

light and truth now, befallen with doubts, fears, prideful self-focus, habitual sin, the voice of the humanistic culture, whatever. Faith is the desire for transfiguration, for accountability and growth in humility—for real progress in the life in Christ. It is the desire for God to take us forward in faith, in life, in love.

The blind man in today's Gospel demonstrates this kind of faith to us: He is yearning for God, yearning for healing. He will not be silenced. He drowns out the other voices around him, trying to silence him, so that Christ God will hear his cry, using the title foretold of the Messiah, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Christ hears him whom He has formed and heals him of his blindness. Likewise, Christ God will heal us too of our spiritual blindness, wherever it may lie, if we are likewise willing to cry out to Him and put our trust in Him.

So, ask yourself, where is my spiritual blindness? Where are my greatest needs for healing? Christ, the Great Physician of our souls and bodies, stands more than ready to hear us, to help us, to heal us as He did this blind man who receives His sight in today's Gospel.

Is there anything in your life you're afraid to give over to God, to entrust to Him, to give up control of? I encourage you, urge you, to open your heart, to yearn for God, to avail yourself of His life in the Church. Put Christ and His Church front and center in your life, put Him on the front burner rather than relegating Him to the back where He is simply one voice among many and is often drowned out by our scientific, skeptical,

rational and materialistic minds. Faith demands courage and humility, but it will open you up to experience the epignosis, that is, the full and experiential knowledge of the living God.

Cry out to God in prayer like the blind man. If you find yourself trying to avoid conforming yourself to some aspect of the Orthodox Faith, "the Faith once delivered to the Saints" (Jude 3), don't give up. Instead, humble and submit yourself, admit that you don't have all the answers, that you can't do it on your own, cry out to God like the blindman and Christ, in His mercy, will likewise reply, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well."

Fr. Robert Miclean



St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Fr Steven Hosking

Rector

Phone: 860-866-5802

Email: frsteve@stalexischurch.org

Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

Bulletin for Sunday, January 20, 2019

Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, it is offered "*on behalf of all, and for all.*" As Orthodox Christians

we stand against racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatian 3:28)

Weekly Services

Tuesdays at 8:30a - Daily Matins
Wednesdays at 6:00p - Daily Vespers (The Church is open at 4:30p for "Open Doors" - confession, meditation and reflection).
Thursday at 8:30a - Daily Matins
Saturday at 5:30p - Great Vespers
Sunday at 9:30a - Divine Liturgy

Members of our Parish Council are:

Greg Jankura - Council President

Natalie Kucharski - Council Treasurer

Kyle Hollis - Member at Large

Glenn PenkoffLedbeck - Council Secretary

Michael Kuziak - Council Vice President

Roderick Seurattan - Member at Large

Pastoral Care - General Information

- *Emergency Sick Calls* can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 866-5802, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.
- *Anointing in Sickness*: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.
- *Marriages and Baptisms* require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!
- *Funerals* are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

Announcements

Weather Related Schedule Changes

Any schedule changes, relating to bad weather conditions, will be made with as much advance notice as possible. Notice of schedule changes or cancelations will

be posted on WFSU (Channel 3), on the parish web site and Facebook page, as well as via email.

Mortgage Update

To the St Alexis parish

We are close to meeting our goal to pay off the church mortgage.

As of 12/31/18, \$42,300 has been donated in both contributions and matching gift. The remaining balance on the mortgage stands at \$7,000.

To date, half of the St Alexis family has contributed to this effort. We have also solicited and received donations from former members.

We are so close. Please contribute and help us to pay it off entirely by the start of Great Lent.

House Blessings

The blessing of homes will begin this week and will continue throughout the month of January, concluding on Friday, February 1st. You may contact Fr Steven directly or email him. Please have a couple of dates and times which would be convenient for you to have your home blessed.

Book/Bible Study

We will begin our new bible study on February 5th (9am) and again on February 7th (7pm). We will study the Apocalypse of St. John, also known as the Book

of those who choose to trust in themselves or in science, in humanism, fall into when something in life unexpectedly goes array and the carefully orchestrated sense of false security they've surrounded themselves with, comes crashing down around them. When you lose a loved one to a horrible disease, when depression sets in, when all your self-confidence and prideful egoism is shattered by your failure to get into the field that you were sure they would be begging to hire you in, when you lose your job, or when a relationship fails because of sin and brokenness, that person without faith in the living God, is left with the transitory emptiness with which they've surrounded themselves.

Humanism always fails in the end because it's a false religion: The problem is that the more time people spend apart from life in God, clinging to humanism, depending only on themselves or substances, the harder it is to change our ways, to open ourselves up to His healing and really learn what is real love. In other words, it's harder to have faith in God over all those temporal things we otherwise put our trust in or anesthetize ourselves with.

The truth is that faith can be scary at times: Faith means relinquishing control. Our pridefulness leads us to believe we can "do it on our own" without God, but faith demands we open ourselves up, become vulnerable towards God, and allow Him to change us, to heal us of all that is broken or incompatible with the life that is only in Him and reflective of His eternal Kingdom. But to be healed, we have to recognize that we are sick, and then, to call out to the only

One who is the Gentle Healer of our souls— Christ God our Creator, "the only Lover of mankind."

Yes, faith is scary, but in a good way: the child learning to ride a bike depends for safety and stability on his father's firm hold on the seat while peddling. The child has to depend that the he'll be there to catch her if she falls. There comes a time, however, when the father lets go and the child, frightened, nevertheless learns to peddle on his own.

God loves us and desires to make us into the men and women He's called us to be, created as we are in His image and likeness, called into fellowship, communion with Him. Faith is a necessary prerequisite for us to achieve all that God has planned for us in this life and the next.

To learn to have faith, we approach God as a little child, trusting that He will lead us, even as we may doubt or fear. Step by step, God builds in us confidence in Him, in the unshakable foundation of faith, the unchanging rock that He is, as much as we allow Him. He makes us into citizens of heaven, ready to spend eternity in His near presence. But, if we prefer our own way, our own beliefs, or those of our culture, if we put our trust in ourselves and all that's transitory, we may find ourselves having rejected Him and His love on that awesome day of His Coming.

In other words, faith is more than belief. Faith is the desire for more of life with God: desire for healing from our 'spiritual blindness.' Faith is a desire, a cry of the heart, to come into and walk in the light of Christ, however far we may feel from that

and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Wisdom of the Fathers

We should not become angry with those who sin, even if what they do is criminal and deserves punishment. On the contrary, for the sake of justice we ought to correct and, if need be, punish them ourselves or get others to do so. But we should not become angry or excited; for anger acts only in accordance with passion, and not in accordance with good judgment and justice. Moreover, we should not approve those who show more mercy than is proper. The wicked must be punished for the sake of what is good and just, but not as a result of the personal passion of anger.

St. Antony the Great

On the Character of Men no. 69, Philokalia Vol. 1 edited by Palmer, Sherrard and Ware; Faber and Faber pg. 340, 4th century

Reflection



Orthodox Homily on Crying Out to God

A blind man sits by the side of the road calling out to Christ God who heals him of his blindness, saying, "Receive your sight, your faith has made you well." Faith is one of those things that the modern rational mind has such a hard time contemplating. In a society where humanists believe that the scientific method is the end all and be all of what we can 'know', of what is 'true', faith seems almost quaint, if not irrelevant to many who prefer the calculations that they know to the mysteries present but unseen. Those mysteries are evidence of the reality of God and so, the modern secular man, trusting in science, finds a reason not to believe.

The fact is that in our pridefulness, memorizing mathematical formulas and filling our minds with the humanist dogma that man can achieve all things (if given enough time, manpower, and resources), fuels our egos and feels, well, 'safer' from a rational perspective than trusting in God, which demands of us faith in Him, His revelation, and the discipline to follow His revealed way.

Ironically, it takes more faith to believe in the random chance involved in many modern theories on the formation of the cosmos, than it does to believe that God purposefully and lovingly created the universe—science does reveal that there is order in the universe, and this order suggests, if nothing else, an Orderer.

I have also seen the abyss that some

of Revelation. Because of the complexity of this *prophecy*, we will take a rather unique approach to studying this book of the Bible, in that we will look into the liturgical implications and impact rather merely taking a textual review. All you will need for the bible study is a copy of the Orthodox Study Bible; at this point I do not recommend reading any particular commentary as a preparation.

25th Anniversary Events and Dates

- *Painting the Sanctuary* - I would like to have the sanctuary painted before the start of Lent. If you are interested in helping with this project please let me know. I have the approximate square footage and the color selected.
- *Souper Bowl Sunday (Feb 3rd)* - This will be our Chilli/Chowder Cookoff. This year we will be supporting OCMC (Orthodox Christian Mission Center) and will have a presentation from Michael and Dori Kuziak about their OCMC Mission trip to Albania.
- *25th Anniversary Dinner (May 18th)* - More specific details for this will be forth coming soon.
- *Guest Speaker, Nicole Roccas, author of "Time and Despondency" (Jun 1st)* - Dr Roccas has agreed to visit and talk with us about her book and other related events. This event will be open to the public. I would like to have a few volunteers to help with the coordinating this event.
- *Wedding of Anastasia Elliott and Malcolm Littlefield (Jun 30th)*

- *Rummage Sale (Sept 21st)* - We will need a whole parcel of volunteers for this. More details will be forth coming.
- *Lyra Concert (Oct 19th TENTATIVE)* - We have reserved the Clinton Town Auditorium for this event, which will be open to the public. We will need a few volunteers to help coordinate with this event.
- *Diocesan Assembly (Oct 25-26)* - Planning for this event is well underway. We will still need a few volunteers for this very important event.

I am in the process of filing for a Diocesan Grant to help fund the activities.

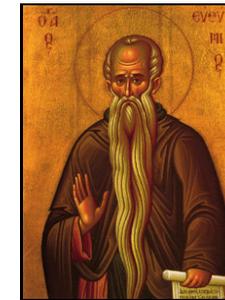
Saints and Feasts

January 20

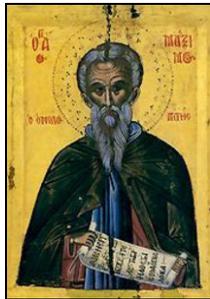
Righteous Euthymius the Great

This Saint, who was from Melitene in Armenia, was the son of pious parents named Paul and Dionysia.

He was born about 377. Since his mother had been barren, he was named Euthymius-which means "good cheer" or "joy"-for this is what his parents experienced at his birth. He studied under Eutroius, the Bishop of Melitene, by whom he was ordained and entrusted with the care of the monasteries of Melitene. Then, after he had come to Palestine about



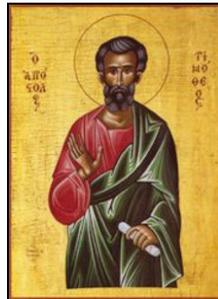
the year 406, he became the leader of a multitude of monks. Through him, a great tribe of Arabs was turned to piety, when he healed the ailing son of their leader Aspebetos. Aspebetos was baptized with all his people; he took the Christian name of Peter, and was later consecrated Bishop for his tribe, being called "Bishop of the Tents." Saint Euthymius also fought against the Nestorians, Eutychians, and Manichaeans. When Eudocia, the widow of Saint Theodosius the Younger, had made her dwelling in Palestine, and had fallen into the heresy of the Monophysites which was championed in Palestine by a certain Theodosius, she sent envoys to Saint Symeon the Stylite in Syria (see Sept. 1), asking him his opinion of Eutyches and the Council of Chalcedon which had condemned him; Saint Symeon, praising the holiness and Orthodoxy of Saint Euthymius near whom she dwelt, sent her to him to be delivered from her error (the holy Empress Eudocia is commemorated Aug. 13). He became the divine oracle of the Church, or rather, "the vessel of divine utterance," as a certain historian writes. He was the instructor and elder of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified. Having lived for ninety-six years, he reposed in 473, on January 20.



January 21

Maximus the Confessor

The divine Maximus, who was from Constantinople, sprang from an illustrious family. He was a lover of wisdom and an eminent theologian. At first, he was the chief private secretary of the Emperor Heraclius and his grandson Constans. When the Monothelite heresy became predominant in the royal court, out of hatred for this error the Saint departed for the Monastery at Chrysopolis (Scutari), of which he later became the abbot. When Constans tried to constrain him either to accept the Monothelite teaching, or to stop speaking and writing against it - neither of which the Saint accepted to do - his tongue was uprooted and his right hand was cut off, and he was sent into exile where he reposed in 662. At the time only he and his few disciples were Orthodox in the East (See also August 13).



January 22

Timothy the Apostle of the 70

The Apostle Timothy, who was from Lystra of Lycaonia, was born of a Greek (that is, pagan) father and a Jewish mother. His mother's

name was Eunice, and his grandmother's name was Lois (II Tim. 1:5). He became the disciple of the Apostle Paul when the latter first preached there,

Tone 1 Kontakion (*Resurrection*)

As God, You rose from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Yourself. Human nature praises You as God, for death has vanished. Adam exults, O Master! Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to You:// "You are the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!"

Tone 8 Kontakion (*Venerable Euthymius*)

The wilderness rejoiced at your birth, holy Father Euthymius. In your memory, it brings a harvest of joy through your many miracles. Pour the wonders on our souls as well and cleanse us from our sins, that we may sing: "Alleluia!"

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. 4th Tone. Daniel 3.26,27.

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

Verse: For you are just in all you have done.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:4-11.

Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with

him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from Luke 18:35-43

At that time, as Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God;

And for... Sofie, Katrina, Olena, Valeriy, Olga, Tatiana, Dimitri, Alexander and Maxim.

All of our College Students: Alex, Kaitlyn, Jack, Sam, Connor, Nadia, Isaac and Matthew.

Many Years! to: Fr Steven Voytovich on the occasion of his birthday.

Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;

All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalize, those who have no one to pray for them;

All Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.

All those who have perished due to hatred and intolerance and all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

Today we commemorate:

Ven. Euthymius the Great(473). Ven. Evfimii (Euthymius), Schema-Monk (14th c.), and Lavrentii (Lawrence) the Recluse (13th-14th c.), of the Kiev Caves (Far

Caves). Ven. Evfimii (Euthemius) of Syanzhémsk (Vologdá—ca. 1470). Martyrs Innas, Pinnas, and Rimmas, disciples of the Apostle Andrew, in Scythia (1st-2nd c.). Martyrs Bassus, Eusebius, Euthychius and Basilides, at Nicomedia (303).

Hymns of the Day

Tone 1 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

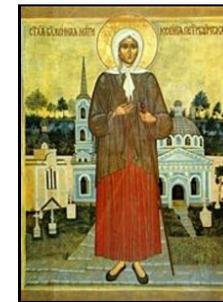
When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure ^body, You rose on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world.

The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life: “Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your ^Kingdom!// Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of mankind!”

Tone 4 Troparion (*Venerable Euthymius*)

Rejoice, barren wilderness! Be glad, sterile desert that has never known the travail of birth! The man of desires, Euthymius, has multiplied your sons; he has planted them in faith and piety. He has watered them with the Holy Spirit; they grow in self-denial and perfect virtue.// Through his intercessions, Christ our God, preserve Your people in peace!

and he followed St. Paul during the whole period of the Apostle's preaching. Afterwards, Timothy was consecrated by him as first Bishop of the church in Ephesus. Under the supervision of John the Evangelist, who governed all the churches in Asia, he completed his life as a martyr in the year 97. He was stoned to death by the heathens, because, as some surmise, he opposed the festival held in honor of Artemis (Diana). The Apostle Paul's First and Second Epistles to Timothy were written to him.



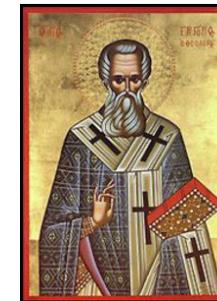
January 24

Xenia of St. Petersburg, Fool-for-Christ

Our righteous Mother Xenia of Petersburg was born about the year 1730. She was married to a

Colonel named Andrew; when she was twenty-six years old, her husband died suddenly, having been drinking with his friends. Left a childless widow, Xenia gave away all that she had, and vanished from Saint Petersburg for eight years; it is believed that she spent this time in a hermitage, learning the spiritual life. When she returned to Saint Petersburg, she wore her husband's military clothing, and would answer only to the name Andrew, that is, the name of her late husband. She took up the life of a homeless wanderer, and was abused by many as insane; she bore this with great patience, crucifying the carnal

mind through the mockery she endured, and praying for her husband's soul. She was given great gifts of prayer and prophecy, and often foretold things to come; in 1796 she foretold the death of Empress Catherine II. Having lived forty-five years after her husband's death, she reposed in peace at the age of seventy-one, about the year 1800. Her grave became such a source of miracles, and so many came to take soil from it as a blessing, that it was often necessary to replace the soil; when a stone slab was placed over her grave, this too disappeared over time, piece by piece. Saint Xenia is especially invoked for help in finding employment, lodging, or a spouse.



January 25

Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople

This great Father and Teacher of the Church was born in 329 in Arianzus, a

village of the second district of Cappadocia, not far from Nazianzus. His father, who later became Bishop of Nazianzus, was named Gregory (commemorated Jan. 1), and his mother was named Nonna (Aug. 5); both are among the Saints, and so are his brother Caesarius (Mar. 9) and his sister Gorgona (Feb. 23). At first he studied in Caesarea of Palestine, then in Alexandria, and finally in Athens. As he was sailing from Alexandria to Athens, a violent sea storm put in peril not only

The Holy Hieromartyr Clement, Bishop of

Ancyra

4:30PM Open Doors

6:00PM Evening Vespers

Thursday, January 24

Xenia, Deaconess of Rome

Akathist to St Xenia of Petersburg

8:30AM Daily Matins

Friday, January 25

Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople

Saturday, January 26

Fr. Steven Voytovich - B

Xenophon & his Companions

5:30PM Great Vespers

Sunday, January 27

15th Sunday of Luke

Buildings and Grounds Ministry Meeting

Akathist to St John Chrysostom

9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, January 28

Ephraim the Syrian

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations

William, Sophia, Robert, Ann, Evelyn, Nina, John, Alex, Luke, Kathryn,

Anastasia, Malcolm,

Veronica, Darlyne, Irene, Nancy, Elena, Jevon, the

new born Stella Anna,

Ivan and Joscean.



he himself is known by the Church only as

Gregory the Theologian. He is especially called

"Trinitarian Theologian," since in virtually

every homily he refers to the Trinity and the

Hence, Alexius Anthorus dedicated the

following verses to him:

Like an unwandering star beaming with

splendour,

Thou bringest us by mystic teachings, O

Father,

To the Trinity's sunlike illumination,

O mouth breathing with fire, Gregory most

mighty.

Parish Calendar

Service and Events

January 10 to January 28, 2019

Thursday, January 10

House Blessings

Sunday, January 20

12th Sunday of Luke

Evangeliism and Outreach Ministry meeting

Sanctity of Life

9:30AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, January 21

Maximus the Confessor

Tuesday, January 22

Timothy the Apostle of the 70

8:30AM Daily Matins

Wednesday, January 23

Second Ecumenical Council, which assembled

there in 381, and condemned Macedonius,

Archbishop of Constantinople, the enemy of

the Holy Spirit. When Saint Gregory came to

Constantinople, the Arians had taken all the

churches and he was forced to serve in a

house chapel dedicated to Saint Anastasia the

Martyr. From there he began to preach his

famous five sermons on the Trinity, called the

Triadica. When he left Constantinople two

years later, the Arians did not have one church

left to them in the city. Saint Meletius of

Antioch (see Feb. 12), who was presiding over

the Second Ecumenical Council, died in the

course of it, and Saint Gregory was chosen in

his stead; there he distinguished himself in his

expositions of dogmatic theology.

Having governed the Church until 382, he

delivered his farwell speech - the

Syntacteron, in which he demonstrated the

Divinity of the Son - before 150 bishops and

the Emperor Theodosius the Great; in this

speech he requested, and received from all,

permission to retire from the see of

Constantinople. He returned to Nazianzus,

where he lived to the end of his life, and

reposed in the Lord in 391, having lived some

sixty-two years.

His extant writings, both prose and poems in

every type of metre, demonstrate his lofty

eloquence and his wondrous breadth of

learning. In the beauty of his writings, he is

considered to have surpassed the Greek

writers of antiquity, and because of his God-

inspired theological thought, he received the

surname "Theologian." Although he is

sometimes called Gregory of Nazianzus, this

title belongs properly to his father;

his life but also his salvation, since he had not

yet been baptized. With tears and fervour he

besought God to spare him, vowing to dedicate

his whole self to Him, and the tempest gave

way to calm. At Athens Saint Gregory was

later joined by Saint Basil the Great, whom he

already knew; but now their acquaintanceship

grew into a lifelong brotherly love. Another

young Prince Julian, who later as Emperor was

called the Apostate because he denied Christ

and did all in his power to restore paganism.

Even in Athens, before Julian had thrown off

the mask of piety; Saint Gregory saw what an

unsettled mind he had, and said, "What an evil

the Roman State is nourishing" (Orat. V, 24,

PG 35:693).

After their studies at Athens, Gregory became

Basil's fellow ascetic, living the monastic life

together with him for a time in the hermitages

of Pontus. His father ordained him presbyter

of the Church of Nazianzus, and Saint Basil

consecrated him Bishop of Sasima (or

Zansima), which was in the archdiocese of

Caesarea. This consecration was a source of

great sorrow to Gregory, and a cause of

misunderstanding between him and Basil; but

his love for Basil remained unchanged, as can

be plainly seen from his Funeral Oration on

Saint Basil (Orat. XLIII).

About the Year 379, Saint Gregory came to

Constantinople, which had already been

troubled for forty years by the Arians; by his

supremely wise words and many labours he

freed it from the corruption of heresy, and was

elected Archbishop of that city by the