



HOLY TRINITY

ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



723 N BODINE ST PHILADELPHIA, PA 19123

CHURCH BULLETIN

Vol. 13 No. 35 * Sunday August 23, 2020 * Editor: V. Rev. Fr. Nicolai Buga

The 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel Reading Matthew 18: 23 - 35

The Lord said 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 till 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 jailors, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to everyone of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

Apostle Reading 1 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.

Synaxarion . Sunday August 23, 2020: Holy Martyr Lupus; Holy Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Lugdunum;
Saturday August 29: Beheading of the Holy Prophet John the Baptist

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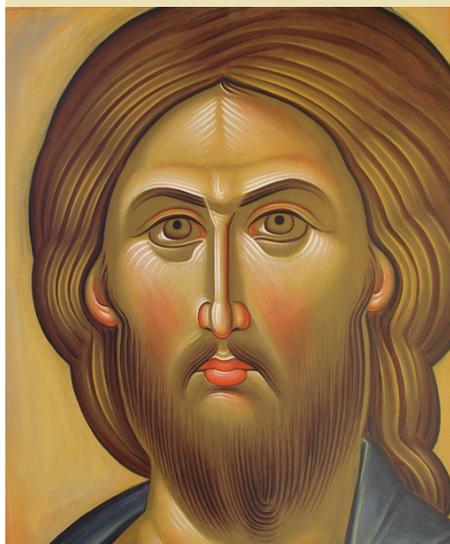
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On Fighting Kicks With Kicks



"This is the way my heavenly Father too will deal with you, if you do not, each one, heartily forgive your brother" (Matthew 18:23-35).

Plutarch, dear brethren, is one of the most famous and prolific authors of antiquity. Historian and moralist, he lived 46-120 A.D. He wrote many books, among which stand out comparisons and historical personalities of the ancient world. He wrote moral essays which have a great similarity to Christian morality. Some critics insist that Plutarch was influenced by the teaching of the Christian Gospel — and especially by St. Paul. In one of Plutarch's essays concerning the education of youth, there has survived to us the following information relative to the life of Socrates.

One day Socrates was teaching in one of the public squares of Athens, when a bold and impudent youth happened to stroll by. With no apparent reason, he kicked Socrates. Socrates said nothing. The youth fled, for the crowd had become indignant. They protested to Socrates: why did he not react? The philosopher calmly answered the anguished crowd thusly. "If a donkey kicks you, do you think that you gain anything by kicking the donkey back?" The youth, as it happened, received his just punishment, for the people began calling him *Δακτιστην* — the kicker, which nickname was such a source of shame and embarrassment for the youth that he finally took his own life. From this account, Plutarch concludes his moral teaching, that a characteristic of the wise man and the philosopher is meekness, with great reluctance to anger.

However wise the words of Socrates, dear brethren, they are but human wisdom. Socrates himself never insisted that his words be accepted as dogma, as absolute truth. As a modern philosopher points out, Socrates does not call people to himself, neither does he offer to them any kind of relief from the burdens of life. Socrates prepares the way for the science of logic. He asks questions, as other great champions of truth have done. He is a great philosopher, a symbol of man's painful longing for and striving after truth. Yet he remains a man. Never does he say: "Come to me, all you who are working hard and carrying a heavy load, and I will give you rest."

Dear brethren, who is Christ? He exists as an historical personage, in contemporary life, in perpetual life. He is not a dead figure of the past, lying dormant with the rest of human history. He lives. He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. He is the center of history. Socrates spoke to people, hinting to them of earthly things. Christ invites men to come to Himself, and then speaks to them of heavenly things. He speaks of a kingdom of life, beginning when this life ends. He speaks not of theories and possibilities, but with assurance, with authenticity: "Truly, truly I say to you." And He speaks with authority; and for this reason His words are divine, obligatory. He speaks in parables, due to human lack of understanding; the truths of the parables speak to the soul of man. One of these parables is related in today's Gospel Lesson — the parable of the two debtors. One of these men owed



HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from August 23 to August 30, **2020**

Sunday August 23 (Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

11:15 am - Prayer for the begin-
ning of a New School Year

11:30 am - Memorial Service for
Fr. Nicolai Buga's parents

12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

Saturday August 29 - Beheading of the Holy Prophet John the Baptist (fasting day):

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

11:30 pm - Coffee Hour

Sunday August 30 (Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

11:00 am - Sunday School begins

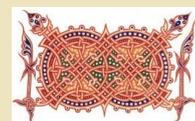
1:00 pm - Coffee Hour

his lord 10,000 talents. In today's money, the sum is astronomical — 10 million dollars. The second man owed the first debtor a hundred dinars — about 20 dollars, which of course was nothing in comparison with the first amount. The lord forgave the first servant the debt of 10 million dollars. But this same servant could not find it in his heart to forgive his fellow servant the go-dollar debt. As we read, he had him thrown into prison until such time as he could pay the debt. This parable reflects the way in which we so often behave. We who have been forgiven so much by God remain unwilling to forgive others in the smallest matters.

How different life would be if men were very strict with themselves, and lenient with others, instead of vice versa. Life on earth would become like life in paradise. It is useless to fight fire with fire. Hatred does not cancel out hatred. A kick in response to a kick solves precisely nothing. Let us rather extend the love of Christ to those who are indebted to us.

We are all debtors to God. We are all judged according to the same scale. Some owe less; some owe more. Let us, trusting in the righteousness of God, learn to forgive and love one another.

Fr. George Dimopoulos



Sermon for the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist

Saint John knew who he was. Self-knowledge, say some of the Holy Fathers, is the greatest of all the spiritual gifts. He was the Forerunner, the last prophet of the coming Messiah, that is, of the Old Testament. Most of all he knew who he was not. He was not the Messiah. In those days, as John was finishing his course, he said, "What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie."

Today we remember John's martyrdom as an end, but also as a beginning. Endings do not close doors, they open doors. John finished his course just as the public ministry of Jesus began.

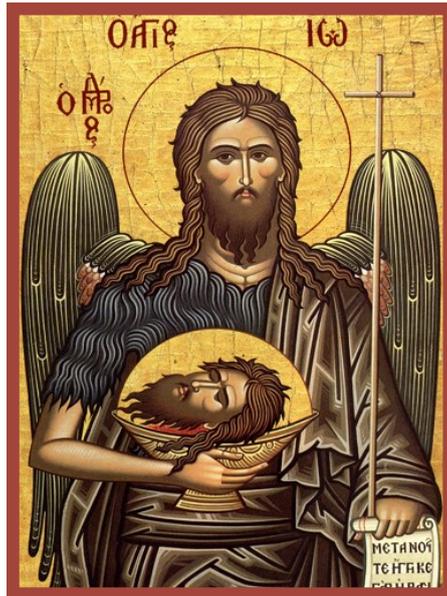
There was no more need for a forerunner. The Messiah had come.

The Baptist's brought a message of repentance based on the Law of Moses, but Jesus calls us to a deeper repentance based on Grace and Truth. It is not simply a repentance of deeds, but of intentions; a transforming repentance that reaches from the exterior to the interior, to the deepest levels of human being, conscious and unconscious.

"Thou shalt not kill," the Law of Moses says. The Lord says, thou shalt not be angry for anger is the seed of murder. Unattended to it leads to death. The Law says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The Messiah says, thou shalt not even entertain lust in your heart for lust is the seed of adultery.

Our hearts and minds are storehouses of seeds, both for good and for ill. Repentance means to make a selection between them and to choose to plant and nurture only those that are good. St. Maximus the Confessor taught that the commandments of God are for the transformation of chaos into order. Sinful actions are the sign of a disordered life, of a heart filled with the fruit of unhealthy seeds. Holiness is the sign of an ordered life, of a heart filled with good and wholesome fruit.

Thus, repentance is not only for the confession of exterior sins, but even more for the discovery and confession of the turmoil within: distracting thoughts, tumultuous emotions, fear, poisonous, unrelenting sorrows, and the subconscious conditioning that moves us without our knowledge to act and react as we do like slaves to an evil



master. We must be purified of everything that disturbs the soul. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." St. Isaac puts it this way: "Purify yourself and you will see heaven in yourself. In yourself you will see angels and their brightness, and you will see their Master with them and in them..."

The spiritual homeland of the person whose soul has been purified is within. The sun that shines there is the light of the Trinity. The air breathed by the entering thoughts is the Holy Spirit the Comforter. With the person dwell the angels. Their life, their joy, their cause for celebration is Christ the light of the Father's light. Such a person rejoices every hour in the contemplation of his

soul, and marvels at the beauty that appears, a hundred times brighter than the brightness of the sun...That is the kingdom of God hidden within us, according to the words of the Lord."

If our spiritual practice is not leading us to a deepening and daily transformation from the inside out, then it is weak and ineffectual. If so, it is a sign that we have missed the message of the Gospel and must be open to seeing anew what we thought we understood. The spiritual life is a continual movement from death to life, from darkness to light, from turmoil to peace. There is a path from sin and the misery it causes available to us, but it is a road that demands our all. We are not called by the Lord to simply give all that we have, but to give all that we are. That includes everything, bad good, bad, and indifferent on every level of human consciousness. As St. Isaac also reminds us, the human heart is an infinitely deep chasm filled with angels and demons. To ascend to heaven is to descend into its depths and allow the light of Christ to penetrate each and every corner.

It is He who leads us, from level to level, healing, exorcizing, cleansing strengthening all the good that is there. This is the way of the Cross, the road to purification after which, writes St. Maximus, the Lord Himself can be born in us just as He was in His Virgin Mother.

Fr. Antony Hughes

