

**MELKITE RESOURCES FOR THE DOMESTIC CHURCH
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS**

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

Parents: Blessed ✠ is our God at all times, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Response: Amen.

Parents: Glory to You, our God, glory to You. Heavenly King, Consoler, Spirit of Truth, present in all places and filling all things, the Treasury of blessings and the Giver of life, come and dwell in us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

Children: Holy ✠ God! Holy Mighty One! Holy Immortal One! Have mercy on us! *(Three times w/ metany)*

Glory be to the Father ✠ and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us! Lord, forgive us our sins! Master, pardon our transgressions! Holy One, look upon us and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy! *(Three times)*

Glory be to the Father ✠ and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE 8

You descended from on high, O compassionate One;
and consented to burial for three days that You might free us from suffering.
O Lord, our life and our resurrection, glory to You!

EPISTLE: ACTS 8:26 - 39

In those days an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Get up and go south on the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This road is deserted. It happened that an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a minister to queen Candace of Ethiopia in charge of all her treasure, had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home, sitting in his chariot and reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Move up and keep close to that chariot."

And Philip ran forward and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and asked, "Do you then understand what you are reading?"

And he replied, "How could I, unless someone guide me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. Now, the passage of the Scriptures he was reading was this: *As a sheep was led to the slaughter. As a spotless lamb silent before its shearer, he opened not his mouth. In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? For his life was taken away from the earth. (Is. 53: 7)*

And answering Philip, the eunuch said, "Please tell me who is he referring to, himself or someone else?" Then Philip, opening his mouth and starting from this passage of Scriptures, announced to him the Good News of Jesus. And as they continued along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"

And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, it can be done."

And he answered and said, "I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And he ordered the chariot to be stopped, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. But when they came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing.

GOSPEL: LUKE 10:25 - 37

At that time, behold, a certain lawyer got up to test Jesus, saying, "Master, what must I do to gain eternal life?" But he said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read?" He answered and said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." And he said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you shall live." But he, wishing to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell in with robbers, who after both stripping him and beating him went their way, leaving him half-dead.

But, as it happened, a certain priest was going down the same way, and when he saw him, he passed by. And likewise a Levite also, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed came upon him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And he went up to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. And setting him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn and took care of him. And as he was leaving the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you send, I, on my way back, will repay you.' Which of these three, in your opinion, proved himself neighbor to the man who fell among the robber?" And he said, "The one who took pity on him!" And Jesus said to him, "Go and do as he did."

CATECHETICAL SUMMARY

In the Gospel that is appointed for today, we hear the famous story of the "good Samaritan." While there is much to say about the meaning of this parable and its call for charity to one's neighbor, it is important to remember that this story is rooted in Jesus's original response to the lawyer who was "testing" him with the question "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" To this question, Jesus responds that to gain eternal life, to go to heaven, a person must first love God with his whole self and his neighbor as himself, quoting the book of Deuteronomy.

Why is the way of love the path to heaven? The answer to this question is simple and yet beautifully profound. In the first epistle of St. John, the Evangelist states that "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8). A simple definition of love is that it is the giving of one's life to the beloved. From all eternity God has lived a life of loving communion, the Father pouring out his life in the Son through the gift of the Holy Spirit. This beautiful understanding of God as love allows us to understand why love is the only way in which we will find eternal life. As we are made in the image and likeness of God, we have the created capacity to live as God does. The one who chooses to live this "way of love" chooses to make God's life his own life. As God's life is eternal life, the one who lives a life of love will, through the giving of his life, find his way to life eternal.

Practical Questions:

1. Is it easy to love God with our whole heart, and with all our soul, and with all of our strength and with all of our mind?
2. If someone loves God with their whole self, will he have any love left for others?
3. What are some real and practical ways that we can "love God?"
4. What is the relationship between the Divine Liturgy and the love of God?
5. How is the Divine Liturgy the first way in which we can begin to love our neighbor?