

## The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Luke 6:31-36

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. (KJV)

The present Gospel is a serious challenge for believers. Believers are expected to respond with love and care to difficult people and evil in daily life. These teachings are to be taken to heart.

The present Gospel requires careful assessment of personal relationships including the relationship with God. Complete honesty is necessary if change is to occur and progress made.

Our relationship with God determines if we live and act in ways pleasing to God. The love we show to others in daily life and our response to evil reveals if we love as God loves and expects us to love.

The Lord teaches by example! Our responsibility is to follow the Lord's example and make it a part of daily life. Hardened criminals are capable of repenting and have become saints. St. Moses the Black is one example.

The present Gospel asks us to fully consider showing love and compassion in difficult relationships. The Gospel wants us to understand great value exists in responding by love at times when we experience evil.

The Gospel message is a teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. We professed our belief in Jesus Christ at Baptism. We chose to follow Christ throughout our lives. His teachings are to be followed if we are to honor our Baptismal commitment.

During His own suffering, Jesus showed compassion to the thief on the cross. The good thief was a criminal. (Luke 23:42-43) When our patience is challenged, when we are hurting from difficulties, let us look to the Lord and learn His ways.

God does not give up on us when we are hurting. God does not turn away from us when we are exhausted. God is ever-present to heal us. God is present to love us. God is present to replenish us.

Exercising patience enables us to eventually see and understand the goodness God has in mind. God reveals to us the goodness to be manifested when we show love for enemies and difficult persons in life.

God is present to shine the brightness of the Resurrection in our darkest moments of life. When tragedy hits us, when dark moments arise in life, let us follow the Crucified Christ to the Empty Tomb and His Resurrection Appearances.

Resurrection joy is always available. Resurrection joy is ever-present. The darkness resulting from the Crucifixion was not lasting. Evil occurring in daily life is always overcome by the Risen Christ!

More than twenty centuries of efforts to deny, denounce and destroy the message of the Resurrection have failed. Believers holding firm to belief in the Resurrected Christ overcome evil with goodness and love.

The Resurrected Christ provides the fervent believer with the sustenance needed to move through darkness to Resurrection joy. The Resurrected Christ is the comforting presence needed when the believer is without strength.

Each Sunday is a celebration of the Resurrection. Each Gospel reading is nourishment for the heart, mind and soul. Attentive believers are strengthened with each Divine Liturgy.

Partakers of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ are renewed and transformed. Participating in the Divine Liturgy makes the decided difference in life. The Light of Christ illumines the path through any darkness in life.

If we read the lives of the saints and martyrs, we learn that in the darkest and most difficult moments of life, goodness prevails due to firm belief in the Resurrected Christ.

When we hurt inside, let us remember Christ's hurt on the Cross. Let us draw strength from the knowledge He rose from the grave. God's love will lead us through difficult relationships and evil if we adhere to His teachings and example.

Thank God for today's Gospel. Each believer needs this Gospel message to assess and reassess personal relationships in daily life and the personal relationship with God.

The Lord's teachings and example are continuous sources for learning throughout life. At Baptism the Christian journey is begun in earnest. The journey to the Kingdom is to last in faithfulness to the last breath.

Everyday is a preparation for Christ's eventual return and the final judgment. The final judgment will take into consideration our responses in personal relationships and to evil. We are to love as Christ loves.

Jesu Christ treats each person with love. Even the most difficult and evil person in the world is the recipient of God's love. May we carefully examine ourselves to learn to love as the Lord loves us.

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The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Venerable Hilarion the Great. St. Hilarion, Bishop of Meglin, Venerable Confessor Bessarion. October 21/November 3, 2024/Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbi