



**ST. NICHOLAS
THE WONDERWORKER**

СВ. МИКОЛАЯ ЧУДОТВОРЦЯ

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**Pastor:
Fr. Yuriy Vyshnevskyy**

~ 8 August 2021 ~

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
ОДИНАДЦЯТА НЕДЛЯ ПІСЛЯ П'ЯТИДЕСЯТНИЦІ



Like everything else in the Christian life, forgiveness is a journey, a process of growth as we share more fully in the life of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Notice that the Lord concluded the parable by saying that we must forgive others from our hearts, from the depths of our souls. Though it may be a necessary first step, it is not enough simply to put on a good face and stop saying angry words and behaving badly toward someone who has wronged us. The goal is to be fully reconciled with them, to forgive and forget, to show them the same love and mercy that the Lord has shown to us with a pure and whole heart.

The challenge is greater, of course, if the others involved in these relationships continue offending us and acting like our enemies. Many would tell us that we are fools to keep forgiving someone a second, third, or fourth time. But remember what the one who told us to forgive seventy-times seven said from the cross, *"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."* There is no limit to the forgiving love of Jesus Christ. And if we are in Him, there can be no limit on our forgiveness either. We who want His mercy must show it to others.



SUNDAY HYMNS	
OPENING HYMN	Гора Таворська / Upon Mount Tabor pg. 224-226
COMMUNION HYMN	Вірую: Господи / I Do Believe pg. 246-247
CLOSING HYMN	Гора Таворська / Upon Mount Tabor pg. 224-226

SUNDAY & DAILY SCHEDULE		
SUNDAY, Aug 8	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom - ONLINE	10 AM
MONDAY, Aug 9	NO SERVICES	
TUESDAY, Aug 10	NO SERVICES	
WEDNESDAY, Aug 11	NO SERVICES	
THURSDAY, Aug 12	NO SERVICES	
FRIDAY, Aug 13	NO SERVICES	
SATURDAY, Aug 14	NO SERVICES	
SUNDAY, Aug 15	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom - ONLINE	10 AM

NOTE: to request a Divine Liturgy, please speak with Fr. Yuriy

SUNDAY EPISTLE		AUGUST 1 DONATIONS
DATE	READING	Loose collection: \$12.00; Envelope collection: \$135.00; Pre-authorized donations Jul 26 to Aug 1: \$475.00; Canada Helps online donations Jul 26 to Aug 1: \$24.13 <b style="text-align: center;">TOTAL: \$646.13 May God bless and reward you abundantly for your generosity!
SUNDAY, Aug 8	1 Cor 9:2-12	
SUNDAY, Aug 15	1 Cor 15:1-11	
SUNDAY, Aug 22	1 Cor 16:13-24	
SUNDAY, Aug 29	1 Cor 1:21-2:4	

DONATE ONLINE - www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/45460

PASTORAL MINISTRY & HOLY MYSTERIES

CONFESSIONS.....by appointment
 EUCHARIST.....by appointment
 BAPTISMS.....by appointment
 MARRIAGES.....six months notice should be given to the parish priest, and he should be contacted before any other arrangements are made
 FUNERALS.....by appointment
 ANOINTING.....by appointment
 HOSPITAL VISITS.....by appointment

Apostolic Administrator ~ Bishop David Motiuk ~ www.nweparchy.ca



ANNOUNCEMENTS

▶ **TODAY - BLESSING OF THE FRUITS & VEGETABLES:** as we will celebrate Post-feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord right after Divine Liturgy we will be blessing the first fruits & vegetables giving thanks to God for a good harvest.

▶ **NEXT SUNDAY - BLESSING OF THE FLOWERS** - as we will be celebrating the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God we will be blessing flowers following the Liturgy.

▶ **CONFESSIONS** - if you would like to come to confession please contact Fr. Yuriy at [250.891.4507](tel:250.891.4507) or st.nicholas.victoria@gmail.com

▶ **PRAYER REQUEST** - Please keep in your prayers SYLVIA KELLY, CHARLOTTE & ED KRAKOWSKI, RICHARD NEWBERRY, LANCE DELVES, RICHARD MACEWKO, ANNE DRAPACK, PETER IWANUCK, LEO VANDERVEN and other members of our parish, our family and friends who are ailing, in hospitals, nursing homes and those who are not able to join actively in their community.

▶ **EASTERN CHRISTIAN TRADITION** - learn more about Eastern Christian Tradition from the Newman Theological College. The program provides an introduction to the rich tradition of the Eastern Christian faith. Participants will explore their faith through the study of the Theology of Eastern Christianity, Worship and Spirituality of the Eastern Catholic Churches, Praying with Icons, and The Holy Mysteries, the terminology for what the West calls the Sacraments. For more information go to <https://newman.edu/ccs>

▶ **UNITY 2021** - Unity is a national gathering of Ukrainian Catholic young adults (1 to 30 years of age) to further understand, embrace and celebrate the Ukrainian Catholic faith through prayer, education and fellowship. Unity promotes and strengthens Ukrainian Catholic religious life and social outreach through faith-based activities and workshops. Unity has been held across Canada since 1996, with hundreds of young adults from across the country being enriched by the experience. This meaningful weekend offers spiritual guidance, community service, and opportunities to deepen one's faith through catechetical enrichment. For information & registration go to unitytoronto2021@gmail.com

▶ **BEQUESTS & WILLS** - Leaving a bequeath is a process of giving a donation through your will. It is simply a distribution from your estate to a charitable organization through your last will and testament. It can be as small or as large a donation as you wish. It is important that you talk to your lawyer about the process. In your kindness please remember St Nicholas the Wonderworker Ukrainian Catholic Church in your bequeath and will. If anyone wishes to make such a bequeath in their will, the following clause may be included or added to a will: "I give, devise, and bequeath to **St Nicholas the Wonderworker Ukrainian Catholic Parish - 1112 Caledonia Avenue, Victoria BC, V8T 1G1**, the sum of \$ _____ (or _____% of my estate), to be used for the benefit of the parish and it's pastoral activities."

DIVINE LITURGY PROPER

*The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom.
Scripture readings from the New Testament are taken from the
New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition.
Українською - у перекладі Івана Хоменка.*

Antiphon 1

Verse: Shout to the Lord, all the earth, sing now to His name, give glory to His praise.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Saviour, save us.

Verse: The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; Your lightning lit up the world.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Saviour, save us.

Verse: You have clothed Yourself in praise and splendour; You robe Yourself in light as with a cloak.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Saviour, save us.

Glory... Now... Only-begotten Son...

Antiphon 3

Verse: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord, let us acclaim God, our Saviour.

Refrain: Son of God, transfigured on the mount, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

Verse: Let us come before His face with praise, and acclaim Him in psalms.

Refrain: Son of God, transfigured on the mount, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

Verse: For God is the great Lord, and the great king over all the earth.

Refrain: Son of God, transfigured on the mount, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

Entrance Verse: Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.

Refrain: Son of God, transfigured on the mount, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

Troparion, Tone 2: When You went down to death, O Life Immortal,* You struck Hades dead with the blazing light of Your divinity.* When You raised the dead from the nether world,* all the powers of heaven cried out:* “O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory be to You!”

Troparion, Tone 7: You were transfigured on the mount, O Christ God,* showing Your glory to Your disciples as much as they could bear.* Make Your eternal light shine* also on us who are sinners,* through the prayers of the Mother of God,* O Giver of Light, glory to You!

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**Glory: Kontakion, Tone 2:** You rose from the tomb, O almighty Saviour,\* and Hades, seeing this wonder, was stricken with fear; and the dead arose.\* Creation saw and rejoices with You, and Adam exults.\* And the world, my Saviour, sings Your praises for ever.

**Now: Kontakion, Tone 7:** You were transfigured on the mount, O Christ God,\* and Your disciples saw Your glory as much as they could;\* that when they saw You crucified\* they might know that You suffered willingly\*, and might proclaim to the world\* that You are truly the brightness of the Father.

**Prokeimenon, Tone 2:** The Lord is my strength and my song of praise, and He has become my salvation. *Verse:* The Lord has indeed chastised me, but He has not delivered me to death. (*Psalms 117:14,18*)

**Prokeimenon, Tone 4:** *Verse:* How great are Your works, O Lord, You have made all things in wisdom.

**Epistle - 1 Corinthians 9:2-12 - A reading from the First Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.** Brothers and Sisters, if I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who at any time pays the expenses for doing military service? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not get any of its milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law also say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Or does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake, for whoever plows should plow in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

**Апостол - 1 Кор 9:2-12 - До Коринтян 1-е Послання Святого Апостола Павла**

**Читання:** Браття і сестри, коли іншим я не апостол, то бодай вам, бо ви, у Господі, є достовірним доказом мого апостольства. Ось моя оборона перед тими, що мене судять. Хіба ми не маємо права їсти й пити? Хіба ми не маємо права водити (з собою) сестру-жінку, як інші апостоли, брати Господні, і Кифа? Чи може один я і Варнава не маємо права не працювати? Хто колись власним коштом ходив у похід? Хто садить виноградник, і не їсть із нього плоду? Хто пасе стадо, і не живиться молоком від стада? Хіба я говорю тільки як людина? Хіба й закон не каже цього? Таж у законі Мойсея написано: «Не зав'язуй рота волів, як молотить.» Чи Бог турбується про волів? Чи, може, ради нас говорить? Бо ж ради нас написано, що, хто оре, мусить орати в надії, і хто молотить, молотить теж у надії, що матиме щось із того. Коли ж ми сіяли у вас духовне, то чи велика річ, коли пождем

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ваше тілесне? І коли інші мають це право над вами, чому радше не ми? Однак, ми не користуємося цим правом, а весь час терпимо, щоб не робити ніякої перешкоди Євангелії Христовій.

Alleluia, Tone 2: *Verse:* The Lord will hear you in the day of tribulation; the name of the God of Jacob will shield you. *Verse:* Lord, grant victory to the king and hear us in the day that we shall call upon You. (*Psalms 19:2,10*) *Verse:* Yours are the heavens, and Yours the earth. (*Psalms 88:12*)

Gospel - Matthew 18:23-35 - The Lord told this parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

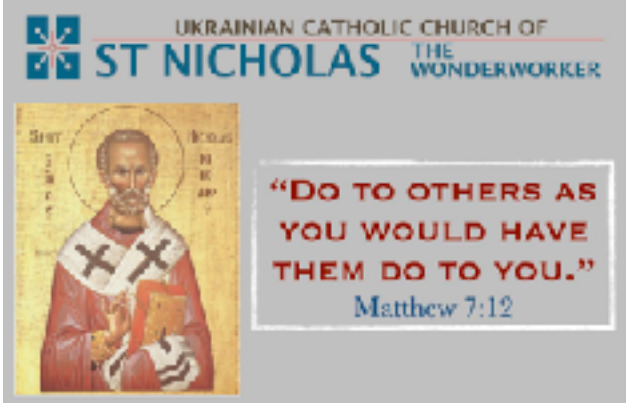
Євангеліє - Маттея 18:23-35 - Господь розповів цю притчу: Царство Небесне подібне одному цареві, що захотів обрахунок зробити з своїми рабами. Коли ж він почав обраховувати, то йому привели одного, що винен був десять тисяч талантів. А що він не мав із чого віддати, наказав пан продати його, і його дружину та діти, і все, що він мав, і заплатити. Тоді раб той упав до ніг, і вклонявся йому та благав: Потерпи мені, я віддам тобі все! І змилювався пан над рабом тим, і звільнив його, і простив йому борг. А як вийшов той раб, то спіткав він одного з своїх співтоваришів, що був винен йому сто динаріїв. І, схопивши його, він душив та казав: Віддай, що ти винен! А товариш його впав у ноги йому, і благав його, кажучи: Потерпи мені, і я віддам тобі! Та той не схотів, а пішов і всадив до в'язниці його, аж поки він боргу не верне. Як побачили ж товариші його те, що сталося, то засмутилися дуже, і прийшли й розповіли своєму панові все, що було. Тоді пан його кличе його, та й говорить до нього: Рабе лукавий, я простив був тобі весь той борг, бо просив ти мене. Чи й тобі не належало змилюватись над своїм співтоваришем, як і я над тобою був змилювався? І прогнівався пан його, і катам його видав, аж поки йому не віддасть всього боргу. Так само й Отець Мій Небесний учинить із вами, коли кожен із вас не простить своєму братові з серця свого їхніх прогріхів.

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*Instead of 'It is truly right' we sing:* O my soul, magnify the Lord transfigured on the mountain. *And the Irmos:* Your giving birth was revealed as incorrupt; for it was God who came forth from your womb; He appeared on earth in the flesh, and made His dwelling among us. Thus, O Mother of God, all of us magnify you.

**Communion Hymn:** Praise the Lord from the heavens;\* praise Him in the highest. (*Psalm 148:1*)\* We will walk in the light of Your face, O Lord,\* and rejoice in Your name forever.\* Alleluia, alleluia,\* alleluia. (*Psalm 88:16,17*)

**PRAYER DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK**



UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF  
**ST NICHOLAS** THE WONDERWORKER

**“DO TO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU.”**  
Matthew 7:12

Jesus Christ, you travelled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbours from helping one another.

Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

Stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow. Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace. Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace. Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace. Be with our priests and spiritual care givers. May they know that they are loved and cared for.

Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.

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Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.

For You are a God of mercy, kindness, and love, and we glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.



### **МОЛИТВА ПІД ЧАС СПАЛАХУ КОРОНАВІРУСУ**

Ісусе Христе, ти подорожував по містах і селах, оздоровлюючи від хвороб і немочей. За Твоїм повелінням хворі видужували. У час пандемії коронавірусу повели цій хворобі відступити, щоб ми відчули Твою оздоровлюючу любов.

Вилікуй тих, хто хворий вірусом. Нехай вони відновлять свої сили та здоров'я завдяки якісній медичній допомозі.

Вилікуй нас від нашого страху, який заважає націям спільно працювати та сусідам допомагати один одному.

Вилікуй нас від нашої гордості, яка може змусити нас претендувати на невразливість до захворювання, що не знає меж.

Залишайся поруч у цей час невизначеності та смутку. Будь з тими, хто помер від вірусу. Нехай вони спочивають з Тобою у вічному спокої. Будь з родинами тих, хто хворий або помер, коли вони турбуються і сумують, захищай їх від хвороб і відчаю. Нехай вони знають Твій спокій.

Будь з лікарями, медсестрами, дослідниками та всіми медичними працівниками, котрі прагнуть вилікувати та допомогти постраждалим та, котрі піддають себе ризику в своїй праці. Нехай вони знають Твій захист і спокій.

Будь з нашими священиками та духовними опікунами. Нехай вони знають, що їх люблять і піклуються про них.

Будь з лідерами всіх націй. Дай їм передбачення діяти милосердно та зі справжньою турботою про добробут людей, котрим вони призначені служити. Надай їм мудрості інвестувати у довгострокові рішення, які допоможуть підготуватися або запобігти майбутнім спалахам. Нехай вони пізнають Твій мир, коли разом працюють над досягненням його на землі.

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Будь ми вдома чи за кордоном, в оточенні багатьох людей, які страждають цією хворобою, або наодинці, Ісусе Христе, залишайтеся з нами, коли ми терпимо і сумуємо. Замість нашої тривоги дай нам спокій.

Бо Ти - Бог милосердя, доброта та любов, і ми прославляємо Тебе, Отця, і Сина, і Святого Духа, нині, і повсякчас, і на віки вічні. Амінь.

### 70X7 = INFINITY (*Matthew 18:23-35*)

What is the hardest thing to accept in Christianity? Is it the doctrine of the Trinity? The idea that God became man? Or that the Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ? While these teachings may meet with obstacles in our minds, the hardest thing for us to accept in practice is the absolute need to forgive others.

In our broken humanity we are much more at home with seeking vengeance. We are often more comfortable with the pre-Christian vision of a vengeful God: *“And the Lord said to him, “Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold”* (Gen 4:15).

The Torah enshrined the concept of vengeance in its laws concerning violence: *“But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe”* (Ex 21:23-25). While modern law is not as demanding, it still endorses the idea of vengeance, clothed in modern dress as “Justice” and “Closure” (which often comes down to a question of money). Perhaps the best comment on this principle is by the Lebanese author Kahlil Gibran, *“An eye for an eye, and the whole world would be blind.”*

### **Forgiveness: the Heart of the Gospel**

Contemporary Catholic writer Scott Hurd describes the Gospel ideal of forgiveness as “...both the central idea of Christianity, and an assault on the conventional human understanding of justice.” It is an “assault” because it challenges the very nature of the world’s way of handling things. It is the heart of our faith because it is the basic attitude of God toward us and the model of how we can act as the images of God.

“Yours it is to show mercy...” we say to God in many prayers, because He is by nature the forgiving Father, the One who runs to welcome home His prodigal children after they stray. God incarnate in Jesus Christ expresses this forgiveness in His humanity when He prayed for His killers, *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do”* (Lk 23:34). And so it is in imitation of God that His disciple, the Protomartyr St Stephen, prayed for those who delivered him to death: *“And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep”* (Acts 7:59-60).

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That forgiveness is required, not an option, in the Christian life we see from the Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount. Christ would come back to this theme again and again, doubtlessly more often than the Gospels record:

- *“Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you”* (Lk 6:37-38).
- *“Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him”* (Lk 17:3-4).

Forgiveness is particularly necessary when we presume to pray:

- *“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”* (Mk 11:25-26).

It is especially necessary when we look to make an oblation:

- *“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift”* (Mt 5:23-24).

The kiss of peace at the Eucharist of all the historic Churches is a rite based on this requirement of the Lord.

The Parable of the Unjust Debtor

In story form this passage, unique to Matthew, repeats the Lord's fundamental teaching that forgiving others is a prerequisite for being forgiven by God.

The call for the godly-minded to forgive others was already common in late Judaism, but in a limited way. Thus the second century rabbinic scholar Issi ben Judah wrote, *“If a man commits an offence once, they forgive him; if he commits an offence a second time, they forgive him; if he commits an offence a third time, they forgive him; the fourth time they do not forgive.”* Rabbi Yossi bar Hanina, writing in the second half of the third century AD counsels, *“He who begs forgiveness from his neighbor must not do so more than three times.”*

By this standard Peter was being downright generous when he suggested forgiving seven times as the new standard. Christ replies by turning around Lamech's rule of vengeance (*“If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold”* – Gen 4:24). Now, Christ says, consider forgiving others seventy times seven, a number meaning **“without limit.”**

St John Chrysostom saw a particularly damning indictment of the tendency to hold grudges or seek vengeance in this parable. Pointing to the fate of the unforgiving servant, Christ says, “*So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses*” (Mt 18:35). Chrysostom offers this interpretation: “*Note that He did not say ‘your Father’ but ‘my Father’ for it is not proper for God to be called the Father of one who is so wicked and malicious*” (Homily on Matthew 61, 4).

These harsh words go unheard by many in the Church who hold grudges, often for many years. People often feel that broken relationships have nothing to do with our faith. In reality our unwillingness to forgive says that we think God is a sucker for being so compassionate: we know better. As Mother Teresa of Calcutta once said, the rift is with more than our relative or neighbor. “*For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.*”

Imitating the Father of Compassion

There are many differences between the three world religions originating in the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). One thing which they all share is the emphasis on God as Compassionate. In the biblical story of Moses, for example, God reveals Himself to the prophet in these words: “*The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness*” (Ex 34:6).

The prophets of Israel continually returned to this theme, adding a new dimension. They saw compassion as a parental trait, paving the way for the Lord Jesus’ description of God as our Father.

In His parables the Lord often returned to themes of compassion. In the parable of the unforgiving servant (Mt 18:23-35) the king, an image of God, is described as “*moved with compassion*” (Mt 18:27), in contrast to his servant who shows no compassion to his fellow. The father of the prodigal son, is described, on the bedraggled boy’s return, as “*filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him*” (Lk 15:20).

The Gospels describe Christ as “deeply moved” with compassion by the death of the widow’s son in Nain (Lk 7: 11-17), and of his friend Lazarus in Bethany (Jn 11). When recording the miraculous feeding of the four thousand, Mark tells us “*Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, ‘I have compassion for these people...’*” (Mk 8:1, 2). In each case He did something concrete in response.

In the Church God was proclaimed from the beginning as “*the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort*” (2 Cor 1:3). In our prayers today we regularly address God as “the only Compassionate One,” in contrast to the evident lack of that quality in our own lives.

What Is Compassion?

When the Gospels describe Christ as being “*deeply moved*” or being “*moved with compassion*,” they use a word which points to the heart of that quality. A literal translation of the Greek term would be “to be moved from the bowels.” (i.e. to feel deeply). Compassion is at the other end of the spectrum from the casual “I’m sorry” that people fling out at any unpleasant circumstance. Compassion is a “gut feeling” which we experience when we allow ourselves to be moved by the suffering of others.

People often equate compassion with sympathy, but true compassion is more. A person may express sympathy in response to sorrow with kindness and concern, then move on with their own lives. True compassion, on the other hand, includes expressions of care and concern, but moves on to concrete action. The compassionate person involves himself in the suffering of the other. Unlike the priest or the Levite in the parable, the Good Samaritan directly engages himself in the troubles of the man who was a victim to robbers and does not leave him until the man has recovered.

The compassionate Samaritan, like the compassionate king in Mt 18 is an icon of God. He it is who involves Himself in the sufferings of the human race to such an extent that He sends His Son and Word to share in their suffering. This Word “...*did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!*” (Phil 2:6-8).

Compassion as getting involved is put forward to us as a way of being godlike: “*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful*” (Lk 6:36). God is, as we have seen, “*the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort*” (2 Cor 1:3). St Paul goes on to say that God is compassionate to us “... *so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God*” (2 Cor 1:3, 4). Reflecting on how God has extended His compassion to us, should energize us into extending compassion to others.

The Power of Compassion

Every year on Meatfare Sunday we hear Christ’s parable of the Judgment (Mt 25:31-46). In this story, people are judged based on the degree of their compassion. Christ identifies Himself with those in need to the degree of saying that “*I was hungry and you gave **me** food ...*” Christ identifies Himself completely with those in need: the essence of compassion.

What we may forget is that Christ begins the parable by saying, “*All **the nations** will be gathered before him...*” He is describing the judgment of the nations – the Gentiles – not the house of Israel. The faithful will be judged on the basis of their faith – the ‘nations’ will be judged on the basis of their compassion.

If compassion is so important in the Lord’s eyes that He calls the compassionate “blessed of my Father” even though they never knew Him, what should it mean to us?

In contrast to this blessing of compassionate Gentiles, we read a condemnation of the uncompassionate at the close of Christ's parable of the unforgiving servant. We are told that, "*In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.*" Then the divine Narrator of the parable presents the moral of the story: "*This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother [or sister] from your heart*" (Mt 18:34, 35).

While true compassion often demands a radical generosity, the lack of compassion can separate us from God. Fr. Alexander Elchaninov, expressed it this way: "*Our lack of compassion, hardness of heart, and mercilessness towards others form an impenetrable curtain between ourselves and God. It is as if we had covered a plant with a black hood, and then complained because it died from lack of sunlight.*"

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION (August 6)



The transfiguration of Christ is one of the central events recorded in the gospels. Immediately after the Lord was recognized by His apostles as "the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the Living God," He told them that "He must go up to Jerusalem and suffer many things . . . and be killed and on the third day be raised" (Mt 16). The announcement of Christ's approaching passion and death was met with indignation by the disciples. And then, after rebuking them, the Lord took Peter, James, and John "up to a high mountain" - by tradition Mount Tabor - and was "transfigured before them."

The Jewish Festival of Booths was a feast of the dwelling of God with people, and the transfiguration of Christ reveals how this dwelling takes place in and through the Messiah, the Son of God in human flesh. There is little doubt that Christ's transfiguration took place at the time of the Festival of Booths, and that the celebration of the event in the Christian Church became the New Testamental fulfillment of the Old Testamental feast in a way similar to the feasts of Passover and Pentecost.

In the Transfiguration, the apostles see the glory of the Kingdom of God present in majesty in the person of Christ they see that "*in Him, indeed, all the fullness of God was pleased*"

to dwell,” that “in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 1.19, 2.9). They see this before the crucifixion so that in the resurrection they might know Who it is Who has suffered for them, and what it is that this one, Who is God, has prepared for those who love Him. This is what the Church celebrates in the feast of the Transfiguration.

Besides the fundamental meaning which the event of the Transfiguration has in the context of the life and mission of Christ, and in addition to the theme of the glory of God which is revealed in all of its divine splendor in the face of the Saviour, the presence of Moses and Elijah is also of great significance for the understanding and celebration of the feast.

Moses and Elijah, according to the liturgical verses, are not only the greatest figures of the Old Testament who now come to worship the Son of God in glory, they also are not merely two of the holy men to whom God has revealed himself in the prefigurative theophanies of the Old Covenant of Israel. These two figures actually stand for the Old Testament itself: Moses for the Law and Elijah for the Prophets. And Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (Mt 5.17).

They also stand for the living and dead, for Moses died and his burial place is known, while Elijah was taken alive into heaven in order to appear again to announce the time of God’s salvation in Christ the Messiah. Thus, in appearing with Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah show that the Messiah Saviour is here, and that He is the Son of God to Whom the Father Himself bears witness, the Lord of all creation, of the Old and New Testaments, of the living and the dead. The Transfiguration of Christ in itself is the fulfillment of all of the theophanies and manifestations of God, a fulfillment made perfect and complete in the person of Christ. The Transfiguration of Christ reveals to us our ultimate destiny as Christians, the ultimate destiny of all people and all creation to be transformed and glorified by the majestic splendor of God Himself.

There is little doubt that the feast of the Transfiguration of Christ belonged first to the pre-Easter season of the Church. It was perhaps celebrated on one of the Sundays of Lent, for besides certain historical evidence and the fact that today St Gregory Palamas, the great teacher of the Transfiguration of Christ, is commemorated during Lent, the event itself is one which is definitely connected with the approaching death and resurrection of the Saviour.

The feast of the Transfiguration is presently celebrated on the sixth of August, probably for some historical reason. The summer celebration of the feast, however, has lent itself very well to the theme of transfiguration. The blessing of grapes, as well as other fruits and vegetables on this day is the most beautiful and adequate sign of the final transfiguration of all things in Christ. It signifies the ultimate flowering and fruitfulness of all creation in the paradise of God’s unending Kingdom of Life where all will be transformed by the glory of the Lord.



Ukrainian Independence Day



День незалежності України

August 22, 2021

12-4 pm

Picnic at Beckwith Park

22 серпня 2021 р.

12-4 вечора

Пікнік у парку Беквіт

