

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church

September 29th, 2024

14th Sunday After Pentecost

Ven. Cyriacus the Hermit, of Palestine (556)

Ven. Theophanes the Merciful of Gaza

Activities and Events this Week

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| • Wednesday 2 | Adult Education | 6:00pm |
| • Thursday 3 | St. John Brotherhood | 6:00pm |
| • Saturday 5 | St. Brotherhood Work Day | 9:00am – 10:30am |
| | Choir Rehearsal | 10:30am |
| | Catechism | 3:00pm |

Announcements

Bookstore – we have lots of good titles – please avail yourself to these books – learn more about your faith! You will also see many beautiful Orthodox Crosses. Buy one and hang it over your front door that God may bless your coming in and going out of your homes.

We will have a concentrated **stewardship drive** for three weeks in October. I ask that everyone be in church during that three week period so we can work toward a “preferred” future verses “reacting” to the future.

October 6 – Myrrhbearers will be starting a Thanksgiving food drive. Please bring nonperishable food items.

Dec 1 – Next meeting of the Myrrhbearers to decorate the Christmas tree. Fr. Lawrence will check with the school to see if we can sponsor a family in need as we did last year.

Be sure to pray for someone each day!

*Christ died having as the content of His heart every man who had ever come into the world.
(From the calendar)*

Love Your Enemies

“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” (Luke 6:35-36).

Notice the command from Christ, “Love your enemies!” Of course in our modern world and always in the “modern world,” of whatever time period of which we want to speak, this command has always been difficult. Why has it always been difficult? That is the \$64,000 question that I wish I could answer. However, I think it has something to do with the fact that man has always modeled hatred and revenge very well.

Our tongue can be a vicious weapons as we see modeled so well in our political system. I don't recall in my lifetime politicians using such vitriol rhetoric and speaking such contempt for the American people who don't agree with them. It has produced such hatred between both political parties and Americans who subscribe to one party or another. We must be very cautious to not use our tongues as weapons against each other in our community. Our community must be haven where everyone regardless of our politics and our level of understanding of Orthodoxy can be together in mutual love and hold each other up.

As Orthodox Christians we use our tongues to worship God, to sing His praises. In our personal prayer life hopefully we sing the psalms and intercede for each other. We receive Christ's Holy Body and Blood on our tongues during the Divine Liturgy with the fervent hope that our unworthy tongues are not burned by the fire of the Godhead. You see how wonderful our tongues can be and at the same time how this small organ of our body can be so destructive?

The reason love of enemies is so difficult is because that understanding and that ability, comes from God. Love of enemies is a divine quality. It takes a deep compassion for another human being, even if that human being is our enemy. And yes, the United States clearly has enemies and this is a reality of the fallen world in which we live. We as Orthodox Christians will indeed have people who hate us, outside and even inside our Church, but we ourselves should strive to have no enemies on a personal level. I am even called to love the most offensive, vile, evil and destructive individuals toward humanity, Communist, Socialists and Marxist leaders throughout the world.

What if we don't want to love others, especially those who we don't like or agree with? I would say nothing happens. And that is preciousely the problem. We become caught up in the world and with ourselves. We reduce God to an abstract idea rather than grow in our faith and become more Christ like by grace. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let us become more aware of what rolls of our tongues and live our earthly lives understanding the power that we have with our tongue to edify or to destroy others and ourselves along the way.