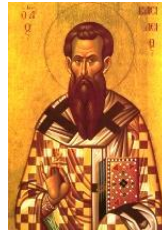


ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
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SUNDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> AFTER THE HOLY CROSS  
Saturday, October 3 & Sunday, October 4, 2020

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**WEEKLY SERVICES**

**Daily Liturgy:** Monday-Friday 8:30AM      **Holy Confession:** Every Monday 4-6PM  
**Holy Liturgy:** Saturday 4:30PM, Sunday 11:00AM      **Vespers:** Every Saturday 3:00PM  
**Matins/Orthos:** Every Sunday 9:00AM      **Holy Rosary:** Every Sunday 10:30AM

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**SPEEDY RECOVERY**

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Archdeacon George Yany, Maggy Atallah, Jean Benoit, Nancy Gazzal, Daniel Klockowski, Rose Pawlinga, Brian Sagrestano, and Karen Zalatan. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

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**WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!**

**Weekly Collection Sept 26/27: \$ 440.00      Memorial Masses: \$ 60.00**  
**Maintenance Donations: \$ 50.00**

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**† MEMORIAL MASSES †**

**THIS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Doris Hutchinson & Family  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Maryann Astour & Family  
† **Ruth Bader Ginsburg**, By Robert Lalli  
† **Mary Murad**, By Anthony & Sandra Showa

**THIS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Gloria Shaheen  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Robert Lalli  
† **Mae Rassar**, 12<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary, By Robert Lalli  
† **Mary Murad**, By the Zaloom Family

**NEXT SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Doris Hutchinson & Family  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Maryann Astour & Family  
† **Mary Murad**, By Anthony & Sandra Showa  
† **William Chanatry**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Memorial Anniversary, By his Family

**NEXT SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11**

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Virginia Lynch  
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Robert Lalli  
† **Mary Murad**, By the Zaloom Family

**IMITATING GOD**

Christ regularly encouraged His disciples to imitate God's way rather than man's. God's way is, of course, the way of mercy and compassion. God "*does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities, For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him*" (Ps 103:10, 11). While the Jews were long encouraged to trust in God's mercy, it was Christ who taught us to imitate that compassion in the way we treat others.

The Lord Jesus urged His disciples to strive for perfection in their spiritual lives and He pointed to love for one's enemies as exemplifying that perfection. Anything less, He identified with the spirit of the scribes and Pharisees. In St Matthew's Gospel the following injunction concludes and sums up the Sermon on the Mount: "*If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful... You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*" (Mt 5:32-36, 43-48). If the aim of the Christian life is to imitate the Lover of Mankind, the chief sign of that way of life is the way we treat our enemies. We can and should act in the image of God.

Perhaps the most striking example of love for one's enemies in the Gospels is the prayer for His killers which Christ offered while hanging on the cross. "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing*" (Lk 23:24). Arrested for preaching in Christ's name some years later, the first martyr, St Stephen, used his last breath to imitate Christ's love for His enemies, praying: "*Lord, do not hold this sin against them*" (Acts 7:60) as he was being stoned by his killers: God, and those who follow His way, do not let themselves be conditioned by the wickedness of others. Even when forgotten or rejected, they continue to be faithful to loving others.

**Forgiving through the Holy Spirit:** Imitating God in this way isn't easy. Some say it isn't even in our power but is an attitude that can only be the fruit of grace, given by the Holy Spirit. Therefore St. Silouan the Athonite writes, "The soul that has not known the Holy Spirit does not understand how one can love one's enemies and does not accept it." He stated also: "He who has not learned to love from the Holy Spirit, will certainly not pray for his enemies"... "Lord, teach us through Your Holy Spirit to love our enemies and to pray for them with tears . . . Lord, as You prayed for Your enemies, so teach us also, through the Holy Spirit, to love our enemies"

The ability to love one's enemies is also tightly bound to humility. Almost all the difficulties we encounter in loving our enemies are linked with pride: it is from pride that flows the affliction that follows upon insults, hated, bad temper, spite, the desire for revenge, contempt for one's neighbor, refusing to forgive him and to be reconciled with him. Pride excludes the love of enemies and love for one's enemies excludes pride. When we think of asceticism, we may consider prayer vigils, fasting, or making numerous prostrations. The most challenging ascetical feat, however, is to practice love for one's enemies. (OctoberLeaflets2020)