



fully human
the special call of special needs

Antoninos' eyes were burned from oil and tar, but filled with great compassion, you straightaway granted him healing, O Paraskevi...Rejoice, you who grant light to the blind. ~Akathist to St. Paraskevi the Great Martyr of Rome

St. Paraskevi exemplified Christ's limitless mercy when she healed her torturer. When hot tar splashed into the eyes of the person harming her, she was “filled with great compassion” for him. Forgiving when we or someone we love has been persecuted is not a task we can accomplish on our own; this feat requires the grace of God.

Families unfortunately face instances when people misunderstand, fear, or even ridicule a loved one with a disability. We must advocate for and defend one another, educate others, and remind people that we are called to love everyone as Christ does, unconditionally, since all are created in His image. We must always stand in solidarity with anyone being mistreated. And yet - and this is most difficult - as children of God we are called to forgive. By the example and prayers of St. Paraskevi, may our own hearts be able to offer God's mercy and love when spiritual blindness overcomes those who act hurtfully toward us, and the people whom we love.