



Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

On Loving Our Enemies

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 8

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One. Thou didst accept the three-day burial to free us from our sufferings. O Lord, our Life and Resurrection: Glory to Thee!

Troparion of Annunciation, Tone 4

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you.

Kontakion of Annunciation Tone 8

O Victorious Leader of triumphant hosts! We, your servants delivered from evil, sing our grateful thanks to you, O Theotokos! As you possess invincible might set us free from every calamity so that we may sing: Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

The 16th Sunday after Pentecost, Tone 8, October 1st, Lu. 6:31-36

Gospel read today (Lu. 6:31-36) deals with loving one's enemies. Do unto others as you would have that men should do unto you. If you love only those who love you, if you do good to only those who do good to you, if you lend to only those who lend to you, you act no differently from sinners themselves, and nothing more. It is your enemies you must love, you must do good to them, and lend to them, for only in this way will you show yourselves to be children of God, Who himself extends his goodness to those who are evil.

The idea of not doing to others what we would not wish them to do to us was familiar to Jesus' contemporaries, and was part of rabbinical teaching. But Jesus goes beyond this negative precept and requires us to treat others as we would like to be treated by them. However, this new commandment, this positive commandment, risks being misunderstood by us. We might be led into doing good to others in the hope that they would respond by doing good to us, and that there would be some sort of reciprocity between our attitude and theirs. This is why Jesus immediately insists on the principle of disinterestedness. Our love must be freely given and go out to those from whom we expect nothing in return.

The climax of today's gospel is the saying: "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful". Here, we are very far from the trite moral injunction such as: "love other people without hoping for a reward. For this phrase confronts us with all that is absolute and — though one hesitates to say so — inaccessible in the Christian duty to love. To be merciful *as* the Father is merciful does not mean that our mercy could ever reach to the infinity of divine mercy: but, that in our own small measure, we should be inspired by the same feelings as the Father; it is from the ocean of the Father's mercy that the minute drops of water which are our acts of mercy must come, and it is into this ocean that they must finally flow.

...A first sign of this spirit is never to think of a man as utterly lost. "Love ye your enemies...hoping for nothing again" today's gospel tells us. This is not a humanitarian and superficial optimism: after all, a man is never entirely bad; he can change. And another thought can inspire our attitude: if God never

Announcements and Activities

Great Vespers— Saturday, at 5:30PM

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, at 10AM.

Coffee Hour— This week's Coffee Hour is being sponsored by Diane Foss. Next week's Coffee Hour will be bagels and coffee.

Church School/Adult Ed— summer recess until October. *We need to get all the diocesan requirements for teachers completed in the interim. Elise and Michael Miller are helping with the processes.*

Consecration Committee Meeting— Our next meeting will take place on October 22nd. I believe Matushka and I will host the meeting around the corner at our place, as it is a bit difficult to speak over the noise that is typical and understandable as people enjoy one another's company at coffee hour. At this early stage, it's about organizing the work under the subcommittee we organized. These early meetings will be short and nothing more than sharing any important news. We will be time certain of no more than 30 minutes.

Pray for... Sarah, the daughter of Fr. Lawrence's godfather, health issues. **Youseff and Jimmy— who are ill. Jonathan— ill. Reposed Barbara Ranjo. . Laure— battling Cancer. Paul— ill Ralph—ill Archpriest Lawrence**, from Canada, progressive eye disease. **Tsige Roman**— our beloved Tsige reposed on December 3rd. Please keep praying for her homeland of Ethiopia. **Brian**— ill. **Jonathan**— ill. **Katia**— sister of Shkbarra's Grace, Heather's goddaughter. **Reposed Priest, James. Reposed Hierarchy Tikhon. Rufin**— soldier in Ukraine. Elise, ill. **Sally**, surgery, **Reposed Patrick, Reposed Jim, Reposed Alex; Christian**, prayers. **Chris**, reposed. **Galina**, reposed. **Patrick**, reposed. **Clint Arsenios**— reposed. **Heather Mary**— uncommon fatigue **Lou Mendez**. Battling ongoing health issues. **George and Steve**, a request from Luci F. Dr. Joseph— personal needs. **Lance**— special request for prayers. **Christian**— prayers. **Tonya**— husband took his own life. Car robbery of Laura Beth's neighbors.

ceases to do good to a sinner, if he is always ready to open his arms to him, who am I to dare to be stricter than God? Even in the greatest sinner, the most hardened criminal, the "image of God" is still present. What is important is to know how the "image of God" in me can meet the "image of God" in my enemy — or in a wrongdoer.

(taken from *Year of Grace of the Lord*, by an Eastern Monk)

From the Lives of the Saints... THE PROTECTION OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS

From time immemorial, the Church has celebrated the Most-holy Theotokos as the patroness and protectress of the Christian people, who, by her intercessory prayers, implores God's mercy for us sinners. The help of the Most-holy Mother of God has been clearly shown numerous times, to individuals and to nations, in peace and in war, in monastic deserts and in densely populated cities. The event that the Church commemorates and celebrates today confirms the Theotokos' consistent protection of Christian people. On October 1, 911 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Leo the Wise, there was an All-night Vigil in the Blachernae Church of the Mother of God in Constantinople. The church was full of people. St. Andrew the Fool-for-Christ was standing in the rear of the church with his disciple Epiphanius. At four o'clock in the morning, the Most-holy Theotokos appeared above the people, holding her omophorion outstretched as a protective covering for the faithful. She was clothed in gold-encrusted purple, and shone with an ineffable radiance, surrounded by apostles, saints, martyrs and virgins. St. Andrew said to Blessed Epiphanius: "Do you see, brother, the Queen and Lady of all praying for the whole world?" Epiphanius replied: "I see, Father, and am struck with amazement!" The Feast of the Protection was instituted to commemorate this event, and to remind us that we can prayerfully receive the unceasing protection of the Most-holy Theotokos in any time of difficulty.

THE HOLY APOSTLE ANANIAS

Ananias was one of the Seventy Apostles. He was bishop in Damascus. In accordance with God's revelation (Acts 9:10-17), he baptized Saul (the Apostle Paul). Because of his courageous preaching of the Gospel he was stoned to death in the town of Eleutheropolis. His holy relics were taken to Damascus and later to Constantinople.

THE VENERABLE ROMANUS THE MELODIST

Romanus was born in the Syrian town of Emesa. He was, at first, a sexton in Beirut, and later served in the cathedral church in Constantinople in the time of Patriarch Euthymius (490-504 A.D.). Romanus was not well educated and was untrained in chanting, for which he was ridiculed by some of the more educated clergy. St. Romanus tearfully prayed to the Most-holy Theotokos, and she appeared to him in a dream, gave him a scroll, and told him to swallow it. The following day was the Feast of the Nativity. Romanus took his place as a chanter at the ambo, and with an angelic voice sang the hymn "Today the Virgin...." All were amazed at both the content of this hymn and at the magnificent singing of the chanter. Having received the poetic gift from the Theotokos, Romanus composed over a thousand Kontakia. Romanus entered into rest as a deacon of the Great Church, Hagia Sophia, in Constantinople. He joined the angelic choirs in the year 510 A.D.

Taken from, Prologue of Ochrid, by St. Nikolai Velimirovich

"There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives" (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)