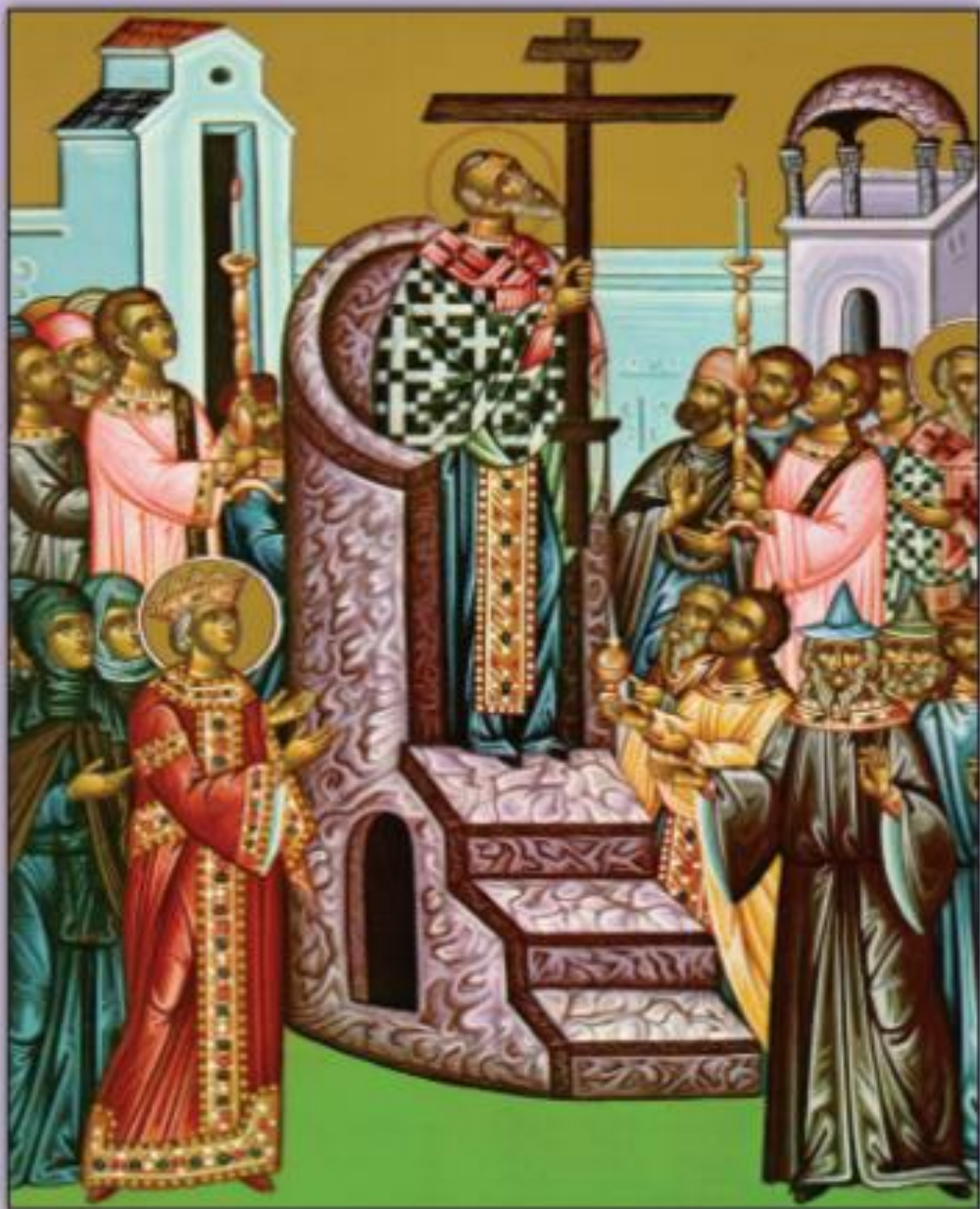


SUNDAY BEFORE THE
EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross -- September 14th

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

13 SEPTEMBER 2026 ♦ TONE 07 EOTHINON 05 † SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST/SUNDAY BEFORE H. CROSS

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

Liturgy Book p. 17

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST:

Liturgy Book p. 29

SECOND:

Liturgy Book p. 32

THIRD/BEATITUDES

Liturgy Book p. 125

ENTRANCE HYMN:

Liturgy Book p. 41

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 7)

Liturgy Book p. 45

Preparation for the Holy Cross

Dedication of Basilica

Patron

Glory to the Father....

KONDAKION: *Dedication*

TRISAGION:

Liturgy Book p. 50

PROKIMENON:

(Tone 6)

Liturgy Book p. 59

EPISTLE:

Galatians 6:11-18

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand! All those who want to please in a human way are forcing you to be circumcised merely to avoid persecution because of the cross of Christ. For not even the circumcised observe the Law: but they want you to be circumcised that they may boast of your subjection to external rites. But as for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision but a new creation is of any account. And whoever follow this rule, peace and mercy be upon them and on God's Israel. From now on, let no man give me trouble, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

ALLELUIA:

(Tone 7)

Liturgy Book p. 62

On the Holy Mountain is his city cherished by the Lord. The Lord prefers the gates of Zion to all Jacob's dwellings.

GOSPEL: *Sunday before Exaltation*

St. John 3:13-17

The Lord said, "No one has gone up into heaven except the One Who has come down from heaven: the Son of Man Who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that those who believe in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that those who believe in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God did not send His Son into the world in order to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

HIRMOS:

Liturgy Book p. 77

KINONKON:

Liturgy Book p. 142 / Liturgy Book p. 77

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Events in September

SUNDAY BEFORE THE HOLY CROSS

Saturday, September 12

Confessions : 3:45 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, September 13

Confessions: 9:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Monday, September 14

Divine Liturgy 5:30 p.m.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Saturday, September 19

Confessions : 3:45 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, September 20

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

13 September: ✠James Kane, by Jemille Zaydon
✠Elizabeth Bachevski, by Parish Community
19 September: ✠Dr. John Abda, by Mrs. Michael Milewski; ✠Connie Szczytko, by Annie Lefler
20 September: ✠Elizabeth Bachevski, by Parish Community

2026 WEEKLY COLLECTION

September 06

Weekly Offering: \$ 1023

Candles: \$ 10

Total: \$ 1033

Thank you for your support!

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW:

STORIES THAT TELL A STORY

THE CULTURE OF WESTERN EUROPE which we have inherited is based on the ideas and methods of Greek philosophy. We use abstractions, logic and the devices of classical thought to express ourselves. That sort of thinking was alien to the Semites of the ancient Middle East. Where a classic philosopher might speak of generosity, a Middle Easterner would tell a story about a generous person. The parables found in Scripture are examples of stories told to teach a truth.

The greatest number of parables in Scripture are found in the Gospels but the Lord Jesus was hardly the first to teach in parables. One of the most striking parables in the Old Testament is found in 2 Samuel 12:1-9. In it the prophet Nathan confronts King David who has arranged the death of Uriah the Hittite so that he could marry Uriah's wife. Nathan makes his point with a story:

"Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: 'There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare a meal for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it

"So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, 'As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity.' Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man!' ... " (vv. 1-7).

Parables such as this use concrete narratives to express abstract arguments. Here Nathan was reproaching David for his own actions under the figure of the rich man in the parable. Very likely, the parable was much more effective than a discourse on the Commandments would have been.

Parable of the Talents

The Lord Jesus teaches His followers about what we would call stewardship in the parable of the talents. In the Mediterranean world a talent (*talanton*) was a measure of weight. In the Palestine of Christ's day a talent would have equaled 130 pounds, as of a precious metal (silver or gold). Today a pound of gold might be worth \$15,000.00, so three talents (390 pounds) was a considerable sum.

The master expects his servants to be productive: to increase the value of what he was given. The first two servants in the parable did exactly that; the third fellow buried the money in the ground. He did not squander what he had received, but he did not increase its value either.

On his return the master commended the first two servants, but told the third:

“You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest” (vv. 26, 27). Even that would have been productive but the servant did not even make the effort to do that.

The Lord points us to the parable’s spiritual meaning in its first line: *“The kingdom of heaven is like...”* (v.14) this. There will be productive servants who will be rewarded and foolish ones who will be humiliated... and worse. As we read earlier in Matthew, *“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire”* (Mt 7:19). The basis for this judgement will be what the servants have done with the wealth entrusted to them.

When Will the Master Arrive?

There have been several answers to this question because the parable applies equally to all of them, human nature being what it is. Perhaps the original reference was to Christ’s coming to Jerusalem which exposed some servants as productive and others as wasteful. In this interpretation it is the Messiah Himself who is the pearl of great price. Some received Him to their profit; others wasted their chance of entering His joy.

Some have said that the Master entrusts Himself to us in any number of ways: in the Scriptures, the Eucharist, the Church, the poor. The way we respond to His presence shows whether we are bearing fruit or not.

The most common interpretation has been that at the Second Coming of Christ His servants will receive what their deeds deserve.

What Do the Talents Represent?

The Fathers offered varied answers to this question as well. St. John Chrysostom said that, *“This parable is delivered against those who will not assist their neighbors with money, or words, or in any other way, but hide all that they have.”* St. Jerome interpreted it to mean that, *“In the five, two, and one talent, we recognize the diversity of gifts wherewith we have been entrusted.”* St. Gregory of Nyssa expands on this thought, pointing to all the gifts believers receive in and for the sake of the Church: *“Let him then who has understanding look that he hold not his peace; let him who has affluence not be dead to mercy; let him who has the art of guiding life communicate its use with his neighbor; and him who has the faculty of eloquence intercede with the rich for the poor.”*

Each of us in the Church has received talents of various kinds and degrees. As St Paul taught, they are meant to be used for the benefit of the community: *“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness”* (Rom 12: 6-8). If we use our gifts to benefit the Church they will increase and bear fruit; if we bury them we will incur the judgment of the Master.

GALATIANS 6:11-18: TAKING A STAND

“As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ” (Gal 6:12).

WE KNOW FROM SEVERAL of his epistles how adamant St. Paul was against obliging Christians to keep the prescriptions of the Torah – circumcision, the dietary rules and the like. In the Epistle to the Galatians we see one reason why some new Christians proposed keeping them: they wanted to fit in with the Jewish community in order to avoid persecution.

First persecutors of this new community, the followers of Jesus, were Jews. Paul himself had been one of the most dedicated. The Acts of the Apostles describes his zeal in combating them. *“Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem”* (Acts 9:1). By being circumcised, keeping the Torah rules and not mingling with Gentiles, some Jewish followers of Jesus felt that the opposition of the more fervent Jews would be muted.

St Paul approached the issue from the other side. The message of the Gospel was that neither the Torah nor the Temple saved; only faith in the Lord Jesus. If believers in Jesus continued to observe these Jewish practices, he argued, it is the Gospel message which would be muffled. People would no longer see Christ as *“the Way, the Truth and the Life”* (Jn 14:6), the only way to the Father. The unique saving role of Christ in God’s plan would be forgotten.

The Practice of Fitting In

Christians throughout the history of the Church have found themselves in situations where they were eyed with distaste. Christians were considered outsiders at best or traitors at worst if they did not conform to the religious or ethical practices of the majority. The choice believers had in such cases has always been either to confront the majority by upholding their faith in Christ, to adopt the religion of the majority or to attempt a compromise: to keep their faith privately while seemingly observing non-Christian practices.

For the first three centuries of Christianity (the Roman era) Christians were suspected of superstitious practices corroding the fabric of the empire. They refused to take part in the state ceremonies honoring the gods and held secret rites behind closed doors. Their neglect of the ancient gods, many believed, would bring disaster on the empire.

When confronted, some Christians resisted and upheld their faith. They are revered today as martyrs or confessors. Others renounced their faith, offering sacrifices to the Roman gods or burning incense before their statues. Still others found ways of seeming to fit in. Some signed certificates stating that they honored the gods. In one such document which survived the author says, *“I have always continued to sacrifice and show reverence to the gods; and now in your presence I have poured a libation and sacrificed, eating some of the sacrificial meat. I request you to certify this for me...”* Often no sacrifices were actually offered; such documents were simply bought by bribing the officials. Other Christians went into hiding until the danger passed.

When the first empire-wide persecution of Christians came to an end in 260, many of those who had sacrificed or bought certificates returned to the Church. Christians did not agree on whether or how they should be received. Most Churches received these people back but with varying penalties. In some places those who had actually offered sacrifices were received as penitents who would only receive absolution and Communion on their deathbeds. Those who had ob-

tained certificates without actually offering sacrifices were to remain as penitents for two years. Those who had betrayed other believers or who had handed over the Church's Scriptures or holy vessels to be destroyed received additional penances before being readmitted to Communion.

Crypto-Christians

In the Middle East and throughout the Ottoman Empire communities of "Crypto" or "Hidden" Christians arose. These people seemingly converted to Islam while adhering to Christian practices in secret. Many of these communities survived until the dawn of the modern era. There are reportedly still Crypto-Armenian Christians in Turkey and Crypto-Christian groups of Greeks, Latins, and Maronites in Turkish-dominated parts of Cyprus.

Perhaps the most famous Crypto-Christians are the Kakure Kirishitan of Japan who found ways of adapting and concealing their faith during persecutions in the seventeenth century. Images of Christ and the saints were transformed to look like Buddhist figures and prayers were adapted to sound like Buddhist chants. Some 30,000 of these secret Christians emerged in the nineteenth century when religious freedom was restored. Most renounced any syncretistic practices and rejoined the Catholic Church.

Fitting-In in a Secular Age

In our society conflicts with other recognized religions such as Buddhism are nowhere near as common as conflicts with the value-free lifestyles promoted by many in our secular society. Most people recognize that the historic Churches oppose abortion and have done so since the first century. Other sanctity of life issues such as euthanasia and the profit-driven restrictions on treatment of some managed care systems demand similar choices. Nurses, technicians and other medical personnel may be faced with choices comparable to those described above. Do they refuse to participate in immoral activities and risk losing their jobs or do they commit the sin their employers demand?

Observers see a number of areas in modern life in addition to health care presenting similar conflicts, among them:

Education – Activists pressure schools to endorse homosexuality, same-sex marriage or sexual permissiveness in their curricula and student activities. Must Christian teachers choose between going along or losing their jobs? Must Christian parents sacrifice to send their children to private schools or to homeschool them rather than leave them where such views are considered "normal?"

Politics – Catholics and Orthodox in politics must daily choose between accepting the agendas of their donors and constituents or following the Gospel. As a rule such demands are not made publicly in this country but this is not true elsewhere. In May, 2014 Canada's Liberal Party leader, Justin Trudeau stated, "I have made it clear that future candidates need to be completely understanding [sic] that they will be expected to vote pro-choice on any bills."

The Tradition on Abortion

First and second century documents show that abortion has never been acceptable in the Church.

Speaking of what distinguishes Christians from pagans:

"They marry, as do all others; they beget children but they do not cast away fetuses"

(From the Letter to Diognetus).

"You shall not slay the child by abortions" (From the Didache).

"You shall not destroy your conceptions before they are brought forth; nor kill them after they are born" (From the Letter of Barnabas)

"Those who use abortifacients commit homicide" (From the Epistle of St. Clement).

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

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