

January 2, 2023

Good Morning All,

The Parish office is closed.
The School office is closed.

As Father Gillespie requested at Mass this weekend, please set aside next Sunday, January 8 through Tuesday, January 10 at 7 pm each evening for our parish mission with Fr. Bill Garrott, O.P. Fr. Bill plays keyboard and/or guitar during his preaching and has done over 200 missions throughout the US. This mission is for ALL, ages 2nd grade and older. Fr. Garrott will be hearing confessions each evening after his talk. He will also be celebrating Mass on Monday morning, January 9 at 8:30 am and hearing confessions afterwards. (Please note: this mission will *not* be recorded so please attend in person.)

1. Today's Readings: [Memorial of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Today we celebrate two 4th century Doctors of the Church: St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen. Each had parents who were saints. These two men were very close friends..... "of the same spirit". There are 3 attachments today--all relatively short--one by St. Gregory telling of this great friendship and the other two, one by each saint on the sacrament of Baptism. Let us soak in the wisdom of the saints, especially these Doctors of the Church!

3. Quote of the Day:

~ "Do not say, 'this happened by chance, while this came to be of itself.' In all that exists there is nothing disorderly, nothing indefinite, nothing without purpose, nothing by chance ... How many hairs are on your head? God will not forget one of them. Do you see how nothing, even the smallest thing, escapes the gaze of God?" *St. Basil the Great*

~ "O sinner, be not discouraged, but have recourse to Mary in all your necessities. Call her to your assistance, for such is the divine Will that she should help in every kind of necessity." *St. Basil the Great*

~ "Different men have different names, which they owe to their parents or to themselves, that is, to their own pursuits and achievements. But our great pursuit, the great name we wanted, was to be Christians, to be called Christians." *St. Gregory Nazianzus*

~ "Give something, however small, to the one in need. For it is not small to one who has nothing. Neither is it small to God if we have given what we could." *St. Gregory Nazianzus*

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!
Saints Basil and Gregory, Pray for Us!

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From a sermon by Saint Gregory Nazianzen, bishop

Two bodies, but a single spirit

Basil and I were both in Athens. We had come, like streams of a river, from the same source in our native land, had separated from each other in pursuit of learning, and were now united again as if by plan, for God so arranged it.

I was not alone at that time in my regard for my friend, the great Basil. I knew his irreproachable conduct, and the maturity and wisdom of his conversation. I sought to persuade others, to whom he was less well known, to have the same regard for him. Many fell immediately under his spell, for they had already heard of him by reputation and hearsay.

What was the outcome? Almost alone of those who had come to Athens to study he was exempted from the customary ceremonies of initiation for he was held in higher honor than his status as a first-year student seemed to warrant.

Such was the prelude to our friendship, the kindling of that flame that was to bind us together. In this way we began to feel affection for each other. When, in the course of time, we acknowledged our friendship and recognized that our ambition was a life of true wisdom, we became everything to each other: we shared the same lodging, the same table, the same desires, the same goal. Our love for each other grew daily warmer and deeper.

The same hope inspired us: the pursuit of learning. This is an ambition especially subject to envy. Yet between us there was no envy. On the contrary, we made capital out of our rivalry. Our rivalry consisted, not in seeking the first place for oneself but in yielding it to the other, for we each looked on the other's success as his own.

We seemed to be two bodies with a single spirit. Though we cannot believe those who claim that "everything is contained in everything," yet you must believe that in our case each of us was in the other and with the other.

Our single object and ambition was virtue, and a life of hope in the blessings that are to come; we wanted to withdraw from this world before we departed from it.

With this end in view, we ordered our lives and all our actions. We followed the guidance of God's law and spurred each other on to virtue. If it is not too boastful to say, we found in each other a standard and rule for discerning right from wrong.

Different men have different names, which they owe to their parents or to themselves, that is, to their own pursuits and achievements. But our great pursuit, the great name we wanted, was to be Christians, to be called Christians.

Source: liturgies.net

The Marvelous Gift of Baptism

In ancient times, baptism was known by many names. Saint Gregory Nazianzen tells how the multitude of names reflects the abundance of the gifts that come to us in this wonderful sacrament.

This illumination of baptism is the splendor of souls, the conversion of life, the question addressed to the conscience that's turned toward God. It's the aid to our weakness, the renunciation of the flesh, the following of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Word, the enhancement of God's creation, the overcoming of sin, the participation in light, the dissolution of darkness.

Baptism is the vehicle that carries us to God, our dying with Christ, the perfection of our mind, the bulwark of faith, the key of the kingdom of heaven, the transformation of our life, the liberation from our slavery, the loosing of our chains, the renovation of our whole nature. Why should I go into further detail? The illumination of Baptism is the greatest and most magnificent of the gifts of God.

Just as Christ the giver of Baptism is called by a variety of names, so too is this gift. The names reflect the great number of benefits it bestows on us. We call it the gift, the grace, baptism (immersion), anointing, illumination, the clothing of immortality, the basin of rebirth, the seal and everything that's honorable.

We call it the gift, because it's given to us in return for nothing on our part; grace, because it's conferred gratuitously even on debtors; baptism (immersion) because sin is buried with it in the water; anointing, both priestly and royal, because in ancient times, priests and king were anointed. We called it illumination, because of its brilliant splendor; clothing, because it hides our shame; the basin, because it washes us; the seal, because it preserves us, and also because a seal is a sign of authority.

Baptism is the image of heavenly happiness. We long indeed to sing out its praises, but we cannot worthily do so.

Source: A Year with the Saints

Baptism born again in water and Spirit

This excerpt on the sacrament of baptism from St. Basil the Great's book On the Holy Spirit (ca. AD 360) describes how baptism fulfills what Jesus says to Nicodemus in John 3 about being born again in water and the Spirit. He also here outlines how baptism was celebrated and understood in the early Church.

Our Lord made a covenant with us through baptism in order to give us eternal life. There is in baptism an image both of death and of life, the water being the symbol of death, the Spirit giving the pledge of life.

The association of water and the Spirit is explained by the twofold purpose for which baptism was instituted, namely, to destroy the sin in us so that it could never again give birth to death, and to enable us to live by the Spirit and so win the reward of holiness. The water into which the body enters as into a tomb symbolizes death; the Spirit instills into us his life-giving power, awakening our souls from the death of sin to the life that they had in the beginning. This then is what it means to be born again of water and the Spirit: we die in the water, and we come to life again through the Spirit.

To signify this death and to enlighten the baptized by transmitting to them knowledge of God, the great sacrament of baptism is administered by means of a triple immersion and the invocation of each of the three divine Persons. Whatever grace there is in the water comes not from its own nature but from the presence of the Spirit, since baptism is not a cleansing of the body, but a pledge made to God from a clear conscience.

As a preparation for our life after the resurrection, our Lord tells us in the gospel how we should live here and now. He teaches us to be peaceable, long-suffering, undefiled by desire for pleasure, and detached from worldly wealth. In this way we can achieve, by our own free choice, the kind of life that will be natural in the world to come.

Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, we ascend to the kingdom of heaven, and we are reinstated as adopted sons. Thanks to the Spirit we obtain the right to call God our Father, we become sharers in the grace of Christ, we are called children of light, and we share in everlasting glory.

In a word, every blessing is showered upon us, both in this world and in the world to come. As we contemplate them even now, like a reflection in a mirror, it is as though we already possessed the good things our faith tells us that we shall one day enjoy.

If this is the pledge, what will the perfection be? If these are the first fruits, what will the full harvest be?

Source: Crossroadsinitiative.com