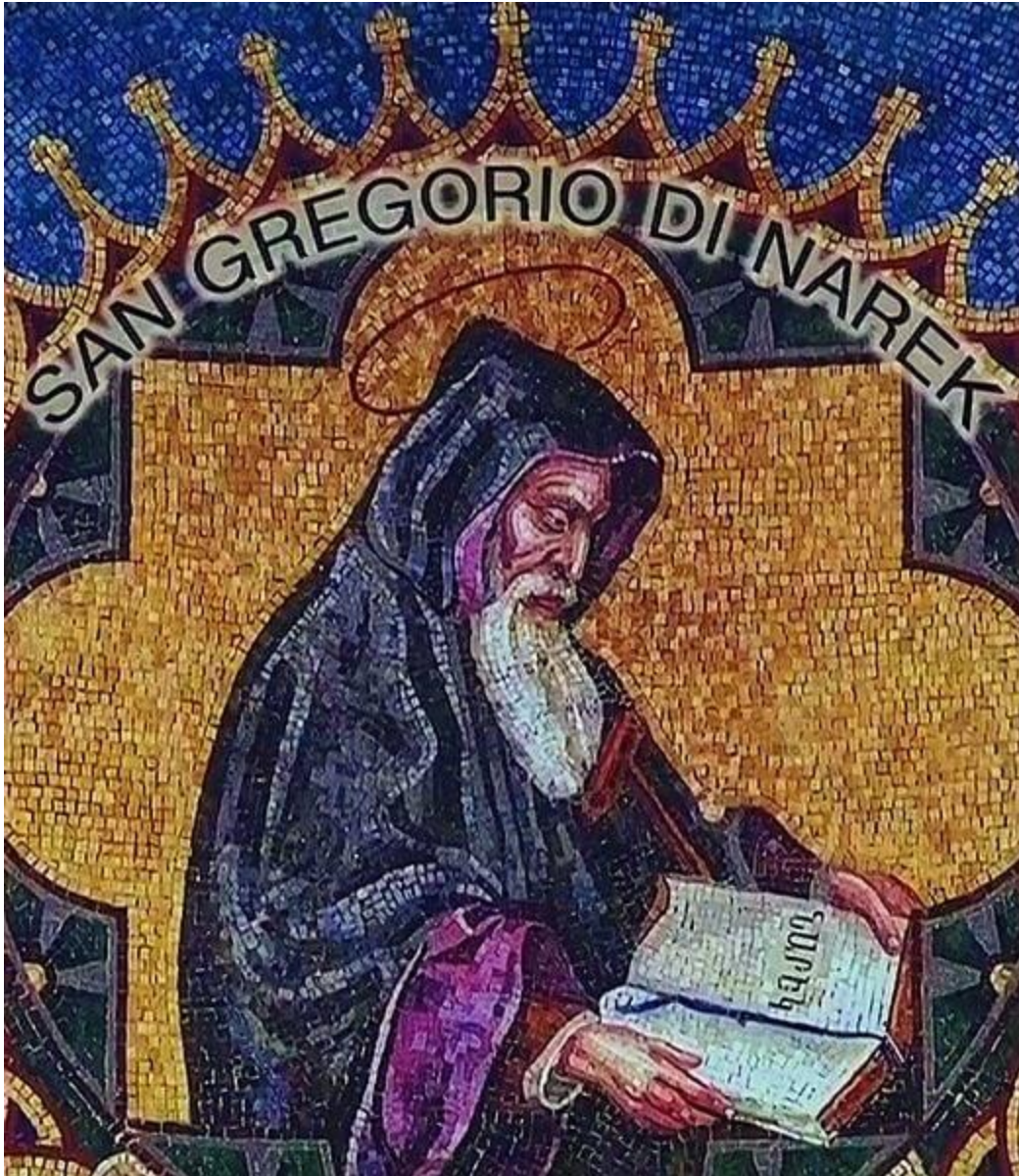


Saint Gregory of Narek, (~950 - 1003 AD) Priest, Monk, Mystic & Doctor of The Church "The Armenian Angel in Human Form"



<http://stgregoryofnarek.am/>

Saint Fr. Gregory of Narek was asked, "What can one offer to GOD, our Creator, Who already has everything and knows everything better than we could ever express it?" He answered in humility, "The sighs of the heart." {A}

"Gregory came from an Armenian family steeped in learning and devout Faith. At a young age, he entered the monastery at Narek [Turkey], where his great-uncle was Abbot. Two brothers soon joined them.

Fed in this silent atmosphere of prayer and study, in his twenties Gregory produced his first major work, a commentary on The Song of Songs commissioned by an Armenian prince. Gregory's most famous work, the "Book of Lamentations," or simply the "Book of Prayer," was written towards the end of his life.

At the time Gregory was ill, perhaps with a terminal illness, and yet he found the strength to produce what he called an "encyclopedia of prayer for all nations."

<https://stgregoryofnarek.am/book.php>

Each of the ninety-five prayer-poems is offered by a "humbled contrite heart" to GOD. Each begins with the simple words, "Speaking with GOD from the depths of the heart." Like The PSALMS, Gregory's prayers span the breadth of human experience.

Above all, they call the wounded soul to prayer and contrition before GOD and encourage the offering of forgiveness of, and reconciliation with, our fellow human beings. A staple of the Armenian liturgy, Gregory's prayers have been forming hearts for a millennium.

Pope Francis declared him a Doctor of The Church in 2015, calling his "Book of Prayer" an "extraordinary interpretation of the human soul" Father in Heaven, through the intercession of Saint Gregory of Narek, teach me to pray from the depths of my heart!" {B} AMEN.

PSALM 51:17

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NykDSSaKz2w>

The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O GOD, Thou wilt not despise.

ROMANS 8:26

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOnSe5J-cz8&list=RDnOnSe5J-cz8&index=1>

Likewise The SPIRIT also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but The SPIRIT Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Prayer 1 of 95, "Book of Prayer" by St Gregory of Narek –  
"Speaking with GOD from the Depths of the Heart" {C}

A

"The voice of a sighing heart, its sobs and mournful cries, [1]  
I offer up to You, O Seer of Secrets, [2]  
placing the fruits of my wavering mind [3]  
as a savory sacrifice on the fire of my grieving soul [4]  
to be delivered to You in the censer of my will

Compassionate Lord, breathe in  
this offering and look more favorably on it  
than upon a more sumptuous sacrifice [5]  
offered with rich smoke. Please find  
this simple string of words acceptable.  
Do not turn in disdain.

May this unsolicited gift reach You,  
this sacrifice of words [6]  
from the deep mystery-filled chamber  
of my feelings, consumed in flames  
fueled by whatever  
Grace I may have within me. [7]

As I pray, do not let these  
pleas annoy You, Almighty,  
like the raised hands of Jacob,  
whose irreverence was rebuked by Isaiah, [8]  
nor let them seem like the impudence of Babylon  
criticized in the 72nd Psalm.

But let these words be acceptable  
as were the fragrant offerings  
in The Tabernacle at Shiloh [9]  
raised again by David on his return from captivity  
as the resting place for The Ark of The Covenant,  
a symbol for the restoration of my lost soul

B

Because Your stern judgment  
echoes mightily in the valley of retribution, [10]  
contradictory impulses in my soul  
brace for battle like clashing mobs.

Crowds of thoughts strike each other, sword  
against armor, evil against good,  
ensnaring me for death, as in other times,  
when Your Grace had not rescued me –  
That Grace of CHRIST, which Paul,  
chosen among The Apostles,  
taught was greater than The Law of Moses. [11]

For as The Scripture says, "The day  
of The LORD is upon us," [12]  
and in the narrow valley of Jehoshaphat [13]  
on the banks of the Kidron, [14]  
those small battle grounds  
foreshadow on earth  
victory in the life to come.

Thus, The Kingdom of GOD in a visible form  
has come already, charging me  
on Truthful Testimony with wrongs  
graver than those of the Edomites, [15]  
Philistines and other barbarians –  
wrongs that brought down the hand of GOD.

And whereas their sentences were measured in years,  
my transgressions will be punished without term.  
As the prophet and the parable-teller warned,  
the dungeon and shackles [16]  
are already at my threshold to show me  
here and now my eternal disgrace.

Only You can work The Miracle  
to make life possible for a soul  
so imperiled by doubt,  
O Atoner for all, exalted beyond saying  
in Your boundless Glory on High  
forever and ever.  
Amen."

sources:

A. {"St. Grigor Narekatsi - Speaking with GOD from the Depths of the Heart." Thomas J. Samuelian, PhD, JD. Undated. Paragraph 3. Retrieved 9/01/2021. <http://stgregoryofnarek.am/>}

B. {"Saint Gregory of Narek, Priest and Doctor." The Magnificat, 9/01/2021. Saints Who Teach us to Forgive, p 39.}

C. {Book of Prayer, "Prayer 1 - Speaking with GOD from the Depths of the Heart." Saint Fr. Gregory of Narek. c1001 AD. Translated, with Bible references, by Thomas J. Samuelian, PhD, JD. Undated. Retrieved 9/01/2021.

[https://stgregoryofnarek.am/book.php?parent\\_id=2&type=2&type\\_1=none](https://stgregoryofnarek.am/book.php?parent_id=2&type=2&type_1=none)}

Bible references:

1. PSALM 6:7; PSALM 38:9-10; ROMANS 8:26; ISAIAH 6:10.
2. PSALM 44:21.
3. PSALM 42:6.
4. PSALM 39:3.
5. PSALM 51:15-20; AMOS 5:22.
6. Divine Liturgy, "Hymn of The Angels."
7. PSALM 92:14; PROVERBS 11:25; LEVITICUS 1:8-13; LEVITICUS 4:8-9; PHILIPPIANS 4:18; LUKE 6:46.
8. ISAIAH 1:15.
9. II SAMUEL 6:17.
10. JOEL 3:14.
11. ACTS 13:39; ROMANS 8:2-3.
12. JOEL 2:1; 3:14.
13. II CHRONICLES 20:16; 20:26-27.
14. II CHRONICLES 15:16.
15. ISAIAH 14:26-29; JEREMIAH 47:1; 49:7-18.
16. ISAIAH 24:
17. JEREMIAH 48:43.