

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
ELEVENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of Saints Lawrence, Hippolytus, and Zystos -- August 10th

IT HAPPENED AT THE EVENING PRAYERS

By an Orthodox Christian

A very sweet thing happened this evening. I was putting David and Todd to bed and we were saying our prayers. After we finished "The Lord's Prayer," Todd said to me, "Mommy, what does Mr. Hallowed do?" It took me a few seconds to realize what he was talking about: "Hallowed be Thy name." I told him that "Hallowed" was not really someone's name, but it meant that God's Name is very special and each time we say His Name, we need to remember all of the blessings that He gives us. It's remarkable to view life through the eyes and innocence of a child.



HUMILITY – A KEY TO BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING

From the writings of Bishop Ignatius



One elder passed seventy weeks in fasting, eating food only twice a week, as he begged the Lord to reveal to him the meaning of a passage in Holy Scripture. But God would not reveal it to him.

Seeing this, the elder said to himself, "I have labored long and hard, and I have accomplished nothing. I will go to my brother and ask him."

When he had left his cell and locked the door behind him, an angel from the Lord appeared and said to him: "Seventy weeks of fasting did not bring you nearer to God. Now, however, when you have humbled yourself and resolved to go to your brother with your question, I have been sent to you to explain the meaning of this passage." And fulfilling this, the angel departed.

ON THE JESUS PRAYER

St. Theophan the Recluse

The practice of the Jesus Prayer is simple. Stand before the Lord with the attention in the heart and call to Him, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!" The essential part of this is not in the words, but in faith, contrition, and self-surrender to the Lord. With these feelings, one can stand before the Lord even without any words, and it will still be prayer.



THE SOCIAL VIRTUES TO BE PRACTICED

By St. Nikolai Velimirovich (+1956)

Almsgiving: "When you give alms, do not sound a trumpet as do the hypocrites, that they might receive praise from men. Let not your right hand know what your left hand is doing. And your Father who sees in heaven shall reward you openly."

Giving without hesitation: "Give to him that asks, and do not turn away the one who desires to borrow from you." (Matthew 5:42) Give all in the name of Christ and for the brotherhood's sake.

Loving your enemies: "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). There is no other way to cooperate with Christ, or to establish peace and brotherhood.

Forgiving your brother: "If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him, and if he repents, then forgive him. And if he trespasses against you seven times a day, and seven times a day turns to you and says, 'I repent', then you shall forgive him (Luke 17:3-4). Try to experience the joy of forgiving."

Humbleness: Christ was born in a stable. Why should we then strive after the highest honors and the first places? "Go down and sit in the lowest seat." "For whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:10-11).

Show pity to sinners: That is the way to help and reform them. Ridiculing and condemning them is of no avail. Christ considered them sick. He visited them (Zacchaeus), ate with them (Matthew), spoke kindly to them (women sinners), and thereby restored their spiritual health and human dignity.

Reconciliation: Before going to church, and also before being drawn before a court of law, a Christian should try to reconcile himself with his adversary (Matthew 5:23-25). However, "If your brother shall trespass against you," take action gradually, as was clearly prescribed by the Lord (Matthew 18:15-17).

Hopefulness, or Christian optimism: In all afflictions, calamities, persecutions, and even tortures and death, a Christian is hopeful. For he remembers Christ's words: "Great is your reward in heaven." "Fear not them who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul." "I have overcome the world." "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth."

Святкуємо 50-років!

Celebrating 50 Years!

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Aflame with Divine Fire

Lawrence, one of the seven deacons of Rome, was born, according to tradition, at Huesca, Spain. He suffered martyrdom in Rome during Emperor Valerian's persecution of Christians. According to several early Christian writers, among them St. Ambrose and Prudentius, he was a deacon of Pope Sixtus II and was overwhelmed with grief when Sixtus was condemned to death in the year 258. Overjoyed when Sixtus predicted he would follow him in three days, Lawrence sold many of the Church's possessions and gave the money to the poor.

When the Roman prefect heard of his action, he had Lawrence brought before him and demanded all the Church's treasures for the Emperor. Lawrence said he would need three days to collect them and then presented the blind, the crippled, the poor, the orphans and other unfortunates to the prefect and told him they were the Church's treasures. Furious, the prefect prepared a red-hot griddle and bound Lawrence to it. Lawrence bore the agony with unbelievable composure and in the midst of his torment instructed the executioner to turn him over, as he was broiled enough on the one side.

According to Prudentius, Lawrence's death and example led to the conversion of many and was a signal of the end of paganism in the city. There is no doubt that his death inspired a great devotion in Rome that quickly spread throughout the entire Church.