



## 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

### Hieromartyr Cyprian and Martyr Justina of Nicomedia

2 / 15 October

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 2:** When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendour of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, Glory to Thee!

**Troparion tone 3:** Thou didst abandon ungodly darkness/ and become a light of the truth./ Thou wast illustrious as a pastor/ and wast glorified in contest./ O righteous Father Cyprian together with godly Justina pray to God the Creator for us.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 2:** Hell became afraid, O Almighty Saviour, seeing the miracle of Thy resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee! And the world, O My Saviour, praises Thee forever.

**Kontakion tone 1:** Thou didst renounce magic for the knowledge of God/ and become a wise healer for the world./ Together with Justina thou dost cure those who honour thee:/ with her pray to Christ our God the Lover of mankind that He may save our souls.

#### Matins Gospel VIII

#### EPISTLE: II Corinthians 11:31 - 12:9

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; But I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands. It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- How he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

#### PAUL'S VISIONS AND REVELATIONS OF THE LORD

This revelation was great indeed ...Why is it then that he neither spoke plainly nor kept silence? To show by this also that he resorts to the thing unwillingly ...to show that he who had refrained for so long a time would not now have spoken out unless the necessity for doing so had been great. But he would still have kept silence, had he not seen the brothers perishing ...

Was it the mind that was caught up and the soul, while the body remained dead, or was the body caught up? It is impossible to tell. For if Paul, who was caught up and whom things unspeakable - so many and so great - had befallen, was in ignorance, much more are we. For indeed, that he was in Paradise he knew, and that he was in third heaven he was not ignorant, but the manner he did not clearly know ...For this reason he also goes on to say, 'Of such a one I will glory,' not meaning that he who was caught up was some other person, but he so frames his language in the best manner he possibly could, so as to mention the fact, and at the same time to avoid speaking of himself openly ... But why was he caught up? In my thinking, so he might not seem to be inferior to the rest of the Apostles. For since they had accompanied Christ but Paul had not: He therefore caught him up unto glory - 'into Paradise' ...He also added, 'For I will speak the truth, but I forbear lest any man should account me above what he sees me to be, or hears from me.' Here you have the acknowledged reason; for they even deemed them to be gods, on account of the greatness of their miracles ... By 'the messenger of Satan,' he means Alexander the coppersmith, the party of the Hymenaeus and Philetus, all the adversaries of the Word, those who contended with and fought against him, those who cast him into a prison, those who beat him, and who led him away to death, for they did Satan's business.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXVI on II Corinthians XII, 1, 2. B#56, pp. 398-400*

for the Martyrs: I Tim. 1:12-17

## GOSPEL: LUKE 6:31-36

The Lord said, as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

### **“LOVE YE YOUR ENEMIES”**

The first part of this gospel is familiar even to those who have never read the Bible and serves as a motto for many who are not even Christians. It is the so called “Golden Rule” - “as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” This is a good rule to follow in our lives in our relationships with others. If we treat others as we ourselves would like to be treated, then many of the conflicts and difficulties that come up in our lives could be managed quite easily. As followers of Jesus Christ, we must not neglect this rule. For us it is not just a slogan or a motto, but it is a commandment.

In the Gospel, this commandment does not stand alone but in order to understand its true meaning we must look at the whole context within which it is found. Just prior to giving this commandment, our Lord spoke of some other characteristics which we must exhibit as Christians, to love our enemies, to turn the other cheek, to give not only what someone asks (or would take) from you but give him more, to lend without the expectation of return. All of these things He sums up by sayings “as you would that men should do to you, do also to them likewise” When viewed as a summary of these teachings, the “Golden Rule” takes on much more meaning and significance than it does by itself. Following the “Rule” here, in the portion of the Gospel we just heard our Lord tells us that if we only do good or lend to those who act in such a way towards us then it has limited spiritual value – but we must go further than simply to do good or give to those whom we judge as deserving of these things (because they are good to us or are trustworthy to repay or use well what we give). To follow the Golden Rule as Christians means that we will love even our enemies, that we will do good to those even who curse us and return evil to us, that we will give to others regardless of whether they will repay or will use our gift wisely. This goes far beyond the way that the world uses this saying of the Gospel. When we follow the “Golden Rule” we who would follow Christ do so not as the world does, but we do as our Lord does.

The heart of this rule is that we tend to love ourselves more than anyone else and so we will treat ourselves better than all others. If we treat others whom we love less in the way that we would treat ourselves, then we naturally begin to follow the second great commandment after the love of God – that is to love your neighbor as yourself. However, as Christians, we have the first great commandment to go before this love of neighbor – that is to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. No longer do we love our own self above all else, but God has been given that place in our lives. Now when we love others, the supreme love of self is no longer the measure, but rather we love them as God has loved us. We are no longer the standard by which we measure our love of others; God is now the standard towards which we strive. When we treat others as we ourselves would wish to be treated, we must now look not at how we love ourselves, but how God loves us. When we come before God we see all of our sins, all of our unworthiness, and all of ugliness – and yet we crave of God forgiveness, we desire that He will give to us good gifts even though we do not deserve it, we pray that He will not act out of justice but out of mercy towards us. The key to properly understanding and implementing the Golden Rule is our own humility before God and His love for us.

All of this is summed up and restated in the final instruction from the Gospel that we heard today, “be merciful, just as your Father is merciful”. Here we see the true meaning of the Golden Rule. It is not an injunction to treat others as we would treat ourselves, but rather to love others as God has loved us; to give to others as God has given to us; to do good to others as God has done good to us; to be merciful towards others, even as God has been merciful towards us. To treat others as we ourselves would wish to be treated is nothing less than the call for us to become like Christ, to act not as a fallen man, but to act instead as God Himself would act. This is a standard that the world will never be able to understand but which for us Christians is the center of our lives. We no longer live for ourselves alone, but rather we die to ourselves and Christ lives in us.

When we consider the Golden Rule, let us then consider the true meaning of that rule, that we should do unto others as we desire for God to do unto us.

*Archpriest David Moser*  
<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/propoved/info>

for the Martyrs: John 10:9-16

## Saints of the week

**2 / 15 October - St Andrew the Fool for Christ** - By birth a Slav, he was bought as a slave by Theognostus, a rich man in Constantinople, in the time of the Emperor Leo the Wise, son of the Emperor Basil the Macedonian. Andrew was a handsome young man, both in body and soul. Theognostus took a fancy to him and allowed him to learn to read and write. Andrew prayed fervently to God and attended church services with great devotion, and, in obedience to a heavenly revelation, resolved on the asceticism of folly for Christ's sake. Once, when he went to the well for water, he cast off his clothes and cut them to pieces, feigning madness. Saddened by this, his owner Theognostus put him in chains and took him to the church of St Anastasia the Deliverer from Bonds, that prayers be read for him. But, as Andrew did not recover as far as his owner could see, he was freed as being sick in mind. Holy Andrew feigned madness all day and spent the nights in prayer. He lived without a roof over his head, spending the nights in the open and going about half-naked in a single, tattered garment and eating a little bread when kindly people shared theirs with him. Whatever he received, he gave away to beggars, and when he gave it to them he would mock them to avoid their thanks, for holy Andrew looked only for the reward from God. Therefore great grace from God abode in him, and he was able to discern men's secrets, see angels and demons, drive demons from men and turn men from sin. He had a most wonderful vision of Paradise and the exalted powers of heaven; he saw the Lord Christ on His throne of glory; he, with his disciple Epiphanius, saw the most holy Mother of God in the Blachernae church, sheltering the Christian people with her veil (see yesterday); he heard in heaven unspeakable words, which he dared not recount to men. After unprecedentedly harsh asceticism, he entered into rest and the eternal glory of his Lord in 911;

**Hieromartyr Cyprian and the Virgin Justina** - Cyprian moved from Carthage to Antioch, where Justina lived with her parents. Edesius and Cleodonia. Edesius was an idolatrous priest and his whole household was pagan, but when Justina, going round the Christian churches, came to know the true Faith, she brought both her father and mother to Christ the Lord and all three were baptised by the bishop, Optatus. Cyprian was a magician, and had links with unclean spirits and powers of divination. A dissolute youth Aglaidas, a pagan, tried to lead Justina astray, being enraptured by her beauty, and, when the holy maiden firmly rejected him, sought Cyprian's help. Cyprian invoked evil spirits, one after the other, on Justina, to set alight in her the passion of impurity towards Aglaidas, but they were totally unsuccessful in this, for St Justina, with the sign of the Cross and prayer to God, drove out the evil spirits. Then Cyprian came to know the power of the Cross, and was himself baptised, in time becoming priest and bishop. The wicked pagans seized both him and Justina, and they were sent for trial to Damascus, and then tortured and beheaded in Nicomedia at the end of the third century; The Holy Martyrs David and Constantine.

**3 / 16 October - The Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite** - He is counted among the seventy lesser apostles. This wonderful man was of a noble, pagan family in Athens. Finishing his education in Athens, he went to Egypt to learn more. One day while he was there, the Lord Christ breathed His last on the Cross, and the sun was darkened and it was dark in Egypt for the space of three hours. Then Dionysius cried out: 'Either God the Creator of the world is suffering, or the world is ending.' Returning to Athens, he married a woman called Damaris and had sons by her. He was a member of the highest court in Greece, the Areopagus, and was always thereafter known as the Areopagite. When the Apostle Paul preached the Gospel in Athens, Dionysius was baptised with his whole household (Acts 17:34). Paul consecrated him bishop of Athens (he having left his wife and children and status from love of Christ), and he travelled widely with Paul, coming to know all the other apostles. He went especially to Jerusalem, to see the most holy Mother of God, and wrote of his meeting with her in one of his works, being at the burial of the Most Pure along with the other apostles. When his teacher, St Paul, suffered martyrdom, Dionysius desired to die such a death himself, so he went off to Gaul to preach the Gospel among the barbarians, accompanied by Rusticus, a priest, and a deacon called Eleutherius. They endured much but met with great success. By their labours, many were turned to the Christian faith and Dionysius built a small chapel in Paris where he celebrated divine service. When he was ninety years old, he was seized and tortured for Christ, together with Rusticus and Eleutherius, until they were all three beheaded with the sword. The severed head of St Dionysius jumped a long way and fell in front of a Christian woman, Catula, who buried it with his body. He suffered in the time of Domitian, in the year 96. He wrote several famous works: on the names of God, on the heavenly and ecclesiastical hierarchies, on mystical theology and on the most holy Mother of God. Our Holy Father John the Chozebite; Our Holy Father Dionysius of the Kiev Caves; St Hesychius the Chorebite.

**4 / 17 October - The Hieromartyr Hierotheos** - He was a friend of Dionysius the Areopagite, and received the Christian faith from the Apostle Paul a little after Dionysius. This Apostle later made him bishop in Athens. At the time of the Dormition of the most holy Mother of God, Hierotheos arrived in Jerusalem and took part in the funeral. With his divine singing, he brought heartfelt joy to many and showed himself to be greatly inspired. He laboured greatly for the sake of the Gospel, brought many pagans to the truth, governed his flock well and finally ended a martyr for Christ, who gave him a twofold wreath in His heavenly Kingdom: of the hierarch and of the martyr. St Stephen Stiljanovic; Our Holy Father Ammon of Nitria; Our Holy Father Paul the Simple.

**5 / 18 October - Sts. Peter, Alexis, Jonah, Macarius, Philip, Job, Hermogenes (Germogen), Philaret, Innocent (Veniaminov), Macarius, Peter and Tikhon, wonderworkers of Moscow.**

**The Holy Martyr Charitina of Amisus** - Orphaned young, she was adopted by an eminent Christian man called Claudius, who brought her up as his own daughter. Charitina was meek, humble, obedient and silent. She studied the law of God day and night and vowed to live in perpetual virginity as a true bride of Christ. But, Charitina having brought others to the Christian faith, the Emperor Diocletian's governor, Dometius, heard of her and sent soldiers to take her from her foster-father for trial. The judge asked her: 'Is it true, little girl, that you are a Christian, and that you delude others by bringing them to this dishonourable faith?' Charitina courageously replied: 'It is true that I am a Christian, and a lie that I delude others. I lead those in error to the way of truth, bringing them to my Christ.' The wicked judge ordered that her hair be cut off and live coals put on her head, but the maiden was preserved by God's power. They threw her into the sea, but God delivered her from it. She was bound to a wheel which began to turn, but an angel of God stopped the wheel and Charitina remained unharmed. Then the wicked judge sent some dissolute youths to rape her. Fearing this dishonour, St Charitina prayed to God to receive her soul

before these dissolute men could foul her virginal body and so, while she was kneeling in prayer, her soul went out from her body to the immortal Kingdom of Christ. The Hieromartyr Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria; Our Holy Father Eudocimus of Vatopedi; Our Holy Fathers Damian, Jeremiah and Matthew.

**6 / 19 October - The Holy and Glorious Apostle Thomas** - He was one of the twelve Great Apostles. Through his doubt of the Resurrection of the Lord Christ, a new confirmation was given of that wonderful and saving event, for the risen Lord appeared again to His disciples, to convince Thomas. The Lord said to Thomas: Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing', and Thomas cried: 'My Lord and my God! (John 20). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the apostles cast lots to see who would go where to preach the Gospel, it fell to Thomas to go to India. He was somewhat saddened at having to go so far away, but the Lord appeared to him and comforted him. In India, St Thomas converted many, both rich and poor, to the Christian faith, and founded a Church there, making priests and bishops. Among others, St Thomas converted two sisters, Tertiana and Mygdonia, wives of Indian princes. Both sisters were ill-treated for their faith by their husbands, who would not live with them after their baptism, and divorced them. Being freed from their marriages, they lived godly lives till their deaths. Dionysius and Pelagia, a couple at first betrothed to each other, heard the Apostle's teaching and did not live together, but devoted themselves to the ascetic life. Pelagia died a martyr for the Faith and Dionysius was made bishop by the Apostle. Prince Misdaeus, the husband of Tertiana, whose wife and son Iuzanes Thomas baptised, condemned the Apostle to death, and sent five soldiers who ran him through with their lances, and thus the holy Apostle Thomas gave his soul into the hands of his Christ. Before his death, he, with the other apostles, was miraculously borne to Jerusalem for the funeral of the most holy Mother of God. Arriving late, he grieved bitterly and, at his request, the tomb of the Most Pure was opened, but the body was not there; the Lord had taken His Mother to His heavenly home. Thus St Thomas first, by his unbelief, confirmed the faith in the Resurrection of the Lord and then, by his late arrival, revealed to us the wondrous glorification of the Mother of God. Our Holy Father, the New Martyr Macarius.

**7 / 20 October - The Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus** - These holy and wonderful martyrs and heroes of the Christian faith were at first nobles at the court of the Emperor Maximian. The Emperor himself valued them greatly for their courage, wisdom and zeal, but, when he heard that these great nobles of his were Christians, his love for them turned to fury. And once, when there was a great offering of sacrifices to idols, the Emperor summoned Sergius and Bacchus to offer sacrifice together with him, and they openly refused to obey him in this. Beside himself with anger, the Emperor ordered that their robes, rings and marks of eminence be stripped from them and they be dressed in women's clothing. He then put iron yokes on their necks and led them thus through the streets of Rome, to be mocked by each and all. The Emperor then sent them to Asia, to Antiochus the governor, for torture. Antiochus had achieved his distinguished rank with the help of Sergius and Bacchus, who had at one time recommended him to the Emperor. When Antiochus began to urge them to deny Christ and save themselves from dishonourable suffering and death, the two saints replied: 'Both honour and dishonour, both life and death—all are one to him who seeks the heavenly Kingdom.' Antiochus threw Sergius into prison and ordered that Bacchus be tortured first. The servants took turns in beating holy Bacchus until his whole body was broken into fragments. His holy spirit went forth from his broken and bloodstained body and was borne to the Lord by angels. St Bacchus suffered in the town of Varvallis. Then holy Sergius was led out. Iron shoes studded with nails were put on his feet, and he was driven out into the Syrian town of Resapha, and there beheaded with the sword. His soul went to Paradise where, together with his friend Bacchus, he received the wreath of immortal glory from Christ his King and Lord. These two glorious knights suffered for the Christian faith in about 303; The Holy Martyr Polychronius; St. Dubtach, bishop of Ardmagh (513); Holy Martyr Princess Osyth of Crich, England (c.700).

**8 / 21 October - Our Holy Mother Pelagia** - A repentant sinner, she was born a pagan in Antioch and endowed by God with great physical beauty, but she used this beauty to destroy her own soul and those of others, acquiring great wealth from her prostitution. One day, walking past the church of the holy martyr Julian, where Bishop Nonnus was preaching, she turned into the church and listened to the sermon, which was about the Dreadful Judgement and the punishment of sinners. These words so shook her, and wrought so great a change in her, that she was of a sudden filled with self-loathing and fear of God, and, repenting of all her filthy sins, fell down before St Nonnus, begging him to baptise her: 'Holy father, be merciful to me, a sinner; baptise me, and teach me repentance. I am a sea of iniquity, an abyss of destruction, a net and weapon of the devil.' Thus this penitent implored Christ's hierarch with tears. And he baptised her. Blessed Romana, a deaconess of that church, stood sponsor to her at her baptism and, after that, as her spiritual mother, grounded her well in the Christian faith. But Pelagia was not content just to be baptised. Feeling the weight of her many sins and the pricking of her conscience, she decided on a great asceticism. She gave away to the poor the enormous wealth she had amassed by her immorality and went secretly to Jerusalem, where, under a man's name as the monk Pelagius, she shut herself in a cell on the Mount of Olives and there began a strict asceticism of fasting, prayer and vigils. Three years later, St Nonnus's deacon, James, visited her and found her still alive, but when he went to her again a few days later, he found her dead body and gave it burial. St Pelagia entered into rest in about 461. Thus that sometime great sinner, by repentance and striving, received the mercy of God, the forgiveness of her sins and sanctification, and her purified and sanctified soul was made worthy of the Kingdom of God. Our Holy Mother Thals; The Holy Martyr Pelagia.