

St Silouan the Athonite on Loving Our Enemies

“He who has not learned to love from the Holy Spirit, will certainly not pray for his enemies.”

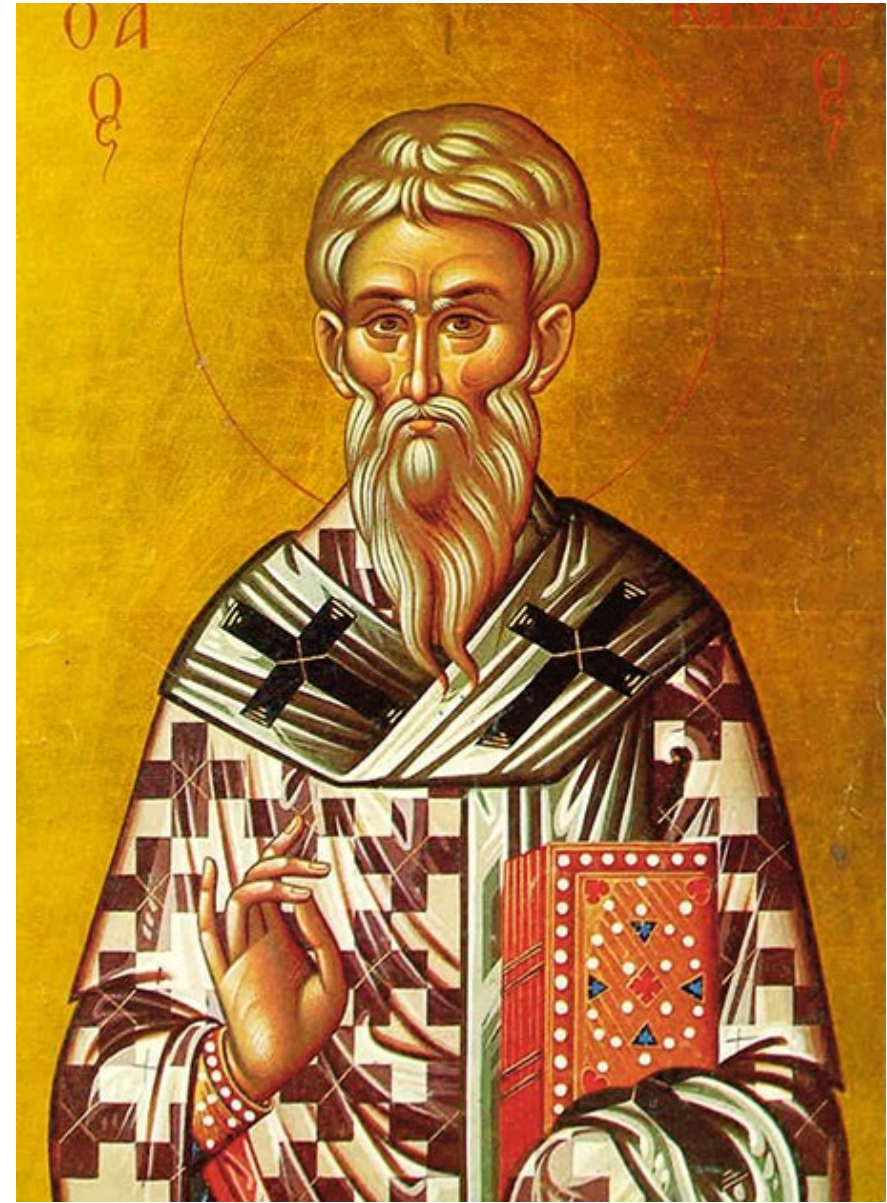
"Lord, teach us through Your Holy Spirit to love our enemies and to pray for them with tears . . . Lord, as You prayed for Your enemies, so teach us also, through the Holy Spirit, to love our enemies."

From the Divine Office

The women were on their way very early to Your tomb when they saw the angel and were overcome by fear; they were filled with amazement when they saw the tomb shining forth Life. They quickly returned to the disciples and announced the Resurrection: “Christ in His mighty power, has despoiled Hades and raised up from the dust of the tomb all those who were dead! He has released man from fear of condemnation by the power of His Cross!” (Orthros)



SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS OCTOBER 4, 2020



HIEROMARTYR HIEROTHEOS

OCTOBER 4 2020

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (1st)

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, sing praise to His name.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us!

2: Say to God: "How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before You."

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us!

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us!

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 1, pg. 38)

After the stone was sealed by the Jews, and while the soldiers were watching Your spotless body, You rose, O Savior, on the third day, bestowing life to the world. Therefore, the Heavenly Powers, cried out to You, O Giver of Life: "Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Your Kingdom, glory to Your Economy, O You who alone are the Lover of mankind."

Troparion of the Dormition (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 intercessions, save our souls from death.

Kondakion (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 Lord Jesus urged His disciples to strive for perfection in their spiritual lives and He pointed to love for one's enemies as exemplifying that perfection. Anything less, He identified with the spirit of the scribes and Pharisees. In St Matthew's Gospel the following injunction concludes and sums up the Sermon on the Mount: "*If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?*"

Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful... You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt 5:32-36, 43-48). If the aim of the Christian life is to imitate the Lover of Mankind, the chief sign of that way of life is the way we treat our enemies. We can and should act in the image of God.

Perhaps the most striking example of love for one's enemies in the Gospels is the prayer for His killers which Christ offered while hanging on the cross. "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing*" (Lk 23:24). Arrested for preaching in Christ's name some years later, the first martyr, St Stephen, used his last breath to imitate Christ's love for His enemies, praying: "*Lord, do not hold this sin against them*" (Acts 7:60) as he was being stoned by his killers: God, and those who follow His way, do not let themselves be conditioned by the wickedness of others. Even when forgotten or rejected, they continue to be faithful to loving others.

Forgiving through the Holy Spirit

Imitating God in this way isn't easy. Some say it isn't even in our power, but is an attitude that can only be the fruit of grace, given by the Holy Spirit. This is why St. Silouan the Athonite writes, "The soul that has not known the Holy Spirit does not understand how one can love one's enemies, and does not accept it."

The ability to love one's enemies is also closely bound to humility. Almost all the difficulties we encounter in loving our enemies are linked with pride: it is from pride that flows the affliction that follows upon insults, hatred, bad temper, spite, the desire for revenge, contempt for one's neighbor, refusing to forgive him and to be reconciled with him. Pride excludes the love of enemies and love for one's enemies excludes pride.

When we think of asceticism, we may consider prayer vigils, fasting, or making numerous prostrations. The most challenging ascetical feat, however, is to practice love for one's enemies.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today The People of Beirut.
Those infected with the coronavirus and those who care for them.
+The people of Beirut
+Those who have died as a result of the Coronavirus

Today's flowers were donated by Marilyn & Zenon Tencza in memory of the Joseph family...

Upcoming Feast Day Liturgical Schedule

Fri 10/23, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the James, the Apostle-Brother of the Lord

NOTE: Evening feast day services will be at 6PM effective September 1 unless announced otherwise.

There are a number of things we need for the church. They include: a second icon stand, a second candle box, red & blue altar cloths, new vigil lamps for the iconostasis and walls, new altar server sticharia, as well as some smaller items. If you would like to donate any of these items in memory of your loved ones, please contact Fr. Bryan.

GOD WITH US ONLINE

This year's God With Us Online series begins on October 7, at 8PM with a four part presentation entitled "God With Us: The Art of Catechesis in the Orthodox Tradition".

For more information, email: info@easterncatholic.org.

2020 BISHOP'S APPEAL

This year's Appeal kicks off today. Each year, Sayidna Nicholas allocates 10% of the funds raised for charitable causes. This year, that 10% will go to aid the Melkites in Lebanon. Be on the lookout for your Appeal letter and be as generous as possible.

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

Regular: \$ 1,887
Candles: \$ 15
Flowers: \$ 50
Total: \$ 1,952

Thanks to everyone who has continued to send in their contributions on a regular basis. As a reminder, it costs approximately **\$8,000** monthly to maintain the parish. Your continued generosity has made it possible to pay our operating costs without dipping into savings.

May God continue to bless you for your generosity to your parish!

FINANCIALS

Sept 2020

Income \$5,730
Expense \$7,259
Net (\$1,524)

YTD (10.2019-9.2020)

Income \$ 95,468
Expense \$103,157
Net (\$ 7,689)

As you can see, we ended this fiscal year (1/1/2019-9/30/2020) with a deficit of \$7,689. This is due in part, to paying the Diocese for back assessments and retirement payments, installing a sump pump in the hall, and removing some trees. Even with these expenses, we have not had to access our savings.

THANK YOU

George Aboody reports that the Beirut Disaster Relief collection he helped organize was a success. There were enough household items, furniture, clothing, and toys collected to fill a 40ft. shipping container. Thank you to all who donated to this critical drive that will assist our brothers and sisters in Beirut, many of whom lost everything in the explosion.

May God continue to bless you!

Forgiving as He Forgives

DOES CHRIST ASK THE IMPOSSIBLE of His disciples? At times it seems so, as when He tells us to “*love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back*” (Lk 6:35). This doctrine goes against the ordinary inclinations of people of every society, social class or station in life. As a result it has been routinely ignored by Christians of every age when they are faced with the choice of actually putting it into practice.

This is why many non-believers have seen Christians as hypocrites – teaching this principle in theory but ignoring it in practice. In all honesty, many of us might see ourselves in this criticism leveled by the eighteenth-century political philosopher of the American Revolution Thomas Paine: “Those who preach this doctrine of loving their enemies, are in general the greatest persecutors, and they act consistently by so doing; for the doctrine is hypocritical, and it is natural that hypocrisy should act the reverse of what it preaches.” (Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*).

In the Old Testament

The Scriptures are full of imprecations against the enemies of Israel. The Torah and the early histories of Israel encourage believing Jews to consider the pagans living in their midst as God’s enemies and, therefore, their own. If they encourage readers to treat their enemies with compassion, it is for a motive other than kindness. The author of Proverbs warns his readers, “*Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice or the LORD will see and disapprove and turn His wrath away from them*” (Prov 24:17, 18). In other words, don’t rejoice over your enemy’s misfortune or God will restore their good fortune to spite you!

In Proverbs we find another word of advice on dealing with one’s enemies which was apparently well regarded among first-century Jews: “*If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD*

will reward you” (Prov 25:21, 22). The author encourages the doing of good from a base motive – Treat your enemy kindly. You will make him feel guilty and God will bless you in the bargain! This is very far from the New Testament teaching and shows us how far from conventional wisdom, even among God’s People, Christ’s doctrine is.

Imitating God

Christ regularly encouraged His disciples to imitate God’s way rather than man’s. God’s way is, of course, the way of mercy and compassion. God “*does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities, For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him*” (Ps 103:10, 11). While the Jews were long encouraged to trust in God’s mercy, it was Christ who taught us to imitate that compassion in the way we treat others.

Prokimenon

Reader: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have placed our hope in You.

People: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have placed our hope in You.

Verse: Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting.

People: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have placed our hope in You.

Reader: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us,

People: For we have placed our hope in You.

Epistle: 2 Cor 9:6-11

Alleluia Verses

O God, You granted me retribution and made peoples subject to me and saved me from my raging enemies.

Verse: Therefore I will proclaim You, O Lord, among the nations, and I will sing praise to Your name.

Gospel: Luke 6:31-36

Special Petitions for the Ecumenic Prayer (Inserted after the third petition)

- For all your people who have proven positive with the coronavirus, that they may be restored to full health and offer you their praise and thanksgiving, we pray to you, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all those who have died as a result of the coronavirus that they may be granted rest with the Saints and the mercy of God in the Heavenly Kingdom, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For doctors, nurses, and all in health care, risking their lives to minister to those afflicted with the coronavirus, that they remain safe, and in good health as they serve others, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all your people in Lebanon who were hurt during the disastrous explosion, that they may be restored to full health, and for those who died that they may be granted rest among the Saints, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For peace throughout the Middle East, especially in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.