

ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
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## FORGIVENESS

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).

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).

**Forgiveness is indispensable 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 offense once, they forgive him; if he commits an offense a second time, they forgive him; if he commits an offense 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.” (*AugustLeaflets2019*)

### SUNDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> AFTER PENTECOST

Saturday, August 31 & Sunday, September 1, 2019

#### WEEKLY SERVICES

**Daily Liturgy:** Monday-Friday at 8:30AM

**Holy Confession:** Every Monday at 4-6PM

**Holy Liturgy:** Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM

**Vespers:** Every Saturday at 3:00PM

**Matins/Orthos:** Every Sunday at 9:00AM

**Holy Rosary:** Every Sunday at 10:30AM

#### SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Rt. Rev. Edward Kakaty, Archdeacon George Yanni, Jordan Barahmeh, Michael Klockowski, Eugene Hutchinson, Maggy Attalah, Nancy Gazzal, Rose Pawlinga, Jean Benoit and John Attalah. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

#### WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

**Weekly Collection August 25: \$ 162.00**

**Fuel Offering: \$ 00.00**

**Cheese Sale: \$ 000.00**

**Bishop Fund: \$ 000.00**

#### † MEMORIAL MASSES †

#### THIS SATURDAY, AUGUST 31

† **Louis Chanatry, 46<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary**, By Eugene & Doris Hutchinson

#### THIS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

#### NEXT SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

† **Alfred Chanatry, 4<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary**, By Eugene & Doris Hutchinson

#### NEXT SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 8

† **Frederick Kopyt**, By John & Dana Ata

#### \* ANNOUNCEMENT \*

The next Parish Pastoral Council meeting will be held on Mon September 9, 6:30 PM, Rectory Meeting Rm