

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2022
23rd Sunday after Pentecost (9th of Luke)
Forefeast of the Entrance into the Temple
Ven. Gregory of Decapolis

Saint Gregory was born in the Isaurian city of Decapolis (ten cities) in the VIII century. From his childhood he loved the house of God and the Church Services. He read the Holy Scripture constantly and with reverence. In order to avoid the marriage which his parents had intended for him, he left home and spent his entire life wandering. He travelled to Constantinople, Rome, Corinth, and he lived as an ascetic on Olympus for a while. Saint Gregory preached the Word of God everywhere, denouncing the Iconoclast heresy, and strengthening the faith and courage of the Orthodox, who were persecuted, tortured, and imprisoned by the Iconoclasts.

Through his ascetical struggles and prayers, Saint Gregory attained the gifts of prophecy and working miracles. After overcoming the passions and attaining the height of virtue, he was permitted to hear the angelic singing in praise of the Holy Trinity. Saint Gregory left the monastery of Saint Menas near Thessaloniki, where he had labored for a long time, and he went to Constantinople again in order to combat the Iconoclast heresy. At the capital, a grievous illness undermined his strength, and he went to the Lord in the year 816.

Saint Gregory was buried at a monastery in Constantinople, and many miracles took place at his tomb. As a result, the monks recovered Saint Gregory's holy relics and enshrined them in the church where people could venerate them.

When Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, the relics of Saint Gregory were carried to the region of the Danube by a Turkish official. In 1498 Barbu Craiovescu, the Ban of Wallachia heard of the miracles performed by the holy relics and he bought them for a considerable sum of money. Barbu Craiovescu placed the relics in the main church of Bistrița's Dormition Monastery which he founded at Rimnicu Vilcea,¹ where they remain to the present day.

A small booklet describing the miracles and healings performed by Saint Gregory the Decapolite in Romania was written by Igoumeness Olga Gologan, who reposed in 1972.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL: 4 stichera of the Resurrection in tone 6 (spiral bound Vespers book), then ...

Forefeast, tone 1:

Virgins, bearing lamps to light the way for the ever-Virgin, truly prophesy in the Spirit that which is to come.
For the Theotokos is the Temple of God,//
and from infancy is led into the Temple in virginal glory.

The glorious fruit of a holy promise,
the Theotokos is truly shown to the world as exalted over all.
As she is brought with reverence into the house of God,
she fulfills the prayer of her parents//
being preserved by the Divine Spirit.

You were nourished by faith with heavenly bread, O Virgin,
in the Temple of the Lord,
and you broughtest forth for the world the Word, Who is the Bread of
Life.

As His chosen and immaculate Temple,
you were betrothed mystically through the Spirit//
to be the Bride of God the Father.

St. Gregory, tone 1:

Dwelling in the heavenly tabernacles in joy, O Father,
and standing with the angels in boldness before the throne of the Lord,
entreat Him that those who celebrate your commemoration on earth//
may be delivered from errors and passions.

Removing the thorns of passions with the sickle of prayers, O Father Gregory,
and renewing the earth of your soul with the plow of abstinence,
you planted therein the seeds of piety,//
through which you are sprouting forth to us fruits of healing.

We call you a vessel of virtues, O holy Father Gregory,
as you are a friend of silence, a keeper of vigil,
a pillar of chastity and moderation,
a sacred abode of prayer, a treasury of wonders,//
and an intercessor for those who honor you.

Glory ... Forefeast, tone 4:

Today the Theotokos, the Temple that is to hold God,
is brought into the Temple of the Lord,
and Zachariah receives her.

Today the Holy of Holies is glad,
and the choir of angels mystically keeps the feast.
With them let us celebrate the feast today,
and with Gabriel let us cry aloud:
“Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you,//
He Who has great mercy!”

now and ever ... the theotokion-dogmatikon of the Resurrection in tone 6 (spiral bound Vespers book)

APOSTICHA: All stichera of the Resurrection in tone 6 (spiral bound Vespers book), then ...

Glory ... now and ever ... Forefeast, tone 4:

Come, all peoples,
let us praise her who alone is without blemish,
who was proclaimed by the prophets and now is offered in the Temple:
the Mother foreordained before the ages,
who in the last days has been shown forth as Theotokos.
By her intercessions, O Lord,//
grant us Your peace and great mercy!

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 5:

The Angelic Powers were at Your tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Your grave,
seeking Your most pure body.
You captured hell, not being tempted by it.
You came to the Virgin, granting life.
O Lord, Who rose from the dead,//
glory to You.

Ss. Gregory and Proclus, tone 8:

The twofold lamps of divine gifts,
Proclus, shepherd of New Rome, and Gregory, scion of Decapolis,
guide us by the light of grace as divinely-inspired fathers.
Let us draw near and eagerly beseech them,//
that we may receive forgiveness and salvation of our souls!

Forefeast, tone 8:

Today Anna bequeaths joy to all instead of sorrow,
by bringing forth her fruit, the only ever-Virgin.
In fulfillment of her vow,
today with joy she brings to the temple of the Lord//
the true temple and pure Mother of God the Word.

Saint John of Damascus Orthodox Church

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