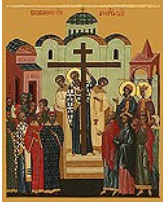


✠Bulletin✠

Week of August 16, 2026



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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11th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 2

Afterfeast of the Dormition

Translation of the Image “Not-made-by-hands”

of our Lord Jesus Christ from Edessa to Constantinople (944)

(Third “Feast of the Savior in August”). Holy Unmercenary Physician Diomedes (298). Ven. Cherimon (Chæremon) of Egypt (4th c.). The “FEODOROVSKAYA” Icon of the Mother of God (1239). St. Anthony the Stylite, of Martqopi, Georgia (6th c.). St. Armel, monastic founder in Brittany and the Frankish lands (570). St. Joachim, monk, of Osogovo and Sarandapor (1105). St. Eustathius II, archbishop of Serbia (1309). St. Nilus of Erikoussa (ca. 1335). St. Romanus the Sinaite, of Djunisa, Serbia (14th c.). Monk-martyr Christopher of Guria (Georgia), at Damascus (15th c.). New Martyr Nicodemus of Meteora (1551). St. Gerasimus the New, ascetic, of Cephalonia (Mt. Athos) (1579). St. Raphael of Banat, Serbia (ca. 1590). St. Timothy of Euripos, archbishop, founder of the Pendeli Monastery (1590). New Martyr Stamatius of Demetrias, near Volos, at Constantinople (1680). New Great-martyr Apostolus of the town of St. Lawrence, martyred at Constantinople (1686). New Martyrs King Constantine Brancoveanu of Wallachia and his four sons, Constantine, Stephen, Radu, and Matthew, and his counsellor Ioannicius (1714). Uncovering of the relics (1798) of Martyrs Seraphim, Dorotheus, James, Demetrius, Basil, and Sarantis, of Megara (361-363). St. Joseph of Varatec Monastery (Romania) (1828). St. Joseph the Hesychast, of New Skete, Mt. Athas (1959).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday August 16th

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Back to School Backpack Blessing

(All students bring your backpacks
or a school material, ex. Laptop, book, pencils)

Saturday August 22nd

5:30 pm - Great Vespers & Confessions

Weekly Schedule

Sunday August 16th

- Choir Practice
- Inquirers & Catechism classes

Forgiveness and the Healing of the Soul: Homily for the 11th Sunday of Matthew in the Orthodox Church

By Fr. Philip LeMaster

Sometimes the truth has to come to us in an unusual way in order to get our attention. That is because most of us are really good at hearing only what we want to hear and seeing only what we want to see. Unfortunately, that means we are skilled in ignoring uncomfortable truths, including the simple teaching of our Lord that we must forgive others if we want God to forgive us. In today’s Gospel text, Jesus Christ spoke a very disturbing parable that should make that truth clear to us all.

A servant owed his ruler more money than he could possibly earn in his entire life. When he could not pay, the master was ready to sell him and his entire family in order to cover the debt. But the servant begged for more time to pay, and the master showed mercy even beyond his request. He actually forgave the huge debt; the man then owed nothing and he and his family were safe from punishment of any kind. This was an unbelievably good turn of events for the servant and his family.

Then that same servant found another servant who owed him a much smaller sum of money. Since the second man did not have enough to pay the debt, the first servant had him put in prison until he could pay. He refused to show him even a small measure of mercy or patience. When the king heard about it, he was enraged that the man to whom he had forgiven so much would be so cruel to his fellow servant. So, the king put the first servant in prison until

he could pay all that he owed. The Lord ended this parable with the harsh warning: So, My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.

This parable gets our attention because we all find it hard to forgive at least some of the people who have wronged or offended us in the course of our lives. Regardless of whether the wrongs occurred days, years, or decades ago, it is difficult to forgive. At times we actually enjoy holding grudges against others; maybe it serves our pride to think that we are better than those who have wronged us and thus justified in looking down on them. We sometimes hate our tendency to remember past offenses, but unpleasant memories can play over and over in our minds, inflame our passions, and make us feel powerless against them.

Like everything else in the Christian life, forgiveness is a process of healing as we participate 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 is a necessary and important first step, simply putting on a good face and not striking back is just the beginning of the journey. Our goal is not only to be a bit better at self-control, but to be fully reconciled with our neighbors, to be so filled with love that we forgive and forget and show them the same mercy that the Lord has shown us with a pure and whole heart. When we realize how far we are from fulfilling that high goal, our need for His mercy should become all the more clear.

Even as we always want God to forgive us when we sin, there is no limit to the forgiving, reconciling love that He calls us to give our enemies. When St. Peter asked how many times he was to forgive his brother who sinned against him, maybe seven times, Christ said, no, seventy times seven (Matt. 18:22). In other words, we should always forgive; there is never a point where the Christian becomes justified in judging, condemning, and refusing to show mercy. We are instead to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect in His providential love, care, and blessing for the just and the unjust. (Matt. 5:48)

None of us is anywhere near fulfilling that divine calling, but we must not give up and despair about our struggle to forgive others. Instead, we must remember that to be a Christian means to participate personally in the life of the Holy Trinity by grace. Jesus Christ brings us into eternal life such that we share in His victory over sin and death. Already in this life, in the world as we know it, the holiness, mercy, and love of the Lord must become active in us,

must become characteristic of us as unique persons as we find greater healing for our souls.

The more we participate in Him, the more we will extend His forgiveness to those who have wronged us. If we refuse to do so, however, we refuse Christ and reject His mercy. And when we refuse Him, we condemn only ourselves.

In moments of anger and pain, it is usually much easier to judge, hate, and condemn than to love and forgive. Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, we humans have distorted our relationships with one another, allowing fear, judgment, and insecurity to divide us. Early in the book of Genesis, their descendent Lamech brags that he will avenge himself seventy-seven fold (Gen. 4:24). In other words, he was like a bloodthirsty gangster who never showed mercy to anyone. We are not that far gone, but we probably do find it beyond our present strength to forgive seventy times seven as Christ forgives us.

Like any other area of weakness in the Christian life, our struggle to forgive must begin with a sincere confession that we hold a grudge against someone else. So we must ask for God's forgiveness and help in being healed. We must also pray for those who have offended us, asking God's blessings on them. And when we are tempted to remember what they have done or to judge them, we must immediately turn our attention to the Jesus Prayer and remembrance of our own need for forgiveness from the Lord, and from those whom we have offended throughout the course of our lives. We are not the blameless judges of others, but those who stand in constant need of grace, mercy, and healing together with those who have wronged us.

It is a long struggle, but if we consistently turn away from unholy thoughts, they will lose their power over us. Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7). The less attention we give to our temptations, the more they will diminish. The challenge is harder if the others involved in these relationships continue offending us. 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 (Luke 23:34). 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. Otherwise, we reject Him and condemn ourselves.

Every human being bears the image of God, including our enemies. In that we have done something harmful to anyone, we have done it to the Lord.

Remember the words of St. John: If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar (1 John 4:20). It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and souls that we will be able to live out our love of God in relation to every human being we encounter.

The more we share in His life, the more His mercy will become characteristic of us in relation to our enemies. We fool only ourselves by thinking that we may accept His forgiveness without also showing that same forgiveness to our neighbors. If we do that, we will become the hypocritical judges of others, like the servant in today's parable who shut himself out of his master's mercy. Whether we acknowledge it or not, that is who we risk becoming every time that we refuse to extend the great forgiveness that we have received in Jesus Christ to those who have wronged us. So let us all convey our Lord's mercy to our enemies, for that is how we open ourselves to the grace that we all desperately need for the healing of our souls.

Schedule of Services

Tuesday – September 8th Nativity of the Theotokos

8:45 am – Hours

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

Saturday September 12th

5:30 pm - Great Vespers & Confessions

Saturday September 26th

5:30 pm - Great Vespers & Confessions

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

tithe.ly.com

Another way to "donate". This app can be downloaded to your phone, and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

Prayer Requests

Patricia Jamison – Chad Willis' Mother-in-law

Don Jamison – Chad Willis' Father-in-law

Agape Brill

Walter Kallaur – brother of the Constantine & Arlene Kallaur

Anne and Scott Peatross

Nicholas Kowalski

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos' daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,

Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,

Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,

Roman, Mykola

Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 2 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal,
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead.

And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead,
all the powers of heaven cried out://

"O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!"

Tone 2 Troparion *(Image)*

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One;
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God.

Of Thine own will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh
and deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the Enemy.

Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee:

"Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior,//

by coming to save the world."

Tone 1 Troparion (Dormition)

In giving birth you preserved your virginity.
In falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos.
You were translated to life O Mother of Life,//
and by your prayers you deliver our souls from death.

Tone 2 Kontakion (Resurrection)

Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior,
seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb!
The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee,//
and the world, my Savior, praises Thee forever.

Tone 2 Kontakion (Image "Not-made-by-hands")

Uncircumscribed Word of the Father,
as we behold the victorious image of Thy true incarnation,
not made by hands, but divinely wrought
in Thine ineffable and divine dispensation towards us,//
we honor it with veneration.

Tone 2 Kontakion (Dormition)

Neither the tomb, nor death, could hold the Theotokos,
who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions.
For being the Mother of Life,//
she was translated to life by the One Who dwelt in her virginal womb.

Tone 2 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

The Lord is my strength and my song; / He has become my salvation.
(Ps. 117:14)

V. The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has not given me over to death. (Ps. 117:18)

Tone 4 Prokeimenon (Image "Not-made-by-hands")

Sing to the Lord a new song, / for the Lord hath done marvelous things! (Ps. 97:1)

1 Corinthians 9:2-12 (Epistle)

Brethren: If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from

working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

Colossians 1:12-18 (Epistle, Image "Not-made-by-hands")

Brethren: giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Tone 2

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

V. May the Lord hear thee in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect thee! (Ps. 19:1)

V. Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call! (Ps. 19:9)

Tone 4

V. O Lord, we will walk in the light of Thy countenance, and will exult in Thy Name forever. (Ps. 88:15)

Matthew 18:23-35 (Gospel)

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children

and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

Luke 9:51-56; 10:22-24 (Gospel, Image "Not-made-by-hands")

Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it."

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

23. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. The gist of the parable teaches us to forgive our fellow servants who have sinned against us, especially if they fall down before us begging forgiveness. To interpret the parable in its particulars should be done only by one who has the mind of Christ. Nevertheless, we shall attempt it. The kingdom is the Word of God, but it is not a kingdom of small extent, but of the heavens. The Word is likened to a man who was a king, that is, He Who became incarnate for our sake and appeared in the likeness of men, and He settles accounts with His servants as a Good Judge. He does not punish without first judging: that would be cruel.

24-25. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. It is we ourselves who owe ten thousand talents, receiving benefaction every day yet giving back nothing good to God in return. He who owes ten thousand talents is also that ruler who has received from God the protection and allegiance of many men, each man being like a talent, and then does not employ his sovereignty well. Selling the debtor along with his wife and children indicates alienation from God, for the one who is sold goes to another master. And is the wife not the flesh, being the mate of the soul, and the children, the evil deeds done by the soul and the body? He commands the flesh to be given to Satan for ravaging, that is, to be given over to illnesses or to the torment of the demons, but the children, that is to say, the doing of evil deeds, are given over to torture on the rack, as, for example, when God withers the hand that has stolen, or constricts it by means of a demon. See how the woman, which is the flesh, and the children, which is the doing of evil, have been given over to affliction so that the spirit might be saved, as in the case of that man who can no longer steal because his hand is crippled.

26-27. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. Behold the power of repentance and the Lord's love for mankind. For repentance caused the servant to fall down prostrate before the king and cease from wickedness, since he who stands firmly in wickedness cannot be forgiven. In His love for man God forgave the debt entirely although the

servant was not asking for complete forgiveness of the debt, but for an extension of time in which to repay it. Learn, therefore, that God gives more than we ask for. His love for man is such that even what seems to be severe, the command that the servant be sold, God did not speak out of severity, but to terrify the servant in order to induce him to fix all his hope on entreaty and supplication.

28-30. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. He who had been forgiven "went out", departed, and as a consequence, took his fellow servant by the throat: the one who lacks compassion is not he who remains in God, but rather he who departs from God and is a stranger to Him. So great was the servant's inhumanity that, although he had been forgiven the greater amount (ten thousand talents), he could not at all forgive the smallest amount (a hundred pence), nor even grant a postponement. And this despite the fact that the fellow servant spoke the very same words to him, reminding him of the words by which he himself had been saved: "Have patience with me and I will pay you all."

31. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. The fellow servants are the angels, who are shown here to be haters of evil and lovers of good. They do not tell these things to the Lord as if He were unaware of them, but in order for you, O reader, to learn that the angels watch over us and are angered by man's inhumanity.

32-34. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. The master in his love for mankind takes issue with the servant, to show that it is not the master, but the savagery and the ingratitude of the servant that has revoked the gift. To what tormentors does he deliver him? To the punitive powers for eternal punishment. For the meaning of "till he should pay all his debt" is this: "let him be punished until he should pay all that was due." But he will **never** be able to pay his debt, and therefore his punishment will never end.

35. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses." He did not say "your, Father", but "My Father". For such as these are unworthy to have God as their Father. He wants us to forgive from our hearts and not only from our lips. Understand, then, what a great evil is remembrance of wrongs, since it revokes the gift of God; though God does not repent of His gifts, nevertheless they are revoked.

(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing:)

The Angels, as they looked upon the Dormition of the Virgin, were struck with wonder, seeing how the Virgin went up from earth to heaven. The limits of nature are overcome in thee, O Pure Virgin: for birthgiving remains virginal, and life is united to death; a virgin after childbearing and alive after death, thou dost ever save thine inheritance, O Theotokos.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*
O Lord, we will walk in the light of Thy countenance, and will exult in Thy
Name forever. *(Ps. 88:15)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!