us the best of all boons, love. Psalmody has bethought her of concerted singing as a mighty bond of union, and links the people together in a symphony of one song. A psalm puts fiends to flight, and brings the aid of angels to our side; it is armor in the terrors of the night; in the toils of the day it is refreshment; to infants it is a protection, to men in life's prime a pride, to elders a consolation, to women an adornment. It turns wastes into homes. It brings wisdom into marts and meetings. To beginners it is an alphabet, to all who are advancing an improvement, to the perfect a confirmation. It is the voice of the Church. It gladdens feasts. It produces godly sorrow. It brings a tear even from a heart of stone. A psalm is angels' work, the heavenly conversation, the spiritual sacrifice.



Oh, the thoughtful wisdom of the Instructor Who designed that we should at one and the same time sing and learn to our profit! It is thus that his precepts are imprinted on our souls... What can you not learn from this source? You may learn magnificent manliness, scrupulous righteousness, dignified self-control, perfect wisdom. You may learn how to repent and how far to endure. What good thing can you not learn? There is a complete theology; a foretelling of the advent of Christ in the flesh; threatening of

judgement; hope of resurrection; fear of chastisement; promise of glory; revelation of mysteries. Everything is stored in the book of the Psalms as in some vast treasury open to all the world.

In Praise of Chanting the Psalms

by St. Caesarius of Arles

It is truly good and pleasing enough to God when the tongue devoutly chants the psalms, but it will be still better if your life is in harmony with the words on your tongue. Our words and our lives should be in agreement. Let not our words bear testimony against our evil habits, and let not our tongue refute our lives. If one thing is uttered with our mouth and something else appears in our actions, what the tongue seems to build up our evil life immediately destroys. For your part, brethren, may the sense of the passage hold your attention as well as the pleasantness of the sound. Just as the sound of the words pleases your ears, so may the meaning of the selection become sweet to your hearts, just as it is written: *How sweet are thy words to my palate, O Lord!* [Ps. 118:103] and further: *The words of the Lord are more to be desired than gold and many precious stones: and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.* [Ps. 18:11]

As often as sinners are condemned in the psalms let us strive to avoid sin, so that we will not seem to be condemning ourselves with our own lips. Moreover, whenever the just, the merciful, the good, the chaste, or the humble are praised in the psalms, let us with God's help endeavor to be such. Then the blessing which is addressed to them will also be conferred on us through the divine mercy... Thus, while your tongue praises the Lord, the blessing of God will come to your souls: with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns, world without end. Amen.

St. Gregory Orthodox Church
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Address Correction Requested

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>September 2024</h1>						<i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i>
1 10 th Sunday after Pentecost; St. Giles, Ab, 708; Twelve Holy Brothers, Mm, c. 303 <i>G</i>	2 St. Stephen of Hungary, KC, 1038 <i>(Labor Day)</i>	3 Consecration of St. Gregory the Great, 590	4 St. Gorazde of Prague, BM, 1942	5	6	7 St. Cloud, C, 560; St. Sergius I, PC, 701 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
8 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary; 11 th Sunday after Pentecost <i>W</i>	9 St. Gorgonius, M, 304	10	11 Ss. Protus & Hyacinth, Mm, c. 257; St. Paphnutius, BC, 4th C	12	13 St. Eulogius, BC, 606	14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross <i>Mass at 10am R</i> <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
15 12 th Sunday after Pentecost; St. Nicomedes, M, 4th C <i>G</i>	16 Ss. Cornelius, PM, 254 & Cyprian, BM 258; St. Ninian, BC, 5 th C	17 St. Lambert, BM, 705	18 Ember Wednesday	19 St. Theodore of Canterbury, BC, 690; Ss. Januarius & comp., Mm, c. 305	20 Ember Friday; Ss. Eustace & comp., Mm, c. 118	21 St. Matthew, Evangelist & Apostle, 1st C; Ember Saturday <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
22 13 th Sun. after Pentecost ; St. Maurice & comp., Mm, 3rd C <i>G</i>	23 St. Thecla of Iconium, VM, 1st C; St. Linus, PM, c. 80	24 Ss. Juvenaly, PrM, 1796 & Peter the Aleut, M, 1815	25	26 Ss. Cyprian, BM & Justina, VM, c. 303	27 Ss. Cosmas & Damian, Mm, c. 303	28 St. Wenceslas, M, 938; St. Lioba of Mainz, V, 781 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
29 Dedication of St. Michael the Archangel; 14 th Sunday after Pentecost <i>W</i>	30 St. Jerome PrCD, 420; St. Gregory the Illuminator, BC, c. 323					