

:: Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev ::
On Prayer, Part XIII: Prayer for our Enemies

The necessity of praying for our enemies stems from the very essence of the moral teaching of Jesus Christ.

In the pre-Christian era there was a rule: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy* (Matthew 5:43). The majority of people continue to live in accordance with this rule. It is natural for us to love our neighbors, those who do us good, and to treat with hostility and even hatred those who pose evil. But Christ says that our attitude should be completely different: *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you* (Matthew 5:44).

Christ Himself, during His earthly life, repeatedly set an example both of love for enemies and of prayer for them. When the soldiers nailed the Lord to the Cross, He experienced frightful torments and incredible pain, but He prayed: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:34). At that moment He thought not about Himself, not about the fact that these soldiers were causing Him pain, but rather about *their* salvation; for, by committing evil, they were first of all harming themselves.

We should remember that people who do us evil or treat us with hostility are not bad in themselves. What is bad is the sin with which they are infected. One needs to hate sin, but not its bearer: man. As St. John Chrysostom put it: “when you see that someone is doing something evil, hate not him, but the devil, who is behind him.”

One needs to learn to separate the person from the sin he commits. Priests very often observe during Confession that sin is really separate from the person who repents thereof. We should be able to turn away from the sinful image of man and remember that everyone, including our enemies and those that hate us, are created according to God’s image; and it is this image of God, these rudiments of good that are in everyone, that we should scrutinize.

Why is it necessary to pray for enemies? It is necessary not only for them, but for us as well. We should find in ourselves the strength to be reconciled with people. Archimandrite Sophrony, in his book about St. Silouan the Athonite, says: “Those that hate and reject their brother are flawed in their being; they cannot find the way to God, Who loves all.” This holds true. When hatred for man settles in our heart, we are not able to approach God. As long as we hold on to this feeling, the path to God is barred to us. This is why it is necessary to pray for our enemies.

Every time we approach the Living God, we should be at absolute peace with everyone whom we perceive as our enemies. Let us remember what the Lord said: *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift* (Matthew 5:23-24). And also other words of the Lord: *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him* (Matthew 5:25). “In the way with him” means “in this earthly life.” For if we do not manage to be reconciled here with those that hate and offend us, with our enemies, then we will be unreconciled in the future life. And to make up there for what is missing here will no longer be possible.

Source: www.pravmir.com

Any announcements for the Sunday bulletin? Please submit by Wednesday each week to Fr. Andrew, by email or phone.



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Sunday, August 24, 2014 – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost **Matins (Morning Prayer), 9:00 AM :: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM**

Today’s Saints: Martyr Eutyches, disciple of John the Theologian; New Hieromartyr Cosmas Aitolos, equal-to-the-Apostles and evangelizer of southern Albania; recovery of the relics of Dionysios, bishop of Zakynthos and of Peter, metropolitan of Moscow

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 2):

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

Troparion of St. George the Great Martyr (Tone 4):

Since thou art a liberator and deliverer of captives, a help and succour of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender and fighter for kings, O great among martyrs, the victory-clad George: Intercede with Christ God for the salvation of our souls.

Kontakion of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Tone 4):

By thy holy nativity, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people do celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee: The barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourisheth our life.

St. George is a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
The Most Reverend Metropolitan JOSEPH
The Right Reverend Bishop ANTHONY, Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest
www.antiochian.org

The Lord is my strength and my song. The Lord has chastened me severely.
The Reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (9:2-12)

Brethren, 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 wife, as 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 serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher 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 upon 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.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (18:23-35)

The Lord spoke this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, 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 servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also My heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and services at St. George, see our website, www.stgeorgeorthodox.org.

Upcoming events and services:

- **This Saturday, Aug. 30:** Crowning of Matthew and Nan McNatt, at 1:30 PM in honor of their 5th wedding anniversary. All are invited! (NO VESPERs that day)
- **Sunday, Sept. 7, Nativity of the Holy Theotokos:** Chrismation of Bridget Rose Kishler immediately after the Liturgy. We will have a **potluck meal** afterwards.
- **Sunday, Sept. 14, Holy Cross Day:** Church school resumes (see note below) and the procession with the Holy Cross will take place at the end of Liturgy.
- **Sunday, Sept. 21:** Join us for a Fish Fry, at the church after Liturgy!

Children and Youth

- St. George's **Church school program** will resume **Sunday, Sept. 14 at 9:15 AM** (immediately before Liturgy). Please see Khouria Patty if you have any questions.
- All of our teenagers are invited to attend a back-to-school overnight retreat at St. George Church in Cicero, Friday Sept. 19 and Saturday, Sept. 20. Our good friend Archdeacon Saed Rihani is in charge of the event and would be excited to have any of our teens participating!

Wednesday Night Prayer and Bible Study

A number of you have requested this and now it's here! Starting **Wednesday, Sept. 10**, all are welcome to gather at the church at 6:00 PM for Evening Prayers and an informal discussion on the Bible and our Orthodox Faith. All adults and teens are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Kitchen Clean-Up

It seems that the same few ladies are often stuck cleaning up the entire kitchen and the fellowship hall every week. This should not be! Let us *all* help pitch in, and clean up after coffee hour each Sunday, out of love for Christ and our church community. This job should not be left to a select few.
