

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:23-35)

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

09 AUGUST 2026 ♦ TONE 02 EOTHINON 11 † ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST / UNFORGIVING SERVANT

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

Liturgy Book p. 17

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST:

Liturgy Book p. 29

SECOND:

Liturgy Book p. 32

THIRD/BEATTITUDES

Liturgy Book p. 125

ENTRANCE HYMN:

Liturgy Book p. 41

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 2)

Liturgy Book p. 40

Saint Matthias

Liturgy Book p.104

Patron: Saint Joseph

Liturgy Book p. 47

KONDAKION: Transfiguration

Liturgy Book p. 172

TRISAGION:

Liturgy Book p. 50

PROKIMENON: Ps.117: 14, 18

(Tone 2)

Liturgy Book p. 55

EPISTLE:

1 Corinthian 9:2-12

Brethren, you are the seal set upon my apostleship in the Lord. My defense against those who question me is this: Have we not a right to eat and to drink? Have we not a right to take around with us a sister woman, as do the other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have not the right of exemption from manual labor? What soldier ever serves at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Who tends the flock and does not drink of the flock's milk? Do I speak these things on human authority? Or does not the Law also say these things? For it is written in the Law of Moses. *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain. (Dt.25:4)* Is God concerned about the oxen, or does he say this simply for our sakes? These things were written for us. For he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes. in the expectation of partaking of the fruit. If we have sown for you spiritual things, is such an affair if we reap from you material things? If others share in this right over you. why should it not rather go to us? Yet, we have not used this right, but we bear all our expenses. lest we be a hindrance to Christ's Good News.

ALLELUIA: Ps.19: 1; 27: 9

(Tone 2)

Liturgy Book p. 62

The Lord shall hear you on the day of distress: the name of the God of Jacob shall defend you.

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

GOSPEL:

St. Matthew 18:23-35

The Lord told this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who desired to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun the settlement, one was brought to him who owed him millions. And as he had no means of paying, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all he had, and payment to be made. But the servant fell down and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will pay you all.' And moved with compassion, the master of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt. But as that servant went out, he met one of his fellow-servants who owed him a small amount, and he laid hold of him and throttled him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' His fellow-servant therefore fell down and began to entreat him, saying, Have patience with me and I will pay you all.' But he would not; but went away and threw him into prison until he would pay what was due. His fellow-servants therefore, seeing what had happened, were very much saddened, and they went and informed their master of what had taken place. Then his master called him, and said to him, 'Wicked servant, I forgave you all the debt, because you begged me. Should not you also have had pity on your fellow-servant, even as I had pity on you?' And his master, being angry, handed him over to the torturers until he would pay all that was due to him. So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if you do not each forgive your brothers from your hearts."

HIRMOS:

Liturgy Book p. 77

KINONKON:

Liturgy Book p. 83

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN AUGUST

Thursday Morning, August 01

BEGINNING OF THE FAST OF THE THEOTOKOS

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Saturday, August 08

Paraklesis: 3:00 p.m.

Confessions : 3:45 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday morning, August 9

Confessions: 9:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS

Friday, August 14

Vesperal Divine Liturgy, 5:30 p.m.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Saturday, August 15

Confessions : 3:45 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday morning, August 16

Confessions: 9:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

9 August: Heath and Salvation, St Martha's Academy teachers, by Annie Lefler

✦ Dr. John Abda, by Parish Community;

✦ James Kane, by Parish Community

✦ Elizabeth Batchafski, by Parish Community

16 August:

✦ Dr. John Abda, by Parish Community;

✦ James Kane, by Parish Community

✦ Elizabeth Batchafski, by Parish Community

2026 WEEKLY COLLECTION

July

Weekly Offering: \$ 928.00

Candles: \$ 8.00

Total: \$ 936.00

Thank you for your support!

Fast of the Dormition

Monday-Friday: Strict fast.

“*Strict fast*” excludes the eating of meat and meat products, cheese, milk, butter, fish, olive oil, wine and alcoholic beverages.

IMITATING THE FATHER OF COMPASSION

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENCES between the three world religions originating in the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). One thing which they all share is the emphasis on God as Compassionate. In the biblical story of Moses, for example, God reveals Himself to the prophet in these words: *“The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness”* (Ex 34:6).

The prophets of Israel continually returned to this theme, adding a new dimension. They saw compassion as a parental trait, paving the way for the Lord Jesus’ description of God as our Father.

In His parables the Lord often returned to themes of compassion. In the parable of the unforgiving servant (Mt 18:23-35) the king, an image of God, is described as *“moved with compassion”* (Mt 18:27), in contrast to his servant who shows no compassion to his fellow. The father of the prodigal son, is described, on the bedraggled boy’s return, as *“filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him”* (Lk 15:20).

The Gospels describe Christ as “deeply moved” with compassion by the death of the widow’s son in Nain (Lk 7: 11-17), and of his friend Lazarus in Bethany (Jn 11). When recording the miraculous feeding of the four thousand, Mark tells us *“Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, “I have compassion for these people...”* (Mk 8:1, 2). In each case He did something concrete in response.

In the Church God was proclaimed from the beginning as *“the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort”* (2 Cor 1:3). In our prayers today we regularly address God as “the only Compassionate One,” in contrast to the evident lack of that quality in our own lives.

What Is Compassion?

When the Gospels describe Christ as being “deeply moved” or being “moved with compassion,” they use a word which points to the heart of that quality. A literal translation of the Greek term would be “to be moved from the bowels.” (i.e. to feel deeply). Compassion is at the other end of the spectrum from the casual “I’m sorry” that people fling out at any unpleasant circumstance. Compassion is a “gut feeling” which we experience when we allow ourselves to be moved by the suffering of others.

People often equate compassion with sympathy, but true compassion is more. A person may express sympathy in response to sorrow with kindness and concern, then move on with their own lives. True compassion, on the other hand, includes expressions of care and concern, but moves on to concrete action. The compassionate person involves himself in the suffering of the other. Unlike the priest or the Levite in the parable, the Good Samaritan directly engages himself in the troubles of the man who was a victim to robbers and does not leave him until the man has recovered.

The compassionate Samaritan, like the compassionate king in Mt 18 is an icon of God. He it is who involves Himself in the sufferings of the human race to such an extent that He sends His Son and Word to share in their suffering. This Word *“...did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!”* (Phil 2:6-8).

Compassion as getting involved is put forward to us as a way of being godlike: “*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful*” (Lk 6:36). God is, as we have seen, “*the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort*” (2 Cor 1:3). St Paul goes on to say that God is compassionate to us “... *so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God*” (2 Cor 1:3, 4). Reflecting on how God has extended His compassion to us, should energize us into extending compassion to others.

Radical Compassion

Sometimes opportunities for compassion present themselves in daily life, such as taking in the child of a hospitalized neighbor. At other times people have been led to extend compassion in a more radical way. Perhaps no one in our society has personified this degree of compassion more than the late Servant of God Dorothy Day, the twentieth century convert extolled by Pope Francis as one of four “inspiring” Americans in his 2015 address to the US Congress. Foundress of the Catholic Worker movement during the Great Depression, Dorothy Day described one of her early ventures in these heart-rending words, revealing the depth of her compassion: “Every morning about four hundred men come to Mott Street to be fed. The radio is cheerful, the smell of coffee is a good smell, the air of the morning is fresh and not too cold, but my heart bleeds as I pass the lines of men in front of the store which is our headquarters...It is hard to say, matter-of-factly and cheerfully, 'Good morning.' ...One felt more like taking their hands and saying, 'Forgive us -- let us forgive each other! All of us who are more comfortable, who have a place to sleep, three meals a day, work to do -- we are responsible for your condition. We are guilty of each other's sins. We must bear each other's burdens. Forgive us and may God forgive us all!'”

The Power of Compassion

Every year on Meatfare Sunday we hear Christ’s parable of the Judgment (Mt 25:31-46). In this story, people are judged based on the degree of their compassion. Christ identifies Himself with those in need to the degree of saying that “*I was hungry and you gave **me** food...*” and the rest. . Christ identifies Himself completely with those in need: the essence of compassion.

What we may forget is that Christ begins the parable by saying, “*All **the nations** will be gathered before him...*” He is describing the judgment of the nations – the Gentiles – not the house of Israel. The faithful will be judged on the basis of their faith – the ‘nations’ will be judged on the basis of their compassion.

If compassion is so important in the Lord’s eyes that He calls the compassionate “blessed of my Father” even though they never knew Him, what should it mean to us?

In contrast to this blessing of compassionate Gentiles, we read a condemnation of the uncompassionate at the close of Christ’s parable of the unforgiving servant. We are told that, “*In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.*” Then the divine Narrator of the parable presents the moral of the story: “*This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother [or sister] from your heart*” (Mt 18:34, 35).

While true compassion often demands a radical generosity, the lack of compassion can separate us from God. The Russian spiritual writer, Fr. Alexander Elchaninov, expressed it this way: “Our lack of compassion, hardness of heart, and mercilessness towards others form an impenetrable curtain between ourselves and God. It is as if we had covered a plant with a black hood, and then complained because it died from lack of sunlight.”

WHY PRAY VESPERS AND ORTHROS AT HOME?- 3

By Rt. Rev. Philip Raczka, PhD & Deacon John Moses

We must note in this passage the fixed day, early morning hymn to Christ, and the later food of “a common and harmless kind,” which probably refers to the Eucharist. The fixed day would be Sunday, and the early morning gathering and hymn could relate Jesus and his resurrection to the rising sun. This would follow from the Old Testament Prophet Malachi 3:20: *But for you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays.* Christ is here associated with the Sun of Justice and healing. Also, in Malachi 1:11 we read: *For from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, my name is great among the nations: And everywhere they bring sacrifice to my name and a pure offering.* This quote is used in the First Century Early Christian Document called the *Didaché, chapter 14* to refer to the Eucharist. It is easy to see that a morning sacrifice of praise followed by the Eucharist at a later hour would also fulfill the prophecy. The association of Christ and the resurrection with the rising sun could also be made from the time of the visit of the Women Disciples to the empty Tomb (Mt. 28:1, Mk. 16:1-2, Lk. 24:1 & Jn. 20:1).

The theme of light appears in Orthros, although not quite as strongly as in Vespers. The Great Doxology is the most obvious place with the following lines:

*Glory to You, O Giver of Light!
For with You is the fountain of life, and in your Light we shall see light.*

The Great Doxology is another ancient hymn, and a version of it appears in the Syrian Early Christian document called the *Apostolic Constitutions*, dating around 380 AD.

There is also the theme of light in some of the Exapostilaria of Orthros, especially those for feast days. Here are the ones for Christmas and Theophany:

From on high our Savior came, the rising Sun who shone from the East to visit us in his mercy – we who sat in darkness and gloom. But now we see the Light of Truth for the Lord Jesus is born of the pure Virgin Mother.

In the streams of the Jordan, the Savior has appeared to us, full of grace and truth. He enlightens those who sleep in darkness and the shadow of death; for the Light that no man can approach has come and is made manifest.

The theme of Light, in particular Christ the Light, appears both in Vespers and Orthros, although it is stronger in Vespers. This is possibly due to the stark contrast between the lit lamp and the darkness of night.

Repentance

The *Didaché* (1st Century), when directing that the Eucharist be celebrated on Sundays, says:

And on the Lord's Day of the Lord gather to break bread and to give thanks, after having confessed your offenses so that your sacrifice may be pure. Didaché 14.1

There are also related sayings in the New Testament, *for example*, James 5:16:

*Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another,
that you may be healed.*

And 1 John 1:8-10 say:

If we say, "We are without sin," we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

*If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.*

If we say, "We have not sinned," we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

While the modern reader would initially look at these three quotes and think: "Am I being told to go to Confession before participating in the Divine Liturgy?" This assumption being based on our present Church life. But that was not the case in the Early Church, where what we know as sacramental Penance was reserved for the three great sins of apostasy, murder and adultery. Other sins were considered forgiven by giving charitable donations, shedding tears, being truly sorry, confessing one's guilt to God, mortification of the body, forgiving others, conversion of life, and seeking the conversion of others.

What then, do the three above quotes refer to? They could refer to the inner spiritual life of the person as does the preceding paragraph, but the quotes from the *Didaché* and James, appear to refer to a public or communal confession. This, I propose, was accomplished by the singing of a penitential Psalm or hymn. Certainly, these penitential pieces start appearing in the written sources in the 3rd Century. Origen (+254 AD) notes the use of Psalm 140 at Vespers. In the 4th Century, the penitential Psalms 50, 62 and 140 appear in various Middle Eastern sources referring to the Cathedral Office. The Cathedral Office refers to the usage of the parish churches as opposed to that of the monasteries.

In our contemporary Melkite Services, the same 3 Psalms occur, 50, 62 & 140, along with others. We also have penitential hymns. Of these, this is the most common and popular being used at Vespers and weekday Orthros:

Deign, O Lord, to keep us this day (evening) without sin.

Blessed are You, O You, O God of our Fathers!

Praised and glorified is your name forever. Amen.

O Lord, let your mercy rest upon us, for we have placed our trust in You.

Blessed are You, O Lord: teach me your statutes

Blessed are You, O Master: grant that I may understand your statutes.

Blessed are You, O Holy One: enlighten me with your statutes.

Everlasting is your love, O Lord; do not turn away from the work of your hands!

*Indeed, praise, adoration and glory are your due,
to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and for ages of ages.
Amen.*

The singing of penitential Psalms and hymns forms a confession of sins by the members of the congregation. 1 John, quoted previously, assures us that this confession of sins prompts God's forgiveness of us.

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

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