

The Orthodox Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross, Lancaster

Meeting at the Chaplaincy Centre of Lancaster University

Newsletter



*Ἐθρονος Χριστός, Ζωοδότης.
(Φ. Κόντογλου, 1962)*

*The Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the United Kingdom and Ireland,
which is part of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Western and Central Europe.*

Our Metropolitan is His Eminence Archbishop John.

The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.

The Patriarch is His Beatitude Ignatius IV.

*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch
(Acts 11:26)*

GOD'S CREATION IS BEAUTIFUL

I am including in this newsletter two photos. The first is of the basil I bought on the 13th September. I bought two plants on that day. The first I kept at home and it's on the left in the first photo. The second, I brought to church the next day for the Holy Cross. I kept the tiny branch fr. Jonathan gave us and put it in a tiny cup of water. It's on the right in the photo. As you can see, the basil in the pot is dead, while the little branch, that was blessed, has at least quadrupled in size and is thriving, more than merely surviving in the half-filled cup of water that I refresh when I remember, and it's not often, I can assure you.



The second photo is of the carnations fr. Jonathan gave me on two occasions, after they had been on the icons. Again, I've had these flowers in some water for so long that I have forgotten, I'd say at least a month. I've only remembered to change the water twice and it wasn't green or smelly (as it always happens with flower water after a few days, let alone weeks) but clean and fresh. The flowers are as fresh as the day they were

given to me, they look like as they are going to bloom even more.



It makes me think, if herbs and flowers gain life as they've come in contact with the Cross and the Icons, what happens to us, who consciously come to them, touch them, kiss them, venerate them. How much renewed life, vitality, strength, we must be getting!

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE WORD "ORTHODOX"?

The designation of a Christian consists in glorifying the Heavenly Father by one's life. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (St. Matt. V:16). But true glorification of God is possible only if one rightly believes and expresses his right belief in words and deeds. Therefore true Christianity and it alone may be named "right-glorifying" (Ortho-doxy). By the word "Orthodoxy" we confess our firm conviction that it is precisely our Faith that is the true doctrine of Christ. When we call anyone or anything Orthodox, we by this very fact indicate his or its non-counterfeit and uncorrupted Christianity,

rejecting at the same time that which
falsely appropriates the name of Christ.

St. John of Shanghai & San Francisco

HUMBLE HEARTS

We lift our voices to the throne
Blessed company of faithful own
The praises of the Lord alone
From humble hearts

But better still our lives to be
A holy temple fit for Thee
Our minds an altar's offert'ry
Of humble hearts

Our life would be unceasing prayer
Our world transformed that we might
share
The image of the Father's care
For humble hearts

We win the world and lose the soul
To restless charms that take their toll
Preserve us Father make us whole
As humble hearts

Lighten our path O Lord we pray
With eyes to see your grace today
In those we meet along the way
With humble hearts

We bring our worship, joy and love
From here on earth to heaven above
Inspired by the celestial Dove
In humble hearts

To the Glory of God, 30.6.08

JAH



ST. BASIL THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP OF CAESAREA & CAPPADOCIA

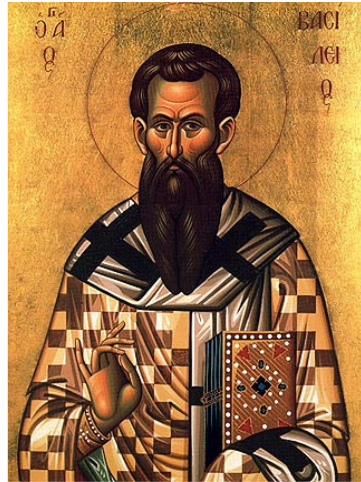
Saint Basil the Great was born about the end of the year 329 in Caesarea of Cappadocia, to a family renowned for their learning and holiness. His parents' names were Basil and Emily. His mother Emily (commemorated July 19) and his grandmother Macrina (Jan. 14) are Saints of the Church, together with all his brothers and sisters: Macrina, his elder sister (July 19), Gregory of Nyssa (Jan. to), Peter of Sebastia (Jan. 9), and Naucratius. Basil studied in Constantnople under the sophist Libanius, then in Athens, where also he formed a friendship with the young Gregory, a fellow Cappadocian, later called "the Theologian." Through the good influence of his sister Macrina (see July 19), he chose to embrace the ascetical life, abandoning his worldly career. He visited the monks in Egypt, in Palestine, in Syria, and in Mesopotamia, and upon returning to Caesarea, he departed to a hermitage on the Iris River in Pontus, not far from Annesi, where his mother and his sister Macrina were already treading the path of the ascetical life; here he also wrote his ascetical homilies.

About the year 370, when the bishop of his country reposed, he was elected to succeed to his throne and was entrusted with the Church of Christ, which he tended for eight years, living in voluntary poverty and strict asceticism, having no other care than to defend holy Orthodoxy as a worthy successor of the Apostles. The Emperor Valens, and Modestus, the Eparch of the East, who were of one mind with the Arians, tried with threats of exile and of torments to bend the Saint to their own confession,

because he was the bastion of Orthodoxy in all Cappadocia, and preserved it from heresy when Arianism was at its strongest. But he set all their malice at nought, and in his willingness to give himself up to every suffering for the sake of the Faith, showed himself to be a martyr by volition. Modestus, amazed at Basil's fearlessness in his presence, said that no one had ever so spoken to him. "Perhaps," answered the Saint, "you have never met a bishop before." The Emperor Valens himself was almost won over by Basil's dignity and wisdom. When Valens' son fell gravely sick, he asked Saint Basil to pray for him. The Saint promised that his son would be restated if Valens agreed to have him baptized by the Orthodox; Valens agreed, Basil prayed and the son was restored. But afterwards the Emperor had him baptized by Arians, and the child died soon after. Later, Valens, persuaded by his counselors, decided to send the Saint into exile because he would not accept the Arians into communion; but his pen broke when he was signing the edict of banishment. He tried a second time and a third, but the same thing happened, so that the Emperor was filled with dread, and tore up the document, and Basil was not banished. The truly great Basil, spent with extreme ascetical practices and continual labours, at the helm of the church, departed to the Lord on the 1st of January, in 379. at the age of forty-nine.

His writings are replete with wisdom and erudition, and rich these gifts he set forth the doctrines concerning the mysteries both of the creation (see his Hexameron) and of the Holy Trinity (see On the Holy Spirit). Because of the majesty and keenness of his eloquence, he is honoured as "the revealer of heavenly things" and "the Great."

Saint Basil is also celebrated on January 30th with Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint John Chrysostom.



THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

About the beginning of our Lord's thirtieth year, John the Forerunner, who was some six months older than Our Saviour according to the flesh, and had lived in the wilderness since his childhood, received a command from God and came into the parts of the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Then our Saviour also came from Galilee to the Jordan, and sought and received baptism though He was the Master and John was but a servant. Whereupon, there came to pass those marvelous deeds, great and beyond nature: the Heavens were opened, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Him that was being baptized and the voice was heard from the

Heavens hearing witness that this was the beloved Son of God, now baptized as a man (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:1-22). From these events the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great mystery of the Trinity were demonstrated. It is also from this that the present feast is called "Theophany," that is, the divine manifestation, God's appearance among men. On this venerable day the sacred mystery of Christian baptism was inaugurated; henceforth also began the saving preaching of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

Home blessings at Theophany by
appointment with Fr. Jonathan

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Jan: St. Basil the Great

6th Jan: The Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

17th Jan: St. Antony the Great

18th Jan: St. Athanasios

20th Jan: Righteous Euthymios the Great

25th Jan: St. Gregory the Theologian,
Archbishop of Constantinople

28th Jan: St. Ephraim the Syrian

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: www.calendar.goarch.org

I saw the snares that the enemy spreads out over the world and I said groaning, "What can get through from such snares?"

Then I heard a voice saying to me, "Humility."

- St. Anthony the Great -



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