



# HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH

THROUGH THE CROSS JOY HAS COME INTO ALL THE WORLD

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MARCH, 2019

Volume 13, Number 7

## ST. DOROTHEUS OF GAZA: DO YOU LOVE YOUR ENEMY?

*St. Dorotheos was a monk in Gaza, in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century. He has been called "A shrewd observer, a master psychologist, an accomplished raconteur, ... a learned man with a prodigious capacity for assimilating in an organized harmony the wisdom of his predecessors in the life of the Spirit."*

The Fathers used to say it is foreign to a monk to be angry, or to annoy other people. And again: The man who masters anger masters the devil, but the man who is worsted by this passion is a complete stranger to the monastic life. What ought we then to say about ourselves who give way to violent anger and even bear malice to the point of animosity toward one another? What else can we do but bewail our pitiable and inhuman condition? Let us control ourselves, brothers, and with God's help come to one another's assistance so that we may be delivered from the bitterness of this pernicious passion. There are times when, with apparent sincerity, a man asks forgiveness of his brother after some discord between them or for some quarrel which has arisen, and yet after the reconciliation he still remains troubled and has hard thoughts against his brother. He ought not to dwell on such thoughts but to cut them off immediately, for this is remembering evil. It needs much self control not to prolong such thoughts and fall into danger. Asking pardon in the way the commandment lays down should heal past anger and so combat

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thoughts of revenge, and yet because of this disagreement there remains a certain irritation with the brother. Now remembrance of evil or rancor is one thing, loss of temper or rage another, annoyance another, and disturbance of mind yet another.

I will give you an example so that you understand this clearly. Someone who is lighting a fire first sets a spark to the tinder; this is some brother's provoking remark, this is the point where the fire starts. Of what consequence is

that brother's remark? If you put up with it, the spark goes out; but if you go on thinking, "Why did he say that to me and what do I have to say to him?" And, "If he did not want to annoy me he would not have said that, and he must think that I also want to annoy him." So you add a small bit of wood to the flame, or some bit of fuel, and you produce some smoke, that is a disturbance of mind. This disturbance floods the mind with thoughts and emotions which stimulate the heart and embolden it to attack. And this boldness incites us to vengeance on the person who annoyed us and this becomes that recklessness which the blessed abba Mark talks about: The heart is stirred up to rashness when the thoughts are set on malice, but malice taken upon itself by prayer and hope leaves the heart

at peace. If, therefore, you put up with a sharp retort from your brother, the little firebrand is extinguished, as I said, before it causes you any trouble. Even if you are a little troubled and you desire promptly to get rid of it, since it is still small, you can do so by remaining silent with a prayer on your lips and by one good heartfelt act of humility. But if you dwell on it and inflame your heart and torment

yourself with thoughts about why he said this to me, and what do I have to say to him, you are blowing on the embers and adding fuel and causing smoke! From this influx of thoughts and conflicting emotions the heart catches fire and there you are in a passion. St Basil calls this passion a boiling up of the blood around your heart: this makes you what is called irascible. But even this commotion can, if you wish, be put out before it becomes rage. If you allow yourself to remain disturbed, however, you will begin to let fly at others—you will be like someone piling logs on a blazing hearth and fanning the fire and so making more firebrands. This is how you get into a rage.

This is exactly what Abbot Zosimos said when he was asked to explain the saying, 'Where there is no bad temper fighting dies out.' 'If at the beginning of a dis-sention,' he said, 'when there is first smoke and sparks begin to fly, if a man forestalls it by blaming himself and humbling himself before he gets drawn into the quarrel and gets into a temper, until, not remaining tranquil but wrangling and becoming reckless, he acts like a man who is piling wood on a fire which gets hotter and hotter until he has made a great blaze. For just as burning logs are reduced to cinders and get covered with ash but do not go out for ages, even if water is thrown on them, so also anger that endures for a long time becomes rancor (malice bearing). And for the rest, unless a man sweats blood he will never be free from it.' You see? He shows us the difference. Keep it in mind. Here you have heard what the first annoyance is, what temper is, what losing your temper is, and what rancor is. Do you see how from one remark a grievous evil is reached? If, from the beginning, you take the blame when you are reproached, without trying to justify yourself or making counter-charges and so repaying evil for evil, you will be delivered from all these ills. This is why I always say to you: when a passion arises, when it is young and feeble, cut it off, lest it stiffen and cause you a great deal of trouble. It is one thing to pluck out a small weed and quite another thing to uproot a great tree. I find it very strange that we do not pay attention to what we sing in the psalms every day: we curse ourselves and we do not realize it. Ought we not to know what we are saying when

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we sing, 'If I have paid back evil for evil, let me fall down defenseless before my enemies.' What does 'Let me fall down' mean? As long as a man is on his feet he has power to stand up to his enemies, he strikes and is struck, he wins a victory or he is defeated, but he is still on his feet. If, however, he loses his foothold and falls down, if he is lying on the ground, how can he go on struggling with his enemy? We pray earnestly not only to fall before our enemies but to fall down defenseless.

Let us discuss what it means for someone to fall down defenseless before his enemies. The 'falling' means no longer to have the power to get up. The 'defenseless' means not to have anything good left in us by which we may at length get up again. For a man who gets up may again take care of himself and when indeed he does so he comes back into the contest. Then we (in the words of the psalm) say, 'May the enemy pursue my soul and capture me.' Not only 'pursue' but 'capture' as well, so that we become subject to him in everything and we are bested in everything we undertake. And we ask that he may throw us down in this way if we render evil for evil. Not only do we pray for this, but we add, 'let our life be trodden down into the earth.' What do we mean by our life? Our capacity for acting virtuously, our power of right action—we ask for this life to be trodden into the earth, so that we become completely earthly, and for all our thoughts and actions to

be bowed down to earthly things. 'Let him plant my glory in the dust.' What is this glory of ours if not the knowledge generated in the soul by the keeping of the commandments. Therefore, we say all this that he [the enemy] may make our glory, as the Apostle says, into our shame; that we may fix it in the dust and make our life and our glory all earthly, that we have no thought of God but only of bodily comfort or the pleasures of the flesh like those of whom God said, 'My spirit will not endure in those men because they are flesh.' Look, when we recite all this in the psalms, this is how we curse ourselves if we pay back evil for evil—to the extent that we do in fact do this—and we pay no attention and show no discernment.

There is a way of rendering evil for evil not only in actions

but also in words and in attitude. A man may not seem to render evil for evil by what he does, but he is found, as I say, to do so in word or in his attitude [general behavior]. For there are times when a person, either by his attitude, his movements, or his looks, disturbs his brother—and does so on purpose—and this is to render evil for evil. Another man may not render evil for evil, by deeds or words or attitude or movement, but he is wounded at heart and harbors resentment against his brother. Another man may have no complaint against his brother, but if he hears that someone has annoyed him or if at some time someone murmurs against him or reviles him, he is glad when he hears it; then it is clear that he too is rendering evil for evil in his heart. Another man may not cling to evil and not be glad when someone who has annoyed him is reviled and may rather himself be annoyed if he has caused annoyance, and yet he is not glad when something good happens to his brother and if he sees him praised or at rest he is displeased—even this is a kind of rancor, though it is less serious. Finally there is the man who wants to rejoice that his brother is at rest, does all he can to be of service to him, and arranges everything to promote his progress and tranquility.

At the beginning of this conference we were talking about the man who apologizes to another but retains a slight irritation against his brother, and we were saying that through his apology the ‘anger’ was healed but he had not yet conquered resentment. Another man, if someone should happen to annoy him and apologize and be reconciled, is at peace with the other person and he no longer retains in his heart any remembrance of it; but if it happens that the same brother, some days later, says something to trouble him, he begins to remember the first offence and begins to be troubled not only about the second but about the first. This man is like a person who has a wound and puts a plaster on it; after a while, through the plaster, the wound heals and forms a scar, but it still remains a weak spot and if someone throws a stone at him, this place is more easily damaged than the rest of the body and begins to bleed. This is what happened to him: he had a wound and he put on the plaster, this is the apology and the reconciliation; soon the wound is healed as in the example, i.e. the anger is cured; he began to take care about the resentment through being zealous not to cling to the remembrance of evil in his heart, and this is the scar

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of the healed-up wound. But he was not perfectly healed, he still had a slight resentment left behind, this is the scar from which the skin can easily be removed and the whole wound opened up again by a slight blow. He has to make a great effort that the scar is completely blotted out and hair grows again and no disfigurement is left behind, so that the place where the wound was cannot be discerned. How then can this be put right? By prayer right from the heart for the one who had annoyed him, such as, “O God, help my brother, and me through his prayers.” In this he is interceding for his brother, which is a sure sign of sympathy and love, and he is humiliating himself by asking help through his brother’s prayers. Where there is sympathy and love and humility, how can wrath and other passions develop? As Abbot Zosimos says, “Even if the devil and all his evil spirits were to set in motion all their cunning tricks to promote evil, all his efforts would be in vain and be brought to nothing by that humility which Christ enjoined on us.” Another of the Elders used to say, “The man who prays for his enemies is a man without rancor.” Work at this and understand clearly what you hear, for unless you work you will not absorb it by word alone. For what man wishing to learn a trade can master it by verbal instructions alone? No! Always he has to start by doing—and doing it wrong—making and unmaking, until, little by little, working patiently and persevering, he learns the trade while God looks on at his labor and his humility, and works with him. And do we wish to master the trade of all trades by word alone, without practical experience of the work? How is this possible? Let us fortify ourselves and work with enthusiasm while we have time. May God give us to remember and keep what we have heard, lest it bring us a heavy sentence on the day of judgment.

—*St Dorotheus of Gaza, Discourses and Sayings, “On Rancor or Animosity.”* [https://www.eighthdayinstitute.org/st\\_dorotheus\\_of\\_gaza\\_do\\_you\\_love\\_your\\_enemy](https://www.eighthdayinstitute.org/st_dorotheus_of_gaza_do_you_love_your_enemy)





## FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

*From the essay by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware in the Triodion, "The Meaning of the Great Fast," in which he discusses the meaning of the various Sundays and other parts of Lent.*

(d) **The Saturday of the Dead.** On the day before the Sunday of the Last Judgement, and in close connection with the theme of this Sunday, there is a universal commemoration of the dead 'from all the ages'. (There are further commemorations of the dead on the second, third and fourth Saturdays in Lent.) Before we call to mind the Second Coming of Christ in the services on Sunday, we commend to God all those departed before us, who are now awaiting the Last Judgement. In the texts for this Saturday there is a strong sense of the continuing bond of mutual love that links together all the members of the Church, whether alive or dead. For those who believe in the risen Christ, death does not constitute an impassable barrier, since all are alive in Him; the departed are still our brethren, members of the same family with us, and so we are conscious of the need to pray insistently on their behalf.

(e) **The Sunday of the Last Judgement** (Gospel reading: Matthew 25:31–46). The two past Sundays spoke to us of God's patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our judge. 'Behold the goodness and severity of God' (Rom. 11:22). Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the End comes. In the words of the Great Canon:

*The end draws near, my soul, the end draws near;  
Yet thou dost not care or make ready.*

*The time grows short, rise up: the Judge is at the door.*

*The days of our life pass swiftly, as a dream, as a flower.*

This Sunday sets before us the 'eschatological' dimension of Lent: the Great Fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Saviour, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come. (This is a theme that will be taken up in the first three days of Holy Week.) Nor is the judgement merely in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts towards others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgement on ourselves.

(f) On Saturday in the week before Lent ('Cheese Week'), there is a general commemoration of all the ascetic saints of the Church, both men and women. As we set out on the journey of the Lenten fast, we are reminded that we do not travel alone but as members of a family, supported by the intercessions of many invisible helpers.

(g) The Sunday before Lent. The last of the preparatory Sundays has two themes: it commemorates **Adam's expulsion from Paradise**, and it is also the **Sunday of Forgiveness**. There are obvious reasons why these two things should be brought to our attention as we stand on the threshold of the Great Fast. One of the primary images in the Triodion is that of the return to Paradise. Lent is a time when we weep with Adam and Eve before the closed gate of Eden, repenting with them for the sins that have deprived us of our free communion with God. But Lent is also a time when we are preparing to celebrate the saving event of Christ's death and rising, which has reopened Paradise to us once more (Luke 23:43). So sorrow for our exile in sin is tempered by hope of our re-entry into Paradise:

*O precious Paradise, unsurpassed in beauty,*

*Tabernacle built by God, unending gladness and delight,*

*Glory of the righteous, joy of the prophets, and dwelling of the saints,*

*With the sound of thy leaves pray to the Maker of all:*

*May He open unto me the gates which I closed by my transgression,*

*And may He count me worthy to partake of the Tree of Life*

*And of the joy which was mine when I dwelt in thee before.*

Note how the Triodion speaks here not of 'Adam' but of 'me': 'May He open unto me the gates which I closed'. Here, as throughout the Triodion, the events of sacred history are not treated as happenings in the distant past or future, but as experiences undergone by me here and now within the dimension of sacred time.

The second theme, that of forgiveness, is emphasized in the Gospel reading for this Sunday (Matthew 6:14-21) and in the special ceremony of mutual forgiveness at the end of Vespers on Sunday evening. Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. As the commemoration of the ascetic saints on the previous Saturday has just made clear to us, we do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family. Our asceticism and fasting should not separate us from our fellow men but link us to them with ever stronger bonds. The Lenten ascetic is called to be a man for others.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Adult Church School: Christ in the Old Testament, Genesis and Exodus.** During the weeks of Lent and following Pascha, we will be having an adult education class focusing on Christ in the Old Testament. Beginning in Genesis, and following the weekly readings throughout the great fast, with classes and discussions based on the previous week's readings. After Pascha, we will continue through the books of Moses with the Exodus! If you're new to Scripture study, looking to delve deeper into the daily lectionary, or looking to understand how the Church reads and interprets the Old Testament, then this will be a wonderful overview of seeing Christ on every page--just as Our Lord did with the two on the road to Emmaus, we'll begin with Moses and see the preparation for and work of the Messiah on every page!

**Moleben on our property:** We will continue serving a weekly short prayer service on our property in Kernersville. This is a service of supplication (Molieben) that

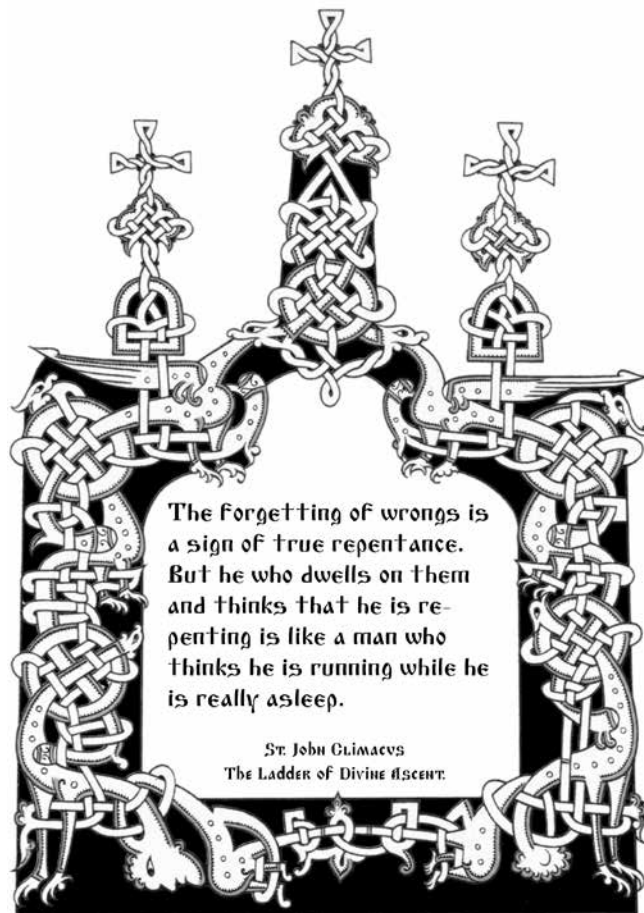
Archbishop Dimitri of blessed memory blessed for the use of parishes in the diocese. Fr. Christopher will be serving it on Friday mornings at 10 AM except where noted in the calendar. Our property is located at 1320 Masten Drive in Kernersville.

**Sisterhood of the Holy Myrrhbearers:** The Sisterhood will meet at 6:30PM on Tuesday, March 19.

**Order Gift Cards Through Holy Cross!** Scrip cards are available from hundreds of retailers and don't cost any more than the face value of the gift card. It's a "free" fundraiser to benefit the Holy Cross building fund! Contact Karen Brudnak-Slate.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

February	Actual	Budgeted
Income	\$12,873	\$12,963
Expense	\$10,180	\$12,963



# HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 10 AM Prayers at the Property	2 6 PM Great Vespers
<b>3 Last Judgment</b> 9:00AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 5:30 PM OCAT home meeting	4 Cheesefare	5 Cheesefare	6 Cheesefare	7 Cheesefare	8 Cheesefare 10AM Prayers at the Property	9 Cheesefare 6 PM Great Vespers
<b>10 Forgiveness</b> Cheesefare 9:00AM Church School 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 1PM Forgiveness Vespers	11 Great Lent begins 6:30PM Compline with the Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	12 6:30PM Compline with the Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	13 6:10PM 9th Hour & Typika 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	14 6:30PM Compline with the Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete	15 10AM Prayers at the Property 6PM Parish Council	16 6 PM Great Vespers
<b>17 Orthodoxy</b> 9:00AM Church School 9:00AM Adult Class 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	18	19 6:30PM Sis- terhood	20 6:10PM 9th Hour & Typika 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	21	22 10AM Prayers at the Property 5PM Open Door	23 6 PM Great Vespers
<b>24 St. John Palamas</b> 9:00AM Church School 9:00AM Adult Class 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	<b>25 ANNUN- CIATION</b> 6:30PM Ves- peral Divine Liturgy	26 6:30PM Small Compline & Catechism Class	27 6:10PM 9th Hour & Typika 6:30PM Presanctified Liturgy 8PM Lenten Potluck	28	29 10AM Prayers at the Property	30 6 PM Great Vespers
<b>31 Veneration of the Holy Cross</b> NO Church School NO Adult Class 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy						