

How to Book

By far the easiest way to book a place on this course is to use the online booking facility at the www.EarlyChurch.co.uk website which ensures that the administration overheads are minimal – please use it if possible!

To book a place using the website, you simply need to select the course, supply an email address and indicate the number of places you wish to book. There is no need to send any money beforehand – just pay on the day.

How else can I book?

If you do not have Internet access, then please send a note of your name and the number of places you wish to book to: Russell Jefford, One Bell Cottage, 109 Church Street, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 1JD

Please note: unless an SAE is enclosed, no booking confirmation will be sent.

EarlyChurch.co.uk Website

The website also contains suggestions for further reading, extracts from the writings of various Early Church figures, and the opportunity to join the mailing list.

Thanks To...

The icon of St Gregory of Nyssa on the cover is courtesy of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA and used by kind permission.



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All Hallows Convent

The Chapel, All Hallows Convent,
Ditchingham, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 2DT



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An Introduction to...

St Gregory of Nyssa



Saturday 12th May 2007

10.30am – 4.00pm

*The Chapel
All Hallows Convent
Ditchingham
Suffolk*

The Importance of the Early Church

The Early Church period (c.100–500 AD) saw the clarification and formulation of the essential Christian doctrines accepted by all mainstream churches today.

But besides being occupied with doctrinal issues, the leading figures of the Church of the time were also engaged in taking the teaching passed on by the first apostles and working out its implications for the culture in which they found themselves.

The study of the events & people of the Early Church period is, therefore, not merely of academic interest, but can also provide inspiration for us in the continuing task of wrestling with the message of Christ in contemporary society.

This course is one of a series aiming to introduce some of the major people and events from Early Church history to a wider audience, especially to those with no previous background in the subject. You'll find the presentation style informal but clear, the coffee fairly traded, and the biscuits rather nice...

The main EarlyChurch.co.uk focus in 2007 is the three important fourth-century Cappadocian Fathers.

If you'd like to be notified of new courses as they're scheduled, you can use the "Stay in Touch" feature on the EarlyChurch.co.uk website (see overleaf).

An Introduction to St Gregory of Nyssa

Saturday 12th May

St Gregory of Nyssa (c.335 – 395) was the youngest of the three Cappadocians, and the brother of St Basil the Great. Despite receiving the least formal education of the three, his writings skilfully present the Christian faith in terms of the contemporary philosophical worldview of his day.

Worthy of special note are his "mystical" texts, such as *The Life of Moses* and the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, which use vivid metaphors to convey a profound understanding of the spiritual life. It is on account of such texts, that some scholars have referred to him as the founder of Christian mysticism.

An important influence for Gregory was the works of Origen (the controversial third century Alexandrian Christian whose views on certain matters had by now begun to receive criticism). The writings of St Gregory owe much to Origen after (sometimes subtle, and sometimes radical) corrections in the light of 4th century orthodox.

The course will outline the life and work of St Gregory of Nyssa. Particular attention will be paid to his understanding of the spiritual life as set out in his "mystical" texts. In addition, we will also consider Gregory's adoption and correction of various aspects of Origen's thought.

Course Structure

The course will be divided into several sessions, with breaks for refreshments, each session consisting of a period of teaching with time for questions. There will also be a break at midday for lunch and time for reflection in the convent grounds.

Excerpts from St Gregory's writings will be provided as handouts on the day, the intention being not merely to provide stock quotations, but rather inspirational texts - "catalysts" for your own spiritual journey.

Who is the course aimed at?

Anyone who's read this far and is still interested! A complete lack of previous experience or study is assumed, although clergy, lay readers or others with some knowledge will still find much of interest.

How much does the course cost?

The full cost is £15 per person, with a concessionary rate of £10 also available. Monks, nuns and anyone else attending in full habit gets in for free...

Lunch

Please bring a packed lunch.

Speaker

Russell Jefford holds an MA in Patristics (Early Church history), is an Associate of All Hallows, and sees much in the writings of the Early Church Fathers which is inspirational and of relevance to contemporary Christianity.