



Class Structure

- 1: Lords Prayer English & Greek**
- 2: Gospel Reading, discussion and explanation**
- 3: Info on the Ecumenical Council of the week**
- 4: History / Story/ Miracles about a Saint Gabriel**
- 5: Answer Questions in Class**
- 6: Read the Creed until learned by memory Greek & English**
- 7: Interactive board work**

2: Gospel Reading, discussion and explanation

The Gospel for 12-11-2022

(Get a Student to Read) Ask who wants to read the Gospel

Luke 14:16-24 *(New King James Version)*

Worldly Entanglements, Poor Excuses

This Gospel, as with all, talks about many things. It shows us direct meaning from the story; it also shows us some things you need to pull out and, most importantly, how Christ wants us to live.

16 Then He said to him, **“A certain man gave a great supper and invited many,**

In the story, who is this man, it is Christ himself. He is inviting us to his Church, which is heaven on earth, to receive the Lord's supper, his body and blood. He invited many, which is all people.

17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’

He sent his servants. This is everyone who follows Christ, his bishops, priest, deacons, and all the people that believe in him, to bring everyone to the Church. When it says all things are now ready, this refers to after the resurrection of Christ because he did his part to save us and sacrificed himself for us. Now it is our turn to give up some of our time to dedicate it to God and receive communion to be one with Christ. The 8th ode of communion prayer says, “Seeking refuge in your loving kindness, good Savior, I cry to you with fear; abide in me and, as you promised, let me also abide in you. For behold, trusting in your mercy, I eat your body and drink your blood.

18 But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’

Like today, all began to make excuses for not attending the great supper (communion at Church). The land bought was probably part of Israel because the Jews were supposedly the Holy people. Here Jesus is telling us he first invited the Jews to come, but out of their greed for land and worldly things, they denied him.

19 And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’

In those times, the Jews would buy oxen to sacrifice in the temple to God, trying to follow the letter of the law, but Jesus was calling them to show them the love of the law, and they missed the point by not coming to the feast as people today miss it by not coming to Church.

20 Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’

Here it shows how people put others in front of God. Today people believe they know everything they need to know about God and focus on themselves and their likes instead of putting God and the Church first. Through the Church, we get closer to God, and in the end, if our goal is to go to heaven to be with God, we should start now.

21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here *the* poor and *the* maimed and *the* lame and *the* blind.’

When followers of Christ told him what had happened, he was upset. Jesus told his follower to go into the streets and city to invite the poor, maimed, lame, and blind. This shows us although he invited the Jews first. He invited the Gentiles as well.

22 And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’

23 Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

When there was still room, Jesus told his follower to go into highways, which was the road to the rest of the world, and hedges, the outermost parts, to bring everyone to his Church.

24 For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.’ ”

Those who were invited to the Church (*heaven on earth*) and did not come will not be one with Christ. Jesus showed us in this parable how and what to do to get to heaven. In verse 16, he invites us to his Church (*heaven*) to lay aside all other things and to worship God with our whole being. He doesn't force us to go. It's our choice, as with everything; it's our free will. In verses 17 -21, he invites all people and their neighbors to come, no matter where they are from. By doing this, Jesus showed us in a parable his commandment in **Mark 12:30-31**, ³⁰ **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.**

³¹ **The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.’”**

Ask questions about Gospel then explain it to the students

3: Info on the Ecumenical Council of the week

Intro to the Ecumenical Councils

In the history of Christianity, the **first seven ecumenical councils** include the following:

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| 1 | the First Council of Nicaea in 325 |
| 2 | the First Council of Constantinople in 381 |
| 3 | the Council of Ephesus in 431 |
| 4 | the Council of Chalcedon in 451 |
| 5 | the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 |
| 6 | the Third Council of Constantinople from 680–681 |
| | Quinisext Council of Trullo held in 692 (<i>not new but a continuation of 5th and 6th</i>) |
| 7 | the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 |

All of the seven councils were convened in Constantinople. (*modern-day Turkey*)

These seven events represented an attempt by **Church leaders** to reach an orthodox consensus, **restore peace and develop a unified Christendom**

Quinisext Council of Trullo held in 692

(*not new but a continuation of 5th and 6th*)

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| 1 | A church council held in 692 at Constantinople under Justinian II . |
| 2 | It is known as the " Council in Trullo " because, like the Sixth Ecumenical Council, it was held in a domed hall in the Imperial Palace |
| 3 | Both the Fifth and the Sixth Ecumenical Councils had omitted to draw up disciplinary canons , and as this council was intended to complete both in this respect, it took the name of Quinisext . |
| 4 | It was attended by 215 bishops , mostly from the Eastern Roman Empire |
| 5 | The Council banned certain festivals and practices which were thought to have a pagan origin. |
| 6 | As a consequence, neither cleric nor layman was allowed to observe the Pagan festivals of Bota, the Kalends or the Brumalia . |

4: History / Story about a St. Gabriel Confessor and Fool for Christ

St. Gabriel Confessor and Fool for Christ 1929 – 1995

Commemorated on Nov 2nd

Life and works

<https://www.monkgabriel.ge/eng/life.htm>



Archimandrite Gabriel born Goderdzi Urgebadze is one of the most renowned orthodox monks in Georgia. He was born to Vasili and Barbara Urgebadze on 26 August 1929, in Tbilisi, Georgia. He was baptized as an infant in St Martyr Barbara’s Church, in Navtlughi district by the former “Sister of Mercy” Tamar Begiashvili. The communist regime was furiously violent then; religion was persecuted; churches were destroyed and closed; innocent people were murdered and deported. Goderdzi was about two years old when his father, Vasil Urgebadze, was murdered in uncertain circumstances. After that his family members called him Vasiko in honor of his father.

Vasiko was an extraordinary boy; since his childhood he has been endowed with Divine Grace. He used to build small churches from pebbles and to light matches in them. Barbara, his mother (after the repose of Fr. Gabriel his mother entered the Samtavro Convent as nun Anna. She is buried next to his son) was afraid someone would have seen her son’s actions, as it was not excluded anyone could spy on their family for bringing up the son against the communist ideology. In his youth Vasiko behaved strangely, he often stopped playing with his friends and preferred to be alone and in silence. However, he still had an unusual entertainment; he used to take a small stick in his hands and ran away. Chirping birds sat on it and followed him all the way. This surprised everyone. Vasiko was a soft-hearted child. He did not allow putting a trap for mice, caught them in a cage alive and afterwards set them free out of the yard. He entered school at the age of six. It was easy for him to study reading, writing and arithmetic, and he gained much love for his kindness. He was 7 when he first heard the name of God which had a great impact on his mind and has completely changed his ordinary life. He soon gathered money to buy Gospel. This was the beginning of his entirely new life. Since that day till his death Monk Gabriel was filled with one thought and devotion – to live only for Christ. All the time he kept reading his Gospel and expressed no interest in anything else; he spent little time for lessons to spare more time on his Gospel. Before going to bed he entered his room and prayed for a long time in the corner of the icons. A few days before his death Monk Gabriel recalled that period of his childhood:

- “I was sitting in the balcony, on the second floor, deep in thoughts, when some voice inside me dictated to look up at the sky. I stood up, came to the edge of the balcony, looked up and saw a big cross erected in the sky. I did not know then, but know now it was my cross to bear for love for God and my people.” His one more memory refers to the same period of his childhood: “When I

slept, at night I suddenly awoke and saw a demon with a terrible face in front of me. He was looking at me enraged. Thanks to God's mercy I was not frightened, but got tense. However, I did nothing to drive him out. I simply looked at him in surprise. He roared at me – You are fighting against me, are you?! And he struck me with the fist."

When Barbara entered the room she found her son without consciousness. But God has saved the life of his chosen one.

Little Vasiko still got some benefit from that accident, which Monk Gabriel proves in one of his memories: "On seeing the Demon, my belief in Christ became stronger and I said – if the Demon exists, then God exists more. Furthermore, I appraised the beauty of the human beings."

God endowed 12 year old Vasiko with divine power and revelations for his true love and devotion.



Nun Pelagia (the former hegumena of Gurjaani nunnery of St Virgin Mary, of the same age as Monk Gabriel and his neighbor) remembers: "One summer day my uncle came home and said loudly for everybody to hear – "Glory to Christ, our Lord, it seems He preserves his chosen ones on the earth". On the question – "What happened? What are you surprised with? He answered by telling the following astonishing story: "I was walking home along the old St Barbara road. When I approached the destroyed church of St George, I saw Goderdzi, Vasiko's son, cleaning the church from the big boulders under the scorching sun. Being engrossed in work he did not notice me for some time. I, too, seeing this, said nothing, but when he saw me, he was glad and told me – "Come, Uncle Mukha and, if you can, take this up" – he pointed to a big boulder. My uncle was called Mukha (oak) for his strength and wrestling abilities, his real name was George. Mukha continued – "I tried hard, but failed to move the boulder. Vasiko then said "in the name of Christ!", took it up and put at the other boulders gathered by him out of the church". Our family was religious, but due to the atheist regime the family members did not attend church services and did not fast. However, my uncle started Christian life since that very day.

During the World War II, poor people, who had no information from the frontline, used to come to Vasiko to get some news about their relatives. Father Gabriel, who was only 12 then, gave answers to all visitors and preached – "Go to the church, don't abandon Christ and don't lose salvation of your souls". His words always came true and people respected him much. Vasiko's extraordinary abilities and apparent clairvoyance turned people's hearts back to confidence in the Church. Little Vasiko didn't accept praise and honor from men and humiliated himself in a very strange manner – he put himself in the garbage and repeated loudly "Always remember Vasiko, that you are a garbage and never think highly of thyself". The family members got angry with Vasiko for such behavior and even punished him, but people avoided laughing at him and insulting him.

It is worth to mention here another astonishing event in the yearly life of Monk Gabriel. During Soviet purges and persecutions, people hid icons in the garrets or some other hiding places. Many people became less faithful and did not pay a proper respect to the sanctities. Little Vasiko used to come to such people and told them: “You have an icon in your house (he pointed exactly to the place). You should either pay proper respect to it, or give it to me. I’ll keep it. Later, if you want it back again, come to me and I’ll gladly return it to you”. Some repented and kept the icons, others, who had no such intention, gave him their icons. All were surprised with such behavior of the little boy. Vasiko cared the icons with special love. Finely and diligently beautified icons existing in his church and in the cell in Samtavro Convent, astonishes everyone. These beautiful icons decorate nearly all the walls and the ceiling, which has an unforgettable impression on pilgrims or guests. Little Vasiko’s idyllic life did not last long. His mother, Barbara, was an honest, hardworking woman. She was beautiful in her youth and married early at the age of 14. From the first marriage she had three children – Emma, Michael and Goderdzi-Vasiko. Then, after the tragedy in the family, when her husband died, a 22-year-old young woman turned out to be in helpless situation. She had no one to assist her and had to work hard to keep her family. From her second marriage she had a daughter – Juliet. Monk Gabriel faced first serious experience at the age of 12. His mother, though she was not irreligious, did not permit her son to lead a religious life. At first, when her son expressed an unusual passion to the Christian faith, she was surprised. But when she witnessed that faith in Vasiko’s life took deep and established form, she adamantly demanded from her son to refuse his choice. “Don’t torture yourself! Live as ordinary people live! Be religious, but not so that to want only Gospel and religion!”.

Many years later, when his mother and sisters visited Monk Gabriel, who was seriously ill and died a year after, Barbara, tearful and crying, appealed to her son: “What was your life, Gabriel, tortures and nothing else?! You had no childhood. It could have been far better to listen to me and to take a good care of yourself, you were a man, weren’t you?!” On seeing crying mother with tears in her eyes, Gabriel was sorry, sorry for his mother, because she still did not understand him, as she was a participant of her son’s hardship and her tears were caused by a deep pain. After a short pause, Father Gabriel answered her in a low warm voice: “I could not lead a different life.” Neither at the age of 12, could he lead a different life. On hearing one more refusal from her son, Barbara angrily threw the Gospel into the WC. Vasiko took it out quickly, put it to his chest and cried plaintively. This was the last moment, when Vasiko was forced to make a choice in his life. At midnight Vasiko took his Gospel and abandoned his house. It was late autumn. He walked day and night and finally reached the city of Mtskheta. First, he came to Samtavro Convent. Hegumenia Anusia (Kochlamazashvili) received him with love, giving him shelter and food. But she could not leave him there as men were not allowed to stay in the nunnery. She offered him to go to Svetitskhoveli (Living Pillar) monastery. Vasiko prayed heartily in front of the Iveron Icon of the Mother of God of Samtavro in asking for a cell and the right to live in the monastery. He spent 3 days in Svetitskhoveli monastery, but the governmental decree forbade giving shelter to the under-aged for a long time. Next he went to Shio-Mghvime monastery, where he was given a shelter for 3

days and then accompanied to Zedazeni monastery, where several old-aged monks lived then. They loved young believer so much that arranged for him a hiding place near the monastery and left him there for several weeks. Due to the strict control from special law-enforcers the monks were forced to send this ardent believer to the Bethany monastery. They explained in details how to get to the monastery and gave him some food. In Bethany he was met by two monks living there – Fr. George (Later canonized as St George-John Mkheidze) and Fr. John (Later canonized as St John Maisuradze). The Bethany monks became Gabriel’s most beloved confessors. After leaving Bethany, nothing is known about his exact whereabouts.

For some time Vasiko was sheltered by one kind woman named Margo who lived in Tbilisi and earned her living through fortune-telling. Little Vasiko was sorry such a kind woman was leading a wrong life and lived in sin. One day Margo got ill. Vasiko calmed her and promised he would accept people coming to her. And, indeed, the people who came to the fortune-teller were met by the pious child. He preached love to God and tried to assure them in the need for Christian life. God endowed Vasiko with the faculty of prophesy and he talked with visitors about their future dangers and committed sins, which they did not remember at all. He taught them to go to priest for confession and receive a Holy Communion. People were astonished with his behavior. Margo believed Vasiko, suspended her fortune-telling activity and started Christian life. This caused many rumors to circulate in Tbilisi those years. Vasiko’s mother kept searching for her son all this time and finally found his whereabouts: “Please, come back to home and live as you wish. I won’t impede your choice”, she told her son and was very glad to find him. Vasiko then returned home. From that time Barbara was no longer strict to her son. However, time and again she recommended him to lead an ordinary life and not to live only for faith.

Vasiko at least once a month used to go to Bethany and assisted aged monks there in doing different work in the monastery. At the age of 16 he went to Martkopi monastery for pilgrimage. During this journey he met an honored monk Fr. Aitala, whom Fr. Gabriel valued much and always remembered him with great respect and love in the following years – “A great monk, gifted with clairvoyance”.

One more story should be mentioned here from Father Gabriel’s life of the same period: once the communist government decided to upgrade a public park near the old Vera cemetery where the Georgian young soldiers, killed in the war for independence of Georgia in 1921 were buried. The territory was cleaned with bulldozers. Vasiko took this brutal act to his heart, gathered the bones into the sacks at nights and buried them again secretly in a secure place.



In 1949 Vasiko was called up for military service in the Soviet Army. He served in Batumi border guard unit. Despite strict regime, he still managed to fast and even walked secretly to St Nicholas church and received Holy Sacraments. After passing obligatory military service, Vasiko returned to his home. Soon he was called to the medical hospital and was questioned there about his childhood visions, when at the age of 12 he saw the evil spirit. After few days he got a certificate; he was acknowledged mentally ill and was forbidden to work at any post. He was awarded pension of the disabled of the II category, which was gross

legal violation, because a patient of such category was not subject to conscription to the armed forces by the soviet legislation. All this was conducted on the part of the soviet security and communist party ideology; in order a person of such consciousness should not pose a danger to the communist system. From that time on, Vasiko continued his spiritual life with greater devotion. In the backyard he built a small-sized dwelling for himself, where he lived and conducted his spiritual activities in peace and calm. He went to Sioni Cathedral for prayers and sermons. Soon His Beatitude the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Melchisedek III turned his attention to the young believer. With the blessing of Melchisedek III, Vasiko started to work as a watchman in Sioni Cathedral, and later – as a reader. In January 1955 he was consecrated as deacon, and on 23 February he took the monastic vow in Kutaisi Motsameta monastery and was called Gabriel according to his will. 3 days after he was ordained as hieromonk by Bishop Gabriel (Chachanidze) of Kutaisi-Gaenati Eparchy at St Peter and St Paul cathedral. From the day of taking a monastic vow, Monk Gabriel worked hard with enormous love and full devotion to God and neighbor. With the blessing of Melchisedek III, first he served in Sioni Cathedral and from 1960 – in Bethany monastery with his beloved spiritual Fr. George and priest-monk Vasili (Pirtskhalava).



In 1962, after the death of Father John, Father George and priest-monk Vasili (Pirtskhalava) the government closed the Bethany monastery. Monk Gabriel returned to Tbilisi and in the



backyard of his house built single-handedly a seven-cupola church there. In 1962-1965 Monk Gabriel served in the Trinity Cathedral of All Saints, and had a small parish gathered around him.

It is quite difficult for the contemporary generation to imagine an unusual spiritual ability of a young monk, who adopted unprecedented and astonishing step during the terrible communist regime: he burned an enormous portrait of Lenin in front of the Council of Ministers during the 1 May demonstration of 1965. He preached boldly to the horror-stricken people: “Glory is not needed to this dead, but glory to Christ, who subdued death and blessed us with an eternal life.” Enraged crowd threw stones at him mercilessly. Alarm of the first

category (highest in the Soviet Union) was declared in the city and only the interference of the famously vicious 8th regiment saved the life of monk Gabriel. Half-alive and seriously damaged monk Gabriel having 17 fractures of skull and other parts of the body was taken to the isolator of the security department hospital. He was sentenced to death and investigation examined the case only formally. But the authorities of the communist regime had a special interest in this case – they demanded from Monk Gabriel to confess the alleged conspiracy in the Georgian Orthodox Church, and in return promised to save his life from the death sentence. Despite long-time tortures, Monk Gabriel was firm. On the contrary, at the interrogatory he once more called Lenin a beast, and as a result was severely beaten once more. This unbelievable and sensational news was spread through the European and US mass media. Such development was reflected on the Kremlin policy and instead of death sentence Monk Gabriel was taken to the asylum as mentally ill person. The soviet government planned to keep him in the psycho-neurological hospital forever. But God has preserved the life of his chosen one not for such fate. It is interesting to read an excerpt from the medical conclusion:



Georgian SSR Tbilisi Healthcare City Psycho-Neurological Hospital 19/1 – 1966, Tbilisi, 1, Electroni Str.

Patient: Vassili Urgebadze, born in 1929, 6 class education. Address: 11, Tetrtskaro Str.

The patient is stationed in the city psycho-neurological hospital on 18.VIII.1965, and is brought from the prison for forced treatment. Diagnosis: psychopathic person, inclined to schizoprenia-like psychosis blanks. He was discharged from the hospital on 19/XI-65. According to anamnesis he had vision of ghostly evil spirit with horns on the head at the age of 12...The patient proves that everything bad that is taking place in the world is due to Evil. From the age of 12 he started to go to churches, prayed, bought icons, and studied church literature...He ate nothing on Wednesdays and Fridays. Grown-ups and soldiers laughed at his nonsense: “On Wednesday Judah sold Christ at 30 silver, and on Friday – Jewish priests crucified him”, he was totally hallucinating. It was clear from the case that on 1 May 1965 demonstration, he burnt a big portrait of Lenin, hanging on the building of the Council of Ministers. After interrogatory he said he did this because the picture of Crucifixion of Christ should hang there and that it was not possible to idolize an earthly man – the doubt appeared in regard to his psychic health, due to which he was sent to court-psychopathic expertise. The examination showed the patient’s orientation is disoriented in place, in time, and in environment. He talks to himself in a low voice: he believes in existence of heavenly essence, God and angels, etc. While talking, the main axis of a psychopath is always turned to that everything depends on God’s Will, etc. He is isolated from the other mental patients in the department. When someone talks to him, he surely mentions God, angels, and icons, etc. He is unable to criticize his condition. He was treated with the aminazinophrazia and syptomisine therapy, after which he passed commission.

Act of stationary #42 1965

Chairman of the commission: candidate of medicine, chief physician T. Abramishvili,

Members: J. Shalamberidze and physician Kropov.

He was discharged from the hospital on 19 Jan.1965 and was taken home by his mother.

Physician: Lezhava 19 Jan.1966.



Such a negative conclusion of the soviet doctors proves Fr. Gabriel's love to God. It is surprising that the soviet officials wrote as a medical conclusion Father Gabriel's description of God's pleasant virtuous life, which was sufficient for the communist party officials to free him and discharge for the mental hospital. When the God's Will intervenes in human affairs many amazing things do happen!

Father Gabriel was released within 7 months after his imprisonment. Famous Georgian academician A. Zurabashvili largely contributed to his release. After three decades, when Monk Gabriel served in Samtavro Convent, hieromonk Gerasim, a member of brotherhood of America's largest Orthodox monastery of St German of Alaska, visited him. Later he published the book in USA -"Christ's Confessor in the Present-Day Georgia". The book ends with the following words: "Fr. Gabriel blessed us and we departed, having witnessed the triumph of the New Testament Church in our own day." Despite the fact that priesthood of monk Gabriel was left untouched, he was suspended from priestly ministry. That was why he attended church sermons together with the parish and got Holy Communion as a secular man. He was called to the security department quite often, and came back home beaten mercilessly. Once, he was beaten too badly and was unable to walk independently. Soviet security officers then called to his family members and informed them about the address where they left the monk.

From that time Father Gabriel decided to completely change his lifestyle, which was too painful for him. Now he was determined to pretend as mentally ill and to outwardly refuse his usual way of life. Instead being in silence, he loudly preached in the streets. If till now he completely refused to drink wine, now he drank among people and pretended to be drunk. To pretend being foolish is an unusual feat which requires a spiritual strength and divine mind. "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men (I Cor. 1:25).

Modesty of Monk Gabriel was astonishing. His elder sister Mrs. Emma recalls:

- We failed to understand him. He had a refined soul from his childhood. After he was consecrated as priest, people respected him much. When monk Gabriel used to come home, he went into his church and often cried plaintively. Once the door of his church was open and when I heard him crying I worried and on entering the church I asked him: Vasiko, brother, why are you crying? Is anything wrong with you?

- Sister, Christ was born in a manger; but people respect me and kiss me on the hand.

Despite Father Gabriel's unusual modesty, numerous secular and church figures behaved with utter respect and reverence towards him, due to his astonishing graciousness – love, kindness, wisdom, prophesy, knowledge of a secret thoughts of men, and strong possession of time, space, and matter. Four years passed since Monk Gabriel left prison and asylum. The communist authorities could not stand his courageous activities and religiousness. It was decided to destroy his church, which was an expression of the inner struggle of the blood-thirsty communist regime towards Fr. Gabriel. However, he restored his church three times. Eventually, the head of the soviet police department and then the secretary of district party committee came to him secretly to express pardon personally. Father Gabriel restored the church and the chapel in a short period of time, but not in its initial form. Instead of seven cupolas he put one and big cupola. At present this wonderful church is preserved in the same condition. In 1971 with the blessing of Cathalicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Eprem II and metropolitan Ilia (now Cathalicos-Patriarch of Georgia, who then headed the Seminary) was installed as priest of Samtavro Convent and Seminary. He was given an Old Tower for his permanent ownership. Father Gabriel sometimes said with true joy: "Upon the mercy of Our Savior and Our Lady and by the blessing of two patriarchs I have been given this cell".



From 1972 to 1990 Fr. Gabriel performed a remarkable feat of pilgrimage to the churches and monasteries destroyed or deserted under the pressure of the communist regime. If the way was long and far-off, had a hard geographical location or involved some danger, Father Gabriel always went alone. Otherwise he was always accompanied by several believers, who assisted him in some way. Father Gabriel used to say: "Always believe that our labor is not in vain. Though many churches and monasteries are destroyed today or closed, the holy Angel sent by God sees and listens to our diligence and supplication, and brings our prayers to God with joy and makes Him aware of it. We find it difficult to do all these things now. We go in snow and slush, covered with plastic foil we have to deliver sermons, but time will come and these churches and monasteries will be rebuilt and services will be restored" (this seemed really impossible then).

From 1987 Father Gabriel chose a very small shed for his dwelling place in the so-called Kaklovani (a small alley of walnut trees in Samtavro yard,). This little shed was used in the monastery as hen-house previously. Later it was left without any function. He rarely left the monastery, only for three days or a week and then again came back to his abode. Such manner of life was an expression of his humbleness and asceticism simultaneously: it is quite difficult for a man to humiliate himself to such an extent; in addition, to live in such a tiny space, where you cannot even straighten yourself properly and withstand frosts in winter without any heating, especially if the walls have 2-3 centimeter gaps – it's a true monastic asceticism. Monk Gabriel lived mostly in the little shed. He stayed in his cell in the old tower too rarely. Once, the holy Angel appeared before him and revealed him about the part of Svetitskhoveli (Living pillar) and pointed exactly to the place, where this holy relic was hidden. Monk Gabriel and the nuns took this holy relic with reverence and put it in the Samtavro Transfiguration church, where it is preserved till today. In 1990 Monk Gabriel went to Shio-Mghvime monastery, as he intended a solitary life as hermit.



There he had a revelation by God to return to Samtavro Convent and serve people there. From that time on, till his death monk Gabriel lived in the old tower. He admitted pilgrims as a confessor and served the neighbor with selfless devotion to his duties. During October-November 1991, the political situation in Georgia became tense, but only monk Gabriel felt the danger of future misfortunes. He used to say: “Blood on Rustaveli Avenue! Blood! Blood of Georgians” When on Rustaveli Avenue begun gun fighting and a Georgian fired at another Georgian, Monk Gabriel rang the bells in Samtavro and lamented. He strengthened fasting and refused to take food at all. It is difficult to describe how arduously he lamented and cried and earnestly entreated to God and Our Lady to save Georgia.

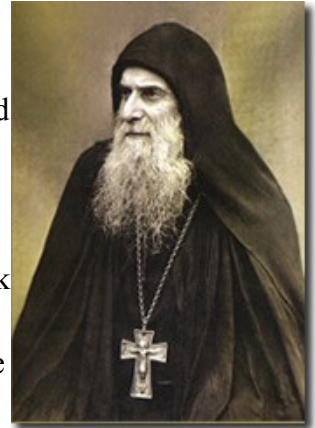
Monk Gabriel made no difference in people. He shared joys and sorrows of all people who came to him. How many of them were saved from being fallen into the abyss of spiritual darkness. With his ability of prophesy he put them on the path of truth.



Monk Gabriel almost completely concealed his power of miracle-working. Anyway, in extreme cases, such as when the basis of Christian belief – the doctrine of one-essence Trinity was confronted, he expressed the ability of miracle-working endowed onto him by God to prove the divine truth. Once, he was visited by a Georgian, a follower of Hinduism, who used to go to India and stayed there for a long time and had his spiritual teacher there. Father Gabriel took bread; made the sign of the cross over it in the name of Holy Trinity and the bread miraculously burst

into flame, water and wheat. “Look at it and see: the same is with the Holy Trinity in three hypostases: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Then Fr. Gabriel made the sign of the cross again and water, wheat and fire turned into bread. “As this bread is whole and cannot be divided, the same is with the Holy Trinity - one-essence and indivisible.”

Once, the hegumen of the Xiropotamos monastery from the Mount Athos, Archimandrite Joseph and the monks arrived in Georgia. They visited Samtavro and took blessings from Fr. Gabriel. But elder reprimanded Father Joseph: “How did you dare and say defiantly to the Virgin that “she has abandoned Georgia”. We are under prayers and mercy of the Holy Virgin, but you don’t see this and disapprove”. On hearing this, Father Joseph got horrified and asked forgiveness. Father Gabriel hugged the Greek guest with love and invited him to the table. It became known that before coming to Samtavro, the Greek fathers visited Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. The tense political and economic situation in Georgia, accompanied by spiritual hardship of the nation, recently liberated from the atheist regime, was the reason that respected Archimandrite expressing regret for Georgia and thought to himself: “The Virgin Mary, you have abandoned Georgia!”.



On bidding farewell, excited fathers suggested Monk Gabriel to go to Mount Athos, but he refused and answered: “I am here, on my Athos. I won’t exchange my Georgia for Athos”. In the same period, Monk Gabriel was visited by priest-monk Gerasim, who arrived from USA to Georgia specifically with this aim. Father Gerasim served in the monastery, founded in Platina-California by renowned American hieromonk Seraphim Rose. After returning to his country, Father Gerasim and Platina-California brotherhood dedicated to Father Gabriel an article in the American Orthodox journal – The Orthodox Word.

In the final years of his life Fr. Gabriel got seriously ill with edema. In addition to that he broke his leg and since that time till his death, Monk Gabriel lay in his bed for a year and a half and was unable to walk. Only in very rare occasions, enduring sharp pains, he asked to assist him to get up and sat in front of his cell. “Your life is my life. If you don’t sacrifice yourself for your people, nothing will come out”, he used to say. The mercy of his hospitality cannot be forgotten. Before breaking his leg, he treated everyone with the meals prepared by him personally. But when he was unable to cook, he asked Mother Paraskeva or someone else to cook meals and with great love treated those who came to him. He was in permanent effort to bring everyone closer to God. His words filled with divine grace and power warmly penetrated into everyone’s heart. His prayer was always accompanied by abundant tears and therefore no one could be indifferent towards this.

Within years Father Gabriel taught mostly about God and love for neighbor, repentance, humility and kindness. In the last year of his life he suddenly changed his preaching and taught about the End Times. “You will see the Antichrist, you will be persecuted and you should fly to the mountains. Don’t be afraid! As the Israelites lacked nothing in the desert, when left slavery of the pharaoh and Egypt, the same with you, God will take care of you, who will go to the mountains for freedom in Christ, to run away from an Egypt of this world, and slavery of pharaoh – the Antichrist. You should know this will take you to the Promised Land – Paradise and will brighten you like the sun.” In his last days Monk Gabriel preached only love and taught to all his visitors with tears in his eyes: “Remember, God is love. Do as much kindness as you can to save yourself by this kindness. Be modest, as God bestows Mercy upon His humble servants. Repent your sins and don’t wait for “tomorrow”, as it is the trap of the Devil. Love each other, as loveless man cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.”



One day before his death Monk Gabriel said: “Time has come for my departure.” Then he caressed the icon of Our Savior, hanging over his head with his right hand, kept silence for some time and said: “I follow you, Christ, from 12 years of my age. I am ready, take me!” All that night, till 4 o’clock, he spent in awful pains, then started breathing loudly and called: “Mother, mother; Sister, sister!” All came from the nunnery, his family members, secular people, a doctor and priests. Father Gabriel stared at the icon of St Nicholas of Myra with love. Archbishop Daniel read the prayers for the dying. At the end Father Gabriel smiled and passed away in peace. It was November 2, 1995. According to his last will Monk Gabriel was buried in the yard of Samtavro Convent wrapped in sackcloth according to an old monastic tradition. During the burial his body was encircled with the people who loved him. No one wished to drop earth on him and scattered the earth beside the grave. Then the earth moved itself as if covering him, put him to the bosom and finally his body was fully covered with ground. According to his will the following words were written on his grave:

“TRUTH IS IN THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SPIRIT” – Monk Gabriel



Numerous miraculous healings are performed at the grave of monk Gabriel. There are several books published in Georgia as well as in others countries about the teachings, life and works of Archimandrite Gabriel.



At the grave of monk Gabriel

Tell students about his miracles

Healings & Miracles of Saint Gabriel

Healings & Miracles of Saint Gabriel



My brother was diagnosed with brain cancer 3 years ago. Metastases were spread all over the brain. He suffered from mental disability and soon he got blinded. We decided to visit the grave of monk Gabriel and used the oil from lampada for about two weeks. During the surgery doctors found that metastases have been disappeared miraculously. Before the surgery surgeons were absolutely skeptical about having any success and considered the case as hopeless. Moreover, we were asked to provide the written consent for surgery. We used only the oil from lampada which burns constantly at the grave of monk Gabriel during those weeks. Now my brother is healthy and is doing well.

Gulnara Agniashvili
Tbilisi



My son was suffering from cerebral palsy during 19 years. He never used his hands to drink even a glass of water in his life. He was unable to stand independently and walked only with the help of two assistants. The situation has changed when we started to use the oil from lampada which burns at the grave of Father Gabriel. Now my son is able to stand from his wheelchair and walk independently. His health condition is gradually improving.

Eka Niauri
Rustavi



I was two month pregnant when doctors found a cyst in the fetus' stomach. The doctors said that case was too complicated and strongly advised me to have an abortion. I refused and began visiting the grave of Father Gabriel and using the oil from the lampada. My baby was born absolutely healthy! Doctors were amazed.

Mariam Kviciani
Tbilisi



I was gravely ill; I suffered from cirrhosis (liver disease). I was brought from the hospital directly to the grave of Father Gabriel on a stretcher and put on the grave. I stood up by myself and took a seat nearby. I felt cold and asked for some food and water. My health improved gradually after that day and now I'm doing well.

Ramaz Kobakhidze
Kutaisi



I suffered from psoriasis (a skin disease). My back was covered by plaques and I was unable to lie down and rest. My neighbor gave me a little bottle with the oil of Father Gabriel. I used it four times and the disease miraculously disappeared.

Makvala Davitashvili
Tbilisi



I suffered from a large cyst on my eye and was scheduled for surgery. I used the oil from the lampada for ten days. I was making the sign of the cross over my eye every morning and evening and the cyst disappeared. My tooth was too loose so I made the sign of the cross with the oil and it strengthened instantly.

Marine
Mtskheta 101, Agmashenebeli str.



Our 18 month old baby suffered from lymphoblastic leukemia. We visited the grave of Father Gabriel in the August, 2001. We brought the oil from the grave; we were making the sign of the cross with the oil and we also were drinking it every day. Now our baby is healthy and is doing well.

Veriko Makashvili
Gori



My mother damaged her eye so badly that a concilium of doctors scheduled a surgery. My mother began visiting the grave of Father Gabriel and used the oil from the lampada. Soon her eye fully recovered and the surgery was canceled. Now she is absolutely healthy.

Nana Tskhvedadze
Tbilisi



5: Answer Questions in Class

6: Read the Creed until learned by memory Greek & English

7: Interactive board work using the Cross of Christ until bell rings