

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

### Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos

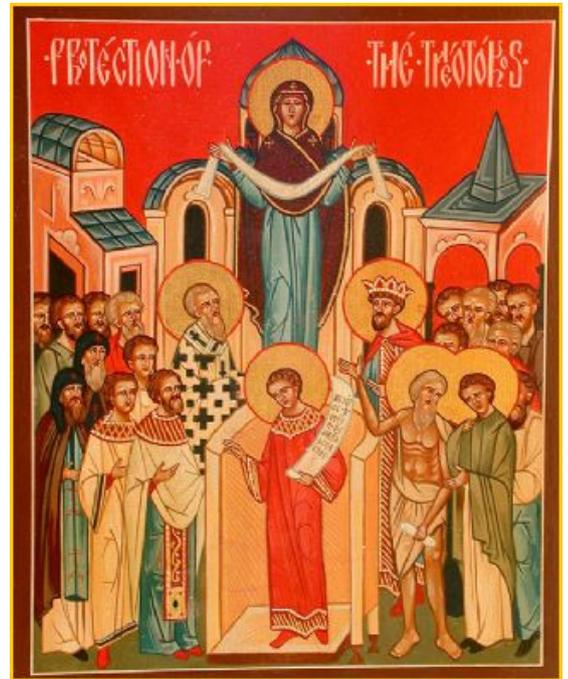
1 / 14 October

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 3:** Let the heavens rejoice / let the earth be glad / for the Lord has shown strength with His arm! / He has trampled down death by death! / He has become the first-born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell / and has granted the world great mercy.

**Troparion of the Protection tone 4:** Most holy Mother of God,/ today we Orthodox joyfully celebrate thy coming among us./ As we gaze at thy icon we cry with compunction:/ Shelter us under thy protection, deliver us from evil,/ and pray thy Son Christ our God to save our souls.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 3:** On this day thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, / leading us from the gates of death / On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices. / With the prophets and the patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

**Kontakion of the Protection tone 3:** Today the Virgin is standing before us in the Church/ praying for us with the choirs of Saints./ Angels worship with Hierarchs,/ Apostles rejoice with Prophets,/ for the Mother of God intercedes with the Eternal God for us.



**Vespers:** Gen . 28:10-17; Ezek . 43:27-44:4; Prov . 9:1-11

**Matins Gospel IX**

**Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19**

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

#### **THE GOSPEL WHICH WAS PREACHED BY ME IS NOT ACCORDING TO MAN**

Observe how diligently he affirms that he was taught of Christ, who Himself, without human intervention, condescended to reveal to him all knowledge. And if he were asked for his proof that God Himself thus immediately revealed to him these ineffable mysteries, he would instance his former manner of life, arguing that his conversion would not have been so sudden, had it not been by Divine revelation. For when men have been vehement and eager on the contrary side, their conviction, if it is effected by human means, requires much time and ingenuity ...For my violence even reached your ears, and the distance between Palestine and Galatia is so great, that the report would not have extended there, had not my acts exceeded all bounds and endurance ...Observe how he does not shrink from aggravating each point: not saying simply that he has 'persecuted' but 'beyond measure' and 'made havoc of it,' which signifies an attempt to extinguish, to pull down, to destroy, to annihilate the Church ...Here his object is to show that it was by some secret providence that he was left to himself for a time ...It is evident that God had some hidden reason for this delay. What this purpose was, you are eager to learn from me perhaps ...I must entreat your love not to require all things from me, but to search for it by yourselves and to beg of God to reveal it to you ...God indeed says that He called him on account of His excellent capacity, as He said to Ananias, 'for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings' (Acts 9:15).

*St. John Chrysostom. Chapter I. Commentary on Galatians. B#57, pp. 9-10.*

for the Theotokos: Heb . 9:1-7

## 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 Theotokos: Luke 10:38-42,11:27-28](#)

### Saints of the week

**1 / 14 October - The Protection of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary** - The Church has always glorified the most holy Mother of God as the Protectress and Defender of the Christian people, entreating, by her intercession, God's loving-kindness towards us sinners. The Mother of God's aid has been clearly shown times without number, both to individuals and to peoples, both in peace and in war, both in monastic deserts and in crowded cities. The event that the

Church commemorates and celebrates today proves this constant protection of the Christian people by the Mother of God. On October 1st, 911, in the time of the Emperor Leo the Wise (or the Philosopher), there was an all-night vigil at the Blachernae church of the Mother of God in Constantinople. The church was crowded. St Andrew the Fool for Christ was standing at the back of the church with his disciple Epiphanius. At four o'clock in the morning, the most holy Mother of God appeared above the people with a veil spread over her outstretched hands, as though to protect them with this covering. She was clad in gold-encrusted purple and shone with an unspeakable radiance, surrounded by apostles, saints, martyrs and virgins. Seeing this vision, St Andrew gestured towards it and asked Epiphanius: 'Do you see how the Queen and Lady of all is praying for the whole world?' Epiphanius replied: 'Yes, Father; I see it and stand in dread.' As a result, this commemoration was instituted to remind us both of this event and of the Mother of God's constant protection whenever we prayerfully seek that protection, that shelter, in distress. The Holy Apostle Ananias; Our Holy Father Romanus the Melodist; Our Holy Father John Kukuzelis; Our Holy Father Gregory; Martyr Prince Mylor of Brittany; St. Bavo, hermit (d.650)

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**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 Chozebite.

**4 / 17 October - Fast Day - 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 - Fast Day - 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).