

# ✠ 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 Sermon by St. Bede the Venerable d. 735*

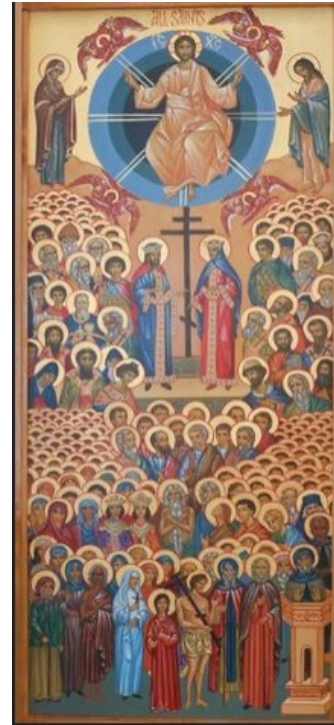
**I**n the heavenly city there shall be no discord for ever, but all things in accord, all things in agreement; because there will be one harmony of all the Saints, one peace, and one joy. Tranquil are all things there, and all at rest. Unfailing is the light, not that of earth, but so much the brighter as it is more blest than ours; because that

city, as we read, shall not need the light of the sun, for the Lord Almighty shall give it light, and the Lamb is the light thereof. There the Saints shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever...

**W**hat, beloved brethren, will be the glory of the righteous, what the great rejoicing of the Saints, when every face shall shine as the sun, when the Lord in the kingdom of his

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Father shall begin to set in order and to number his own people and to render the rewards promised for the merits and works of each one; to bestow heavenly things for earthly, eternal things for temporal, great things for little, to bring the Saints to the vision of the Father's glory, and to make them sit down in heavenly places, that God may be all in all; to grant the boon of eternity and immortality to those who love him, and to restore to paradise those whom he had renewed by his life-giving blood; to open the kingdom of heaven according to his faithful and true promises?

**L**et it be our joy to look forward to gaining the palm of saving works. Let us gladly and eagerly strive in this contest for righteousness; let us run,

with God and Christ seeing us; and let us who have already begun to rise above this life and the world not slacken our pace for any hankering after worldly things. If the last day shall find us running swiftly and without hindrance in this race, the Lord will never fail to reward us after our deserving...

**T**herefore, beloved, with an honest heart, firm faith, strong courage, and perfect charity, let us be ready to fulfil the will of God, bravely keeping his commandments: keeping innocence in simplicity, concord in charity, temperance in humility, diligence in service, zeal in helping the distressed, mercy in cherishing the poor, constancy in defending the truth, discretion in allotting discipline, that no example of good deeds be wanted in us. For these are the footprints left for our guidance by the Saints on their way home to the heavenly country: that we, following in their steps, might also attain to their joy.

## *Farewell, Dear Friends*



It is with the mixed feelings of sadness and thanksgiving that we bid goodbye to Fr. Raphael and Kh. Catherine Garcia, as they move back to the Phillippines, returning to the land of their birth. We will miss them but wish them Godspeed and pray that they will be able to continue their ministry in the Church there.

We first welcomed Josephine (Catherine) Carandang into our parish family and she soon brought her friend, Fr. Jeffrey Garcia, a Roman Catholic priest serving a parish in Virginia. After much prayer and study, he resigned his priesthood and was chrismated at St. Gregory's in 2010. With great joy, we celebrated the marriage of Catherine and Jeffrey later that year. Having completed our Archdiocese's St. Stephen's Course of study, he was ordained to the Orthodox deaconate by Bishop THOMAS also in 2010, taking the name Raphael (after St. Raphael of Brooklyn), and in 2011 was ordained to the holy priesthood.

We have been greatly blessed at St. Gregory's by Fr. Raphael's service at the altar, hearing confessions, and his excellent sermons in which he often shares his experiences as a hospice chaplain. Kh. Catherine's many contributions - from taking pictures and videos of important occasions, to welcoming and encouraging visitors and inquirers (and even to quietly emptying the dishwasher every Sunday morning!) have also been a great blessing. We will miss the Garcias' reading in Tagalog and Bikol at Pentecost and we will especially miss Kh. Catherine's beautiful reading of the creation story at the Paschal Vigil each year.

November 3 will be the last Sunday that Fr. Raphael and Kh. Catherine will be with us before they leave. May God go with them as they begin this new chapter in their lives.

## *St. Odo of Chuny* *Feast Day ~ November 18*



Readers of church history will be very familiar with the Protestant Reformation. The belief that the Church had become so corrupt and had veered so far from the teachings of the Apostles led some priests to rebel against the authority of the bishops and, consequently, create a new church. The disastrous results of this attempt at "reform" continues to spawn more and more "churches" - groups of people who interpret holy Scripture in unique ways and who themselves have become corrupt and have veered far from the teachings of the Apostles and the

worship and organization of the early Church. Before this Reformation took place (in the 16<sup>th</sup> century), before the West separated from the holy Catholic and Orthodox Church, another need for reform was recognized - this time in the monasteries.

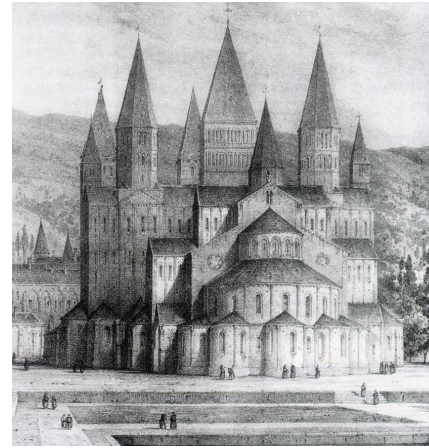
Withdrawing from the world in order to spend a more intense life devoted to prayer had begun with St. Anthony in Egypt in the fourth century. Many Christians followed his example in both East and West, and by the tenth century, there were numerous monasteries for men and women all over the world. In many places, monasteries had become places of pilgrimage and they had received gifts of land and riches by those who had received spiritual benefit from the monasteries. What had begun as an

attempt to live ascetic lives away from riches and the lure of the world had devolved into places of luxury and laxity of life. Some monasteries had been abandoned by the monks after raids by Vikings (in France) and by Huns and Muslims (in Italy) and the monks who returned to those monasteries often refused to resume the strict monastic life. Reform was greatly needed.

**S**t. Odo, living in the first half of the tenth century, found himself in a position to bring about reform in many monasteries in France and Italy. The son of a knight, Odo was sent as a young boy to serve as a page at the court of Aquitaine where he received his early education. When he was a teenager, he began to suffer from severe headaches and, as his family had attributed his birth to their prayers to St. Martin of Tours, he was encouraged to enter the monastic life at the shrine of St. Martin. There, at the age of 19, Odo was tonsured as a canon and his headaches ceased.

**T**he next six years of Odo's life were spent studying the classics and reading the Fathers of the Church. He excelled in poetry and music, which he pursued for the rest of his life. In 901, he traveled to Paris for further study and when he returned to Tours, he was appointed as chief cantor for the community. When he read the Rule which St. Benedict had established for his monks, Odo realized his disillusionment with the "easy" life of the monks at Tours and the wealth of the monastery. He decided to increase his own personal discipline and in 909 entered the Benedictine monastery of Baume to center his life on the balance of prayer, study, and physical work which St. Benedict had established as the ideal for monks. Leaving behind worldly possessions did not include leaving behind his library - a collection of over 100 manuscripts which were essential to the life of this scholar/monk!

**I**n the meantime, a small Benedictine monastery had been founded at Cluny in 909. It was here that St. Odo later found his life's work. After being in charge of the monastic school at Baume, he became the abbot of the Cluny monastery in 927. He built on



the already established strict principles there of an emphasis on silence, abstinence, chastity and the life of poverty within the community. All this was in great contrast to what had become typical of the monasteries of the time. He was able to obtain charters granting Cluny immunity from secular control, which gave the monastery an important freedom not

experienced by most monasteries. Abbot Odo's influence began to spread to other monasteries in need of reform and his influence was extended even to the political sphere, as he was called upon to arbitrate between rival rulers. St. Odo was widely known for his charity to the poor and help for prisoners. It was reported that Cluny Abbey, under his direction, distributed food to more than seven thousand poor people in one year. St. Odo also contributed to the liturgical life of the Church by establishing November 2 as All Souls Day, a day for commemorating all the faithful departed.

**A**bbot Odo was put in charge of monasteries in France and Italy which were in need of reform. He often discovered that fasting was one of the most contentious issues. The Benedictine rule prohibited the eating of flesh meat but fish was allowed. Sometimes the monks who resisted this newly returned prohibition would allow the supply of fish to deplete, expecting that Abbot Odo would then be forced to allow the eating of meat. On every occasion, an "emergency" supply of fish was discovered and the monastic fast preserved! After reforms were established in these places they were then spread to monasteries in England and other parts of Europe. This was a "reformation" that did not destroy the unity of the Church but that strengthened the importance of monasticism in the life of the Church.

St. Odo traveled to Rome in 942 and there fell ill with malaria. Having determined that he wished to die in Tours, he returned there for the feast day celebration of his patron, St. Martin, on November 11, and died a week later, on November 18.

St. Odo spent his life working to restore the monastic vocation to the kind of life that St. Anthony and St. Benedict had envisioned for those who had left the world for Christ's sake. We give thanks for the fruits of his labors, which greatly enriched the Church. Those of us who live and strive for holiness in the world can also look to St. Odo for inspiration and his intercessions. All Orthodox Christians are called to lead disciplined lives - to conquer the passions, observe the fasts, be diligent in prayer, be merciful to the poor - and always to be ready to reform our lives when we go astray. *Holy Odo, pray for us.*

Resources: *Lives of the Saints* by Omer Englebert; *The One Year Book of Saints* by Clifford Stevens; *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* by David Farmer, article from Wikipedia.

## Parish News

We will celebrate several important feast days in the month of November. All Souls will be celebrated on Saturday, November 2, with Lauds for the Departed at 9:40, Requiem Mass at 10:00am, and pot-luck brunch following. We will remember the names of our departed loved ones at this Mass, so please submit your names to Fr. Nicholas by November 1. On Sunday, November 3, we will celebrate the Sunday within the octave of All Saints. At coffee hour that day, we will continue our celebration of the saints by sharing the stories of our personal patron saints or favorite saints with each other. On Wednesday, November 20, the Eve of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple, Mass will be at 7:00pm with Vespers at 6:30 and pot-luck supper following.

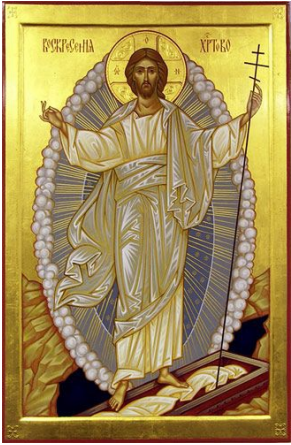
Thanks to all who contributed to our preparation of clean-up buckets for flood relief to those affected by the recent hurricanes. Another annual outreach effort will begin this month with the Archdiocesan Food for Hungry People program. We will begin collecting canned and dried foods for a local food bank on Sunday, November 10 and continue until the Epiphany season begins in January. The Archdiocese has also suggested that contributions can be sent for those affected by the continuing and expanding war in the Middle East (checks should be made to St. Gregory's and marked for Middle East relief).

## *Why do the Orthodox Pray for the Dead?*

Praying for the dead is self-evident to us as Orthodox Christians. Even Monophysites, Nestorians, Roman Catholics, and Uniates continue this practice from their Orthodox Christian past. But many of our Protestant neighbors question or reject it, thinking it is not biblical. As Orthodox Christians, we should understand why we pray for the dead, so we can explain this to others who ask about it [1 Peter 3:15].

Prayer for the dead is biblical. First and foremost, the Orthodox pray for the dead because the Bible tells us to. As members of the Church, the Body of Christ, we are exhorted to pray for one another [James 5:16]. Whether we live or die, *we belong to the Lord* [Romans 14:8]. For we are *members of His Body, of His flesh and of His bones* (Ephesians 5:30). The Church is *the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God*. As such, she includes *tens of thousands of angels and the spirits of righteous people made perfect* as well as those of us alive on earth [Hebrews 12:22-24].

Because of Christ's resurrection and victory over death, death does not end our membership in the Body of Christ. For *neither death nor life [...] will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord* [Romans 8:38-39]. The Orthodox remember



that God *is not the God of the dead, but of the living – for all are alive to Him* [Luke 20:38]. Therefore, we pray for both the living and for the *dead in Christ* [1 Thessalonians 4:16].

**T**he Apostle Paul prays for his departed friend Onesiphorus. As he writes: *May the Lord grant that he find mercy from the Lord* (on Judgment Day) [2 Timothy 1:16-18]. And so the Orthodox do likewise!

**W**e can see from the verses above that we remain alive to God and part of His Church, even if we are dead to this world. Death is the parting of our souls and bodies, not the end of our existence or the obliteration of our personhood. The Bible bears witness that our souls live on after death, both conscious and active after our earthly lives [Luke 16:19-31; Revelation 6:9-10]. For this reason, the Church speaks biblically of the dead as those who have “fallen asleep” [1 Corinthians 15:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16], for they are destined to awake and rise on Judgment Day.

**W**ith an eye toward the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come, we ask God who gives life to the dead, to keep them in His eternal memory and grant them mercy, peaceful rest, forgiveness of their sins, and a good answer for themselves before the awesome judgment seat of Christ.

**A**s Orthodox Christians, we have hope in Christ both in this life and in the age to come. As He tells us: “I am the One who lives, and became dead, and behold I am alive for ages and ages [...] And I hold the keys of death and death’s underworld” (Revelation 1:18-19). So, the Orthodox turn to Him in prayer for both the living and the dead, as the church has always done.

*From an article on the website of St. John the Evangelist (Antiochian) Orthodox Church, Beaver Falls, PA*

**St. Gregory Orthodox Church**  
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*Address Correction Requested*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2024</h1>						<i>Sunday services: Matins at 9am Sung Mass at 9:30</i>
					<b>1</b> All Saints Day	<b>2</b> All Souls Day  <i>Mass at 10am</i> <b>B</b>  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>3</b> Sunday in the Oct. of All Saints; 19 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; St. Winifred, VM, c. 660  <i>W</i>	<b>4</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Vitalis & Agricola, Mm, c. 304	<b>5</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; Ss. Zachariah, M, and Elizabeth, Ma, 1st C	<b>6</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Leonard of Noblac, Ab, c. 559	<b>7</b> of the Oct. of All Saints; St. Wilibrord of Echternach, BC, 739	<b>8</b> Patriarchs & Prophets of the Old Law (Oct. Day of All Saints); Four Crowned Martyrs	<b>9</b> Dedication of the Basilica of St. Savior in Rome, 324; St. Benignus, BC, c. 468  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>10</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; Ss. Tryphon, Respicius & Nympham, c. 250  <i>G</i>	<b>11</b> St. Martin of Tours, BC, 397; St. Theodore the Studite, Ab, 826  <i>(Veteran's Day)</i>	<b>12</b> St. Martin I, PC, 655	<b>13</b> St. Britius of Tours, BC, 444	<b>14</b> St. Gregory Palamas, BCD, 1359	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>17</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> Sun. after Pentecost; St. Hilda of Whitby, V, 680; St. Gregory the Wonder-worker, BC, c. 270  <i>G</i>	<b>18</b> Dedication of Basilica of Ss. Peter & Paul, 4 <sup>th</sup> C; St. Odo of Cluny, Ab, 942	<b>19</b> St. Pontianus, PM, 235	<b>20</b> St. Edmund, KM, 870  <i>Mass at 7pm</i> <i>W</i>	<b>21</b> Presentation of the BVM; St. Gelasius, PC, 496; St. Columbanus, Ab, 615	<b>22</b> St. Cecilia, VM, c. 230	<b>23</b> St. Clement, PM, 96; St. Felicity of Rome, M, 165  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
<b>24</b> 22 <sup>nd</sup> and Last Sunday after Pentecost; St. Chrysogonus of Aquileia, M., c. 304  <i>G</i>	<b>25</b> St. Katherine of Alexandria, VM, 4th C	<b>26</b> St. Peter of Alexandria, BM, 311	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>  <i>(Thanksgiving Day)</i>	<b>29</b> Vigil of St. Andrew; St. Saturninus, M, 309	<b>30</b> St. Andrew the Apostle, 1st C  <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>