

Homily: Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Gospel: Luke 6:31-36

Date: 5 October 2025

Preacher: Father John Holoduek, OCA

... You will be sons of the Most High....

In this World, the *concept of Love* can be distorted to mean very different things. However, the Lord teaches us what genuine love means and how it is expressed concretely. We see the *Meaning of True Love through What God has Done and Continues to Do for Us*. **Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God**, the Logos Who is, Who was, and Who ever shall be. He has no beginning and no end. He is before all things, and in Him, all things exist. He created all things for us so that we may share in His love. The act of creation itself is an act of His profound love.

Jesus Christ Ascended in the Flesh to Heaven to prepare a place for us on the right hand of the Father. He United Our Broken Humanity to His Divine Person So We Could Live with Him Forever. He did it all because of His Unending Love for Us. He died and resurrected to give us New Life in Him. The Resurrection is the Center of our Faith, and it is what gives us not only *Eternal Life in Heaven*, but *New Life Now*. *Only in this New Life can We Truly Love and Forgive Our Enemies and Do Good to Them*.

The Lord teaches us this Very Love by His Example. It is an *Unselfish Love that desires the Eternal Good of our Loved Ones for Their Own Sake*. *A concrete love is Expressed Not Only in Words but in Acts, as Christ Did for Us*.

Saint Porphyrios taught: ***When someone injures us in whatever way, whether with slanders or with insults, we should think of him as our brother who has been taken hold of by the enemy. He has fallen victim to the enemy. Accordingly, we need to have compassion for him and entreat God to have mercy both on us and on him, and God will help both.***

*God does not want us to be Merely Nice People. The Gospel does not say: be Nice, as God is Nice. Rather, God says: **Be Holy, for I am Holy** (Leviticus 11:44). It is much more than just being Nice or God—**It is About Being like God!** We are in His Image and **Called to Become Holy**—in His Likeness. **As Saint Silouan the Athonite says, the measure of our Holiness is the measure of Our Love for Our Enemies. We begin to Acquire this Holiness, or Love for Enemies, by Doing to Others as We Wish They Would Do to Us; that is, By Not Returning Evil for Evil.***

...You will be sons of the Most High....

*The Lord knows our weaknesses. Sometimes, we fall short and cannot be as good as we intend. We may even respond with evil for evil. He loves us regardless and helps our weaknesses and needs through His Grace. **Let us not lose hope when we fall**, because God is full of Love, Mercy, and Understanding. Christ knows that we cannot be as good as He Is...*Christ wants us to try our best with the Grace that He Provides.**

Believe this: that *Christ knows that God Loves Us, Even Though We Crucified Him.* We are **called to Imitate Him**, and **Do Good to Those Who Do Evil Unto Us**, Because **Evil Can Only Be Dispelled By Love.**

Let Us Follow the Example of the Life of Jesus and Show Love to Every Person We Encounter, So We Can Do Our Part to Help Eliminate the Evil of the World and Fill It Instead With Christ's Love.

...You will be sons of the Most High....