

Prayer for our Enemies

In Matthew 5:43-48 Jesus says: “You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven;

In Luke 6:27-28 Jesus says: “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.”

Short Prayers for Enemies

Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst command us to love our enemies, and those who defame and injure us, and to pray for them and forgive them; Who Thyself didst pray for Thine enemies, who crucified thee: grant us, we pray, the spirit of Christian reconciliation and meekness, that we may heartily forgive every injury and be reconciled with our enemies. Grant us to overcome the malevolence and offences of people with Christian meekness and true love of our neighbor. We further beseech Thee, O Lord, to grant to our enemies true peace and forgiveness of sins; and do not allow them to leave this life without true faith and sincere conversion. And help us repay evil with goodness, and to remain safe from the temptations of the devil and from all the perils which threaten us, in the form of visible and invisible enemies. Amen.

Save, Lord, and have mercy on those whom I have caused to stumble, turning them away from the path of salvation and leading them to evil and unseemly deeds. Return them to the path of salvation by thy Divine Providence. (a prostration is made)

Save, Lord, and have mercy on those who hate me and offend me, and do me harm. Do not let them perish because of me, a sinner. (a prostration is made)

(Fr. Stephen Freeman comments: “I often think the prostration is worth at least as much as the words. It is an action in which we can allow the words to sink into our hearts – and by God’s grace – melt them to some degree.”)

Other things we can do:

We can light a candle for those who have hurt us, bringing light to the darkness.

We can pray the Lord’s Prayer for our enemies, asking God to lead them to call God holy, to seek His Kingdom, and to strive to do His will; that their daily needs are met, that they are forgiven and learn to forgive, and that they turn from temptation and evil.

St. Silouan always teaches that this attitude is a gift of the Holy Spirit: "The Lord has commanded us to love our enemies, and the Holy Spirit reveals this love to us"; "One can only love one’s enemies through the grace of the Holy Spirit"; "When you will love your enemies, know that a great divine grace will be living in you." The strength to love one’s enemies, he says, comes through the grace of the Holy Spirit, and we must seek it fervently, with humility and repentance, trusting in and imitating God’s infinite mercy and love for all creation.