

(cont. from previous page)

Seek First the Kingdom” In our Byzantine typika the bulk of the Sermon on the Mount is read at the Divine Liturgy on the weekdays after Pentecost and the Sunday of All Saints. Mt 6:22-34 is reserved for Sunday, however, for it provides the principle underlying the entire discourse: *“Seek first the kingdom of God”* (v. 33).

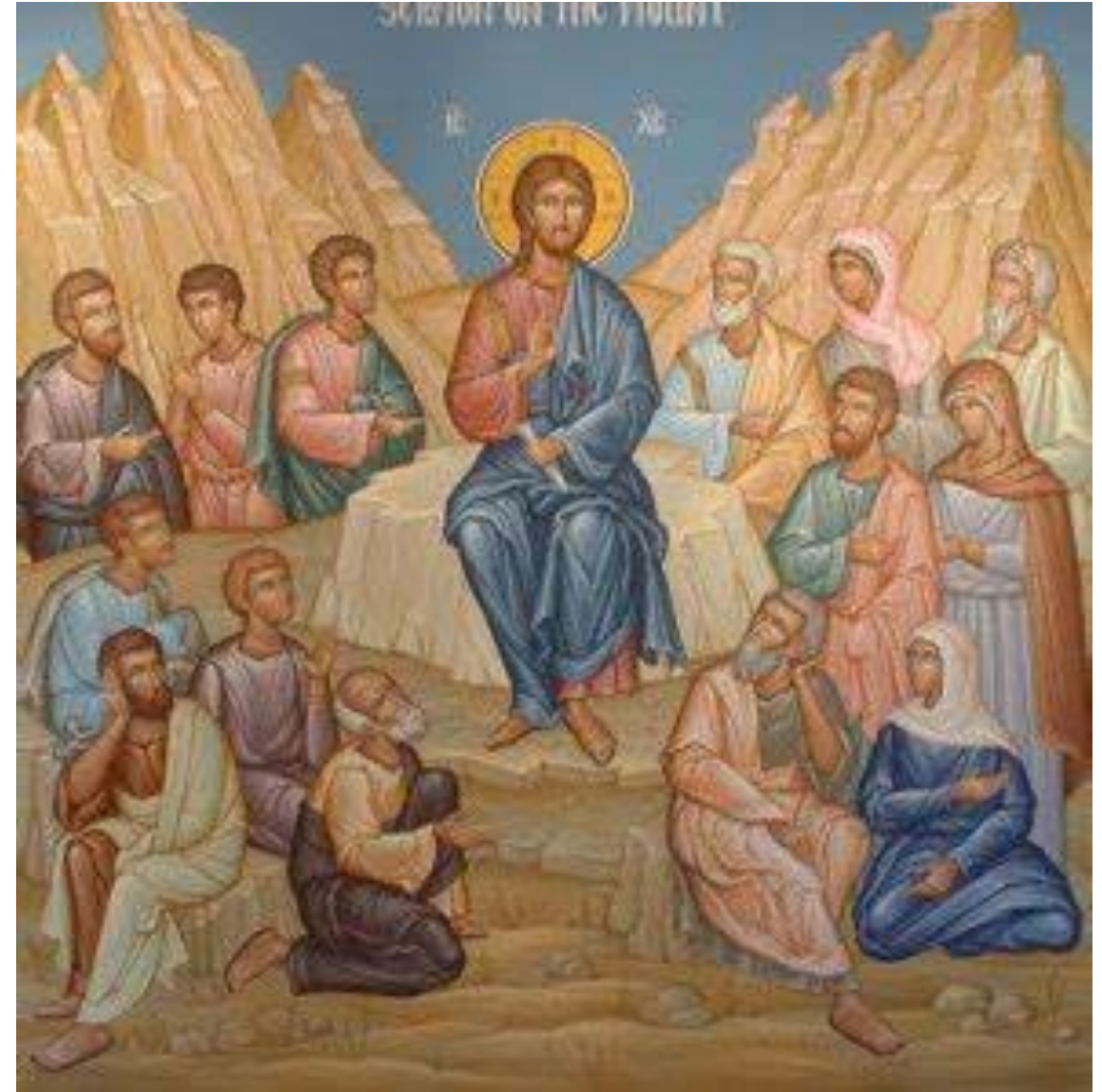
Commentators have often said that it is practically impossible to put the precepts in this discourse into action and they are right, if we see these instructions in isolation from their underlying motivation. If a person is truly seeking the kingdom of God, then keeping the radical nature of these precepts will come naturally. If someone is following the Lord wholeheartedly they will see Him accepting and supplying the strength for every sacrifice they make to keep His commandments.

If a person does not put the kingdom first then his *“eye is bad”* (v.23). His outlook on life leads only to darkness, whether it is the dreariness of a life committed to unrighteous living or the shadowy world of one who seeks to serve two masters by doing “just enough” to get into heaven without commending one’s whole life to Christ. As St John Chrysostom observed, no further punishment is needed; having such a mindset is punishment in itself. “To have mammon for your master is already worse itself than any later punishment and enough retribution before the punishment for any one trapped in it. ... Think of the lawsuits, the harassments, the strife and toil and blinding of the soul! More grievous, one falls away from the highest blessing – to be God’s servant” (Homily on Matthew, 21.2).

What holds people back from seeking the kingdom of God wholeheartedly? – a preoccupation with what we eat and drink and with what we put on (v. 32). Can we afford the better cuts of meat and the best wines, or to be seen in the restaurants everyone is talking about? Can I afford the latest fashions? Do I have the right jewelry for this or that occasion? What about the right address, the furnishings everyone will admire, a more expensive car than my neighbor, a vacation to be envied, etc. etc.? Not that material things are sinful in themselves; the Lord said that we will have enough of these things to meet our needs (v. 32). We sin when we make acquiring them the chief aim and purpose of life. As St Augustine noted, there is a difference between seeing something as a *goal* and seeing something as a *means*. Those who claim to be believers and yet pursue the goods of the world as their first priority in life must listen carefully to the words which the Lord addressed at the end of the discourse: *“Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven”* (Mt 7:21).



THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST JUNE 26, 2022



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St.
Worcester, MA 01604
Rectory: (508) 752-4174 Hall: (508) 755-2199
Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com
Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor
Email: Brymc56@comcast.net Cell: (978) 314-1962
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (3rd)

1: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka.

Haleloueya.

3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ.

People: O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 2) pg. 38

When You descended to death, O immortal Life, You put Hades to death by the splendor of Your divinity. And when You raised the dead from below the earth, all the heavenly powers cried out to You: “O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!”

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1) Pg. 15

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kontakion (Tone 2)

O never-failing Protectress of Christians, and their ever-present Intercessor before the Creator, despise not the petitions of us sinners, but in your goodness extend your help to us who call upon you with confidence. Hasten. O Mother of God, to intercede for us, for you have always protected those who honor you.

The Giving of the Law – On Sinai Moses receives the Law from God, which he then transmits to the people. The heart of the Law is, of course, the Ten Commandments but there is much more besides: ritual precepts, commercial laws, jurisprudence, reparations, money-lending, etc. Chapters 21 through 23 are devoted to these laws.

On the mount near Capernaum the Lord Jesus also delivers a Law, the heart of which is expressed in the nine Beatitudes. While most of the Commandments are expressed negatively (“Thou shalt not...”), the Beatitudes are expressed positively as the path to perfection (“Blessed are the...”).

As the Ten Commandments were but a part of the Law given to Moses on Sinai, there is more to the Law of Christ than the Beatitudes. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ continues with an expansion of the Ten Commandments (Mt 5:28-47). Not only external actions (e.g. murder, adultery) but interior passions (e.g. anger, lust) deviate from the Law. Love must replace the desire for vengeance and that love must extend to all, even our enemies. The result is that “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Mt 5:48), which has been described as the summary of the Beatitudes.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the Sermon on the Mount concerns the way Christ proclaims His Law. On Sinai God gives His Laws to Moses with instructions to set them before the people of Israel. In the Sermon on the Mount it is Christ Himself who teaches in His own name, placing Himself as the equal of Him who gave the Law to Moses: “You have heard that it was said to those of old...But I say to you...” (Mt 5: 21, 27, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44).

The Lord Jesus does not negate the Ten Commandments; rather, He gives them greater depth. As He said, “*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill*” (Mt 5:17). He completes or fulfills the Law by addressing our inner motivations as well as our actions. If our aim as believers is to know God, then we must know Him from within, by assuming His attitudes and adopting His ways for living. As He is perfect, so ought we to be.

This for Everyone? The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew’s Gospel is addressed to “the multitudes.” Yet in the medieval West a common opinion was that the Beatitudes were “intended for those who strive for perfection; they are based on poverty, chastity and obedience and are therefore primarily for those who join the religious life.” Ordinary Christians were counseled that salvation was assured for them if they devoutly observe the precepts of the Church. This opinion was rigorously denounced by Luther and others during the Protestant Reformation as undoing the Sermon on the Mount, but it is still frequently found even in contemporary Roman Catholic writings.

The East, on the other hand, has always seen the spirit of the Beatitudes as basic to the Christian life for both monastics and lay people. The ways in which monastics and laypeople will embrace humility, poverty of spirit, compassion, or the pursuit of righteousness will differ but their essential importance is the same for both. The Beatitudes point out the path to the kingdom of God, the goal for all Christians.

At two significant moments in our liturgical life the central place held by the Beatitudes in our spirituality is reflected. In many churches, particularly in the Slavic tradition, the Beatitudes are sung at the Divine Liturgy during the Little Entrance. As the Gospel Book is carried to the center of the church, this passage from the Sermon on the Mount is sung as the summary of the entire Gospel message of Christ.

The second liturgical moment pointing to the universal importance of the Beatitudes in our spirituality takes place at the burial service. The Beatitudes climax the funeral hymns at the funerals of non-monastics (laypersons and priests). They are sung with hymns such as the following inserted between the verses: “May Christ grant rest to you in the city of the living. May He open to you the gates of paradise and make you a citizen of His kingdom. May He remit your sins, for He loves you greatly.” Communion with Christ, is the ultimate goal of our life as Christians, whether monastics, clergy or laity. Living the Beatitudes is the universal means to that goal. **(Continued on back page.)**

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today HS of Peter Abraham on the occasion of his 50th birthday.
Requested by Ron Abraham

July 10 +Nicholas & Theodora Barouk. Requested by Michael & Virginia Mischitelli and Antonio & Karen Solitro

July 24 +William (23rd) & Bertha Rahall, Habib & Miriam Rahall.
Requested by Nick Rahall & Family

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Houda Daou

Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. is hosted by

This morning's flowers were donated in memory of Carol Esper Webster by James & Karen Esper.

Please Remember in your prayers: Susan Arraje, George Arraj, Jr., Robert Ghiz, Archie Opatka, Katherine Thomas, Charlotte Stockhaus, Ruth Welsh, James Rahall, Richard Abraham, Sr., Daneil Sarrouf, the people of Ukraine, those who suffered a loss as a result of the mass shootings in various cities in the country.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$1,000
Candles	\$ 35
Coffee Hr.	\$ 41
Flowers	\$ 15
Diocesan	\$ 10
TOTAL	\$1,101

God bless you for your generosity!



Welcome to any visitors we may have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.

UPCOMING LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Wed June 29 6PM Divine Liturgy for Feast of Sts. Peter & Paul

Wed July 20, 6PM Divine Liturgy for the Great Prophet Elijah followed by blessing of cars.



2022 Family Picnic

Our annual Family Picnic will be on **Sunday September 11, 2022 from Noon to 6:00PM. Our next meeting will today** after the Divine Liturgy.

We need volunteers for many tasks: advance food preparation, food runners, setup/breakdown, cashiers, children's activities, etc. If you can share a couple of hours prior to, or on the day of the Picnic, please reach out to Marilyn Tencza at (774) 239-2081 or mtencza9@hotmail.com.

Thanks in advance for your help!

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

As most of you know, next year (2023) is the one-hundredth anniversary of the parish. I would like to form a committee to explore how we want to mark the occasion. If you are interested in being on the committee or have some ideas about how to celebrate this milestone in the life of the parish, please contact me. We will have an initial meeting in the next month or so.

The One who Gives Life to the World

“THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT” (Mt 5-7) is the name given to the first of the five Discourses of Jesus in Mathew’s Gospel. The term – from its introductory phrase, “Seeing the multitudes He went up on a mountain” (Mt 5:1) – was popularized by St Augustine’s commentary on Mt 5-7, *De Sermone Domini in Monte* (c. AD 392- 396).

In Matthew’s Gospel three important moments take place on a mountain: what we call the “Sermon on the Mount” (Mt 5-7), the Holy Transfiguration of Christ (Mt 17:1-9), and the eschatological discourse in which the Lord speaks to the signs of His coming (Mt 24:3 and following). Each of them evokes the memory of an Old Testament event in order to proclaim the person and message of Christ.

Remember that Matthew was written for Greek-speaking Jewish believers in Syria, perhaps at Antioch. Their minds would immediately be drawn to another mountain, Sinai, where God gave the Hebrews the basics of their faith, the Law of Moses. They would find in Jesus’ teaching from this mountain the fundamental texts of their faith: the Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-12) and the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:9-13) as well as Jesus’ interpretation of the Commandments and the precepts to pray, fast and give alms. They would see Jesus portrayed as the New Moses and more for, unlike Moses, He taught on His own authority: “*You have heard it said... but I say to you...*” (Mt 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32 38-39, 43-44).

In both the Sermon on the Mount and the Transfiguration we see Christ depicted in terms recalling Moses’ encounter with God on Mount Sinai. There are several points of comparison and/or contrast which have been identified since the first Christian centuries:

Location – Both events take place “on a mountain;” however there are no mountains in Galilee on the scale of Mount Sinai. The place traditionally identified as the site of the Sermon on the Mount is a hillside on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum. It overlooks a plain which can accommodate thousands. A Byzantine church was erected there in the fourth century. In the 1930s Italian dictator Mussolini sponsored the building of the Church of the Beatitudes on this site to commemorate the Sermon on the Mount.

The place of the Transfiguration is not identified in the Gospels. Jesus took Peter, James and John, we are told, and “led them up on a high mountain” (Mt 17:1). In the third century Origen identified the site of the Transfiguration as Mount Tabor, west of the Sea of Galilee, a monadnock, or rocky hill which rises dramatically from the plain which surrounds it. It was a pilgrimage site by the fourth century with several churches at its peak. Today there are two: one Greek Orthodox, the other Roman Catholic, each with a monastery attached. Identifying these Galilee sites as “mountains” emphasizes the connections with the experience of Moses.

The Cloud and Glory – In the days of Moses, “the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days” (Ex 24:16). When the Father spoke at Jesus’ Transfiguration, the “high mountain” was overshadowed by “*a bright cloud*” (Mt 17:5). On Sinai “when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off” (Ex 20:18). On Tabor the disciples “*were fearful as they entered the cloud*” (Lk 9:34), sign of their greater intimacy with the divine presence.

On Sinai Moses asked to see the LORD’s glory, but the LORD replied: “*You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live*” (Ex 33:20). At the Transfiguration, on the other hand, Jesus’ face “shone like the sun and His clothes became white as the light” (Mt 17). What was concealed in the experience of Moses becomes manifested to the disciples on Mount Tabor. As John’s Gospel has it, “*we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*” (Jn 1:14).

Prokimenon

Reader: My strength and my courage is the Lord, and He has been my Savior.

People: My strength and my courage is the Lord, and He has been my Savior.

Reader: The Lord has chastised me through His teaching, yet He has not delivered me to death.

People: My strength and my courage is the Lord, and He has been my Savior.

Reader: My strength and my courage is the Lord,

People: And He has been my Savior.

Epistle: Rom. 5:1-10

Alleluia Verses

The Lord shall hear you on the day of distress; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you.

Verses: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance.

Gospel: Mt. 6:22-33

