

Everyone knows that a church calls for reverence, for a collecting of thoughts, for deep thinking about God, and for standing in the presence of God, but who fulfils this? People go to church with a desire to pray, to stand in it for a while with warm fervour; but then thoughts begin to wander, and bargaining begins in one's head even louder than that which the Lord found in the Jerusalem temple.

Why is this so?

Because the way one stands in church is a reflection of one's entire life. As people live, so do they behave in church. A church influences and somewhat supports spiritual movements; but then the usual course of one's spiritual constitution takes over.

Therefore if you want your time in church to consist of worthily standing in the face of the Lord, prepare for this in your ordinary life; walk, as much as you can, in a prayerful frame of mind.

This labour will bring you to the point that in church also you will stand reverently all the time. This reverence will inspire you to be reverent in your ordinary life as well. Thus you will walk ever higher and higher. Say, 'O Lord, help' — and begin!

Saint Theophan the Recluse



**16 August 2015 is the
Eleventh Sunday of Matthew**

Matins Gospel: John 21:14-25

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 9:2-12

Gospel: Matthew 18:23-35

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

When Thou didst descend unto death,
O Life Immortal, then didst Thou slay
Hades with the lightning of Thy
Divinity. And when Thou didst also
raise the dead out of the nethermost
depths, all the powers in the Heavens
cried out: O Life-giver, Christ our God,
glory be to Thee.

Seasonal Kontakion:

Neither the grave nor death could
contain the Theotokos, the
unshakable hope, ever vigilant in
intercession and protection. As
Mother of life, He who dwelt in the
ever-virginal womb transposed her to
life.

Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: 2 Corinthians 5:10-15; Mark 1:9-15

Martyr Myron; Straton, Philip, Eutychian, & Cyprian of Nicomedeia

Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 5:15-21; Mark 1:16-22

Martyrs Floros & Lauros; John and George, Abps. Of Constantinople

Wednesday: 2 Corinthians 6:11-16; Mark 1:23-28

Great Martyr Andrew Stratelates; Martyrs Timothy, Agapius and Thecla

Thursday: 2 Corinthians 7:1-10; Mark 1:29-35

Prophet Samuel; Martyr Luke of Bouleutos

Friday: 2 Corinthians 7:10-16; Mark 3:13-21

Holy Apostle Thaddaeus; Martyr Bassa and her Children

Saturday: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 2:1-5; Matthew 20:29-34

Martyr Agathonicus; Martyr Anthuse



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

16 August 2015

Archbishopric of Good Hope

Patriarchate of Alexandria & All Africa

Unless You Forgive from the Heart

Today, on the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, Saint Matthew recounts the parable that Jesus Christ told about the unforgiving debtor in order to teach us something about the forgiveness that God grants to us, but also expects us to show to others.

Forgiveness is at the very heart of our Christian faith. It is not only something that we receive from God, but also something that God expects us to share with others. It is something that can be excruciatingly difficult and yet it is also the test of whether our faith is genuine.

However, simply to view forgiveness as a moral command, as something that we are expected to do, is not always very helpful. If forgiveness is to be genuine and not simply hollow words, then we need to find the resources within ourselves that can enable us to forgive others.

In today's parable Jesus Christ gives us a clue to the mystery of forgiveness by pointing to the forgiveness that we have received from God. It is only when we are able to see ourselves as sinners who have been granted God's forgiveness that we will in turn be able to forgive others. When we contemplate our own sins, and the greatness of God's mercy, we are able to see what others have done in a different perspective. And, as we recognize ourselves as sinners who have been forgiven, we can perhaps even eventually acquire a certain sympathy for others as we recognize them as suffering from the same passions that we too suffer from.



As the Searcher of hearts, the Lord knows that men are liable to very frequent trespass, and that, having fallen, they often rise up again; therefore He has given us the commandment to frequently forgive trespasses, and He Himself is the first to fulfill His holy word. As soon as you say from your whole heart, 'I repent,' you will be immediately forgiven.

Saint John of Kronstadt

Ordained to Serve the Church

A series on the meaning of Holy Orders

In discussing the various sacraments, or mysteries, of the Church, we have seen that they are the means that God gives us in order to be united with Him in His Church. Through baptism, we enter into the Body of Christ, and in the other sacraments we are strengthened and nourished to live out our Christian life.



An Ordered, Visible Community

However, as Orthodox Christians we believe that this Body of Christ that is the Church has a visible structure. It is not something invisible or subjective, but is an objective, visible reality that exists in history. This reality of the Church is guarded and made present by her ordained ministers, namely, the bishops, priests, and deacons.

In the gospels we read that Jesus Christ Himself appointed the apostles, and gave them the task of leading the Church.

In these days He went out to the hills to pray; and all night He continued in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples, and chose from them twelve, whole He named apostles; Simon, whom He named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and

John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (Luke 6:12-13)

We also read that Jesus ordained the apostles to be His co-workers. He breathed the Holy Spirit onto them, saying:

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you... Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."
(John 20: 21-23)

In the Acts of the Apostles we read how, after the Ascension of Christ, it was the apostles who themselves who laid their hands on others to ordain them. (Acts 6:6; 13:3) And in one of his epistles, the Apostle Paul reminds Timothy of how he too had been ordained by the laying on of hands. (1 Tim 4:14)

This gift of ordination was for the sake of preaching the Gospel, building up the Church, and ensuring the unity of the Body of Christ. Already during the time of the apostles the different ministries of bishop, presbyter (priest), and deacon were distinguished, each with their own particular task. By the end of the first century, Saint Ignatius of Antioch wrote of how all Christians should live together in harmony in the Church:

Wherefore it is fitting that ye also should run together in accordance with the will of the bishop who by God's appointment rules over you. Which thing ye indeed of yourselves do, being instructed by the Spirit. For your justly-renowned presbytery, being worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp. Thus, being joined together in concord and harmonious love, of which Jesus Christ is the Captain and Guardian, do ye, man by man, become but one choir; so that, agreeing together in concord, and obtaining a perfect unity with God, ye may indeed be one in harmonious feeling with God the Father, and His beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (Letter to the Ephesians, 4)

On the Help of the Saints

God's saints are near to believing hearts and, like the truest and kindest of friends, are ready in a moment to help the faithful and pious who call upon them with faith and love.

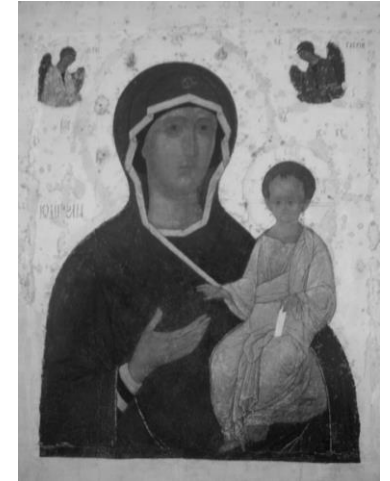
We have for the most part to send, and have sometimes to wait long for earthly helpers, whilst we have not to send for nor wait long for spiritual helpers:

The faith of Him who prays can place them close to his very heart in a moment, and he will as speedily receive through faith full spiritual help.

In saying this, I speak by experience;

By this I mean the frequent deliverance from affliction of heart through the intercession and patronage of the saints, and especially through the intercession of Our Lady, the Holy Virgin Mary.

Saint John of Kronstadt



When you sin, blame your thought, not your action.

For had your intellect not run ahead, your body would not have followed.

... He who secretly mingles his own wishes with spiritual counsel is an adulterer, as the Book of Proverbs indicates (cf. Prov. 6:32-33); and because of his stupidity he suffers pain and dishonour.

Just as water and fire cannot be combined, so self-justification and humility exclude one another.

He who seeks forgiveness of his sins loves humility, but if he condemns another he seals his own wickedness.

Do not leave unobliterated any fault, however small, for it may lead you on to greater sins.

If you wish to be saved, welcome words of truth, and never reject criticism uncritically.

Saint Mark the Ascetic