

Our Lady, Star of the Sea and St. Drostan

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St. Mary's

64 St Peter Street
Peterhead
AB42 1QB

Our Lady Star of the Sea & St. Drostan Church, Fraserburgh, and St. Mary's Church, Peterhead, are currently closed until further notice, due to Government regulations in connection with action taken to combat the spread of the Covid 19 coronavirus.


Sun 7 th Feb	5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Mon 8 th Feb	Monday in the 5 th Week of Ordinary Time
Tue 9 th Feb	Tuesday in the 5 th Week of Ordinary Time
Wed 10 th Feb	Saint Scholastica, Virgin - Memorial
Thur 11 th Feb	Our Lady of Lourdes – Optional Memorial <i>World Day of the Sick</i>
Fri 12 th Feb	Friday in the 5 th Week of Ordinary Time
Sat 13 th Feb	The Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday – Optional Memorial
Sun 14 th Feb	6 th Sunday in Ordinary Time



The whole town came crowding round, and he cured those who were suffering from diseases of one kind or another.

Doctors Strange – Part 1

Last week Pope Francis added 4 new celebrations to the Roman Church's yearly liturgical calendar. Three of these have to do with **recently appointed Doctors of the Church**.

Especially right now, when we think of "doctors", our minds go to GP surgeries, hospitals, and... perhaps also to the dreaded  ... But the Church has long used the term to denote someone who has special importance as a **teacher of the faith**.

A "Doctor of the Church" is a Saint of truly outstanding holiness, who is notable for the depth of their insight into the mysteries of our faith, and who left a body of writings that the Church can recommend as an expression of the authentic and life-giving Tradition.

As of today (05.02.21), there are 36 of them. Four are women. In fact, the one who lived most recently is a woman: St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897). But she's not among the 3 to have been most recently granted the illustrious title. They are St. John of Ávila, St. Hildegard of Bingen, and St. Gregory of Narek.

Probably not the subject of many dinner-time conversations.

Never fear. If you Google "narek", you'll find out that he was a Romulan spy in Star Trek: Picard.

Wait a minute, weren't we talking about Doctors of the Church?



St. Gregory of Narek

Yes. *Our Narek* is a place, a book, and a man. Simple.

OK, if you must know, *our man* who lived in *that place* took his name from it, and wrote a *book* that came to be identified so closely with its author as to take on *his name*.

Gregory of Narek, or Grigor Narekatsi as he's also known, was born some time between 940 and 950 AD to a family of scholars and churchmen near the south-eastern edge of Lake Van in the east of present day Turkey.



Lake Van By gozturk - Originally posted to Panoramio as Akdamar Adası- Bahar, Akdamar Island - Spring time. commons.wikimedia.org

After his mother died while he was still young, he was entrusted to the care of the monks at the Armenian monastery of Narek, near where he was born. Later he professed monastic vows and was ordained a priest. He loved the Church, which he looked upon as a second mother: **"This spiritual, heavenly mother of light cared for me as a son more than an earthly, breathing, physical mother could".**¹

Gregory was a man of culture. His literary output was considerable, but of all his works, undoubtedly the most famous is the **Book of Lamentations** (also known as the *Book of Prayer*, or simply as *The Narek*). This is a collection of 95 poetic prayers, in which the author presents himself as a person **"speaking with God from the depths of the heart"**. It was written towards the end of his life when he appears to have been suffering from a debilitating illness. These prayers

¹ Prayer 75k, Book of Lamentations; in *Outreach*, Vol 25, No. 6, March/April 2003, p. 19 (a publication of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America).

are “**songs of everything**” – Gregory’s description of the Psalms can be applied to his own work too – a treasure-trove of biblical wisdom and Catholic truth “for all thinking people the world over, expressing all human passions and serving with its images as an encyclopaedic companion to our human condition”².

Gregory’s **understanding of the human condition** is evident. Here was a man of profound humility and genuine self-knowledge, a man cognisant of his own weaknesses... Take, for example, this painfully honest appraisal of **his own fear**:

“If I see a soldier, I expect death,
a messenger, punishment,
a clerk, foreclosure,
a jurist, condemnation,
an evangelist, the shaking of the dust off his feet,
a pious person, reprimand,
a snob, sarcasm.”

Was the early loss of his mother partly to blame for this fragility? Gregory found, as we have noted, a ‘new mother’ in the Church. But he found a mother more marvellous still in the Virgin Mary. To Her he turned with that exceptional confidence that can provide **anchorage for the soul in every trial – even that resulting from sin**:

“Blessed among women, I am in trouble.
Help me with your tears.
Ask on bended knee for my reconciliation, Mother of God.
Care for me who am miserable, altar of the exalted.
Lend me a hand, for I have fallen, heavenly temple.
Glorify your Son, by performing upon me the divine miracle of mercy and pardon,
handmaid and Mother of God.”³

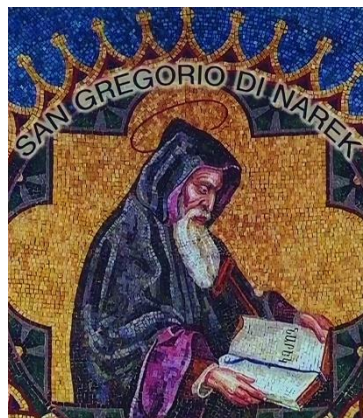
Mary was his secret weapon. With Her help, Gregory, if knocked down, was never going to stay down.

“Weave and mix into your prayers of happiness and adoration the bitter sighs that I, a sinner, utter – you, who are the tree of life bearing the blessed fruit – so that always receiving help from you and through your good deeds, and taking refuge in the light of your holy motherhood, I may live for Christ, your Son and Lord.”⁴

And he did – live for Christ. And in Christ and with Christ, he lifted up his heart and mind to heaven to contemplate the source and origin of all:

“Let us praise and lift up our voices
with music and songs of blessing,
in faith and worship.
You who are the benevolent commander
and cause of all creation,
the Trinity without beginning,
exalted without comparison,
inaccessible to our thoughts,
incomprehensible by our mind,

imperceptible by our senses,
unbearable by your creatures,
a greatness that extends beyond heaven
and the lowest depths,
the fulfilment of all endings and
origin of all beginnings.
One in three distinct persons;
Three in one indivisible essence.
Beyond the freedom of mind,
extended through all places.”⁵



[Wikimedia commons](#)

Gregory drew strength from the “edifice of faith”⁶. Maybe one of the reasons why he was made a Doctor of the Church is so that we too might find strength and help to overcome the ills and wounds of our present age. Gregory could be a **good friend** to all of us.

St. Gregory, pray for us!

Other Stuff Lent

It’s not far away... This could be a good time to begin to think about how you’re going to hallow this special and super-fruitful time in the Church’s year...



Fasting?



A special prayer?



Helping someone in need?

Our Lady Star of the Sea and St. Drostan

Collection at Mass on 27.12.20	£75.00
Crib Offerings (for Mary’s Meals)	£47.10
Collection at Mass on 03.01.21, & other donations	£293.00
Justice and Peace Special Collection	£9.30

Thank you for your support.

Our parish safeguarding coordinator is Mrs. Anne Reilly.

Items for the Newsletter, website and Facebook page should be sent to Bob Watson, email: rlambwatson@gmail.com

² Prayer 3b; Outreach, ibid.
³ Prayer 80; Outreach, p. 18.
⁴ I.c.

⁵ Prayer 75; in <https://sites.berry.edu/mpapazian/st-gregory-of-narek/prayer75/>; accessed 05.02.21.
⁶ Prayer 10b; in Outreach, p. 19.